



CITY OF VICTORIA
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING MINUTES
October 8, 2025

HYBIRD MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS & Xwsepsum Nations ROOM
1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE

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

PANEL MEMBERS Marc Showers (Chair); Kavita Srinivasan; Nicholas Standeven; Katie McEvoy (HAPL-ADP Cross-Appointee); Priscilla Samuel; Joseph Gowid; Kristina Zalite; Julie Brown;

ABSENT Mark Hornell; Tamara Bonnemaison

STAFF PRESENT: Miko Betanzo – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Caner Oktem – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Kamryn Allen – Recording Secretary
Patrick Carroll – Senior Planner
Geordie Gordon – Senior Planner
Kristal Stevenot – Senior Heritage Planner

APPLICANT **A) Delegated Development Permit Application**
ATTENDEES: **No.01065 for 2501 Blanshard Street – Phase 1**
Sean MacLean (BC Housing), Elyse Kuwert (BC Housing), Theresa Paul (BC Housing), Jonny Davis (MDI Landscape Architects), Scott Murdoch (MDI Landscape Architects), Erica Sangster (DAU Studio), Mark Zupan (DAU Studio), Mike Barros (DAU Studio)
B) Development Permit with Variances Application
No.00293 for 932 Balmoral Road
Chelsea Dunk (Director Heritage Conservation - Donald Luxton and Associates), Zina Fraser, Adrienne Rademaker (Associate Architect AIBC – MA + HG Architects), Kieran Lynch (Development Manager - Aryze Developments), Chris Quigley (Aryze Developments), Marianne Ammodio (Principal Architect AIBC - MA+HG Architects), Harley Grusko (Principal Architect AIBC - MA + HG Architects), Joseph Fry (Principal – Hapa Collaborative), Olivia Lund (Senior Development Coordinator - Aryze Developments)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

Panel Members and staff provided introductions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved By: M. Showers

Seconded By: K. Zalite

That the October 8, 2025 Advisory Design Panel Agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Applications

A) Delegated Development Permit Application No. 01065 for 2501 Blanshard Street – Phase 1

Patrick Carroll Senior Planner provided an overview of the application.

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

Nicholas joined at 12:10pm

Four items of interest:

- Alignment of master plan
- Parmiter block form
- Building design and materiality
- Landscape shadows

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- It's great to see the inclusion of 3- and 4-bedroom units. The stormwater management plan is well done, and the building has a strong pedestrian-oriented feel, which is great to see.
- Can we comment on the master plan? Not specifically on the building but how it might impact the upcoming commons and plazas?
 - Today's focus is on Phase 1, specifically the building's design. However, I think it's fine to take questions regarding the overall project as well.
- A wide range of amenities is being offered, and because of that, I don't see an issue with the block form itself, there's a reasonable trade-off with the shading.

- I noticed there's a trike path on level 5, which is great. Will there be trike storage or shared trikes available? Also, the garden area on level 6 looks fantastic, does it include space for a sink and compost?
 - Yes, we've considered space for a potting table and preparation area, and there's also a small storage area located nearby. The other details will be explored further.
- Is there any provision for storing four-wheeled scooters? I believe many BC Housing residents use scooters.
 - We don't have designated areas specifically for that, but each unit includes storage, and the ample bike parking could also accommodate scooters. While there isn't a dedicated space, the adaptable and accessible units offer a bit of extra room for them.
- I can see there's some variation in the site's topography, particularly across the Evergreen site. Could you speak to the changes in elevation from east to west and north to south?
 - Yes, you're correct, there is some grade variation from north to south. We've worked hard to incorporate a slab step to avoid having a large, exposed parkade wall. The courtyard tiers down with some ramping at the end, and where the private unit patios extend out, we've added stairs to address the change in elevation. Essentially, we're fitting a flat building into a sloped site and adapting the design to accommodate that.
- Appreciate that on the south side the courtyard access has some vertical separation from Dowler.
- On the west wing at ground level, there are some larger homes facing Blanshard. Were there any limitations that prevented adding private outdoor spaces along that west elevation?
 - Yes, we wanted to maintain fairness and consistency, so we avoided having a mix of different unit types. The ground-floor units do have patios that are larger than the balconies above, but they weren't maximized to ensure easier maintenance and a balanced look across the building. BC Housing also emphasized keeping things equitable while maximizing the shared green space.
- Regarding the northern interface along the public way that connects to Kings, I wondered if there are any concerns about overshadowing. It looks like the parcel may cast some shade on the private outdoor areas, particularly near the childcare space. That said, I think it's been balanced nicely with the other courtyard areas. The geometry feels dynamic, and the building's massing, along with the subtle setbacks, helps address this well. I also appreciate the cohesive use of a single colour palette and the panel textures. The recessed balconies wrapped in contrasting copper are a great touch, I think they'll look really striking.
- Really appreciate the diversity of the way the materiality has been used, the staggered balconies and some on the East visaed works really well.
- I see that there is no visitor parking in the report, curious about that? Also, no commercial parking for the daycare.

