



**Town of Aurora
Council Report**

No. PBS17-095

Subject: Restoration of the Aurora Armoury - 89 Mosley Street

Prepared by: Anthony Ierullo, Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning

Department: Planning and Building Services

Date: November 28, 2017

Recommendation

- 1. That Report No. PBS17-095 be received; and**
- 2. That the total approved budget for capital project #12041 “89 Mosley Renewal” be increased to \$200,000, representing an increase of \$100,000, to be funded from the unallocated interest component of the Aurora Hydro Sale Investment reserve fund, to allow GOW Hastings Architects to proceed with detailed design for the renewal of 89 Mosley Street.**

Executive Summary

- The Aurora Armoury was acquired by the Town in 2014 with the intent to restore the property and secure an appropriate use that supports the Town’s Strategic Plan.
- Council has already approved funding to complete the removal of hazardous materials and enhance the mechanical systems in conjunction with an approved provincial grant.
- The Town’s Architects have completed a conceptual design that effectively maximizes the short and long term utility of the building, while restoring the heritage elements of the building and strengthening the link between the Armoury and Town Park.
- The Town has also been working with a post-secondary partner on a potential business incubator and post-secondary facility in the renovated Aurora Armoury.
- Staff will be progressing with the design and renovation of the site with the intent that the facility will be ready by late 2018.

Background

The Aurora Armoury (89 Mosley St) is unique in that it is located adjacent to a public park and was designed and operated as an Armoury under the Department of National Defense. The Armoury itself is a heritage structure that represents a significant piece of Canadian and Auroran heritage. The property was acquired by the Town of Aurora in September 2014 with the intent to restore the property and secure an appropriate use that supports the Town's Strategic Plan priorities. Council has approved funding to complete the removal of hazardous materials and enhance the mechanical systems in conjunction with an approved provincial grant. Moreover, staff have been working to advance three distinct, but related, activities in relation to the 89 Mosley Street property. These activities include:

1. The restoration of the Aurora Armoury;
2. Re-establishing the connection between the Armoury and Town Park; and,
3. Identifying a strategic use for the property.

These activities have actively progressed over the past several months. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on these activities for Council and the public.

Analysis

As previously mentioned, the Aurora Armoury project has been organized into three distinct, but related, activities. These activities are further described below:

The Restoration of the Aurora Armoury

Staff have been working with GOW Hastings Architects to complete the design for the restoration of the property. The intent of the design was to produce a multi-purpose facility that could be repurposed quickly and efficiently as a municipal facility. The Town's Architects have completed the conceptual design and related cost estimate that effectively maximizes the short and long term utility of the building, while restoring the heritage elements and strengthening the link between the Armoury and Town Park. In the proposed design, the architects are proposing the building be designed to accommodate three distinct uses concurrently. These uses include:

- classroom/meeting space with limited office/administration (northern side of the building);

- event/reception/multi-purpose space with a small demonstration area (central area in the building); and,
- a small teaching kitchen/demonstration area (southern side of the building).

These uses are supported by restroom facilities that are accessible both from within the building and by an exterior entrance into Town Park, basic kitchen facilities and limited storage.

The proposed renovation envisions the restoration of the exterior elements of the building. The architect has reviewed the available historic documentation related to 89 Mosley St to identify the key historic design elements of the building. Based on this information, the restoration includes maintaining the original building and roof configuration, maintaining or restoring original openings (where possible) and removing and replacing the existing aluminum and vinyl siding with vertical siding that better replicates the original materials and design. The result will be a building that better reflects the original design and function of the property.

Re-establishing the link between the Aurora Armoury and Town Park

The Town's Repurposing Study first identified an opportunity to establish a physical and operational connection between the Aurora Armoury and Town Park. The architects also found historic evidence of a connection between the Armoury and Town Park. This connection is reintroduced with the removal of exterior barriers/fencing and the introduction of glass elements within the central areas and proposed extension. As such, a significant goal of the proposed renovation is to reintroduce a connection between Town Park and the Aurora Armoury. The current situation reflects efforts to minimize potential land use conflicts with the use of fencing and signage as well as the historic removal of windows along the western edge of the building. The goal of the design is to remove these barriers and introduce new elements that allow the two properties to better complement each other from both a design and use perspective. This is achieved through the removal of existing fencing and signage as well as the introduction of design elements that improve the interface between the park and the building (i.e. improved access and visibility). Re-establishing the connection between the Armoury and Town Park will create significant opportunities to enhance programming both at the Armoury and Town Park.

