



**CITY OF VICTORIA
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING MINUTES**

July 22, 2026, 12:00 P.M.

HYBRID MEETING, MICROSOFT TEAMS, 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Brown; Tamara Bonnemaïson; Mark Hornell; Joseph Gowid; Jarren Butterworth; Priscilla Samuel

PANEL MEMBERS ABSENT: Nicholas Standeven; Kristina Zalite

STAFF PRESENT: Miko Betanzo – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Caner Oktem – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Rob Bateman – Senior Planner
Kamryn Allen – Recording Secretary

APPLICATIONS: ATTENDEES: **A) Rezoning Application No.00893 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variances No.00292 for 441-443 Government Street and 605-607 Michigan Street**

Justin Bennett (UWA's, Principal and Architect AIBC), Brendan Casidy (UWA's, Architect AIBC), Chris Windjack (LADR Landscape Architects, Principal and BCSLA), Kristy Irvine (Abstract Developments, Development Coordinator), Nicholas Standeven (Abstract Developments, VP of Development)

B) Rezoning Application No.00911 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variance No. 00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street, 901-919 Gordon Street and 620-630 Courtney Street

Mark Whitehead (Partner MCM Architects), Grant Brumpton (Principal, PWL Partnership), Jonathan Tinney - Principal, SvN Architects + Planners), Gillian Brennen (Sr. Associate, MCM Architects), Geoff Heu (SVP, Development, GWLRA), Michael Reed (VP, Development, GWLRA)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

T. Bonnemaïson was absent at the start of the meeting.

2. New Chair Nomination

Panel members were offered the opportunity to extend their terms beyond their June 2026 term end date to December 2026. M. Showers declined the extension; therefore, a new Chair must be selected for the remainder of the 2026 calendar year.

N. Standeven put his name forward for nomination and it was approved unanimously.

M. Hornell assumed the role of Chair for today's meeting due to N. Standeven's absence.

3. Minutes

Minutes from the meetings held June 24, 2026

Moved By: J. Brown

Seconded By: J. Gowid

That the Minutes from the meetings held June 24, 2026 be approved.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved By: J. Gowid

Seconded By: P. Samuel

That the July 22, 2026 Advisory Design Panel Agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Applications

A) Rezoning Application No.00893 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variances No.00292 for 441-443 Government Street and 605-607 Michigan Street

Rob Bateman, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the application.

Applicant team provided an overview of the project and provided a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification;

- Just curious where the PMT was located before it was moved to the corner. I believe, Christine, you mentioned that it had been relocated.
 - The PMT was originally located on the Government Street frontage, where the parkade ramp is now. Following discussions with BC Hydro, it was relocated to the Young Street and Michigan Street corner to be closer to the existing infrastructure.
- Could it go anywhere along Young Street, or does it need to be on the corner?

- Locating the PMT on the corner was the most practical option for site planning and coordinating the other functional elements. While it could have been located elsewhere along Young Street, both the project team and BC Hydro preferred the corner location.
- Is there a reason why trees have not been incorporated into the Young Street patio planting areas, while they have been included along Government Street? Is this related to the patio area requirements or the size of the patios?
 - The planters along Young Street are currently too small to provide sufficient soil volume and space for tree plantings. While the patios are sizable, they may be reduced slightly as part of the ongoing review to enlarge the planters and accommodate additional trees.
- Can the boulevards can take any more trees, like Young Street and Government Street.
 - The trees are currently located in the areas recommended by Parks. Utilities along both the Young Street and Government Street frontages make adding additional trees challenging, although there may be an opportunity to accommodate one more.
 - *Rob Bateman, Senior Planner responded:* From the City's perspective, there are two separate tree requirements: street trees located on City property to support the boulevard and streetscape, and trees located on the development site, as required under the Tree Protection Bylaw.
 - The PMT could also be wrapped to better blend with the surrounding landscape. This approach has been used on recent projects, with various standard print options available to create a wrap complementary to the overall landscape design.
- Has the design team evaluated locating the PMT underground rather than at grade?
- I don't believe so. There is generally a preference to locate the PMT at grade. Abstract has not previously had a project where a PMT was located underground, and our understanding is that this is typically only done for very large loads and can be cost-prohibitive.
- Is there any adaptable unit provided in this building?
 - I believe at least 20% of the units are adaptable in this project, which meets the required adaptability guidelines for this project.
 - Two accessible parking stalls are provided in the parkade: one standard accessible stall and one van-accessible stall. The omission of one stall from the drawing package may have been an oversight.
- If the loading zone or parking space along Young Street were removed, would this create additional space to accommodate more trees and help meet the tree requirements?
 - That would be considered off-site planting and would therefore be separate from the on-site tree requirements. The frontage design was developed in conjunction

with City staff, so the decision would involve balancing the priorities of street parking and additional boulevard trees.

