



RPC25-32Heritage Demolition- 2184 12th Avenue

Subject: Support for Façade Preservation – Credit Foncier Building, 2184 12th Avenue

In response to the demolition application for the Credit Foncier Building at 2184 12th Avenue, Heritage Regina recognizes the challenges associated with maintaining aging heritage structures, particularly those impacted by the 2023 Gordon Block fire. However, we strongly encourage the City and the property owner to pursue a stabilization and façade-bracing solution rather than full demolition.

The Credit Foncier Building is a key architectural element within the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District. Its Tyndall stone façade contributes significantly to the character, continuity, and pedestrian experience of 12th Avenue. At a time when the district has already suffered substantial loss — including the Novia Café and the Burns Hanley Building — preserving this remaining façade is more important than ever to maintain the integrity of the streetscape and the collective memory of the area.

Heritage best practices are clear:

- Conserve the heritage value of a historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter intact or repairable character-defining elements.
- Do not move or discard parts of a historic place if their current location and relationship to the streetscape are themselves character-defining elements.
- Conserve changes to a historic place that, over time, have become character-defining.
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach that starts with retention, repair, and stabilization, rather than removal.
- Protect and, if necessary, stabilize a historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Where there is potential for disturbance of archaeological resources, they should be protected and preserved in place; where disturbance is unavoidable, mitigation measures must be taken to limit damage and loss of information.

We also know that saving a façade is both practical and proven. A powerful precedent exists in the case of St. Boniface Cathedral. After the 1908 building was devastated by fire, the front façade, portions of the side walls,

and the entire sacristy were underpinned and retained. The cathedral still stands on its original site, and the stone ruins of the 1908 structure have been stabilized for decades without major alteration. This example shows that, with commitment and careful engineering, a damaged but significant structure can be safely preserved and meaningfully integrated into future use, rather than erased.

In the case of the Credit Foncier Building, the street-facing Tyndall stone walls are precisely these character-defining elements. We therefore recommend that the two outer walls be carefully braced and retained until a long-term redevelopment plan can be implemented. This approach allows for safety and site stabilization while preserving an irreplaceable architectural feature for future integration into new construction.

Importantly, retaining the Credit Foncier façade does not prevent the development of the proposed park behind it. It may introduce some logistical challenges or minor inconveniences during construction, but it does not fundamentally limit or change the ability to create a successful public space. In fact, incorporating the historic façade as an edge or backdrop to the park could strengthen the sense of place and reinforce the heritage character of the Victoria Park district.

Maintaining the façade would also demonstrate the City's commitment to the goals outlined in its own Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District Bylaw — primarily to protect and enhance the district's heritage character and sense of place.

One reason we fear this building may not be saved, is that we are even debating an outcome that runs counter to the Government of Canada's our own stated standards and guidelines. The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places, the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District policies, and the professional recommendations sought by the City of Regina of Donald Luxton & Associates all clearly support conservation, stabilization, and retention of character-defining elements. This is not a building that was simply left to decay; Luxton & Associates have confirmed that this was not a poorly maintained structure. The fact that full demolition is on the table at all is deeply concerning.

In addition to its heritage significance, the environmental cost of demolishing and disposing of this character-defining resource is substantial. Demolition would send tons of reusable stone and historic material to the landfill, generating unnecessary waste and emissions. Retaining and adapting the existing structure is not only a matter of cultural preservation — it is also an act of environmental responsibility consistent with sustainable development principles.

It is our shared responsibility — as City Administration, Heritage Regina, and citizens of Regina — to uphold the bylaws and conservation standards enacted to support, secure, and protect these important historical resources. Together, we can ensure that the district's remaining heritage assets are treated with the respect, foresight, and stewardship they deserve.

Heritage Regina supports thoughtful, adaptive reuse of heritage materials and encourages that any interim site plan prioritizes both public safety and the retention of key heritage elements, with the braced Credit Foncier façade as a central feature.

Therefore, Heritage Regina support option 1 with changes to retaining the two outer walls in place.



President

Heritage Regina