- There are actually three visitor stalls in the underground parkade. Since this is a DDP process, we'll be coordinating with the City regarding the daycare parking requirements. We've made sure that the provided parking aligns with the expected demand.
- I noticed in the rezoning application package that the massing showed the two buildings with a bit of a dip between them, and the common amenity space along the north façade appeared wider and more open, overlooking Evergreen Plaza. I was curious about how that design evolved, specifically, why that space was reduced and how that relates to the units facing that direction.
 - Yes, the goal was really to include as many units as possible, since this building not only replaces the existing homes on this part of the site but also accommodates residents from the next phase of development. We focused on optimizing the number of homes by rationalizing the floor plates—shifting to a more L-shaped layout that connects with the other wings helped increase the housing floor area relative to circulation space, making the building more efficient. While a plaza-level amenity space would have been great, we also wanted to maintain some privacy for residents. There's also the Middle House, a shared community building, which will be located across the plaza in a future phase. Ultimately, we prioritized maximizing the housing capacity.
- Regarding the materiality, I was wondering about the south elevation, it appears less broken up and is quite prominent from the adjacent common area. Has anything been done to address that?
 - On the south façades, they're relatively small, so we didn't feel the need to create a larger design gesture there. That said, I see your point, they do appear a bit more understated compared to some of the other larger façades. Our focus was more on how the building's overall form wraps around and how the courtyard connects along that southern edge.
- For the childcare outdoor space, have you considered adding landscape separation between the main entrance and that exterior area? Also, is there any landscape separation planned between the residential courtyard and the other adjacent spaces? I also noticed a garbage bin located near that entrance.
 - The garbage staging area isn't a permanent location—the City is moving away from having bins brought up from the underground parkade, as that would conflict with the highway access bylaw. Instead, it's a temporary staging area that must remain accessible. For both childcare outdoor spaces, there's actually a vertical separation from the shared areas due to the site's grading. We've designed a landscaped buffer at that grade change, and there will be a detailed fencing element above the wall to maintain a light, visually open feel while clearly defining the spaces.

Panel members discussed:

- No discussion was held

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommends that Delegated Development Permit Application No. 01065 for 2511-2543 Blanshard Street and 2520-2530 Dowler Place be approved as presented.

Moved By: M. Showers

Seconded By: N. Standeven

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B) Development Permit with Variances Application No.00293 for 932 Balmoral Road

Geordie Gordon Senior Planner provided an overview of the application.

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

Four items of interest:

- Provision of outdoor common spaces – courtyards
- Landscape design of central muse
- Feasibility of space for gathering
- Screening material at entrance of the courtyard

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- Regarding the courtyard design, I noticed there's bench seating included, could you speak to the intended use or purpose of those areas?
 - Yes, the seating is intended to encourage social interaction, with benches oriented in both directions to activate the courtyard. The goal is to create a sense of openness and public use without establishing a completely separate zone.
- The muse space, its not intended to be secure?
 - Yes, the central muse and the north muse is a public space to gather
- What is the intention of that space, who is expected to use it?
 - Looking ahead, retaining a major tenant in the United Commons could create an arts and culture hub, with the office located across from the Central Muse. This presence would not only activate the Central Muse but also allow the public to enter and use the space. Residents would be able to pass through an outdoor area connecting the parkade, which includes bicycle parking and commercial tenants, providing multiple levels of access to the space.
- Is there movable seating? Who is managing that? Have you looked into permanent seating?
 - We've included bench seating near the ramp area, but I think this is something we'll need to explore further. There are some wooden benches as well as floating seating elements, which would be managed by the tenant on the southeast commercial side, potentially a coffee shop or café.

