

Developer seeks facelift for post office

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Sidney's heritage post office is expected to undergo a major facelift, including a three-storey addition to the back and side of the building that would nearly triple the current space.

The basement, main and second floors — totalling 17,050 square feet — would be reserved for commercial use. The 5,459-square-foot third floor would hold five residential units.

An L-shaped walkway would be carved through the middle of the red-brick landmark, with entrances on Beacon Avenue and Fourth Street.

Owner and developer Bruce McLay needs a zoning amendment to allow the changes to the 62-year-old building. The proposal has to clear the environmental heritage committee and the advisory planning commission before coming to council for final approval.

McLay bought the 2423 Beacon Ave. building from Canada Post below the list price of \$900,000, but documents detailing the money exchanged have not yet been filed with the Land Titles office.

Canada Post put the building up for sale last year after moving a couple of blocks west on Beacon Avenue.

The size of the development requires 37 parking spaces be generated as well, but the proposal comes up 31 spaces short. Instead, the developer is offering to donate 3,000 square feet of space for community use.

The proposed donation is significant because the town is looking for a home for Sidney Museum's historical artifacts. A consultant's report has recommended the museum split its marine mammal and heritage themes. The town has approved in principle a proposal from Mineral World to operate the marine mammal part in the present waterfront location, but there is still no home for the historical artifacts.

The Sidney and North Saanich Community Arts Council, looking for space to display artists' works, wanted Ottawa to donate the post office building as a public art gallery in May last year.