



March 10, 2021

Members of the City Council,

RE: Options for Regulating Heritage and Architectural Design

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the document submitted to your committee by Planning and Development Services.

Heritage Regina's recommendation is to continue with the original August 26th directive to create a detailed plan for a control zone to protect heritage properties and heritage neighborhoods with heritage stakeholders and input via community engagement.

Our recommendation however, requires for an adjustment to the current schedule established by Administration for completing community plans. We feel that Cathedral/Crescents, Lakeview, Transitions/Centre Sq., and Heritage neighborhood plans should be the first to be completed and be made a priority within the current schedule. Considering that the Heritage Policy is about to be supplemented with several new or enhanced initiatives related to incentives and maintenance, it seems prudent to ensure that the neighbourhoods that stand to be most impacted by this enhanced heritage policy have their plans in place as soon as possible. Completing these neighbourhood plans first, would be the final piece that achieves what would then be a comprehensive and fully functional heritage policy.

Prioritizing these neighbourhoods would allow Council an opportunity to direct administration to include heritage as part of the planning process and introduce regulatory measures to support it. This would create an efficiency where-in community and stakeholder consultations for both processes could be combined and result in a comprehensive heritage component to each community plan.

The document submitted to the Planning Commission identifies several regulatory options for council/community to consider. One option is to rely on conventional zoning districts and the Infill Overlay Zone. Our concern with relying on these two zoning tools to protect the character of a neighbourhood is that through the available appeal process, the intent of these bylaws can be eroded over time as property owners/developers ask for exceptions based on their desire to maximize the value of their property or add developments that increase their economic gain. The City has done an admirable job in incorporating the needs and desires of the community and developers into the new Zoning and Infill Bylaws, but we have already seen proposals come forward that seek to significantly vary the elements that preserve neighbourhood character.

Identification and preservation of particular architectural themes and styles, addressing form and massing (e.g. height, setbacks, etc.) and preventing specific features and styles not compliant to the character and intent of the neighborhood are essential requirements to ensure the preservation of heritage neighbourhoods. Maintaining original buildings for their heritage value and preventing demolition with the realization that some demolition is okay if certain architectural objectives are respected in new buildings, supports land-use and build-form diversity while ensuring overall compatibility.

Aside from the Municipal Heritage Property Designations, Heritage Regina does not feel that any one of the remaining options presented will be comprehensive enough to preserve our built heritage. Therefore, we recommend two options used simultaneously to achieve this end. A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) to protect the existing heritage properties within a neighborhood and a Direct Control Zone to guide the infill within a heritage neighborhood and which could direct materials, colors, form and massing, and also apply to rehabilitation and repair when applicable. Utilizing these two options for neighbourhoods would create a comprehensive tool that allows flexibility and control.

A Heritage Conservation District would allow protections for heritage not yet assessed for designation and provide protection for Grade 2 assessed properties that are not eligible for full designation. This would help to address a concern with the current Heritage Policy as to the fate of those properties considered significant for the neighbourhood (Grade 2) but only considered for designation if the property owner wants to pursue it.

Combining a HCD with a Direct Control District (DCD) could supplement or replace the current Residential Infill Development Overlay Zone for heritage neighbourhoods. The DCD provides enhanced controls to ensure that new development fits within the character defining elements of a neighbourhood while allowing for a neighbourhood to be renewed. This option addresses concerns by citizens that demolition and new builds in our heritage neighbourhoods will not change the landscape such that we can no longer recognize these neighbourhoods as the oldest in our city. In addition, these control zones could be highly incentivised through the planned enhancements to the Heritage Incentives Policy.

The goal is to create a healthy heritage policy that builds in a mechanism to maintain the policy by adding and removing properties on a continual basis and expands to additional neighbourhoods as the city ages. The policy must be developed with stakeholder involvement, and include incentives for owners, plans for continual enforcement, and a provision to recognise sites when demolition is necessary but the desire to retain the

history of that location exists. Furthermore, a mechanism whereby changes of ownership of designated properties or properties within an HCD/DCD triggers the City Administration to notify the new owner of the Heritage Policy, including options to pursue designation and the Incentives Program. These components are essential to the success and longevity of that policy. Much work is underway by City Administration to this end but a HCD combined with a DCD would complete this policy and meet many of the objectives of the Official Community Plan and the Cultural Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackie Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jackie Schmidt