Identifying a Strategic Use for the Property – Post Secondary Facility

The Town has been working with a post-secondary partner on a potential business incubator and post-secondary facility since the spring of 2016 and the Aurora Armoury was recently identified as the ideal location for the proposed facility. The Armoury site and location aligns well with the partner's vision for the facility and potential plans for Library Square. The proposed facility will provide professional training opportunities for businesses and residents. This type of training offers significant opportunities for business and community development and aligns well with the Town's revitalization activities in the Aurora Promenade as well as the feedback received to date through the Cultural Precinct Plan consultation. This is a strategic priority for the Town as outlined in the Strategic Plan and Economic Development Action Plan. Staff also believe that the establishment of the proposed training facility is a necessary first step towards the potential creation of a future larger scale training facility in Aurora. Council has authorized a Lease Agreement with the proposed partner for the use of the Armoury that is in the process of being finalized. Staff will provide additional information on the post-secondary partnership and related lease agreement once it has been finalized.

Advisory Committee Review

Staff intend to present the conceptual design for the Armoury to the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee.

Financial Implications

The Armoury Building at 89 Mosely was purchased by the Town in 2014 for a net purchase transaction cost of \$524,000.

A current project in the amount of \$100,000 was approved for the preliminary interior conceptual design of a community use space. Concurrently, a capital project in the amount of \$275,000 was approved to begin the process of interior abatement of hazardous materials, and upgrading of mechanical systems, funded in part by Canada 150 grants.

This report seeks to increase the design project budget by \$100,000 to a total of \$200,000 to be funded from the unspent interest component of the Aurora Hydro Sale Investment reserve fund. This fund has balances available as follows:

Unspent interest component as at December 31, 2016	\$ 4,715,106
Unspent principal component as at November 23, 2017	<u>\$31,521,221</u>
Total funding available for allocation by Council subject to Bylaw 5439-12	\$36,236,627

When using the unspent interest components of this reserve fund towards Strategic Plan priorities, no special notice or voting requirements of the reserve fund bylaw apply.

The proposed total renovation project is currently estimated to cost approximately \$4,000,000 including contingency, landscaping and other potential costs related to the integration of the site into Town Park. These costs are within the range that was previously anticipated for the project. Options for funding sources include use of one or a combination of the following options:

- internal financing
- external financing
- Cash in Lieu of Parkland reserve fund
- Community Benefit reserve fund
- Council Contingency reserve fund
- Aurora Hydro Sale Investment reserve fund.

A separate report will be forthcoming outlining options and recommendations for funding sources for the construction phase of the project.

Communications Considerations

The Town recognizes that the Armoury holds cultural significance for residents and is committed to developing a comprehensive communications and branding strategy that will keep the community up-to-date on the restoration efforts and, ultimately, serve to promote the Armoury as an important community hub. The Town will utilize all available communication channels to share information and promote enhancements to the Armoury and Town Park.

Link to Strategic Plan

This report was prepared in support of the Strategic Plan and directly relates to various key action items.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

Council may choose to not authorize funding to complete the design and restoration of 89 Mosley Street.

Conclusions

The Aurora Armoury was acquired by the Town in 2014 with the intent to restore the property and secure an appropriate use that supports the Town's Strategic Plan. The Town's Architects have completed a conceptual design that effectively maximizes the short and long term utility of the building, while restoring the heritage elements of the building and strengthening the link between the Armoury and Town Park. The Town has been working with a post-secondary partner on a potential business incubator and post-secondary facility and recently approved a Lease Agreement to locate the use in the renovated Aurora Armoury. Staff will be progressing with the design and renovation of the site with the intent that facility can begin operating in late 2018.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Renderings for 89 Mosley Street

Previous Reports

None.

Pre-submission Review

CAO, Director of Planning and Building Services, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services and Director of Financial Services

November 28, 2017

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Departmental Approval

Approved for Agenda



**Marco Ramunno
Director
Planning and Building Services**



**Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer**



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