



KEVIN WOODLEY PHOTO

If plans are approved, the post office building will retain its vintage facade, but with some additions.

Some public space retained in plans

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Some expansion along with some community use in part of the building are among the components included in the Sidney Post Office plans.

Those plans went to Sidney town council on Monday, Feb. 1, and now go on to the Environmental Heritage Committee and Advisory Planning Commission for consideration.

Owner Bruce McLay and architect Norm Friesen gave a full presentation during an incamera council meeting before the Feb. 1 committee of the whole meeting.

The applications for amendments to zoning and the official community plan and for a development permit were considered during the public portion of the meeting, when council recommended the plans be submitted to the EHC and APC, along with design plans for the building.

The concept drawings show the addition of a second and third floor, plus some expansion to the building. The 5,600-square-foot main floor is to be com-

mercial use, as will the 6,550-square-foot second floor. The five residential units will be on the 5,459-square-foot third floor.

Roof lines for the top two floors are stepped back about six feet per floor.

There is also a lower floor that will have about 4,900 square feet in commercial space.

The proposed development is not in compliance for maximum building heights under current zoning policies. The allowable height is 12.5 metres; the plans call for 14 metres.

It is also above the allowable densities of 50 units per hectare; this is 56.1 uph.

Friesen told council the expansion will take over

most of the available footprint of the lot, leaving no room for parking. He said he will work with staff and council to find on-street parking or to build a parking garage.

"We need to solve that without turning Beacon Avenue into a parking area, as was addressed in the Vision 2000 process. But it still has to be resolved," Friesen said.

Use for the proposed community spaces (two rooms at the back of the building on the basement level, plus another on the main floor) have yet to be determined. Friesen suggested use by arts groups, seniors or the museum.

Signage, lighting and ac-

cessibility were issues for council members.

Friesen said signage would be placed flat against the building, in keeping with its vintage facade, and that he would work with town staff to enhance the lighting around the building.

For access, he said ramps were part of the entry way plans, and there would be an elevator located in the central lobby inside.

McLay said he would like to begin renovations soon.

He told council he has done similar renovations before (such as Eaton's centre in downtown Victoria), and will be making plans that comply with heritage building regulations.

NORTH SAANICH COUNCIL BRIEFS

A letter from Minister of Municipal Affairs Jenny Kwan to the municipality of North Saanich opened a door to a request on taxation.

the letter was written to inform council that the issue of property tax exemption for public libraries will be considered during the 2000 legislative review

process.

Council decided to take advantage of the information, and are responding to the letter with a request that, in light of that initiative, the government also consider providing taxing powers to local governments for universities not being operated for education purposes.

Council will counter the closure of the gate at John Dean Park with a closure of its own. They are recommending that signs be posted and/or yellow curb No Parking area be initiated along portions of the east side of Carmanah Terrace and south side of Dean Park Road.