



## CATHEDRAL AREA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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Presentation to City Council

Feb. 10, 2021

Re. Bagshaw Residence

As proponents of a heritage designation for the Bagshaw Residence at 56 Angus Crescent, we were disappointed in the decision the provincial review board has reached, however, we appreciate their work and the thoughtful discussion that ensued.

Going forward we are in favor of a more public discussion of heritage and building restrictions for the neighborhood so that all views are well represented in addition to the important arguments made by Heritage Regina, developers, and property owners. This should inform any guidelines set in place by the City and help make it clear the expectations when looking to purchase, renovate or demolish properties on the heritage holding bylaw or construct infill housing more generally.

Through discussion of the Bagshaw Residence, some points became quite clear:

1. Residents are passionate about the historic properties that define our neighbourhood. The number of residents, including many living nearby the Bagshaw Residence, who have signed a citizens' petition against demolition is evidence of the level of concern about the future of our streetscapes.
2. The process could use additional independent expertise. At one time the City had an advisory committee that included architects, historians and conservationists. In the absence of those voices, assessments by qualified building conservators could provide alternative perspectives on how to rectify problems. A walk-through of a building by decision-makers who lack this specialized background, or engineering reports paid for by those seeking demolition, are not the best way to form decisions around historic significance and restoration planning, and are unlikely to gain full public trust.
3. The situation is growing more urgent as buildings age. The submission you received from the provincial Heritage Branch emphasized the cascading effect that demolition of the Bagshaw Residence may spark. The province's letter stated "there is potential for the loss of the entire block over time or the emergence of a 'saw-tooth' streetscape where one is left with one or two historically-significant properties left out of context amongst many modern structures." The Branch's submission further encouraged architectural

controls under Sec. 73 of the Planning and Development Act as a means to preserve the streetscape.

4. In addition to looking more closely at the tools already at the City's disposal for protecting heritage, a clear plan forward for ensuring responsible stewardship of homes on the Inventory List, and discouragement of demolitions, would be a useful discussion going forward. Demolitions carry a high public cost in terms of loss of heritage assets, an increased carbon footprint for the City, increased burden on our landfill, and loss of mature trees and green space as part of the demolition. Such costs should be calculated and reported to Council as part of the permit process, with an appropriate levy potentially placed on the owner if demolition proceeds. Too often the City looks at these as 'no cost' decisions when in fact the costs are considerable but simply not tallied, though formulae exist to do so.
5. Our central location has become desirable to property developers that make their daily bread from new construction, not restoration. It should be stated we generally welcome new developments as part of neighbourhood revitalization. However, similar to greenwashing, in a manner we often hear promises of 'affordable housing' and 'respectful design,' followed by developments that are anything but. It's not uncommon to hear the buildings referred to as infill, as if they sprouted on vacant lots instead of replacing existing character homes. We pointed out in our presentations that newly constructed buildings sometimes sit vacant for extended periods, presumably for reasons related to property speculation. We are not arguing this will be the case with the Bagshaw Residence -- only that awareness of this trend needs to be on Council's radar now and in the future, with ideas for mitigation as part of our community plan.

In closing, we thank you for your consideration of this issue and your attention to the future of the Cathedral Area. We look forward to working together on these pressing concerns in 2021.

Patricia Elliott