

# **PRESENTATION HOUSE STRUCTURES AND SITE - 03**

The current Presentation House site located at 333 Chesterfield Avenue has been described previously in this Report. This section takes a more detailed look at the site and its existing physical structures in order to provide the City of North Vancouver with a strategy for their use in creating a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale.

**The Site**

The 333 Chesterfield Avenue site and buildings are owned by the City of North Vancouver, and occupied by several different non-profit arts-based organizations including Presentation House Theatre, Presentation House Gallery and the North Vancouver Museum and Archives. The site consists of Lots 12 to 21. The majority of the site was granted to the City in 1975 under Provincial Crown Grant No. 6558, which limited its use to community cultural purposes, and restricted any business, commercial or profit making on it. This provincial encumbrance is registered on the title of the land, and should be discharged by the Province prior to any sale or other use being approved.

The east half of Lot 21 and Lot 17 are designated park space. Their total area, approximately 836 m², should remain as park space on the site, although it may be relocated.

A lane currently cuts through the parking lot on the site, and connects to Chesterfield Avenue. City Council action would be required to terminate this lane and explore alternate venting options to 3rd

Street, 4th Street or Chesterfield Avenue. Each alternative has its own challenges. 3rd Street is a busy, high-traffic street, the large grade difference between 4th Street and the lane makes venting problematic and the current venting to Chesterfield Avenue is too close to the intersection. Termination of the lane provides the most flexibility for the site.

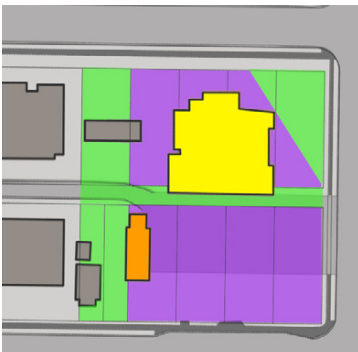
Chesterfield Avenue currently serves as the west boundary to the commercial activity feeding off Lonsdale Avenue and marks the end of the Lower Lonsdale pedestrian neighbourhood. To the west of Chesterfield, W 3rd Street is characterized by low to medium density residential buildings with an FSR not to exceed 1.6 times the lot area. The north side of W 4th Street is designated medium density, ground oriented with an FSR of 1.0. To the east of Chesterfield, W 3rd Street is considered an urban corridor with commercial at grade and residential above to a maximum FSR of 2.3.

The intersection of Chesterfield Avenue and W 3rd Street is busy and well travelled by both public transit and private vehicles. The gas station site on the south east corner is available for commercial redevelopment.

In 2003, the City established a density transfer bank for the Presentation House site in order to realize its development potential. The revenue already generated and any future density transfer is intended for the upgrade of both open spaces and civic uses on the land. The Presentation House Site (zoned CD-456) was



PHOTO OF PRESENTATION HOUSE SITE



UNENCUMBERED LAND  
ENCUMBERED LAND



DEDICATED PARK LAND  
PRESENTATION HOUSE  
ANNE MACDONALD HALL

assumed to be fully developed at an FSR of 1.6, which provided approximately 9100 m<sup>2</sup> (98,000 sf) of transferable heritage amenity density. Approximately 2500 m<sup>2</sup> (27,000 sf) was transferred to Site 1 at 161-179 W 2nd Street, to increase the site area for development. Approximately 6600 m<sup>2</sup> (71,000 sf) of density remains for either transfer or development.

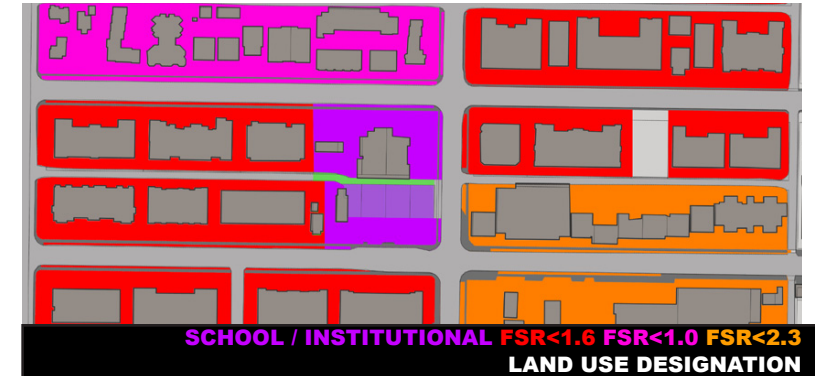
The site strengths and challenges previously outlined in Part 3, are listed again here for clarity.

