This page was exported from - The Auroran
Export date: Fri Mar 29 7:29:17 2024 / +0000 GMT

Redesigned Armoury will be a blend of historic and new

By Brock Weir

Designs for the soon-to-be-renovated historic Aurora Armoury show a blend of heritage features and new elements.

The plans are expected to be approved this week by Council after getting the green light at the Committee level last Tuesday night.

In coming up with the designs, architects have peeled back layers of the nearly-150-year-old building, uncovering original design elements that figure prominently in the new plan.

?The architect has reviewed the available historic documentation related to 89 Mosley Street to identify the key historic design elements of the building,? said Anthony Ierullo, Aurora's Manager of Strategic Planning in a report to Council. ?Based on this information, the restoration includes maintaining the original building and roof configuration, maintaining or restoring original openings (where possible) and removing and replacing the existing aluminum and vinyl siding with vertical wood siding that better replicates the original materials and design. As a result, a wood board and batten configuration is proposed for the exterior of the historic structure. The building addition has been designed using modern elements that complement the historic elements of the building, which is consistent with the advice of the heritage consultant on the project.?

From this advice, preliminary designs for the north and east designs have been revamped to be more in keeping with the original building design, including the removal of two roll up doors from the east to create a more welcoming entrance. There is also less glazing on the facades, an element which raised some privacy and security concerns around the Council table.

?The design objective was to maximize the short and long-term utility of the building while restoring significant heritage elements and also strengthening the link between the Armoury itself and Town Park,? said Mr. Ierullo, presenting the plan to Council members last week, noting the plans before them reflected feedback received from the Town's Heritage and Accessibility Advisory Committees, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, and members of the public alike.

Architect Philip Hastings was on hand to take the presentation the rest of the way, noting that the designs ?reflect 150 years of history? and functional design.

The intent, he said is to create an event space as large as possible with rooms off to the sides.

?The intention is as much as possible bring it back to how it existed originally while, at the same time, adding an addition to the south,? said Mr. Hastings. ?The addition to the south primarily houses the new pieces of the program which are the kitchen, and have a large amount of mechanical equipment. It is an ideal place to put those things.?

Parking and access will come from the east side and, on the west, there will be an overhang giving the teaching kitchen full visibility from the Town Park. A rollup window can be used to serve Town Park patrons from inside the Armoury, previously existing windows will be restored, and a canopy will be installed to ?be a great spot to get out of the rain or sun.?

?Following the demolition of the interior of the building, the Town was able to confirm the historic existence of a prominent roll up door on the westerly façade of the building,? said Mr. Ierullo. ?This demonstrates that the building did at one time feature a more direct connection to Town Park as envisioned in the proposed design. The Town's Repurposing Study first identified an opportunity to establish a physical and operational connection between the Aurora Armoury and Town Park. The architects also found photographic evidence of a connection between the Armoury and Town Park. The current situation reflects efforts to minimize potential land use conflicts with the use of fencing and signage as well as the historic removal of windows along the western edge of the building. The goal of the design was to remove these barriers and introduce new elements that allow the two properties to better complement each other from both a design and use perspective.

?This connection is reintroduced with the removal of exterior barriers/fencing and the introduction of glass elements within the central areas of the building and the proposed extension. This is further supported by a new outdoor patio/deck area as well as new exterior elements along on southern and western facades. These areas are designed to integrate with activities planned inside the building as well as service activities in Town Park. This includes the introduction of two new service counters that will provide food and beverage service into Town Park. The landscape design includes approximately 2000 square feet of new exterior space, while preserving all of the existing trees in Town Park.?

While Council is expected to approve the designs last week, they requested more information to come forward on the fine details, including the pros and cons of a zinc roof over a more costly, but potentially longer-lasting copper roof, and the integration of permeable pavement to better handle rain and run-off.