

Plans for North Vancouver museum resurrected

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A couple of months ago, the North Vancouver Museum's proposal to move to a spiffy new waterfront site was quashed by its council.

But the dream didn't die. The museum approached Polygon, which was developing a mid-rise tower next to Lonsdale Quay.

A new plan was hatched where the museum would take over a floor in the tower, and Monday night, North Van council asked Polygon to incorporate the museum into the building.

Polygon is now revising the plans for the mixed-use development at 131 West Esplanade, which is largely on a parking lot beside Lonsdale Quay.

The building was to be 12 storeys, but if approved, will be a floor-and-a-half taller. Essentially, Polygon will get to build an extra storey of condos in return for handing over a 15,000-square-foot space for the museum. The floor had been previously slated to be offices.

The proposal that was rejected Jan. 25 was to move the museum into an old Pipe Shop at the foot of Lonsdale, which would have cost around \$10 million.

North Vancouver council had asked the museum to raise \$5 million by Dec. 31, 2015, and said it would match it. The museum raised more than \$3 million, but council decided it wasn't enough and rejected the Pipe Shop proposal.

Sanford Osler of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives Commission said the new location has similar attributes to the Pipe Shop, and will probably be cheaper.

"When we were turned down in January, we started thinking about what other opportunities there might be," said Osler.

“The Polygon Homes development looked like a very good fit, from our perspective. Similar size, similar location, and it had some advantages in terms of being only one floor and less capital cost.

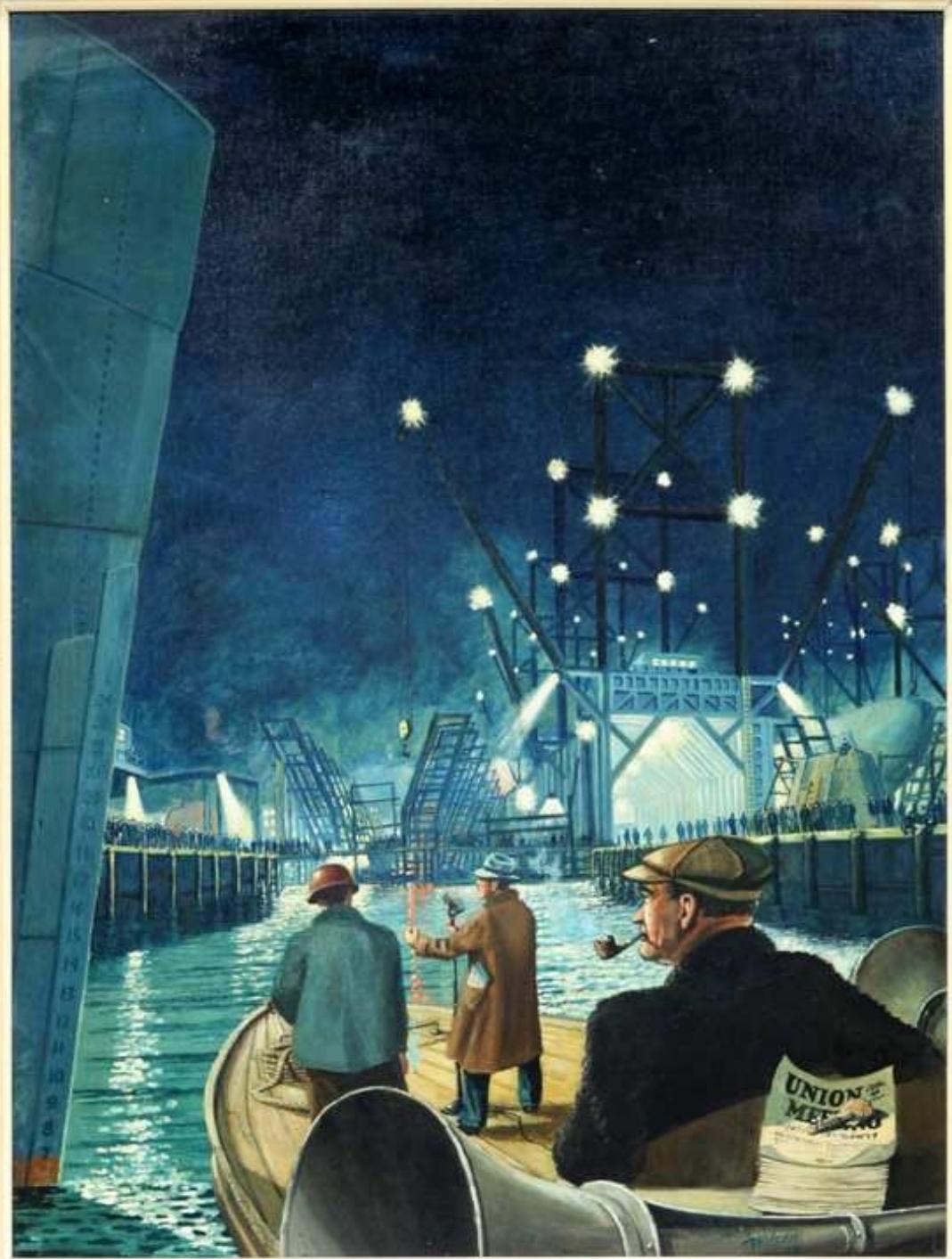
“So we approached them to see if they might be interested, and they were.”

Polygon is already involved in the area as the major sponsor of the new Presentation House Gallery on the North Vancouver waterfront, which will be called the Polygon Gallery. Polygon president Neil Chrystal feels the museum will be a nice fit into the developing neighbourhood.

“I think the neat thing (is that) in Lower Lonsdale, there’s a real entertainment and cultural precinct being developed,” he said.

“From our perspective, we’re effectively trading a floor of office for a smaller floor of residential. It’s a zero-sum game for us, other than that we get a museum at the base of our building, which is a nicer amenity to have.”

The new museum would be about three times larger than the current museum, which is located in the old North Vancouver city hall building at 209 West 4th St.”



The 1944 Fraser Wilson painting **Organization** is among 18,000 artifacts in the North Vancouver Museum and

Archives collection. It depicts a union leader speaking to workers at a Vancouver shipyard during the Second World War, when local shipyards produced many “Victory Ships.” P N G

North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto said the new proposal is a better fit than the rejected one. “It looks like more of a local museum, a museum appropriate for North Vancouver,” said Mussatto.

“It’s not one of those big regional plans that’s going to cost tens of millions of dollars; it looks like it’s scaled down slightly.”

The site is on a slope, so the museum would be on the first floor of the tower on Esplanade, but on the second floor from Cattie Cates Court, the street beside Lonsdale Quay. There will be retail stores along Cattie Cates and 106 condos in the tower.

The old Starbucks building at the corner of Esplanade and Rogers would be demolished for the project, but the Coronation Block at 105-111 West Esplanade won’t be affected. Built in 1911, the handsome two-storey brick building is on North Vancouver’s heritage register.

The proposal will still have to go through a rezoning and public hearing. Chrystal hopes to have the revised plan to council by May 20 or 27. If it is approved, pre-sales for the Promenade at the Quay project could begin this summer and the building could be ready for 2019.

