

DATE OF MEETING [February 3, 2020]

AUTHORED BY [CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING]

SUBJECT [DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1156 –
666 FITZWILLIAM STREET]

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council’s consideration, a development permit application for a new fire station.

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1156 at 666 Fitzwilliam Street with the following variances to:

- increase the building height from 12m to 15m; and
- reduce the front yard setback from 2.5m to 0m.

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1156, was received from S2 Architecture on behalf of the City of Nanaimo in order to permit a new fire hall at 666 Fitzwilliam Street.

A public road right-of-way (Lubbock Square) between the subject property and the Community Services Building at 285 Prideaux Street was closed by Council on 2019-NOV-18 and a portion is currently being consolidated with the site.

Subject Property and Site Context

<i>Zoning</i>	DT2 - Fitzwilliam
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located at the northeast corner of the Fitzwilliam / Milton Street intersection.
<i>Total Lot Area</i>	3,160 ²
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Neighbourhood Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family, and Mixed Commercial / Residential development

The subject property is located in the Old City Neighbourhood and currently contains the City of Nanaimo’s Fire Station No.1. The existing fire station was built in 1966 and is nearing the end of its operable lifespan. The site slopes slightly downhill from west to east and is situated at a key entrance gateway to Downtown Nanaimo via Fitzwilliam Street.

The surrounding neighbourhood is a transitional area between more intensive commercial uses to the east and residential uses to the west. Nearby properties include single residential

dwellings, low-density commercial uses, multi-family residential buildings, and commercial services. The Nanaimo Detachment of the RCMP is located across Fitzwilliam Street to the south.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing to develop a new three-storey 2,109.2m² fire station to replace the existing station. The proposed station will be located behind the existing station so that operations can continue in the existing building during the new station's construction. The existing building will be subsequently demolished. The new fire station will consolidate the operations of the existing fire station and the Command & Business Centre, currently located at 580 Fitzwilliam Street. A portion of the closed Lubbock Square road right-of-way is being consolidated with the subject property to facilitate this development.

The proposed building will have a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.67, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 2.3.

Site Design

The proposed building is located on the eastern portion of the site and close to Fitzwilliam Street to maximize space for emergency vehicles exiting onto Milton Street and maximize street presence along Fitzwilliam Street. The primary pedestrian entrance will be from the sidewalk on Fitzwilliam Street, while the primary vehicle entrances will access from Milton Street.

The City of Nanaimo "Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266" does not specify a minimum parking rate for the proposed use. A total of 18 parking spaces will be provided on site, with 15 spaces accessed from Milton Street and 3 spaces to the northeast of the building.

Garbage and recycling facilities are provided to the rear of the new station, within the parking area.

Building Design

The building is contemporary in design and expresses the intended fire hall use. Fibre cement panel cladding will cover most of the building, and coloured panel cladding will be used on the prominent projecting features and window frames.

The building's massing relates strongly to Fitzwilliam Street and provides significant street presence. The building will frame the entrance to Downtown Nanaimo when arriving via Fitzwilliam Street. A projecting entryway will draw attention to the front entrance and provide a strong horizontal break in the upper and lower building masses. The southeast corner of the building will feature generous glazing on the 2nd and 3rd floors to provide transparency to the building.

The ground floor of the building will be programmed primarily for emergency response and will contain the apparatus bay. The upper floors will contain offices and a dispatch centre.

Landscape Design

A large portion of the site will be required for the fire truck drive aisle. Landscaping will be concentrated along Fitzwilliam Street, between the parking area and the drive aisle, and to the north of the drive aisle. Two raingardens are proposed within the landscape buffers along the drive aisle and northern parking area. Patterned pavers and bollard lighting in the parking areas will add visual interest to the site. A stone installation and bench seating is proposed outside of the front entrance on Fitzwilliam Street.

A public outdoor gathering area is envisioned for the corner of Milton and Fitzwilliam Streets. A future public art display will be featured here.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2019-OCT-10, accepted DP001156 as presented with support for the building height variance and provided the following recommendations:

- Look at using exterior materials from the building to screen rooftop equipment and any Genset equipment on the ground;
- Explore the plantings along the south edge of the building and consider including indigenous species within the plaza area; and
- Consider ways to increase parking for the facility.

A written response to the DAP's recommendations was received from the applicant on 2019-OCT-30 and the following revisions were highlighted:

- Screening included for the rooftop equipment, Genset equipment, and fuel tank;
- The landscape plan adjusted to provide a robust screening hedge that will reach the height of the window sills; and
- A review of the anticipated demand and supply of parking for the fire station. Three additional parking spaces were incorporated in the northeast portion of the site.

Proposed Variances

Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the DT2 zone is 12m. The proposed building height is 15m; a proposed variance of 3m.

The requested height variance is required to accommodate the consolidated functions of the fire station within a three-storey structure. The ground floor includes an over-height apparatus bay that is necessary to account for fire truck dimensions. Only portions of the proposed building require a height variance (as shown on Attachment D), providing visual interest and articulation in building design. No negative impacts are anticipated and the proposed building height will help frame the view corridor along Fitzwilliam Street.

Staff support the proposed building height variance.

Front Yard Setback

The minimum front yard setback, where a property abuts a major road and road dedication has not yet occurred, is 2.5m. The proposed front yard setback is 0m; a proposed variance of 2.5m.

The DT2 typically allows for a front yard setback of 0m, except along major roads. Fitzwilliam Street is designated a major road; however, no road widening is anticipated to occur along Fitzwilliam Street under the existing street configuration. Staff in the Engineering Department have reviewed the requested front yard setback variance and have determined that the highest priority street amenities can be incorporated into the road right-of-way, and therefore do not have any concerns or need to protect for additional right-of-way. No negative impacts are anticipated.

Staff support the proposed front yard setback variance.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit Application No. DP1156 is for a new three-storey 2,109.2m² fire station to replace the existing fire station.
- Variances are requested to increase the building height and reduce the front yard setback. Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Location Plan
ATTACHMENT C: Site Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Building Elevations
ATTACHMENT E: Building Renderings
ATTACHMENT F: Landscape Plans
ATTACHMENT G: Aerial Photo

Submitted by:

Lainya Rowett
Manager, Current Planning

Concurrence by:

Jeremy Holm
Director, Development Approvals

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services