

ITEM
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 1
68
COUNCIL MEETING 92/11/02

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
DATE: 1992 OCTOBER 22

FROM: DIRECTOR RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MS. H. ROBSON RE: BURNABY ARTS CENTRE EXPANSION


PURPOSE: To respond to Ms. H. Robson's correspondence to Council regarding Burnaby Arts Centre Expansion.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Ms. H. Robson.

REPORT

At its meeting of 1992 October 21, the Parks & Recreation Commission received the attached staff report on the above subject and adopted the recommendation contained therein.



DENNIS GAUNT
DIRECTOR RECREATION &
CULTURAL SERVICES

tc
Attach.

A-1305

~~ITEM (SUPPLEMENTARY) 05~~
~~DIRECTOR'S REPORT NO. 19~~
~~COMMISSION MEETING 92/10/21~~

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COUNCIL MEETING 92/11/02

RE: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MS. H. ROBSON RE: BURNABY ARTS CENTRE EXPANSION

RECOMMENDATION:

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1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to City Council.

REPORT

Appearing on Council Agenda for 1992 October 19 was a letter regarding the proposed expansion of the Burnaby Arts Centre from Ms. Helen Robson (attached). Ms. Robson, who was especially concerned about the impact the expansion could have on Deer Lake Park and its users, also appeared in delegation at that Council meeting.

Staff have reviewed the correspondence and prepared the following responses.

In 1988 October, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the hiring of the team of Henry Hawthorn Architect and Hotson/Bakker Architects to conduct a concept planning exercise for the proposed Arts Centre expansion. During that period, a thorough environmental impact study was done to assess the types of changes that would occur in the precinct. It was concluded that the place of least intrusion to construct the expansion of approximately 35,000 square feet of new structure was in the parking lot area immediately south of the existing James Cowan Building. Since it is already a "built area" very little new park space would be affected. A two-storey structure with underground parking for 70 vehicles was designed, representing a relatively efficient "footprint" for the expansion.

As well as input from environmental consultants, the City heritage planners advised against any changes to the existing Mather House and Anderson House on the site. This was agreed to, and the designated heritage structures were fully integrated into the concept plan in their current state.

A survey of Burnaby residents by Cornerstone Planning Group showed strong support for expanding arts facilities. The sample size used in this survey is statistically reliable as representative of the City population. The Burnaby Arts Policy approved in 1990 also set the expansion of the Arts Centre as a developmental priority. The success of the Burnaby Arts Centre Capital Campaign is further evidence of the support of the whole community for the addition of new dedicated arts space for learning, performance and exhibition. The project is a designated Centennial Legacy Project.

City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed that the expansion project should be "phased" based on available resources, other current priorities and long-range plans. The proposed 35,000 square foot first phase will proceed in 1993, and plans for a 450-seat theatre will be developed later. The three current options for the theatre are as follows:

1. Build the new theatre in the north parking lot adjacent to the existing James Cowan Building.
2. Same as above; and remove the James Cowan Building.
3. Remove the James Cowan Building and construct the new theatre on that site.

These options will be considered further in light of the projected life of the existing James Cowan Theatre building.

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It has been strongly recommended by Council that new City buildings be constructed with underground parking wherever possible. At the Arts Centre, it was seen as undesirable to create additional paved surface parking which could intrude into the park space (treed and grasses areas). While visitors will not be able to park vehicles on the surface south of James Cowan Theatre, the design provides for many new vistas of the park and lake. The south terrace will be equipped with shaded areas, movable furniture and planted spaces. A second-storey walkway and exterior viewing area will be a new feature, respecting traditional pedestrian pathways while offering a new perspective of the site. The building is wheelchair accessible and complete with an elevator. The underground parking facility will provide free parking to both park and centre visitors, and access will be open even if the centre is closed.

An additional underground parking facility will be needed under the proposed 450-seat theatre in the north parking lot. Further studies will be conducted to address the need for other requirements for the precinct, including the possibility of some tiered surface parking off Deer Lake Avenue.

The proposed expansion will involve a minor intrusion to the west of the existing James Cowan Building. The rhododendrons displaced by the expansion will be relocated to a new quadrant of the Century Gardens immediately south of the current location and the symmetrical design of the gardens east of the Burnaby Art Gallery will be enhanced. Some of the Lombardy poplars will be removed. However, the hardwood deciduous trees identified by the planners will not be disturbed, and new planting will occur as part of the required landscaping for the new facility.

For over 25 years since the opening of the Burnaby Art Gallery and the Burnaby Arts Centre, patrons and visitors to the cultural attractions have been able to enjoy the site in harmony with park users. The Burnaby Village Museum and the Hart House have also attracted larger numbers of visitors. The concepts put forward for the expanded Arts Centre have carefully considered the ambience that visitors to Deer Lake have come to enjoy, and have attempted to incorporate many of these elements in the design of the new structure. Parks staff take pride in keeping the park in good repair as a feature attraction in the community, and the Arts Centre expansion will reflect the careful planning that has gone into this important project.

Park users, centre patrons, neighbors and visitors have frequently expressed their interests, ideas and concerns to parks staff in the planning process and all ideas are welcome.

CN/pao
Attach.

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6850 Balmoral St.,
Burnaby, B.C. 704
Oct. 23, 1992.

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Dear Mayor Copeland and Council Members,

It is with deep concern that I write to you regarding the plans for the expansion of the Burnaby Arts Centre. My concerns are thus:

Firstly, as a Burnaby resident of 16 years, I have tried to do my part to protect the natural habitat of Deer Lake Park, whether it be picking up stray garbage, reporting oil leakage, or asking a neighbour to put his dog on the leash. Will the increased number of people expected to come to the expanded Arts Centre, many from without our municipality, show the same respect for this fragile habitat as we who live here?

Secondly, the brochure entitled "Live Art a Home" states, and I quote,

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"The need for extended Art Centre facilities was clearly expressed as a priority in a survey of over 5,000 Burnaby homes in 1989." I must ask, in a municipality of ^{about} 100,000 people, why wasn't every home sent a survey?

Thirdly, after examining the model and floor plan, I have not seen an area designated for the proposed Phase 4 Community Theatre. Is it to be built on the present site of the James Cowan Theatre? Or is yet more of the park land to be used for this proposed theatre?

Fourthly, I am concerned as to whether the proposed plans will include the preservation of the presently-used Mathers House, as well as the building which houses the Arts Council offices.

Finally, I am gravely concerned at the absence, in the new design, of the outdoor parking lot. Are only the Arts students, who have paid for their lessons, to enjoy the view of the lake and park? Will the underground lot be paid parking only?

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What of the elderly, the handicapped, and countless others who seek to appreciate the natural beauty by parking their cars overlooking the lake? For some, this is their only means of enjoying it!

If an underground parking lot is to be built, can it not be placed on the north side of the complex and retain some of the present lot facing the lake?

In addition, should the ground floor terrace area be retained in the design, I would strongly suggest that a number of shaded benches with back-rests be provided, at the edge overlooking the lake.

Before closing this letter, I would like to join my fellow citizens in commending the motion you made to all municipalities to protect trees on private property, resulting in the summer passage of Bill 771. Truly, Burnaby has provided a leadership role in this undertaking. There are many who join me in thanking you for your

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commitment, and who feel proud to
be represented by this Council!

I would now ask you,
on behalf of those citizens and
myself, to help us protect the
natural legacy of Deer Lake Park,
which remains in your hands
and ours.

Yours truly,

Helen Holson.

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