
Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Peggy Sarjeant - Saskatoon Heritage Society - Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment - CK 710-49
Attachments: knox_united_church_heritage_designation_bylaw_amendment_public_hearing_submission_feb_2021.docx

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:25 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Peggy Sarjeant - Saskatoon Heritage Society - Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment - CK 710-49

Submitted on Thursday, February 18, 2021 - 22:25

Submitted values are:

Date Thursday, February 18, 2021
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Peggy
Last Name Sarjeant
Phone Number
Email
Address University Drive
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Saskatoon Heritage Society
Subject Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment
Meeting (if known) City Council Public Hearing
Comments
Please find attached a letter from the Saskatoon Heritage Society regarding the Knox Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment. I have asked to speak at the Public Hearing
Attachments
[knox_united_church_heritage_designation_bylaw_amendment_public_hearing_submission_feb_2021.docx](#)

Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment to be Considered at a Public Hearing to held on February 22nd 2021

Submission by Peggy Sarjeant on behalf of the Saskatoon Heritage Society

To the Mayor and Members of Council

Although this Public Hearing concerns the subdivision of designated heritage property and the revocation of heritage status from one portion, it is impossible to separate that discussion from the development being proposed for the site. This is tacitly acknowledged by the City since their report includes references to the relationship of the proposed development to Knox United Church and to St John's Cathedral.

Provided the zoning requirements listed by the Development Appeals Board are met, subdivision will allow the development to go ahead with no further input from the public. Currently, **this is the only opportunity the public has to have their voices heard.** We respectfully request that Council give due consideration to the many letters of concern Council has received related to this matter.

The Saskatoon Heritage Society understands the financial needs of the Knox congregation and is not opposed to development on the proposed site; however, we believe that any development should be respectful of its heritage neighbours. We disagree with the City and the developer that the proposal will have no negative impact on the heritage value of Knox United Church and St John's Cathedral. Its placement on the site obscures the south façade of Knox and overwhelms both churches, reducing their status as Saskatoon landmarks, a key reason behind their designation as heritage sites.

We explain our concerns more fully in our earlier submission to the Planning, Development and Community Services Committee Dec. 8th 2020. The submission is attached to the end of this letter.

According to the City report, the applicant has provided a draft Heritage Impact Statement as per the Civic Heritage Policy; however, we are unaware of its status and where the Impact Statement is currently residing within the City Administration. We believe a Heritage Impact Statement should be provided at the outset of a development proposal and be part of the public process. We look forward to reading the Heritage Impact Statement provided.

The discussion surrounding this proposed development has brought to light several gaps and a lack of clarity within the Civic Heritage Policy. We hope that it will lead to a much needed Heritage Policy review.

Clearly, there are many concerns amongst the heritage community and the public regarding the proposed development on the Knox site. There has also been a lot of confusion and

misunderstanding about the process of approval for such a development. This has led to considerable frustration amongst the public. The lack of any public engagement strategy has fueled the situation.

These concerns cannot be separated from this application to subdivide the Knox United Church Property.

We, therefore, urge Council to deny approval of the Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw Amendment at this time, to allow for further exploration of how development on the site can align with the goal of celebrating our heritage assets.

What happens on this site is of interest to a wide spectrum of the Saskatoon population and will set a pattern for the future. We need to get it right.

Sincerely,

Peggy Sarjeant

President, Saskatoon Heritage Society

ADDENDUM

**Knox United Church Heritage Designation Bylaw No 8232 Amendment
To be Considered at Planning, Development and Community Services Standing Committee
Tuesday December 8th 2020
Submission by Peggy Sarjeant on behalf of the Saskatoon Heritage Society**

The site under consideration for subdivision is one of the most sensitive sites in Saskatoon from an architectural, heritage and cultural perspective. Any development will have an impact, not only on the two historic churches abutting the site and on their cultural setting, but also on the pedestrian experience along Spadina Crescent. It will set a precedent for development along the Spadina corridor.

