



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To General Purposes - June 2, 2008

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

Date: May 26, 2008
File: 06-2025-20-003/Vol 01

Re: Britannia Historic Zone - Caretaker Suite & Washrooms

Staff Recommendation

That the original scope of work as outlined in Option A of the "Britannia Historic Zone - Caretaker Suite & Washrooms" report be endorsed.

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FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGERS		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the City Council meeting of May 12, 2008 Council made the following referral:

That staff give further consideration to the uses for Murchison House 1 and 2, and the Stilt House 1 and 2, and return the analysis to the appropriate committee.

Issues raised by Council focused on the location of the public washrooms and the caretaker suite in the proposed plan.

This report responds to the referral.

Background

In October 2004 Council adopted the Britannia Historic Zone Development Plan. The Development Plan included:

- a detailed plan of the historic zone;
- the placement of buildings, use of and interpretation of the buildings;
- a circulation plan through the historic zone and connection to the rest of the site;
- a landscaping plan;
- an interpretation plan;
- a capital funding plan; and,
- a phasing plan.

Facilities for a site caretaker and a visitors/interpretation centre including public washrooms were envisioned to take place in the existing buildings.

The Development Plan Steering Committee recommended:

- that the Historic Zone be considered as an entity and not as a collection of parts or buildings; and,
- that the development phasing plan be used as the logical sequence to complete the area.

An interpretive plan for the Historic Zone was prepared in 2006. The interpretive theme for the Historic Zone is the residential-cultural aspect of those who lived and worked on the river. This captures the social values and stories of the site, as well as the physical nature of the buildings and their interiors, and the spaces in between. Since all of the buildings in the Historic Zone are not originally from the Britannia site, the theme is made richer by the layers of occupation and subsequently the capacity for storytelling that each of the buildings holds. The specific themes to be interpreted in the Zone are:

- ethnicity and cultural diversity;
- society and community;
- a typology of housing;

- the cannery experience: interconnectedness within the industry;
- cultural expression of the maritime experience.

Analysis

The development of the Historic Zone was started in 2006 and phased over the following 3 years. Capital funding has been allocated and the current phase includes:

- completion of pedestrian paths within the Zone;
- construction of north boardwalk and extension of south boardwalk;
- construction of gravel access lane from Westwater Drive to the Bunkhouse boardwalk;
- restoration of the exterior of all 5 buildings (Murchison Houses 1 & 2; Stilt Pile Houses 1 & 2; Chinese Bunkhouse);
- restoration of the interior of all 5 buildings including a caretaker suite (Stilt Pile House 2), visitors/interpretation centre (Murchison House 1) and public washrooms (Murchison House 2);
- landscaping to the north of the buildings.

Completion of this phase will allow the area to be open to the public in November of this year.

The contract for this phase has been awarded and the start up meeting has been held. The contractor is mobilizing on the site with the proviso of holding work for a month on the interior of the Stilt Pile House 2 and Murchison House 2 pending this review. Any delay in the current contract beyond this timeframe will result in increased costs.

Current Plan – buildings from west to east (see Attachment 1 for zone map)

Murchison House 1

This building is intended to house the visitor/interpretation centre – an entry, information and reception area and a gift shop. The house also has a covered porch where brochures and maps can be available even when the building is closed. The interpretation of the building focus is on the Customs and Police office functions performed by John Murchison

Murchison House 2

The bottom floor of this house is designed as public washrooms. The upstairs floor is not publicly accessible and has a meeting room and volunteer lounge. This location on the site was chosen for the washrooms as it is an acceptable distance both from the shipyard dock and the bunkhouse, both buildings designed to accommodate larger numbers of people for events and rentals as well as serve visitors to the Historic Zone. A wide corridor along the western side of the building has been designed so as to provide wall space for interpretive panels. The interpretation focus is the Murchison family with a side bar for the Sisters of the Atonement.

Stilt Pile House 1

This building is designed as an exhibition viewing space to interpret the bunkhouse life of single men that worked in the canneries and shipyard.

Stilt Pile House 2

This building is designed to house a site caretaker in the northern two thirds with exhibit/interpretation of fishermen's family space in the southern third. The exhibit space is adjacent to the boardwalk so provides a buffer space between the caretaker's living space and the high traffic public area.

Chinese Bunkhouse

This building is exhibit space interpreting the living and working experiences of Chinese workers in the canneries. In addition it will function as a public and rental space for gatherings and events.

