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Culture, Multi-culturalism and Status of Women  
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8820 112<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edmonton, AB T6G 2P8  
CANADA

Re. Scabro Heritage Conservation Status

Dear Mr. Ward,

I am writing in support of the Heritage Conservation designation application for the historic Scabro neighborhood in Calgary. My perspective on this endorsement comes from my years in the heritage conservation field as an advocate, consultant and researcher. I also bring my scholarship to the table which centres on the Olmsted Firm in Canada<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, I see this submission from the perspective of an Expert Advisor in UNESCO's International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes. I now serve as the co-chair of the World Heritage Evaluation Panel. Finally, there is my familiarity with this neighbourhood as a former resident of Calgary and scholar researching this district while working at the University of Calgary (2010-2016).

When I heard of the intention to put Scabro forward for Heritage Conservation status I was delighted as I deem this one of the precious gems of early Canadian suburban planning. It is distinctive as one of two fully built out Olmsted firm designs in Canada with strong integrity. The other, Uplands in Oak Bay, Victoria, BC, has recently been designated a National Historic Site (<https://www.vicnews.com/news/uplands-park-designated-a-national-heritage-site/>).

For the City of Calgary and the Province of Alberta, this cultural landscape is distinctive and would be unique as a protected district in this region and province. The Olmsted Firm was the largest landscape architectural and city planning firm of its time with the bulk of its work in the United States. As my research shows, 14 of their 95 Canadian job listings were subdivisions. However, only two, as noted, Uplands and Scabro, were fully conceived and delivered by the Olmsted Firm with the trademark Olmsted design elements that were mastered by Olmsted Sr. adopted son, John Charles Olmsted.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see papers: ; *The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm, 1857-1979*. "The Olmsted Firm in Canada" pages 15-17

<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=110IAQAAMAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR2&ots=iEhcQ4ifHL&sig=Dyh4BRCIh5v8uT1VAvlxGsS7z7Q#v=onepage&q&f=false>; "The Prolific Interpreter of the Olmsted Vision: Frederick G. Todd, Canada's First Landscape Architect" <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02665433.2017.1389658>; "Rickson Outhet: Bringing the Olmsted Legacy to Canada. A Romantic View of Nature in the Metropolis and the Hinterland". <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/jcs.44.1.137>; "Gordon Culham: Living a 'Useful Life' through the Professionalization of Canadian Town Planning and Landscape Architecture" <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02665433.2012.705123>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Olmsted Firm in Canada: A Correction of the Record"

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02665430600731203>;

John Charles in fact was known as the consummate landscape designer especially at the scale of a subdivision. The Olmsted Firm's records illustrate his mastery of topography that is key to the organic layout of Scaboro. The middle class enclave was designed across a significant grade however, in travelling through the district today one can see how he strategically placed the roadways at a manageable gradient, with steeper areas affording the opportunity for smaller intersecting open spaces. The subdivision was intended to provide a picturesque counterpoint to the city and the strategic placement and design control of the single family houses help reinforce the parklike impression of this area in Calgary. It was to and from the city to which the 'breadwinners' would travel daily on a street car. Of course, those dynamics have shifted dramatically since its original conception with the removal of the streetcar and the modernization of the notion of family. However, what is so very evident is that this is as strong a community as the Olmsted could have imagined. They believed, (and the present Scaboro community is a striking example of their success), that good design contributes to and reinforces the building of community where neighbourhoods meet each other on the street, in the playgrounds and across their fences.

Much of the Olmsted subdivision work around North America was stalled or abandoned because of the First World War. Uplands and Scaboro sit as the exceptions. Much of the building out for each project occurred after the interruption of the war but the original Olmsted design was ultimately executed. Scaboro has all the same elements that were conceived of and used in larger celebrated American examples such as Riverside, Chicago, Illinois, (1868); and Tarrytown, NY, (1871), decades before by Olmsted Sr. himself. John Charles Olmsted's, and thus Sr.'s, skills, philosophies, and legacy are still very much evident in this Calgary neighborhood. The importance of such a significant Canadian landscape—possessing both integrity and authenticity—warrants recognition. And a provincial heritage designation for this extraordinary landscape will help mark its importance not only to the City and Province of Alberta but also for the Canadian nation.

Regards,



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