#### Site Strengths:

- City owned property
- Zoned for cultural use
- Good vehicle access
- Underdeveloped site
- Existing building has historic significance to North Vancouver
- Potential parking
- Tenants have a history in this area
- Potential views to water
- Conducive to commercial or residential development
- Anne MacDonald Hall can be easily relocated
- Draws tourists into Lower Lonsdale

#### Site Challenges:

- Existing building requires major renovation
- Existing site can't accommodate all 3 facilities' needs
- View impact is sensitive topic in neighbourhood
- Rising neighbourhood standards
- Limited opportunity for 'walk-by' patrons
- Parking should be accounted for
- Designated parkland should be retained
- Encumbered land
- Existing lane through site



## The Buildings

The existing buildings on 333 Chesterfield Avenue include the Presentation House Arts Centre, Anne MacDonald Hall and storage facilities. Presentation House Arts Centre and Anne MacDonald Hall are both listed on the City's heritage register, although neither building is legally protected. As City owned, significant heritage buildings they are recognized as valuable community resources that should be maintained to a high standard. The Centre and garages are in poor condition. The garages currently serve as storage space for the NV Museum, but are not appropriate for this purpose, putting artifacts stored there at risk.

## Presentation House Centre

### History

Presentation House Arts Centre is listed in Canada's Historic Places as Central School. It is described as a 2 - storey wood-frame institutional building that has developed, through a series of additions, from a small core structure to a rambling complex. Several historic features have been removed.

This building has had an ongoing civic presence in the City of North Vancouver as the first school (1902-1915), as City Hall (1915-1975) and as Presentation House Arts Centre (1975 - present). Major renovations were made to the school in 1907 and 1911 including the construction of the second storey and the addition to the south. At this time the building took on the basic form that still exists today. Significant additions were made again in the 1930's, and in 1975 when it was converted to Presentation House Arts Centre. These final renovations also involved remediation following a significant fire that occurred while the building was vacant.

The building changes have obscured the original form of the structure. As a consequence there is confusion regarding the appropriate building form that should be chosen if conservation takes place.

The following have been identified as Character Defining Elements for Presentation House Centre. They have been identified according to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada as elements that contribute to the heritage value of the place. They should be retained in order to preserve this value. Where elements have already been lost, their representation should be considered in any conservation strategy.

- Boxy rectangular form, prominent scale, generally symmetrical massing
- Broad, shallow hip roof with paired gables at front entry
- Symmetrical massing facing 4th Street with central entry at front
- Tall ceilings main level
- Wooden siding under later asbestos siding
- Tall double-hung 2 - over - 2 wooden-sash windows
- Interior features (vaults from City Hall Period)

The Presentation House Historic Assessment (PHHA) Report by the City of North Vancouver states the following:

*"No building has held such a dominant role in public life for such a long time in North Vancouver. Not only is it one of the oldest buildings in the community, but it is one of the few public buildings over a century old on the North Shore."*

The PHHA Report recognizes that both the Centre and Hall buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, which means that they are formally recognized for their heritage value. They have historic,