Options

A. As currently designed. No change in construction contract. The current contract value is \$848,727.00

B. Move caretaker suite from a portion of Stilt Pile House 2 to all of Stilt Pile House 1.

This will result in changes to the current contract and impact costs as outlined below.

CHANGE	PROPOSED NEW USE	IMPACT on COSTS to CONTRACT
Redesign of Stilt Pile 2 (844 sq.ft)	exhibit purposes	\$ (6,000.00)
Redesign of Stilt Pile 1 (377 sq.ft.) including site services (Servicing for the caretaker's suite in the SP2 building was brought to the building in a previous phase.)	caretaker suite	\$ 45,000.00
TOTAL NET CHANGE		\$ 39,000.00

The Stilt Pile 1 House is small (377 sq ft). The boardwalk leads the public to the front door as the intent was for visitors to view the interiors as well as directly to the back door via the north walkway. As a result and given the size of the house, the resident caretaker's private living quarters would lack privacy and would most likely result in blinds always being closed creating an unwelcoming public façade and the caretaker living in a "fish bowl". Therefore, this option, while feasible, is not recommended.

C. Build a new building to house the washrooms.

A washroom facility could be built somewhere in the Historic Zone. The location should take into consideration proximity to the other facilities particularly those to be used for large gatherings – the shipyard building and dock and the Chinese bunkhouse as well as the landscaped area to the north. The building would need to be designed so as to fit with the character of the site.

This will result in changes to the current contract and impact costs as outlined below.

CHANGE	PROPOSED NEW USE	IMPACT on COSTS to CONTRACT
Redesign of Murchison 2 (441sq.ft)	exhibit purposes	\$ (15,000.00)
Design of new washroom building	design public washrooms servicing visitors to the Historic Zone, Shipyard Building and dock, and site redesign to suit	\$ 30,000.00
Construction of new public washrooms	Site servicing and construction of new building	\$ 195,000.00
TOTAL NET CHANGE		\$ 210,000.00

The addition of the new washroom would not impact the current contract and would be constructed after the renovation work as a separate project.

D. Build a new building to house both public washrooms and caretaker suite.

A new building could be constructed somewhere in the Historic Zone to house the public washrooms and the caretaker suite. The location should take into consideration proximity to the other facilities particularly those to be used for large gatherings – the shipyard building and dock and the Chinese bunkhouse as well as the landscaped area to the north. The building would need to be designed so as to fit with the character of the site.

Redesign of Murchison 2	exhibit purposes	\$ (15,000.00)
Redesign Stilt Pile 2	exhibit purposes	\$ (6,000.00)
Design and construction of new building	Public washrooms and Caretaker's suite	\$ 331,500.00
TOTAL NET CHANGE		\$ 310,500.00

The addition of the new washroom/caretaker suite would not impact the current contract and would be constructed after the renovation work as a separate project.

Financial Impact

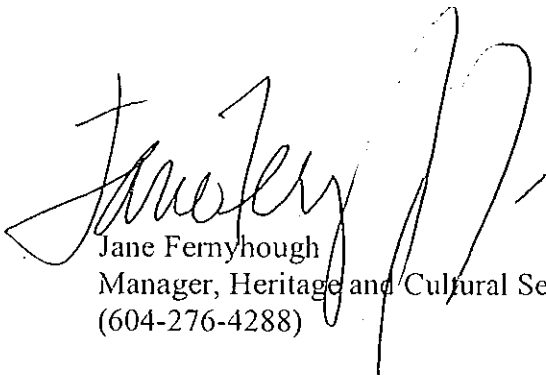
None

Conclusion

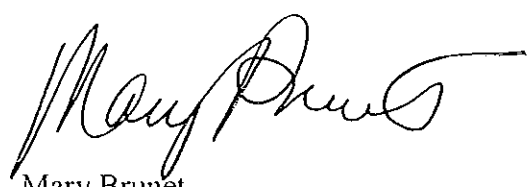
It is possible to relocate the Caretaker's suite from Stilt Pile House 2 to Stilt Pile House 1 at an additional estimated cost of \$39,000.00 without a significant delay impact to the current contract which has been awarded to complete the five buildings in the Historic Zone. However, given the siting of the Stilt Pile House 1, there would be very little if any privacy for the Caretaker in his private home. This would result in a negative social impact.

To relocate the required public washrooms for the proposed uses on the site to a new washroom facility would increase costs as outlined in the report.

It is recommended to proceed with the current design and contract unchanged for the Britannia Heritage Shipyards Historic Zone.



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