

August 16, 2019



**City of Nanaimo**  
Service and Resource Centre  
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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 – Building Height Variance Rationale**

Dear Lainya:

The subject project is requesting a variance for increased building height. The maximum allowed building height for this site is 12m per DT2 zoning regulations. This project proposes a building height of approximately 15m (based on average grade and drawings at development permit level of detail). This project was not designed to be a three storey building at its origin; however, the area required by the functional programme in conjunction with the site constraints demanded a third floor, which brought the building up past the maximum permitted building height for the zone. Please see the variance rationale provided below for further details.

### Building Height Variance Rationale

#### Site Design

The site of the Nanaimo Fire Station #1 is the same as the existing Station #1 – 666 Fitzwilliam Street. The overall strategy for this project requires the existing Fire Station #1 to remain fully operational during the construction of the new building on the same site. This requires the new replacement building to be built to the east of the existing fire station (with a separation of approximately 3m to allow for constructability of the new building and demolition of the existing building) so that responding apparatus may continue to respond west on to Milton Street during and after construction. The portion of the available site east of the existing building limits the amount of site coverage/building footprint that can be utilized to fulfill the project's functional programme requirements; therefore this necessitates the design to propose a three storey building that exceeds the maximum permitted building height.

#### Building Design

The functional capability of this building is paramount as it houses several critical services for the city of Nanaimo: the Emergency Coordination Centre, the Dispatch Centre and Fire Station #1 including Fire Department offices. The main floor includes a double height apparatus bay for the fire vehicles. This space is double height so there is safe head clearance for a fire fighter to perform minor maintenance while standing on top of an apparatus. This minimum height dictates the height of the main and second floors of the building. The third floor proposes to have typical ceiling heights, with additional space in the ceiling plenum to accommodate the building services required to serve the high electrical and mechanical demands of the uses of the building, including the power and data requirements of the Emergency Coordination Centre and the Dispatch Centre. This design of spaces and floor-to-floor heights results in a typical building height (top of typical parapet) of approximately 14.3m.

#### **PRINCIPALS**

Robert Spaetgens *Architect, AAA, AIBC, SAA, MRAIC*  
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#### **ASSOCIATE PRINCIPALS**

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#### **ASSOCIATES**

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The highest point of the building is the red parapet on the south west corner that extends from grade to the highest point of the building. This feature extends approximately 720mm higher than the typical/adjacent parapet height. This corner feature is an important and strong symbolic identifier for this building to the public. The red colour is synonymous with fire trucks and fire stations, and the added height on this corner feature mimics that of the hose tower that is tucked away at the north-west corner of the building.

#### Impact on Surrounding Property Owners

The building's location at the east portion of the site means there is minimal impact on neighbouring property owners with the increased height. The small house/commercial use immediately to the north is provided with more clear sightlines as the existing building which was directly south of this building will be demolished. The multi-family development to the north will be located immediately adjacent to the new Fire Station, but is still not expected to be impacted significantly as this development has limited habitable windows that face the new Fire Station, which are already provided with a landscape screen of some tall trees. Although the residential properties to the west across Milton Street view a taller building, they are still provided with increased visual comfort as the proposed Fire Station is set back further east, minimizing the impact of a taller building on this site. The Community Services Building which is located east of this site is minimally impacted by the additional height on this project as its primary view towards Fitzwilliam Street and towards Downtown and the harbour are unaffected by the height of this project.

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Thank you for considering the above variance request. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me directly at 1-780-229-2440 ext.2023.

Yours truly,



Grace O'Brien  
Architect, AAA.  
S2 Architecture