



April 11, 2017

Mayor & Council
SPC on Planning & Urban Development
City of Calgary

Dear Members of Planning & Urban Development:

Subject: PUD2017-0314 – A Bylaw to Repeal the Eau Claire Smokestack as a
Municipal Historic Resource

The Calgary Heritage Authority (CHA) in principle, is opposed to the practice of de-designating sites as a Municipal Historic Resource and moving them for the convenience of development at the expense of heritage. The de-designation of a heritage site has, as far as our research has found, never happened in Alberta outside of the City of Edmonton repealing a designation bylaw for a site(s) that burned down.

When the City enacted the bylaw in 2008, which designated this resource, it made a long-term, enforceable and legal commitment to protect it. It took a stand, saying, in effect, “this matters”. Giving an historic resource protected status means just that – you are serious about it and acting in the public interest.

There is an old saying, “you make your own luck” and in fact we are very lucky with the current situation, largely due to City Staff’s excellent work in ensuring all the reasonable risks are identified and mitigated. It is terrific that, after the developer’s initial proposal to relocate the stack far away from its original home, it is now to be moved a comparatively small distance. This means the stack is in less physical danger from a larger move, and it can still retain some of its landmark status.

Part of the significance of built heritage is its integrity, and that the integrity of built heritage includes its presence in its historic environment. Moving heritage resources takes them out of their original context, both to the detriment of the neighbourhood in which they are part of the community fabric, and to the detriment of the historic resource, which loses some of its meaning.

We have had some fantastic successes in moving heritage resources in this city – Heritage Park, which we all love, is testament to that. And the move of the McHugh House saved it from certain demolition and ensured it will be part of the quality of life on 17th Avenue for many years to come. And now we have the good luck of the Eau Claire smokestack only being moved a short distance. But the circumstances of the McHugh House and the Eau Claire Smokestack are not equal, one is protected as a Municipal Historic Resource (smokestack) where the other was not (McHugh House).



However, we want to, and are obligated as your advisors to, impress upon you today - as some of our members have told individual Members of Council as well - that de-designating heritage resources should not in any way become a precedent in Calgary.

We commend City Staff for doing an exceptional job of analyzing and proposing the best possible solution under very difficult circumstances. Their care, skill and professionalism are a credit to our city and we hope you will join us in recognizing that. However, this Council-initiated act to de-designate is worrisome; it is unprecedented and should remain so.

In conclusion, we advise you in the strongest possible terms to never de-designate a historic resource again.

Sincerely,



Pam Heard
Chair, Calgary Heritage Authority

Cc Kathy Dietrich, Director Calgary Growth Strategies
Clint Robertson, Senior Heritage Planner