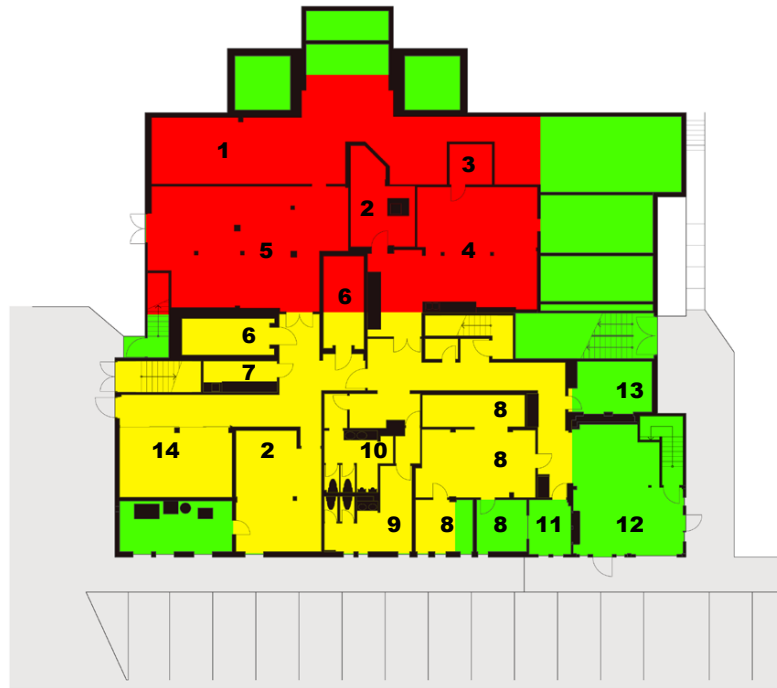
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Historic photo of Presentation House

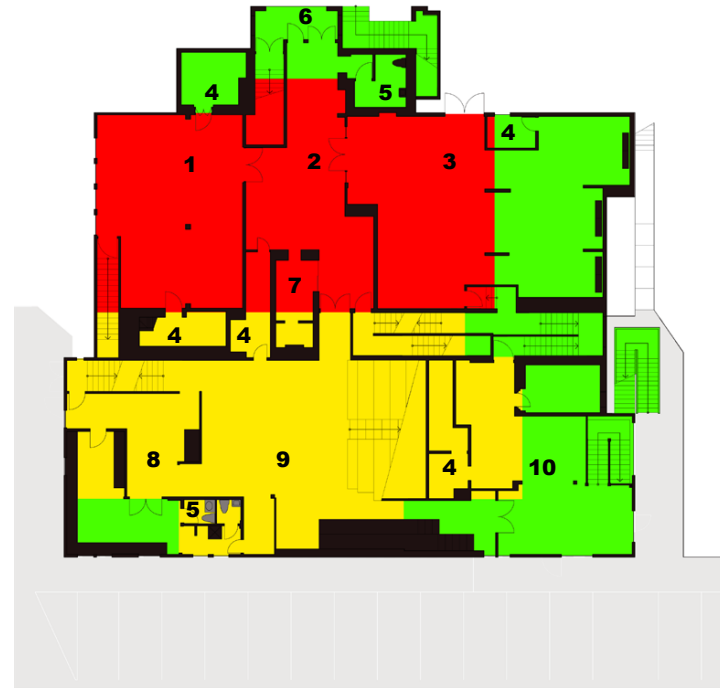


Historic photo of Presentation House



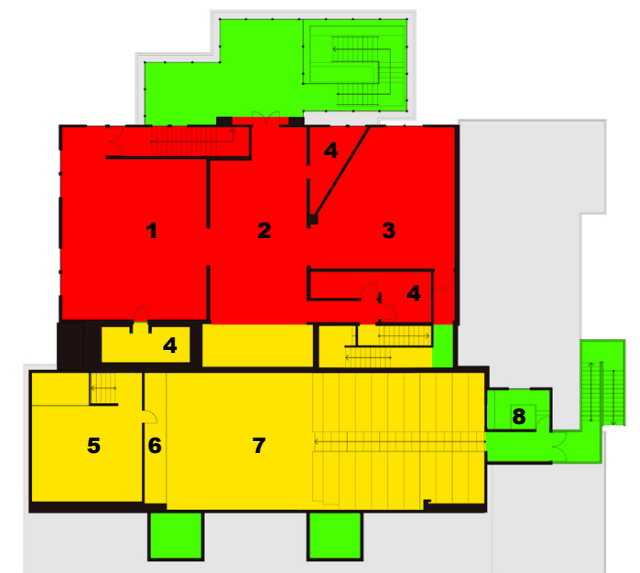
### PRESENTATION HOUSE: GROUND FLOOR

1- CRAWLSPACE 2- STORAGE 3- MECHANICAL ROOM  
 4- COSTUMES / PROPS 5- STORAGE/OFFICE 6- VAULT 7- DARK ROOM  
 8- OFFICE / ARCHIVES 9- WOMENS WC 10- MENS WC  
 11- TICKET OFFICE 12- MAIN LOBBY 13- OFFICE 14- BOARD RM



