



July 21, 2016

**Regina City Council**  
 City of Regina  
 2476 Victoria Avenue  
 Regina, SK S4P 3C8

**RE: Official Community Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment and Discretionary Use Applications (15-OCP-02) – Mixed-Use Building - 3504 – 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 2064 Elphinstone Street**

Attention Mr. Mayor and City Councilors:

On behalf of Heritage Regina, we are writing to express our concern regarding the proposed demolition and redevelopment of a group of buildings on the corner of 13th Avenue and Elphinstone Street. Although Heritage Regina does not oppose the demolition of the buildings located at 3500 - 3514 13th Avenue, we do oppose the demolition of the house at 2064 Elphinstone St. to make room for parking. In addition, we oppose the current design of the structure that being proposed for that corner.

Specifically, it is Heritage Regina's position that the proposed structure is too tall for that part of the neighbourhood. The Cathedral Area Neighbourhood Plan shows this intersection is where the community transitions from commercial and higher density uses to the east into single family homes to the west. By developing a four- story structure in that location, it will overshadow everything that is to the west and north of its location. It would be the first building of this height in the neighborhood and we fear that it will set precedence for any future development in that area. **As outlined in the community plan, the height of a proposed development should relate to the individual neighbourhood character and the height and scale of adjacent buildings to avoid an overwhelming or dominating appearance of new structures.**

The City has already identified the portion of the Cathedral Area north of Victoria Avenue, between Elphinstone St. and Albert Street, as the Inner City Infill Area where higher density developments will be encouraged over the coming years. This development, as it is being currently proposed, would be more suited for within that area. Restricting proposed developments like these; to blocks with existing concentrations of medium density housing will preserve the integrity of other blocks of a lower density house-form character. Therefore, Heritage Regina recommends that this new structure should be no more than 3 stories.

By reducing the current design to 3 stories, the number of parking stalls required would also be reduced. By reducing the number of parking stalls required, it is our belief that the house located at 2064 Elphinstone St. would no longer require demolition. This 100+ year old house is in good shape for its age and should be preserved. We recognize this home is not designated as a heritage building, however, we believe the demolition of yet another character home further deteriorates the integrity of the neighbourhood. The 3 story structure will also quadruple the number of residential units that are

currently there and therefore will more than meet the infill guidelines that developers are encouraged to do.

The developer has expressed concern that reducing the scope of the project to three stories will result in the project not being financially viable. Heritage Regina does not believe his comments are valid. There are several examples of similar projects developed in recent years that are 3 stories or less - for example, the project at 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Edward St. consists of 6 - 2 story townhouses on a similar sized lot. There is also the Badham Boulevard project on Broad Street that consists of commercial on the main level and 2 stories of residential; it also includes underground parking which adds extensive costs to the project. If both of these projects are able to provide a good return on their investments, then the project on 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Elphinstone St. should be able to do as well with only three stories. Heritage Regina is not opposed to the development of financially viable buildings, but we are against when it destroys the integrity of our neighbourhoods.

Heritage Regina Board members represent Regina citizens who are concerned about supporting the conservation of Regina's heritage neighbourhoods and buildings. We urge you to deny this request as currently presented and to encourage the property owner to consider alternatives that are sensitive to the neighbourhood.

Heritage Regina promotes developments that show sensitivity to and value the established community, encourages property appreciation, and value quality of life for nearby residents. The Cathedral Neighbourhood has a distinctive character and an identity and a sense of place; buildings which are designed and located in the public realm contribute to a better neighbourhood experience. Projects like these should not be rubber stamped because it brings development and money into the city. Development should be controlled and show sensitivity to the neighbourhood and to the people who live and work in it.

Some people, including Heritage Regina, believe that the Cathedral Heritage Management Strategy is outdated but until it has been revised; it is the document that still must be followed. A person wouldn't change the rules of a football game partway through a game because they believe they are no longer relevant to today's game. A person would wait until after the season to review and consult and make sure they get it right. Until then, the rules must still be followed. In this case, the Cathedral Heritage Management Strategy must be followed.

The developer has indicated that he won't be starting his project for at least another 2 years until the economy has improved and the city's vacancy rate has dropped. Therefore, this project may never go ahead and we may end up with the same situation that exists now on the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Robinson Street - an empty lot. With this in mind, there is the opportunity to wait until the developer is ready to proceed to ask for approval of his project. This will give the city time to review the Cathedral Heritage Management Strategy with the community and to bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The developer has also expressed concern that the basement in the house at 2064 Elphinstone St. is completely shot and that the house will need to be torn down anyway. Once again, we don't agree with his argument as an estimated 75% of all the houses in the Cathedral have or are experiencing basement problems. In the majority of cases, the homeowners replace, brace or fix them. Is it the city's position that all houses with basement problems in the Cathedral area be bulldozed?

It is time this Administration & Council enforce the official city plan and the Cathedral Heritage Management Strategy, as voted on and passed at previous council meetings and take a stand against developments like these. We urge you to honor the time and effort of the individuals who worked on the Community Plan and the Design Regina plan as well as the tax payer's dollars that went into development of these plans.

The City of Regina has agreed to conserve, protect and support its cultural resources, historic places, civic identity and intercultural dialogue as important civic elements with broad and meaningful social, economic and cultural outcomes. The decisions you make today will have a profound effect on this portion of the neighbourhood well into the future therefore we implore you to be leaders in heritage conservation, stand by the Official Community Plan which you asked the citizens of Regina to support and that you so proudly voted for. Once again, we implore you to be leaders in heritage conservation and amend or deny this proposal as presented.

Sincerely,

Jackie Schmidt  
President  
Heritage Regina