
Application for Municipal Heritage Property Designation – Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory (950 Spadina Crescent East)

Recommendation

That a report be forwarded to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services with a recommendation to City Council:

1. That the City Solicitor be requested to prepare and bring forward a bylaw to designate the property at 950 Spadina Crescent East as a Municipal Heritage Property under the provision of *The Heritage Property Act*, with such designation limited to the exterior of the building and the interior lobby;
2. That the General Manager, Community Services Department, be requested to prepare the required notices for advertising the proposed designation; and
3. That \$2,500 be allocated from the Heritage Reserve Fund for supply and installation of a recognition plaque for the property.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to consider a request by the City of Saskatoon to designate 950 Spadina Crescent East (Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory) as a Municipal Heritage Property.

Report Highlights

1. The Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory is a prominent concrete, masonry, and glass building located along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River at 950 Spadina Crescent East. The Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory was built in 1964.
2. The heritage value of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory resides in its Modernist architectural style with attributes that illustrate light, order, and open space. The building is also valued for its cultural significance and its association with Fred S. Mendel, a local industrialist and art enthusiast who was instrumental in the establishment of the building and the former art gallery.
3. A formal evaluation of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory was conducted. The Administration is recommending designation of 950 Spadina Crescent East as a Municipal Heritage Property. Designation would be limited to the exterior of the building and the interior lobby.
4. The City is currently in the process of reviewing potential options to enhance the Civic Conservatory portion of the building for functionality and future use.

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Strategic Goal

The report supports the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Quality of Life. As a community, we find new and creative ways to showcase our city's built, natural, and cultural heritage.

Background

The City is requesting Municipal Heritage Designation of this property. The property has been identified on the Saskatoon Register of Historic Places as a significant heritage resource.

Report

Description of the Historic Place

The design for the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory was the result of a nationwide design competition. The winning design was submitted by Blankstein, Coop, Gilmour, and Hanna of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Located at 950 Spadina Crescent East, across from Kinsmen Park, the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory offers a panoramic view of the South Saskatchewan River and features a mix of concrete, masonry, and glass building materials (see Attachment 1).

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory resides in its architecture, cultural importance, and historic association with Fred S. Mendel. The building's architecture exhibits the classic Modernist attributes of light, order, and open space. The building features large pure spatial volumes, and exhibits transparency with the exterior landscape and framed views of the river.

Fred S. Mendel, a local industrialist, was instrumental in the establishment of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory. After arriving in Saskatoon, Mendel established a company in 1940 called Intercontinental Packers. Mendel was an art collector and art enthusiast, and in the early 1960s, donated \$175,000 for the construction of a civic art gallery and conservatory at 950 Spadina Crescent East.

The Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory became one of the major collecting art galleries in Saskatchewan. In 1965, Mendel donated 13 paintings to the gallery, including paintings by the Group of Seven, which became the nucleus of the gallery's collection. Over the years, by donation and acquisition, the collection has grown to include many works by Saskatchewan, Canadian, and international artists in a variety of media forms and styles.

Additional information on the heritage value of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory is included in the Statement of Significance for the property (see Attachment 2). Photographs of the heritage resource are shown in Attachment 3.

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Evaluation

In 2011, civic staff and Derek Kindrachuk, a local architect, completed a Heritage Structure Evaluation (see Attachment 4). Based on that evaluation, the Administration is of the opinion that the property is eligible for designation as a Municipal Heritage Property. The following elements would be included in the designation:

- a) exterior of the building;
- b) interior main lobby;
- c) donor wall; and
- d) siting of the building in relation to the riverbank.

Civic Conservatory

In 2010, a condition assessment of the Civic Conservatory conducted by the Facilities and Fleet Management Division found that the original 1964 fibreglass roof needed replacement and that the wall glazing should be updated for aesthetic, operational, and energy usage considerations. Further to this, an Accessibility Audit was completed in 2014, which outlined the need for interior pathway widening, a power entrance door, and a passenger elevator or platform lift. Potential options, which may include restoration and/or an expansion to the building, are being reviewed to address current structural and accessibility issues while remaining sympathetic to the building's original character.

The designation of the Mendel Building and Civic Conservatory will not impact the plans of the Children's Discovery Museum. Representatives from Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture and the Children's Discovery Museum discussed the proposed changes to the building with the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee at its meeting on January 4, 2017. At that time, the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee was informed that the key heritage elements of the building would be retained.

Options to the Recommendation

City Council has the option of not designating this building as a Municipal Heritage Property.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Public and/or stakeholder consultations are not required.

Communication Plan

All Municipal Heritage Properties are marked with a bronze plaque on site that describes the heritage significance of the property.

Policy Implications

The recommendation within this report complies with Civic Heritage Policy No. C10-020.

Financial Implications

The amount of \$2,500 from the Heritage Reserve Fund would be allocated for the fabrication of the bronze plaque and installation on the property.

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Other Considerations/Implications

There are no environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

If City Council recommends designation of the property, a date for a public hearing will be set in accordance with the provisions in *The Heritage Property Act*.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Public Notice Policy No. C01-021, is not required.

If designation as a Municipal Heritage Property is recommended, the designation will be advertised in accordance with the provisions in *The Heritage Property Act*, which requires that the Notice of Intention to Designate be advertised at least 30 days prior to the public hearing.

Attachments

1. Location Plan
2. Statement of Significance
3. Photographs of Subject Property
4. Summary of Heritage Structure Evaluation – Character-Defining Elements

Report Approval

Written by: Catherine Kambeitz, Heritage and Design Coordinator, Planning and Development

Reviewed by: Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development

Approved by: Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department

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