



## RPC25-32 Heritage Demolition- 2184 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Your Worship and Members of Council,

Heritage Regina continues to strongly advocate for the preservation *in place* of the two Tyndall stone walls of the Credit Foncier Building at 2184 12th Avenue—an important and character-defining resource within the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District (VPHCD).

Our request is clear and reasonable:

**Retain and underpin the two Tyndall stone façades**, allowing the remainder of the building to be removed or redeveloped as needed to accommodate the City’s proposed Skuare Park and the property owner’s long-term plans.

This approach fully aligns with the VPHCD Bylaw and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, both of which direct municipalities and owners to conserve heritage resources *in place* whenever possible.

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### 1. Clarifying Ownership and Context

It is essential for Council and the public to understand that the buildings adjacent to the Credit Foncier site are owned by a Developers, while Credit Foncier is owned by private individuals entirely.

This distinction matters, because:

- The owner of the Credit Foncier Building is *not* the source of past demolition applications for neighboring properties.
- The destruction of the Burns-Hanley Building and the Gordon Block—both lost within the last year—makes the preservation of this remaining heritage resource even more urgent.

We cannot continue losing heritage buildings downtown at this rate without permanently altering the character and cultural identity of the district.

## 2. Why the Façade Must Be Saved

The Credit Foncier Building holds heritage value *because of its location*, streetscape presence, and materials—not simply because of its age. According to the **Standards and Guidelines**:

- **“Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter intact or repairable character-defining elements.”**
- **“Do not move a part of a historic place if its location is a character-defining element.”**
- **“Protect and, if necessary, stabilize a historic place until subsequent intervention is undertaken.”**

The two Tyndall stone walls **are** the character-defining elements. They are intact, structurally stabilizable, and remain in their original, meaningful location.

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## 3. This Is Not a Maintenance Failure

Donald Luxton & Associates—the City’s own contracted heritage consultants—confirmed that the building was **not suffering from years of neglect or lack of maintenance**.

The damage is attributable to:

- The 2023 Gordon Block fire, which spread heat and impacted the adjacent structure
- Vandalism and forced entry during the prolonged vacancy
- Exposure by water and smoke cause by fighting the adjacent fire

None of these conditions justify demolition under heritage policy. Vandalism is **never** an acceptable reason for removing a designated heritage element. In fact, *active sites* deter vandalism far better than empty spaces.

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## 4. Demolition Option #1 Is Too Easily Exploited

In the City’s own proposed Option #1, the final sentence states that the building may be:

**“Carefully dismantled when feasible and salvaged for future development where practical.”**

“Feasible” and “Practical” are loopholes large enough to ensure the façade is **never** reconstructed, never integrated, and never returned to the district.

This would effectively erase the heritage value the bylaw was created to protect.

Representing the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District does **not** mean piling Tyndall stone into a cairn and placing a plaque that says:

*“Here lies the site of the Credit Foncier Building.”*

A plaque is not preservation.  
A rubble pile is not conservation.  
A façade in its original place **is**.

## 5. Preserving the Façade Does Not Impede the New Skuare Park

Some have suggested that retaining the Tyndall stone walls may interfere with developing the park behind the building. This is incorrect.

- The façade sits along 12th Avenue, **not** inside the future park footprint.
- The park can be fully built behind it without obstruction.
- Many world-class public squares incorporate preserved heritage façades—enhancing the space, not limiting it.

A braced and or a pinned stabilized façade will **frame** the park and create a richer sense of place than an empty lot or temporary landscaping ever could.

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## 6. Economic & Cultural Benefit

Preserving heritage buildings is not simply about honouring the past. It is a strategy that supports economic development, strengthens community identity, and advances environmental sustainability.

- They attract businesses, foot traffic, and tourism.
  - They increase neighbouring property values.
  - They reduce vacancy and contribute to safety.
  - They provide authenticity—something new construction cannot replicate.
  - A vibrant downtown needs buildings, not gravel pads.
  - A streetscape with history draws people; an empty site does not.
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## 7. Environmental Responsibility

Demolition is not environmentally neutral.

Sending the Credit Foncier Building to the landfill carries:

- Massive embodied-energy loss
- Large transportation costs
- Embodied carbon losses
- Significant unnecessary waste

Stabilizing the existing stone walls aligns with Regina’s environmental targets and the federal green-building standards that emphasize reuse over new construction.

## 8. Precedent: St. Boniface Cathedral, Winnipeg

The St. Boniface Cathedral offers a powerful example:

- After fire destroyed the 1908 structure, the façade, portions of the side walls, and the sacristy were stabilized and underpinned.

- These elements remain today—beautiful, striking, and meaningful.
- The ruins have suffered no major deterioration since stabilization **114** years ago
- A modern building was constructed far *behind* the preserved heritage walls.

This model demonstrates exactly what is possible for Credit Foncier:  
a preserved façade blended with a modern redevelopment, without impeding site use.

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## Conclusion

### **Retention, stabilization, and bracing of the two Tyndall stone walls of the Credit Foncier Building, preserved in place.**

This approach:

- Protects a character-defining resource
- Respects national Standards and Guidelines
- Allows the Skuare Park to be developed as planned
- Maintains continuity of the streetscape
- Prevents another avoidable heritage loss
- Supports economic and cultural vitality downtown
- Demonstrates municipal leadership in heritage stewardship

**In conclusion, heritage districts create value far beyond the buildings themselves.** Their presence boosts the vitality and market strength of nearby non-heritage properties, a benefit consistently observed in cities with well-preserved historic areas. When combined with the social benefits these districts provide — fostering identity, connection, and cultural vibrancy — and the environmental value gained by retaining embedded energy and avoiding demolition waste, the cumulative impact is unmistakable. Heritage conservation delivers returns that exceed economic measures alone, strengthening the city in ways that are financial, social, and sustainable.

We owe it to the city, to future generations, and to the values enshrined in our own bylaws to protect what remains. Heritage Regina asks Council to uphold the purpose and integrity of the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District by saving this façade in place.



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