

**TO:** CITY MANAGER

2004 JANUARY 5

**FROM:** DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

**SUBJECT:** Demolition of Three City-owned Houses at 8655 Barnet Highway  
(Former Nichols Chemical Company Houses, Future Barnet Marine Park East)

**PURPOSE:** To seek authority to demolish the structures at #28, #29, #30 - 8655 Barnet Highway/Nichols Drive

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council authorize the demolition of three former Nichols Chemical Company Houses situated on the lot at 8655 Barnet Highway.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Community Heritage Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission for their information.

**R E P O R T**

**1.0 Background:**

In 1992, the City acquired the property at 8655 Barnet Highway from the General Chemical Company for the future expansion of the eastern portion of Barnet Marine Park. General Chemical continues to operate a plant on the Burrard Inlet waterfront at the end of Nichols Drive. This upland property accommodates three existing houses that date from around 1912 and are included in the City's preliminary list of heritage buildings.

Two of the houses have been vacant and boarded up since the mid-1990's. The tenant of the third house vacated in 2000. Staff have conducted extensive reviews of the feasibility of upgrading the houses to rental standards for the interim period until this portion of the park is slated for development in approximately 10 years (it will be necessary to purchase the existing General Chemical lands on the waterfront prior to this occurring). The upgrading costs of the three houses were estimated in 2001 to be approximately \$466,000 and the payback period was estimated to be in excess of ten years. While the long term plan for this area includes a marina, an effective and economic future use of these houses within the park context has not been identified. The Community Heritage Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission have considered options for their use, however, no feasible options have emerged and the houses remain vacant and boarded up.

The houses were also shown in 2002 to a non-profit group which provides housing shelter, but the group indicated that the cost of upgrading, combined with the isolated location of the site did not make use by their group feasible. No other potential users have been identified for the houses.

City Manager

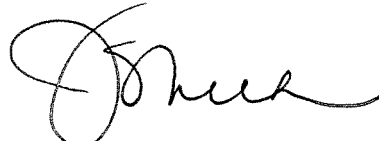
Demolition: Three City-owned Properties at 9655 Barnet Highway

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## 2.0 Current Situation:

While staff have followed established procedures for securing, alarming and monitoring these houses that are in an isolated location, there have been repeated vandalism of the homes, particularly since the late summer of 2003. There has also been water damage and some indication that squatters have been occupying the site. The heritage value of the structures has been severely undermined due to the features being extensively damaged. The alarm wires have been cut and the interior of the houses and the windows have been very extensively damaged, beyond economic repair.

Given the current situation and the lack of identified potential users, there appears to be no alternative but to demolish all of the three houses. Therefore, it is recommended that authority be given for demolition. The Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, the Director Finance and the Director Engineering concur with this recommendation.



J. S. Belhouse

Director Planning and Building

BR/gk

cc. Director Engineering  
Director Finance  
Director Parks Recreation and Cultural Services  
Chief Building Inspector  
Chief Licence Inspector

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