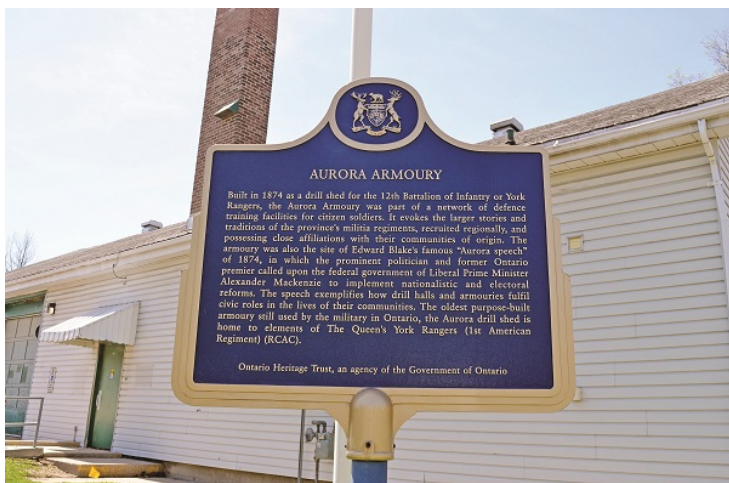


Council puts a lid on Aurora Armoury renos, approving \$5 million budget



By Brock Weir

The devil was in the details, and now that Council has decided what kind of roof to put on the historic Aurora Armoury, money is now flowing to complete its restoration.

Council last week voted 7 ? 2 last week to put a zinc roof on the landmark at the northeast corner of Town Park.

The roof component was the missing piece of what was once a \$4.7 million base budget tentatively approved by Council the previous week to finance the 1870s Armoury's transformation from a drill shed that was once home to the Queen's York Rangers into the newest campus of Niagara College's Canadian Food & Wine Institute.

Council was presented with three roofing options ? a \$30,000 basic steel roof, a zinc roof for \$380,000, and an \$800,000 copper roof option.

Their choice of the zinc roof brings the renovation budget up to \$5.045 million.

?The architect has identified wood, zinc and cooper as roof materials that were most likely available when the Armoury was constructed,? said Anthony Ierullo, Aurora's Manager of Policy Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Aurora in his report to Council. ?Given the utilitarian nature of this building, it is not expected that copper would have been a preferred material for this type of building at that time. The Architect is not recommending a wooden roof due to the cost and upkeep associated with this material, particularly when considering the recommended exterior wood finish.?

A standard metal roof, the report notes, has a lifespan of approximately 40 years. The zinc and copper options would extend the roof life to 80 ? 100 years.

?Based on the above considerations, the zinc roof alternative is preferred by the Town's architect as a heritage sensitive alternative,? Mr. Ierullo continued. ?This material offers a time appropriate alternative that could be envisioned for use in a late 17th [sic] century drill shed without the associated maintenance costs of wood.?

While Councillor John Abel supported the copper roof option, the majority of Council disagreed, citing not only the extra costs, but the view that a copper roof was not in keeping with the original look of the building.

?It doesn't fit in with the period or the use of the building at the time,? said Councillor Paul Pirri. ?It is an additional cost, and if we all look and read the report, it doesn't bear out in the life cycle costs to be more cost efficient than the steel roof which is already included.?

Supporting the next step above the steel roof, zinc, was Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

?I think this is the appropriate use for the building,? she said. ?I think it is going to give us a lot less trouble than a metal roof. I think it has a long life cycle and I think the metal roof is going to have to be replaced far quicker than the zinc roof.?

While zinc ultimately won the day, and it was the last hurdle the Armoury renovations had to clear before going to the next level, last Tuesday's debate was another opportunity for Councillor Abel to voice his opposition of the project.

Councillor Abel questioned the fact a cost analysis was done with the roof options and not, he contended, a cost analysis of the whole deal with Niagara College, a concern he has brought up repeatedly around the table.

His comment brought a flurry of Points of Order from a number of Councillors, including Tom Mrakas, who said it didn't make sense that Councillor Abel wanted to go with a roof option above the base metal if he wasn't in favour of renovating the building. Not so, said Councillor Abel.

"I am in favour of renovating the Armoury," he said. "I was in favour of the \$2.3 million we originally started at. My point is I am in favour of renovating the Armoury and I thought the investment in zinc would be a good one."