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# Historic waterfront building looks for new lease on life

## PCC seeks proposals for Stores Building on Inner Harbour

BY BILL CLEVERLEY  
*Times Colonist staff*

Looking for a landmark proposal, the Provincial Capital Commission is putting the historic, waterfront Stores Building at 254 Belleville St. on the Inner Harbour up for lease.

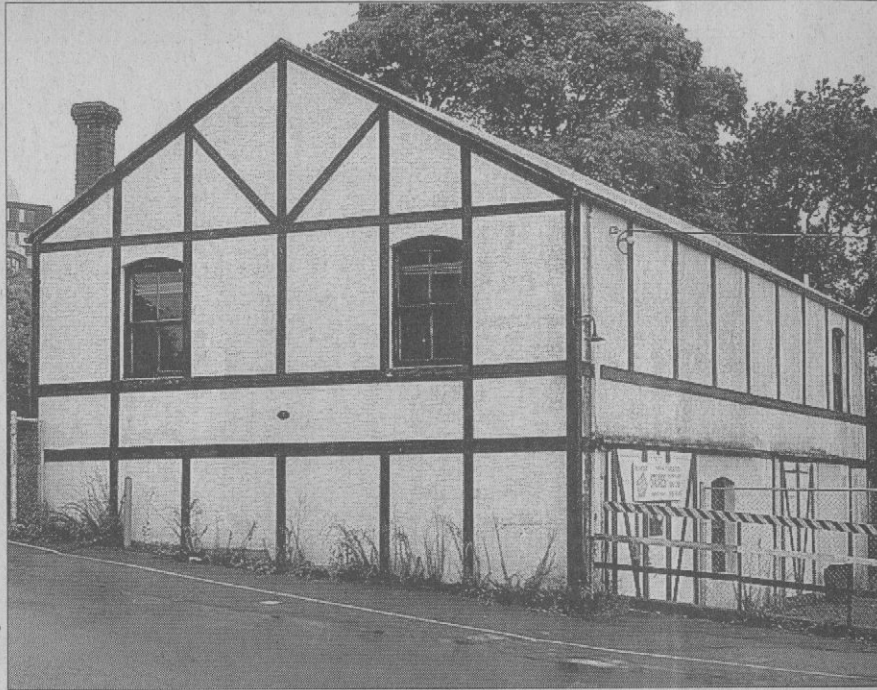
"The site is one of the icon sites in the harbour and the potential here is awesome," said PCC CEO Ray Parks.

"Let's just close our eyes and imagine for a moment this is one of the most wonderful harbours in the world. This is the point where you actually get down right to the harbour. You get to connect with people, with tourists, the public and the water. You get to connect with the history."

The two-storey, 3,180-square-foot building was constructed in 1912 and comes with a 49-metre wharf.

Lease of the wharf is optional to lease of the building, he said.

The building was originally used by the Canadian Pacific Railway for linen storage. The PCC assumed ownership of



**The Provincial Capital Commission suggests the historic Stores Building, available for lease, could be used for a restaurant/pub, marine adventure or tour boat businesses, offices or a storage facility.** *John McKay/Times Colonist*

the property from the federal government in 2001.

Parks said the PCC is open as far as

the building's eventual use.

"We're looking for ideas," he said.

The PCC Request For Proposals on

its Web site suggests possible uses for the building and wharf include (but are not limited to): a restaurant/pub, marine adventure, tour boats, land-based rentals, offices and a storage facility.

It notes there are limited rental spaces located on the Inner Harbour for such activities and says the building offers a number of advantages such as nearby hotels and motels.

"The property also has good exposure to users of the adjoining Victoria Clipper ferry terminal, as well as the Blackball and Starline Express ferries. These facilities and services all provide a pool of patrons for businesses operating in the Stores Building and on the wharf," the RFP says.

The RFP notes that moorage and docking uses from the wharf are limited, given that the adjoining seabed is either exposed or extremely shallow at low tide. A floating dock may be the only option to allow full water access but costs of such a dock would be considered a tenant or leasee improvement and they would have to assume the cost.

The Stores Building has remained vacant since the PCC acquired it. The PCC, which plans to renovate and restore the building is looking for one or two tenants for the building. There is some structural work which will have to be done to

the building but it is essentially in good shape, he said.

The PCC plans to do restoration work to the building's exterior — bringing it back to its original historical status — and it will be the leasee's responsibility to renovate the interior.

"It's a relatively small building but it's got great bones. It's a wonderful little solid building.

"It's been there forever so it's sort of passed that test," Parks said.

PCC board chairman Bill Wellburn said in a release the PCC is looking for someone who will restore the historical significance of the building while adapting it to modern use.

Victoria Coun. Pamela Madoff, who sits on the PCC board, is pleased the building is to be restored, which she said is a city-imposed condition on the historic building. However, Madoff hopes the call for proposals isn't premature given that there's some interest in a comprehensive redevelopment of the surrounding site including the Pacific terminal site.

"I hope it doesn't close any doors for what we might be able to achieve on the larger terminal site," she said.

Applicants have until Nov. 1 to submit their proposals. The successful tenant(s) will be selected Dec. 1.