- I was hoping the applicant team could specifically speak to the inclusion of live-work units around the central courtyard, as opposed to a purely residential focus, and also address any related considerations.

Priscilla Samuel left the meeting at 1:58pm

- The goal of including a more diverse typology of units is to support different lifestyles and foster a varied community. The live-work units around the exterior of the courtyard add a functional work element that further activates the space. At the North Muse, the townhouse/loft units are more private but still carry an arts/studio vibe. Combined with the 1–3-bedroom apartments in the main block, the design aims to offer a variety of living options. The developer and team have worked to provide something new and flexible, allowing people to live in different ways. In terms of gates and access, we've carefully considered the balance between public and private spaces. The courtyard is the primary area for public engagement, it's designed to be secure, safe, and welcoming. At the North Muse, gates create privacy and a sense of security for the loft units, whereas the central and northern portions of the Muse are more publicly accessible, with overflow lobby space connecting to the street and enhancing the overall urban realm. This approach ensures a thoughtful balance between openness and privacy across the site.
- For the Central Muse and East Addition, if the space is intended for public use but also functions as a loading zone or dock, I'm concerned about how performances would be accommodated. Is there a plan for moving lifts or equipment if events are taking place in the East Addition?
 - Yes, this is something we're trying to balance. From what we understand, the loading area is primarily intended for musical equipment, which involves smaller-scale trucks. While a dedicated loading function didn't feel essential, it did seem to occur frequently. It was actually Joe who suggested the idea of a multifunctional space to make better use of the loading dock. We saw this as an opportunity to encourage gathering and connection with the surrounding cultural events. The industrial and arts functions can coexist dynamically. Since the loading use is expected to be occasional, it creates the opportunity to also use the loading bay as a stage when needed.
- I'm more concerned about the potential impact on the heritage elements. As equipment and performances are moved more frequently, could this activity extend into the original building and potentially affect features like the flooring?

Katie McEvoy left the meeting at 2:07pm

- The local vendor we're working with does not plan to store equipment on site, so the loading bay will primarily serve short-term, on-site loading rather than long-term storage. There are also plans to upgrade the elevators within the church to provide easier access for moving equipment, instruments, and performance materials.
- The flying beam, the plinth that's been described can you elaborate on its materiality at L2 and L1?

- In general, this element is part of the cast-in-place concrete assembly at the Level 2 slab, which extends outward to form this area. The walls are also cast-in-place concrete, essentially creating a concrete “tub.” This allows us to integrate built-in planter conditions, so the planters can be cast directly into the concrete. Unlike projects like Robson Square, which use “flying” planters, this approach keeps the materiality consistent with exposed concrete. It’s a great way to enhance the landscape theme, focused on rewilding and maximizing greenery in a challenging urban environment. The irrigated planters will accommodate plants that cascade over the sides, which I think will be very visually appealing.
- Regarding the courtyard space, the staff report noted a concern about the removable tables, specifically, whether they might be taken away and how the commercial spaces would use that area.
 - The removable tables and chairs are primarily shown for scale and will be arranged more appropriately based on the commercial tenants, considering proportion and use. They’re mainly for visual reference. Additionally, there’s a small, shaded garden near the parkade entrance, providing a quiet retreat away from the more public pathways.
- Regarding the performance loading space, I’m curious about how you envision its use, how will the audience or participants interact with it? Will they be standing around, or is there another plan? It seems a bit tight; has there been any consideration to expand it?
 - The space is approximately 6 meters wide from the base of the steps, similar to the width of a fire lane, not accounting for the overhanging balconies. It’s intended to feel intimate and accommodate partially covered seating. For the panel, we could provide a visual demonstration of this, similar to a design we’ve implemented in Ontario, to illustrate the concept at the next stage. We’re envisioning the area for street-style performances, giving the public a small “muse boost” and highlighting activity in the revitalized United Commons heritage building. The intent is casual, with the potential to create engagement. We could also explore subtle design elements, like changing the paving at the entry to the live-work area, to indicate a semi-private threshold without gates or fencing. Additionally, the color scheme in the design rationale package reinforces this connection, using the same yellow from the public space to tie elements together.
- I’m curious about the visual connection through the mesh, depending on its density, and with the southern exposure receiving a lot of light, could this affect visibility? Also, what was the reason for choosing mesh as the material?
 - Overall, it’s about balancing security and transparency while keeping the entry feeling friendly, whimsical, and singular. The idea was to use a ready-made material like mesh, which could be powder-coated or given some depth to make it feel lighter and sunnier. It also serves a functional role for the fire department connection, so it reads as an entry rather than just a gate. The project has a subtle industrial edge, and this approach helps complement that while remaining sensitive to the stained glass. Granville Island is a good example of this balance.