### PRESENTATION HOUSE: MIDDLE FLOOR

1- WEST MUSEUM DISPLAY AREA 2- FOYER 3- EAST DISPLAY AREA  
 4- STORAGE 5- WASHROOM 6- FOYER 7- OFFICE 8- BACKSTAGE  
 9- THEATRE STAGE / SEATING 10- LOUNGE





cultural and social importance or significance for past, present or future generations, and require a sound heritage conservation strategy for the protection and promotion of these values. According to the Historic Assessment, there is a desire at the City to restore these buildings.

#### **Current Condition**

As Presentation House Arts Centre, the building is identified as a multi-use facility, and is listed according to the BC Building Code as Group A Div.1 Assembly. It is wood-frame construction on a concrete basement foundation, and occupies approximately 1450 m<sup>2</sup> (15,608 sf) excluding exterior patios.

The building is located on a sloped site with the main entrance of the building to 4th Street from the Main Floor and the south rear entrances to 3rd Street and Chesterfield Avenue from the Lower Floor. The Lower Floor contains the administration offices, meeting rooms, boiler room and storage rooms, and is used by all three current tenants. The Main Floor contains the front-of-house space for the PH Theatre and the exhibition areas and office for the NV Museum. The Upper Floor contains the Gallery exhibition space and PH Theatre storage and mechanical space.

Outdoor on-site parking is located to the south of the building with access from the lane and Chesterfield Avenue.

The Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) Report by VFA

Canada Corporation completed in September 2006 is the most comprehensive and current description of the condition of the building. It was intended to determine the overall building condition and the condition of primary systems in order to identify and prioritize building repairs and needs. The FCA Report identifies a large amount of deferred maintenance and renewal required primarily for the electrical system and exterior enclosures. It also identifies near-term anticipated renewal with regards to building integrity and several code non-compliance issues. The majority of the building, especially the Gallery space on the third floor, does not comply with Barrier-Free design guidelines. Because the FCA Report is now four years old, several components considered potentially or not yet critical in 2006 have now become critical.

The list on the next page identifies items requiring immediate action in 2006, items now requiring immediate action in 2010, and items that will require action by 2015.

## Action Items

### In 2006

- Missing evacuation plans

### By 2010

- Carpet beyond rated life
- No backflow preventer for domestic water distribution
- Aged electric hot water heater
- Obsolete emergency generator
- Obsolete stairwell lighting fixtures
- Obsolete exit signs
- Damaged exterior walls
- Damaged and deteriorated painted wood
- Deteriorated historical windows
- Obsolete fire alarm
- No sprinkler coverage
- Outdated toilet partitions
- Aged electric baseboard heaters
- Unit heaters past useful life
- Inadequate utility sink
- Incorrectly installed asphalt shingle roofing
- Rolled asphalt roof beyond rated life
- Damaged drain pipes
- Damaged/aged theatre seats
- Non compliant accessible washroom

### By 2015

- Non compliant exterior doors
- Non compliant fire extinguishers
- Non compliant interior doors
- Inefficient interior lighting
- Removal of equipment not in service
- Non compliant handrails

Further to the FCA Report, more recent water damage, mould and issues with grounds maintenance and vagrancy have arisen.

The Presentation House Exposure Control Plan by Pacific Environmental Consulting and Occupational Hygiene Services completed in February 2003 identifies the following materials containing asbestos:

- Drywall taping compound (DTC) throughout building
- Floor tiling in first floor darkroom and
- Asbestos cement siding on building exterior walls. Remediation of all or part of this will influence renovation, rehabilitation or expansions to the building.

In the past, the City has undertaken only minimum maintenance to satisfy its tenants. This anticipated a 'big move' by the City of North Vancouver, either to demolish the building or significantly rehabilitate it.



