

Asbestos removal increases costs of Armoury renovation



By Brock Weir

The price tag to transform the Aurora Armoury into a new satellite campus of the Canadian Institute of Food and Wine is on the rise. Council this week is set to approve an increase of over \$36,160 to address ongoing asbestos issues as they continue to gut and renovate the historic Town Park building.

This will bring the total cost of demolishing the two buildings which formally stood on Library Square, along with the interior demolition of the Armoury, up to \$245,309.75, excluding taxes.

The price increase was tentatively approved at last Tuesday's General Committee meeting on consent, without any discussion. The [Purchase Order] increase was approved for additional works at 56 Victoria and to the interior at the Armoury, said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations. The Purchase Order (PO) was issued by the Town in the amount of \$111,300, excluding taxes, for the demolition of the two buildings located at 52 and 56 Victoria Street. On January 23, Council increased this PO to cover the costs of additional work asbestos removal and recovery of four wooden beams at 56 Victoria and the interior demolition of 89 Mosley in the amount of \$97,840, bringing the total to \$209,140.

Since then, he notes, staff has requested additional interior works, namely the complete removal and disposal of asbestos-containing pipe wrap, elbows and T-fittings on the main floor and attic space of the armoury, along with additional work to non-structural ceiling joists in the amount of \$36,169.75.

Should this recommendation be approved this week, it will be the latest step bringing the vision of the Armoury to reality.

This vision of transforming it into a satellite campus of Niagara College's Canadian Institute of Food and Wine was approved by Council last year, generating excitement from both the College and elected officials along with assurances, responding to community concerns, that the finished project would include ample community space.

The concept will include not only extensive kitchen space, but a reconfiguration of the building itself, opening its west wall onto Town Park to integrate it into the popular green space and allowing it to become an integral part of the number of seasonal events the park hosts each year.

Work got underway at the end of January with a sledgehammer ceremony attended by some of the key players in the project who each took turns swinging a sledgehammer into one of the building's interior walls.

Branding for the building was given the green light at the end of the same month, with Council signing off on a new logo to pitch the Armoury as a Town venue.

Designed in-house by the Town's Communications Department, it features the building's pitched roof silhouette, along with the original vertical siding which is set to be restored through this renovation project.

According to the Town, the logo will be used to differentiate the Town building from the Canadian Food and Wine Institute at Niagara College.

The Armoury was built as a military drill shed in 1874.

Purchased by the Town from the Federal Government in 2014, it has since been used as space for several community events and initiatives, including hosting the Aurora Farmers' Market's annual indoor season and events associated with Doors Open Aurora and Arctic Adventure, to name just two.