

August 16, 2019



City of Nanaimo
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Attention: Lainya Rowett
Manager, Current Planning
Community Development
City of Nanaimo

Re: Nanaimo Fire Station No. 1 Replacement – S2 Project #218166
Development Permit – Design Rationale

Dear Lainya:

The Nanaimo Fire Station #1 Replacement building is located at 666 & 618 Fitzwilliam Street. This new proposed development, owned by the city of Nanaimo, is designed to be sensitive to the Official Community Plan, the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines and the Nanaimo Downtown Plan. The design responds to the aforementioned guidelines through its expression of form and character, the site design's compatibility with its surrounding context.

The site information is as follows:

Zoning:	DT2
OCP Designation:	Neighbourhood
Neighbourhood Plan:	Downtown Plan
Neighbourhood Plan Designation:	Fitzwilliam – Old town variety
Development Permit Area:	Area 9 – Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multifamily and Mixed use
Guidelines:	Official Community Plan
	Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines
	Downtown Plan

Neighbourhood Context:

The project site is located in downtown Nanaimo along Fitzwilliam Street and Milton Street. The surrounding area is composed of single family residential, three-storey and six-storey multi-family buildings, and low rise mixed use and public buildings including RCMP, Community Services Building, and the Nanaimo Fire Department Command and Business Centre. Fitzwilliam Street, which the project entrance faces, is a major roadway that leads to and from downtown Nanaimo. Milton Street is a minor road, on to which the fire apparatus respond.

Building Design Concept:

The proposed Fire Station #1 is designed to be a site and building that works to improve the character of the area by introducing a high level of contemporary design that speaks to the heritage and history of Nanaimo. The design also considers and promotes street level engagement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users by being a strong symbol for the community as well as a gathering node.

The design team worked with the client, the City of Nanaimo, to design a contemporary civic building – a flagship fire station for the City of Nanaimo. There was no desire to replicate the form of historic buildings, so Nanaimo's history

PRINCIPALS

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ASSOCIATE PRINCIPALS

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was used as the inspiration to apply contemporary architectural strategies to this building. Inspirations for the building form and character include the following aspects of the City to Nanaimo's history and environment:

- Harbour city
- Coal mining history
- Radial downtown plan
- Water/nautical

The above aspects were used as guiding principles to create the architectural form of the building. The form uses contemporary architectural strategies including:

- Push/pull
- Void/solid
- Cantilevering/floating forms
- Wave patterning

The building creates the vision of a white form that appears to be floating over a dark base. The white form references floating water houses and boats on the city harbour. The building base is an abstracted representation of the coal mines that is a deep part of the city's history and one of its founding industries. Placement of the windows and the reveal lines of the fibre cement building cladding mimic the rhythmic pattern of waves in the harbour as they advance toward the shore.

The building form and character make strong references to the history of Nanaimo and the neighbourhood, and creates a strong symbol for the community.

Site Design Concept:

The site engages the public at street level and creates areas of gathering and interaction. The sidewalk along Fitzwilliam Street extends the length of the site from the corner of Lubbock Square to Milton Street concluding at a future art location. It has been discussed that this future art may be a welcome pole created by the Snuneymuxw local First Nations community. The sidewalk along Fitzwilliam Street becomes increasingly more generous as pedestrians travel west. The sidewalk culminates in a public plaza that is the stage for the art. The art area and sidewalk are buffered at their north edge by a wide berth of landscaping as an additional point of interest. Art and culture in downtown Nanaimo is emphasized by the art area that is central to the public gathering space on site.

The building angles away from the street, with its closest edge at the corner of Fitzwilliam Street and Lubbock Square. The angle of the building from the street speaks to the historic radial plan of downtown Nanaimo, and to the historic buildings along Fitzwilliam Street that share the same orientation. The sidewalk also widens as an extension of the south building canopy which projects further from the building towards the main entrance. This covered area under the canopy helps to create the sense of a strong urban streetscape edge.

The building main entrance faces Fitzwilliam Street. The entrance is recognized by a projection of the building towards Fitzwilliam Street and by the tall architectural feature at the south-west corner of the building. This feature serves as a strong symbol and identifier of this building as a fire station to the public. The red colour of this feature has strong historic and contemporary references to fire stations and fire trucks; and the extended height of this corner mimics a fire station hose tower and other culturally significant architectural monuments. This entrance and architectural feature also serve to highlight the building's importance within the community.

Nanaimo Fire Station #1 Replacement building and site are designed to be sensitive to the required guidelines by creating a strong contemporary symbol for the community of downtown Nanaimo and encouraging public engagement through arts and culture. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me directly at 780-229-2440 ext.2023.

Yours truly,



Grace O'Brien
Architect, AAA.
S2 Architecture