Although any development should be considered in this wider context, we shall restrict our remarks to the narrower focus of the proposed Bylaw amendment.

Agreement to this Bylaw Amendment will clear the way for the proposed development to go ahead, provided zoning requirements are met. It is impossible, therefore, to regard subdivision of the property as a mere technicality and separate it from consideration of the development itself. There is tacit acknowledgment of this fact in the City's report.

Let's be clear, the Saskatoon Heritage Society is not opposed to development on this site. We recognize the financial needs of the Knox congregation and we recognize the City's desire for increased residential density downtown. The Society's concerns lie in the placement of the tower on the site, its relationship to the two heritage churches and in how this massive structure fits within the site. Surely, a building with a smaller footprint would be more appropriate. It would remove the sense of overcrowding which is very evident with the current proposal.

We disagree with both the City and the developer in their assertion that there would be no impact on the heritage value of Knox United Church and St John's Cathedral. It is stated quite clearly in the designation Bylaws and elsewhere that a key heritage value lies in the churches' significance as Saskatoon landmarks. The proposed tower would overwhelm and diminish the status of both buildings. The impact would be the greater on Knox Church whose south façade would be significantly obscured by the tower and its south - facing stained glass window, one of its character-defining elements, unable to be appreciated.

We are still worried about the proximity of the proposed development to the walls and foundation of Knox, despite the developer's verbal assurance that there shouldn't be a problem. Other concerns relate to our winter climate. The shadow from the tower will fall over the south side of the church roof – this can be seen in the renderings provided by the developer. Will this lead to ice-damming in the winter? Will lack of winter sunlight lead to freeze-thaw within the masonry assemblies of the church? Will the change of airflow, brought about by such a tall structure, lead to snow build - up between the two buildings?

The Heritage Society is calling for a development that respects and complements Knox United Church and St John's Cathedral. Toronto has implemented *Tall Building Design Guidelines*, which it would be useful to consider. (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/96ea-cityplanning-tall-buildings-may2013-final-AODA.pdf>)

Principles include:

- *promote harmonious fit and compatibility with the existing and planned context, emphasizing relationships to lower-scale buildings, parks and open space;*
- *conserve and integrate adjacent and on-site heritage properties so that new tall buildings are sympathetic to, and compatible with, the heritage property;*

In more detail, the guidelines state that when a tall building abuts a heritage property, it must

“respect and complement the scale, character, form and setting of on-site and adjacent properties”.

Toronto also uses extensive public consultation when sensitive sites with an impact on the public realm are involved.

Unfortunately, Saskatoon has no such guidelines but does have a Heritage Policy in which it states that the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* must be followed when assessing interventions on heritage sites – and we need to remember that the Knox Church property is a heritage site. The Standards talk about visual relationships and context and the need to ensure that new construction does not have a negative impact on character defining materials and forms. We would suggest that, in this instance, the *Standards and Guidelines* are not being followed.

The proposed development will have a huge impact on much loved heritage buildings and also on the ambience of the public realm. It is causing much controversy and heartache. Sadly, there was no public engagement process which could have helped guide the development in its early stages. It is not too late, however, to bring the parties together to voice their concerns and to discuss other options and opportunities for the site. The City, in its Civic Heritage Policy, has already suggested this approach to

resolve difficult situations, when looking at heritage landscapes. Section 4.6 (c) of the Policy states that “The City will work to achieve a balance between competing needs ... The City will involve other interested parties in the process ... “.

- **In a spirit of cooperation, we request that the City convene a meeting of interested parties at the earliest opportunity and a minimum of six weeks prior to the Bylaw Amendment being brought before City Council, thereby allowing time for additional discussion**

With open minds and some creative thinking, we believe that a development is possible that will be more sensitive to the two heritage churches and their cultural setting and will not overcrowd Knox United Church, while, at the same time, contributing to the vitality of downtown and to the financial security of the church.

What happens on this site is of interest to a wide spectrum of the Saskatoon population and will set a pattern for the future. I am sure that we can all agree that we need to get it right.