- How much parking is being provided? I see the parkade goes to the property line, where is the need coming from?
 - Based on current market conditions, parking remains highly valued by purchasers and is important to the overall viability of the project. While parking is not required for this type of development, providing it helps meet the needs of potential and current homeowners.
 - *Rob Bateman, Senior Planner responded:* The Province prohibits the City from requiring standard parking stalls in this location due to the TOA; only accessible and bicycle parking can be required under zoning. PMTs can generally be located either inside or outside a building, although the applicant may have other criteria influencing the proposed location.
 - The City may take a more flexible approach to PMT locations moving forward, given BC Hydro's prescriptive requirements. Relocating the PMT inside the building would reduce available housing space and require significant setbacks and non-combustible construction, which could negatively impact the building's overall design and expression.
- Question for Staff, Regarding the rear yard, given that the site is bounded by roads on three sides and the remaining side would typically be considered a side yard, could you explain the rationale for pursuing a perimeter block concept on this site?
 - *Rob Bateman, Senior Planner responded:* Zoning, guidelines, and related bylaws work together to encourage open site space on sites outside the downtown core. The intent is to provide space for stormwater management, trees and urban forest benefits, and potential resident amenities. The perimeter block concept helps achieve these objectives by creating open space rather than maximizing the building footprint.
- Question for staff, in terms of the policy trade-off between housing and open space required to achieve the rear yard setback, would the City consider allowing additional height, or would this result in an overall reduction in density?
 - *Rob Bateman, Senior Planner responded:* Under the current zoning and guidelines, achieving the open space objectives would likely require a reduction in density. However, the site is located just outside the 200-metre TOA radius, where higher density and taller buildings may be supported. While the TOA could potentially justify additional height, the City's current policies identify six storeys for this area, and staff cannot confirm whether additional height would be supported.
 - The requested density is necessary for the project to remain viable. An 11-metre rear yard setback would require a significant portion of the 13,000-square-foot site to be dedicated to open space. Increasing the building height would also move the project beyond viable six-storey wood-frame construction into a significantly different and less economically viable construction type. The applicant noted that similar setback conditions have been approved on other recent projects in Victoria. The project also provides new ground-level green

space and plantings through the Young Street dedication, as well as a rooftop amenity area with additional planting opportunities. Given the site's constraints, including its size, three frontages, dedications, and the need to protect existing tree roots, the applicant believes the proposal represents a reasonable balance between the City's policies and a viable project that fits the neighbourhood.

- Have you explored options to increase the number of outdoor spaces, can you elaborate on this?
 - The balcony design was initially intended to reflect the heritage character of James Bay and Victoria. However, given the importance of outdoor space to both residents and prospective purchasers, the applicant will explore opportunities to increase balcony space, including adding balconies to corner units or increasing balcony sizes, as part of the next resubmission.

Panel members discussed:

- No comments were made.

Moved By: J. Gowid

Seconded By: J. Brown

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 00292 for 441/443 Government Street and 605/607 Michigan Street be approved with the following changes:

- Better integrate the PMT with the landscape design and appropriate wrap
- Address accessible parking deficiency
- Enhance the design of the rooftop to include landscaping, which could include a green roof
- Incorporate onsite trees along the Young Street frontage, either in planters or grade.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

T. Bonnemaïson joined the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

B) Rezoning Application No.00911 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variance No. 00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street, 901-919 Gordon Street and 620-630 Courtney Street

P. Samuel recused herself from the meeting at 1:05pm due to a non-pecuniary conflict of interest with the following item relating to her business relationships with the applicant team.

Miko Betanzo Senior Urban Designer provided an overview of the application.

Applicant team provided an overview of the project and provided a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- Clarification was requested regarding the building's upper-level design, as some renderings show a crown or overhang while others show a simple box-like termination.

- The upper-level design includes distinct overhangs or cornices at the termination of each massing element.
- The plaza was identified as a strong aspect of the proposal, transforming the space between St. Andrew's and the adjacent building. Will there be a commitment to keeping the plaza publicly accessible?
 - The ownership group holds its properties long-term and has local staff who manage and maintain its spaces. Given the proposed residential overlook, the applicant expressed strong support for the plaza and hopes that it will remain a successful public space.
- Just to confirm will there be an easement then?
 - That is correct
- Regarding the public sidewalk, the landscape plans appear to show the sidewalk widening in several locations to provide additional public space. How much of the sidewalk design has been finalized, and will these areas provide additional space for pedestrians?
 - The applicant has discussed the sidewalk design with City Engineering and will continue to work closely with staff. There are opportunities to add corner bump-outs, reduce crossing distances, increase sidewalk widths, and incorporate additional greenery.
- Level 2 outdoor amenity area, does that connect down to the plaza?
 - No, it does not, it's a private space.
- Could it be connected for convenience?
 - That's a good point, but it may present as a security concern. We have not thought about that before but will consider a connection.
- Regarding the plan showing a maximum occupancy of 60 people, does this limit relate to the single exit from the space, and does it include the private patios or are those occupants considered to exit through the building?
 - The applicant has been working with consultants to resolve the issue and is currently revising the design to provide two means of egress for all occupants.
- it looks like a great space, and I could see 60 plus people there
- Given the existing relationship with the adjacent church and the proposed plaza, what discussions have taken place with the church owner regarding potential integration of the space into the plaza or other opportunities to create greater synergy between the two sites?
 - The applicant has held at least two private meetings with the church representatives, and discussions regarding the relationship between the two sites are ongoing.

Panel members discussed:

- The design team was congratulated on the proposal, particularly the dialogue between the project and its surrounding context. The proposed plaza was viewed as a significant improvement to the area and a valuable addition to the neighbourhood.

- The project was viewed positively for its strong fit within the surrounding context, including the use of green brick alongside the red brick of St. Andrew's Cathedral. The outdoor amenity spaces and plaza were considered successful. A potential connection between the private amenity space and the plaza was also identified as a valuable addition. Overall, the project was supported for approval

Moved By: J. Butterworth

Seconded By: J. Gowid

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Rezoning Application No.00911 and Development Permit with Variances Application No.00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street and 901-919 Gordon be approved with the following changes:

- Explore the opportunity for a connection between the private amenity space and the surface plaza
- Continue discussions with the adjacent church property to explore an improved interface at the ground level of the property.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Adjournment

Moved By: J. Brown

Seconded By: T. Bonnemaïson

That the July 22, 2026 Advisory Design Panel meeting be adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY