

DE19-48
From the desks of
Tom Moore, Westmount Developments Ltd. and
George Tsiklis, Evia Group Inc.

Regina, Saskatchewan

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Date: March 20, 2019

To: His Worship Mayor Michael Fougere, Councilors Young, Hawkins, Stevens, Bresciani, Findura, Murray, Bryce, O'Donnell, Mancielli and Flagel of the City of Regina (via email to clerks@regina.ca)

Re: Residence at 3160 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan and the Heritage Holding Bylaw

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilors:

We wish to submit our thoughts with respect to the feasibility of restoring 3160 Albert Street. Attached to this letter is a brief bio of each of us, outlining our experience and specializations in residential construction and restoration. We welcome questions from his worship Mayor Fougere and our Councilors and will make ourselves to them available as necessary.

<<Before offering our thoughts, we should clarify our relationship to Carmen Lien, the homeowner. George Tsiklis met Carmen a few years ago because they attend the same church in Regina. They have never done business with each other. Tom just recently met Carmen, introduced to him by George. George and Tom have no interest, economic or otherwise, in 3160 Albert Street and are not being compensated for their professional opinion.>>

Why do we offer our opinion on this matter of 3160 Albert Street and its heritage value? We are passionate builders and restorers, and believe that Canada needs to lead the world in the areas of sustainability and quality of residential construction. We also enthusiastically believe in preserving properties that have historical value because of their higher quality construction and unique style.

We have reviewed the following documents with respect to this property: building inspector's report, engineer's structural review and report, contractor's estimate of restoration, and the City of Regina's Statement of Significance. It was very important to us to form our own opinion and on March 19th we made our own inspection of the home, both inside and out.

Our initial impressions can be summarized in the saying: 'good from far, but far from good.' The home's Tudor style and its unique tower are eye-catching. Upon closer inspection, we feel the front door and some of the interior millwork is exemplary. These elements are easily preserved or even replicated in new construction, and to a much higher standard using today's building materials, and with an

expectation that they will last a hundred years or more without significant deterioration. This is in stark contrast to what we currently see at 3160 Albert: a previously well-taken care of home in a serious state of disrepair, beyond the ability of the most talented restorer to renew, full of dangerous elements: asbestos and mixed electrical wiring, significant structural problems and terrible renovations over time that have permanently and irreparably compromised the home's beauty and safety.

The foundation has deteriorated so much that there's a 7-inch difference in height between one side of the home and the other. The walls throughout show significant cracks from this movement. There's been major water penetration on the west side of the house that cannot be fully assessed without removing cladding from both the interior and exterior. This has been going on for some time and we believe there may be significant mould issues as a result. Large amounts of moisture are entering the attic from improper venting and all the timbers of the roof show water damage – a completely new roof is needed. The single pane leaded glass windows have been covered with Plexiglas to try to stop water leaks. All windows would have to be replaced at significant cost. All the plumbing and mechanical systems are in an advanced state of disrepair and need replacement. The list goes on and on. Bottom line: it would cost much more to renovate the home than it would to build brand new. Just one example: It is simply not logical or practical for a private homeowner to spend over a million dollars on an old foundation before any other construction is done.

The current quotation of \$2.98M to renovate the home is inadequate, because there are significant costs that accompany the restoration of such an old home that cannot be known until the work begins. We believe the homeowner should be prepared to spend at least 20%-30% more than the estimate, \$3.58M - \$3.87M. Adding the purchase price to this amount could put the total cash outlay at \$4.5M. In our opinion, it makes no sense to repair an old house for double or even triple the price of the most expensive new comparably sized houses available in our city! It just doesn't make sense. Instead, building brand new, incorporating design elements of the current home, would cost significantly less and result in a home that is sustainable, longer lasting, and could preserve the legacy of the original owner in a unique way. We estimate that a new build on that location, assuming that same general footprint and design, would end up costing the homeowner between \$2.25M - \$2.55M.

In our opinion, even if the home was kept in good standing since 1929, the surprisingly low quality of the structural construction lacks the 'strong bones' needed to renovate/restore the home to any standard, let alone a modern one. The exterior of the home is only a veneer. The brick walls, for example, are not structural. We expected them to be, especially for a home of this size and importance. We appreciate that two talented professional organizations have provided a quotation to repair the structure and restore the home, but we think this is a complete waste of money, building materials, time,

and human resources and is the furthest thing from a green solution. Forcing the homeowner to restore this home will create a white elephant that will not achieve the goals of preserving its heritage.

Considering the facts about the state of the home, we would recommend a balanced approach that would take into account the following:

- Incorporating elements of the existing home in a new one.
- Working with the homeowner to come up with a design that honors the old, but welcomes the new using efficient and sustainable design that will last 100 years or more.
- A brand new basement that can handle the movement and water issues of the famous Regina 'gumbo' soil conditions necessitates demolition of the home and starting fresh.
- Considering the large size of the lot and its location on one of Regina's busiest streets, we recommend increasing density; perhaps the homeowner and city have some ideas about this.

We believe in the general concept and spirit of saving heritage properties; it's just that this one doesn't meet a standard of construction to be saved.

Sincerely,

Tom Moore and George Tsiklis

Founders and CEOs of Westmount Developments and Evia Group Inc., respectively

George Tsiklis brief bio:

George incorporated Evia Group Inc. in 2003, a trusted luxury home renovator in Toronto's most sought after core neighbourhoods, offering high touch, high tech and sustainable solutions. This included complete gutting, underpinning and restoring of century homes. What makes Evia Group unique is that all their work is reviewed and validated by third-party specialists who report directly to the homeowner.

Tom Moore brief bio:

Tom incorporated his firm, Westmount Developments Ltd. in 1978. He's been building custom luxury homes for over 40 years, and is well known for his significant contribution to Regina's residential landscape. He's built some of the nicest homes in Regina and the surrounding area.