

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

Date: 12/28/2024 5:40:55 PM

Subject: Update: 500 Dunsmuir St demolition

Attachments: Update re. 500 Dunsmuir Street 324A (02287788xD3527).pdf

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from the Chief Building Official regarding the work to demolish the building at 500 Dunsmuir Street resulting from the special Council meeting on Wednesday December 18, 2024.

The memo sets out additional information regarding the property and the preservation of heritage elements as described in the resolution:

- On further detailed assessment, the proposed preservation work cannot be done safely without delaying the demolition of the building for 14 months or possibly longer.
- Given the imminent safety risks, the Chief Building Official considers it necessary to proceed with the demolition as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to Saul Schwebs at [Saul.Schwebs @Vancouver.ca](mailto:Saul.Schwebs@Vancouver.ca).

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**MEMO TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL****December 28, 2024**

TO: Mayor and Council

AND TO: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Corrie Okell, General Manager of DBL
Margaret Wittgens, General Manager of ACCS
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Office

FROM: Saul Schwebs, Chief Building Official

SUBJECT: Update - Declaration of Dangerous building - 500 Dunsmuir Street

Purpose

This memo updates the Council regarding the resolution it adopted on December 18, 2024 that required a building located at 500 Dunsmuir Street (also known as Dunsmuir House) to be demolished.

Background

The building is owned by 500 Dunsmuir Property Ltd., and is controlled by Holburn Properties. The building is listed on the Heritage Registry, but is not a protected heritage property. During Council's deliberations, Council amended the proposed resolution to include a requirement that parts of the building be safely preserved for future use in the redevelopment of the site. The amendment read:

"During the demolition of the building the owner is to safely preserve the heritage defining cornice, dentils and bracket elements of the building fronting Dunsmuir and Richards streets as shown on the attached diagram, and store them at the owner's expense until such time as they can be reused in-situ as part of any future redevelopment of the site." (underlining added).

Unfortunately, there are now practical questions about the necessary effort to preserve these parts of the building. It is apparent that the building cannot be both safely demolished and the cornice etc. safely preserved. An experienced demolition contractor estimates that the work to preserve parts of the building could take approximately 14 months. Other unknowns, like contaminants, could further slow the demolition and preservation. Worksafe BC would also have to approve the work, and that may not happen because of the condition of the building.

This unreasonable delay creates a significant safety risk and undermines the basic concern about public safety that motivated the Council resolution.

The amended resolution as adopted by Council is clear in requiring that the preservation work be conducted safely. Unfortunately, that condition cannot be fulfilled.

As Chief Building Official, I am primarily concerned about public safety. I have determined that any steps to preserve parts of the building should be abandoned, because they cannot be done "safely". The owner has been informed of this position and will be proceeding to simply demolish the building. This work should commence shortly.

Conclusion

Heritage aspects of the building at 500 Dunsmuir Street cannot be safely preserved, so the owner should be relieved of this obligation because failure to do so will necessitate that the preservation work proceeds in an unsafe manner.

Sincerely

Saul Schwebs,
Chief Building Official