

Office of the Fire Commissioner Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

July 29, 2009

James Bast
Manager of Fire Services
Comox Valley Regional District
600 Comox Rd
Courtenay BC
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Re : Hornby Island Fire Station

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with yourself and Fire Chief LeRose at the Hornby Island Fire Station.



Figure 1 Hornby Island Fire Station

My comments are intended to offer some prospective from an operational and safety point of view. Structural integrity of the building is not within my field of expertise and therefore that information should be sought elsewhere.

The building has been constructed in different stages as the need to house emergency equipment and fire apparatus expanded over the last decades. Although, it has been functional, it is getting older and is not capable of operating to its full potential as a fire station given its current design.

The land the building is situated on is not large enough to accommodate both ample parking for fire fighters and a safe training area. The building sits on an elevated rise of land which is problematic for access and egress to the property by fire fighters in winter conditions. The water supply to the Fire Station is borrowed off an adjacent property and the septic field limits the use of a lot that is already bursting at the seams.

Apparatus Bay doors are a mix of 11 foot and 12 foot wide doors. These doors should be 14 feet wide to accommodate modern Fire Apparatus. The current door configuration also limits the safe zone between the existing fire apparatus and could become an issue with Worksafe BC. Moving apparatus in close proximity to responders getting dressed in turnout gear elevates the potential for a serious accident.



Due to the limited space between the trucks and given the current construction, if retrofitting was even possible it would be very expensive. If you look at the picture of the fire station in figure 1 you can see the 2 to 3 feet of additional space between the doors doesn't exist in order to accommodate new doors.

Although this Fire Station is currently functioning, operational shortcomings of the building are apparent. Communities of similar size such as Oyster River and Quadra Island have made decisions and built new fire stations to serve their respective areas. If the investment in your community of a new fire station is possible, I would encourage you to pursue that avenue because the current site and structure has fundamental deficiencies that cannot be easily addressed.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to say that Hornby Island's Fire Department under the direction of Fire Chief LeRose are a well respected group within the Mid and North Island region. The community is fortunate to have such a dedicated group serving their emergency needs. All the best in working through the process and making your decision. If you need any more information please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours truly

Rob Owens
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