- I had to look closely for the meander, and I felt it wasn't clearly expressed in the architecture. It seemed like the meander stopped at the building rather than continuing beyond the landscape. Regarding the rooftop garden, while urban agriculture was mentioned, I didn't really see it, perhaps it will be incorporated in future iterations. I was also hoping to see more emphasis on the social aspects of the garden, as indicated for the rooftop.
 - This is a fairly light-touch design that will continue to evolve, so it will be included in some form and remains an ongoing conversation with our client. We've received varying levels of interest and feedback. Additionally, we like the idea of integrating edible plants, such as chestnut trees, into the project. Thank you for the comment, it will be given careful consideration.
- The live work people may be collaborating over this which we love to see.

Panel members discussed:

- I think this is a strong proposal overall. I have a specific motion in mind, but before that, I'd like to note a few points. Staff had questions regarding the main courtyard spaces, and through our discussions, it's clear that the loading dock has multiple uses, similar to Granville Island, and also serves as a main entrance. I understand the need for secure lines, so I don't question that, but I do think the resolution could benefit from another look. In Victoria, those small lanes with commercial uses spilling into them are really engaging, and it's challenging to replicate that in contemporary construction. The live-work units facing the courtyard have sacrificed their patios for this experiment in public space. Without the patios, the units feel almost confrontationally exposed to the public realm, even though it is privately owned. I agree with the applicant team that this is a worthwhile experiment, and the effect is balanced by other generous amenity spaces throughout the building. I also appreciate the bold, heroic nature of the flying beam of the plinth. My concern is its current resolution with the gate, the gate has its own flying beam that reads as a different language, with a distinct scale and profile. There may be an opportunity to either unify the language or clearly differentiate them. I think the design team has the talent to address this successfully. Overall, it's a great project, and I would lean toward Option 1.
- I would also support Option 1. Regarding the roof deck, it looks great and is sizable, but I noticed a note that the extent and liability haven't been confirmed. I'd like to see it retained at the largest possible size and consider adding shading to provide more options. For the other common spaces, it's clear the design is still evolving and that seating will be provided. I would encourage including a mix of fixed and movable seating. Lastly, for the mesh screening material, I think it provides a good balance; however, the main entry door currently blends in, which could be challenging for wayfinding. I'd suggest revisiting that to improve visibility.
- Given the number of internal comments we have, I would lean away from Option 1. With so many points we're asking the team to address, I would support either Option 2 or 3.
- It feels like there's a long list of details, from the plinth to the fencing to the landscaping, where the design rationale may not be fully consistent. I think this is a

very exciting project, but Option 1 seems to miss a lot of the feedback from today's ADP discussion. The landscaping provides sufficient space for programming, but I almost see the landscape and architecture clashing. It might be worth considering a slightly more industrial approach in areas like the Muse, where the loading zone is, with less landscaping.

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 000293 for 930-934 Balmoral Road and 1701 Quadra Street be approved as presented.

Moved By: N. Standeven

Seconded By: M. Showers

One opposed (Kristina Zatlie)

4. Adjournment

The October 8, 2025, Advisory Design Panel meeting was adjourned at 2:38p.m.