**Non-compliant accessible washrooms**



**Damaged / aged theatre seats**



**Deteriorated windows, deteriorated painted wood**

## Anne MacDonald Hall

### History

Anne MacDonald Hall is listed on Canada's Historic Places as the Church of St. John the Evangelist. Originally located at 13th Street and Chesterfield Avenue, it is described as a 1 - storey wood-frame building with steeply pitched roof, clad in drop-siding with shingles in the gable ends.

This building is the oldest Anglican Church in North Vancouver, the oldest building on the City's Heritage Register and one of the oldest extant buildings on the North Shore. It was constructed as a church in 1899 and converted to a church hall in 1909 when a new church was built to accommodate the growing congregation. At some point an addition was made to extend the length of the original structure. This retained the same form, window rhythm and cladding. In 1973 it was donated to the City, moved to its current location and converted to a community facility to ensure its preservation. It opened as part of the Presentation House Arts Centre on December 11th, 1978.

The following have been identified as Character Defining Elements:

- Rectangular plan form, modest scale, regular symmetrical massing
- Exterior cladding (wooden drop-siding) with cedar shingles in gable ends
- Regular fenestration (10 - pane wooden-sash casement windows)
- Steeply pitched front gable roof
- Overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails
- Front entry at centre of front façade

### Current Condition

Currently, Anne MacDonald Hall is a recital hall and is used for auditions, workshops, rehearsals, dance classes and community events. It is 6 m (20') wide by 14 m (46') long. It has 2 washrooms, mirrors on the end wall and dance bars on the 2 side walls. It also has a kitchen counter and sink. Although the hall is small, it is a relatively affordable, available space for rehearsal purposes, making it a well-used facility.



Historic photo of Anne MacDonald Hall



Anne MacDonald Hall c.2010



The Buildings’ Suitability for Current Uses

Neither the Presentation House building nor Anne MacDonald Hall are purpose-built or well suited to their current uses. Typically theatre, gallery and museum uses are internally focused. They have specific requirements for lighting and climate control, security and accessibility. Each has been limited by the quality and quantity of space available to their needs in the existing building.

Each of these users also requires considerably more and better attendee services – lobby, washroom, box office and reception space. Mobility challenged access is poor. Appropriate workshop, preparatory and loading areas are not available.

Further, the character defining elements of the buildings are being compromised in order to accommodate these uses. For example, large windows are inappropriate for a theatre, museum or gallery, and have consequently been covered up. The spaces with large windows would be better suited to the tenants’ office or administrative uses which are currently housed on the Lower Floor. In the future, rooms with large windows will make excellent artist’s studios.

Anne MacDonald Hall is heavily used; however, realistically it is 6m (20’) too small in each direction to be a good rehearsal space. This is also little to no performance space available when filled with an audience. This makes it difficult to use for presentations.

The Buildings’ Suitability for New Uses

In considering Presentation House Centre, its state of deterioration and incompatibility with its current uses, the initial impulse is to demolish the existing buildings in order to create a ‘blank slate’ on the site. However, it often makes more sense socially, economically and environmentally to re-use existing structures and this site is an opportunity for the City of North Vancouver to lead by example. Several objectives clearly outlined in the Official Community Plan afford the City of North Vancouver the opportunity to act as stewards of culture, heritage and sustainability on the Presentation House Site (OCP 14.2.4).

The OCP places great value in achieving a sense of place in the City of North Vancouver, and recognizes the relationship between this sense of place and what makes the City unique. To this end, the OCP advocates for the conservation of significant heritage resources (4.10.1), and the promotion of a greater public awareness of the community’s history (4.10.2). One of the ways to achieve this is to identify landmarks and significant locations within the City that can serve as focal points for individual neighbourhoods (4.10.11). Presentation House Centre is already a historic landmark for the community, and has the potential to become an even stronger cultural landmark. Its conservation is an opportunity to promote a continued connection between the community and its history. The OCP also outlines a number of objectives that address the built environment and its relationship to principles of sustainability and livability. Accordingly, new development in the City should be durable and long lasting (8.7.1) and encourage the use of re-useable and recyclable materials (8.7.3). Most significantly, the OCP

advocates the adaptive re-use of buildings to increase the lifespan of new and existing development. Fortunately, many new uses exist for Presentation House Centre that more closely align with its original use. Once rehabilitated, the existing building can be used to accommodate administrative and office space, artist’s studios and dirty space. It can facilitate shared classroom and meeting spaces for programming partners for the remaining tenant or tenants. Retaining this building will help conserve a significant piece of North Vancouver heritage, and maintaining its public use will increase accessibility and exposure to this heritage by the community.

It is also important to note that the City has adopted the LEED Green Building Rating System as part of its ongoing sustainability program to reduce environmental impact, save energy and reduce operational costs as well as provide long term benefits for the community. The minimum acceptable building standard for all newly constructed civic buildings and all such civic building projects classified as ‘Major Renovation’ projects is LEED Silver with exceptions made for Registered Heritage Properties. Through its point system, LEED recognizes the reuse of existing buildings and materials.

To strive for the conservation of significant heritage resources, as appropriate, through the City’s Heritage Program. **(OCP 4.10.1)**

To increase the lifespan of new and existing development by considering adaptive re-use of buildings **(OCP 8.7.4)**

## Recommendations for the Buildings

It is recommended that the garages be removed and that both Presentation House and Anne MacDonald Hall be retained on site and conserved to maintain and enhance their status as important heritage and cultural buildings in the community. A Conservation Plan should be implemented to identify a strategy for their conservation according to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

The governing strategy for the plan should be rehabilitation although aspects of preservation and restoration may be included where appropriate. These terms are defined by the Standards and Guidelines as follows:

**Conservation:** all actions or processes that are aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of a cultural resource so as to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life. This may involve “Preservation,” “Rehabilitation,” “Restoration,” or a combination of these actions or processes.

**Preservation:** the action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, forms, and integrity of a historic place or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

**Rehabilitation:** the action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of a historic place or an individual component, through repair, alterations, and/or additions, while protecting its heritage value.

**Restoration:** the action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.

In order for future accommodation of cultural tenants on the site individually or in combination, the following recommendations are made for the Conservation Plan:

- That Anne MacDonald Hall be preserved in form, but relocated on the existing site. It is currently reasonably well maintained and in good condition, and has already been relocated to this site. It is a heavily used facility and many options exist for connecting it to the rest of the site. If necessary, it may be relocated to another site, but it is recommended to retain Anne MacDonald Hall in the study area, for arts & cultural uses.
- That Presentation House be rehabilitated for compatible contemporary use while protecting its heritage value through the revealing and stabilizing of existing materials. Where they do not exist, individual components may be represented. A period of significance should be determined to which the building form can be returned. This may be either its form as Central School including the upper storey or its predominant form as City Hall including the addition to the south. The building is currently a good example of

the evolution of a civic building that has been continually renovated in order to remain in use. It is recommended that it be pared down to a simple form that can be used for purposes more closely related to those originally intended. Because the current condition of the building requires major renovations, the interior can, at the same time, be reconfigured to accommodate these new uses.

These actions will free more site area for purpose-built cultural facilities. Functional components of any new cultural facilities, such as administration offices, shops, rehearsal rooms, teaching and meeting spaces, could still be housed in the rehabilitated Presentation House building where appropriate.

A structural assessment of the buildings is necessary to determine their structural integrity, the ability of Anne MacDonald Hall to be relocated and the potential for returning Presentation House to an earlier form. It is recommended that a qualified Heritage Consultant be involved in this process to collaborate with engineering on structural and building condition assessments. This consultant can analyze and assess the buildings’ evolution and thereby guide decisions regarding the most workable and authentic conservation period. They can also develop a rehabilitation plan, in conjunction with an architectural design team, to recommend appropriate conservation practices and to provide a plan for on-going maintenance.

Because of the space requirements for the PH Theatre, NV Museum and PH Gallery, it is unlikely that all three will be able to coexist on the current site. It is possible and even desirable for two to remain, while the third relocates to another site at the waterfront or in central or upper Lonsdale. An advantage of maintaining one or more of these uses on the site is that the Provincial encumbrance for cultural use is satisfied. If the encumbrance can be removed, new commercial uses could be introduced to the development. Based on the surrounding pattern of use, commercial would be most suited to W 3rd Street. Residential use could also be introduced to the W 4th Street area of the site, but only if the cultural use of that part of the property is not theatre-related. The late-night activities of theatres do not pair well with adjacent residential use.

While the addition of a residential component to the site would help to pay for the new facilities, it would compromise the available density for new facilities (see below). Incorporating a significant residential component would require removal of the Provincial encumbrance, possibly rezoning the site to allow for additional FSR, and working with the public to determine an acceptable building height.

Approximately 6,645 m<sup>2</sup> (71,526 sf) of area is available on the site to be developed as a result of the density transfer bank. While the intention was to sell off this density to raise funds to restore the existing building, it may be used on the site to accommodate new facilities.

A portion may still be sold and put towards the new facilities. Maintaining all or part of the existing buildings increases the amount of buildable area on the site. Returning to the Central School form will allow for an additional 730 m<sup>2</sup> (7,858 sf) of buildable area. Returning to the City Hall form will allow for an additional 1,586 m<sup>2</sup> (17,072 sf). The area currently designated as park space (836 m<sup>2</sup>/9,000 sf) can be relocated elsewhere on the site.

If the PH Theatre, as recommended, and the NV Museum or PH Gallery remain on the site, they should be accommodated in new, purpose-built facilities, and sited in relation to the existing Presentation House Centre after rehabilitation. The ideal location for a new facility is on the southeast corner of the site at the intersection of 3rd Street and Chesterfield Avenue because of its high visibility and views to the harbor. A second facility could be located to the west of the existing PH Centre. Parking should be accommodated on the site, in a secure underground lot to serve all facilities. The existing Presentation House Arts Centre can be used by the current tenants during their transition to new facilities regardless of whether they are on the existing site or elsewhere.

1. Presentation House Site should be retained for cultural use.

Historically, 333 Chesterfield Avenue has been used for cultural or institutional purposes in accord with the Provincial encumbrance. As City-owned land in Lower Lonsdale it should be retained for cultural use and to help create a cultural neighbourhood.

2. At least one of the current Presentation House tenants should remain on the site in new, purpose-built facilities.

The current Presentation House tenants have a history on this site, and retaining one or more of them here will provide a strong boundary and destination for a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale. Both the site area and the available density exist on this site for 1 or 2 new facilities while retaining some portion of the existing heritage building.

As determined in Chapter Two, Presentation House Theatre should remain on this site in a new, purpose-built facility.

It is possible for Presentation House Gallery to remain as well in a new facility, provided the park space is relocated on the site, the lane location is addressed, the storage garages are demolished and parking is provided on site.

To maximize the potential of this large site for arts and cultural purposes, independent of any cultural neighbourhood goals, the best option is to create an arts centre, or cultural campus, that links a new theatre and gallery with a rehabilitated centre for arts administration, studios, rehearsals and meetings.

3. Part of Presentation House Arts Centre should be rehabilitated and Anne MacDonald Hall retained on the site.

As an important heritage and cultural building in the community, part of Presentation House Centre should be rehabilitated. With the help of a Heritage Consultant and structural assessment, it should be returned to an earlier form and used for purposes more closely related to the original building: cultural administration offices, shops, studios, a rehearsal room, teaching and meeting spaces.

This will help to animate both the building and site throughout the day and evening while maintaining part of North Vancouver’s built heritage. It will also allow for phasing of the project so that there is no interruption of the current tenants’ programming. The building will accommodate them until their new facilities are built.

Anne MacDonald Hall should be retained on the site but may be relocated to accommodate new facilities. The rehabilitation of Presentation House Centre and Anne MacDonald Hall promote the City’s goals for heritage conservation and creating a sense of place as identified in the Official Community Plan.

Retaining the site, maximizing its cultural uses and enhancing its historical significance provides the opportunity to act as municipal stewards of culture, heritage and sustainability.

Support strategies that develop, support and celebrate the City’s distinctive cultural identity. (pg.14 OCP 4.10.10)

