



February 14, 2023

Reference No.: 000659426-004

To: City Council  
From: Kent Snyder, Branch Manager  
Subject: **Notice of Intention to Designate the Magrath Mansion as a Municipal Historic Resource**

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## SUMMARY

This memo reinitiates the process to designate a historic resource, the Magrath Mansion, at the owner's request, as a Municipal Historic Resource in accordance with the *Historical Resources Act*.

## CURRENT ACTIONS

*(Immediate)*

1. That a Notice of Intention to Designate a Municipal Historic Resource, as set out in Attachment 1, be served on the owners of the property located at 6240 Ada Boulevard NW in accordance with Section 26 of the Alberta *Historical Resources Act*, RSA 2000, c H-9.<sup>1</sup>
2. That the City Manager be appointed to implement matters arising from the issuance of the Notice of Intention to Designate the Magrath Mansion as a Municipal Historic Resource, as set out in Attachment 1.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

*(At least 60 days after the Notice of Intention to Designate is served)*

1. Pursuant to the provisions of the Alberta *Historical Resources Act*, RSA 2000, c H-9, a Bylaw to Designate the Magrath Mansion as Municipal Historic Resource (the "Bylaw") will be brought forward to Council for their consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> On November 26, 2019, City Council passed amendments to the City Administration Bylaw, delegating approval of Notices of Intention to Designate (NOI) under the *Historical Resources Act* (HRA) to the City Manager, where the owner consents to the designation of their property. The NOI initiates the designation process under the *Historical Resources Act*; the final decision on designation remains with City Council by way of a bylaw.

2. If approved, the Bylaw and corresponding Rehabilitation Incentive and Maintenance Agreement will contemplate funding of up to \$10 to be provided from the Heritage Resources Reserve to satisfy the requirement for compensation under the *Historical Resources Act*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Magrath Mansion is listed on the Inventory of Historic Resources in Edmonton, and merits designation under City Policy C450B - Policy to Encourage the Designation and Rehabilitation of Municipal Historic Resources in Edmonton. The building was constructed in 1913, and features a Classical Revival style of design.

On February 10, 2022, the owners completed the application requirements to have the Magrath Mansion, located at 6240 Ada Boulevard NW, designated as a Municipal Historic Resource under the provisions of City Policy C450B.

A Notice of Intention to designate the Magrath Mansion was served to the property owner on April 29, 2022. Following the issuance of the Notice of Intention, the property owner determined they were not in a position to proceed with the designation at that time. On February 1, 2023, the property owner contacted the City and indicated that the concerns that had prevented them from proceeding previously had been resolved and requested the designation process be reinitiated. As the April 29, 2022 Notice of Intention has lapsed this requires serving the property owner with a second Notice of Intention.

The Magrath Mansion was designated as a Provincial Historic Resource on September 17, 1975. If designated municipally, it will benefit from dual historic designation.

The property owner is seeking the designation of the Magrath Mansion as a gesture of goodwill and is not requesting a rehabilitation incentive, however the nominal amount of \$10 will be provided to the property owner in order to satisfy the requirement for compensation under the *Historical Resources Act*.

Any future renovation of the Magrath Mansion will be required to meet the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

The designation of this property will support its proper restoration and continued protection in the future.

## **BUDGET/FINANCIAL**

If the Bylaw is approved, the property owner will be provided up to \$10 from the Heritage Resources Reserve. The current Reserve balance is sufficient to cover the committed funding, including the Magrath Mansion.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Public engagement was not undertaken as part of this process, as it is not required under the *Historical Resources Act*.



KS

c: Executive Leadership Team

Aileen Giesbrecht, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk

Kim Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor, Legal Services

Attachments:

1. Notice of Intention to Designate the Magrath Mansion as a Municipal Historic Resource - *Historical Resources Act*
2. Location Map for the Magrath Mansion
3. Photographs of the Magrath Mansion
4. Heritage Officer's Statement of Significance

**Notice of Intention to Designate the Magrath Mansion as a Municipal Historic Resource**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES ACT  
R.S.A. 2000, cH.-9, as amended, Section 26

TO: Concordia University of Edmonton  
of 7128 Ada Blvd. NW  
Edmonton AB T5B 4E4

Notice is hereby given that sixty (60) days from the date of service of this Notice, The Municipal Council of The City of Edmonton intends to pass a Bylaw that the original 1912 structure known as the Magrath Mansion and the land on which such structure is located, legally described as:

PLAN 1621197  
BLOCK 9  
LOT 1  
EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS

and municipally described as 6240 Ada Boulevard NW, be designated a MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE under Section 26 of the *Historical Resources Act*, as amended from time to time.

AND TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT the Municipal Council of the City of Edmonton has appointed the City Manager to implement matters arising from the issuance of the Notice of Intention to Designate a Municipal Historic Resource.

DATED this day of 2023

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City Manager  
The City of Edmonton

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

The above Notice is addressed to the owner of, or person with a legal interest in, the resource named which the Municipal Council of the City of Edmonton (hereinafter referred to as the Council) intends to designate, by Bylaw, as a Municipal Historic Resource under Section 26 of the *Historical Resources Act*.

## EFFECT OF NOTICE

This Notice of Intention protects the historic resource named in it for 120 days from the date it was served on you. During these 120 days **NO PERSON MAY DESTROY, DISTURB, ALTER, RESTORE OR REPAIR A MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE OR REMOVE ANY HISTORIC OBJECT FROM IT** unless they have written approval of the Council or person appointed by the Council for the purpose.

The Council or the person appointed by the Council, in its or their absolute discretion, may refuse to grant an approval or may make the approval subject to such conditions, as they consider appropriate.

Although there is no right of appeal as such against designation as a Municipal Historic Resource, you are not precluded at any time from writing to the Council, claiming that the site should not or should cease to be designated. Such claim must demonstrate that the property to be designated is not of architectural or historical significance. The evidence provided to support the claim will be carefully considered.

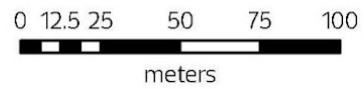
You may also apply by originating application to any judge of the Court of Queen's Bench for an Order shortening the 120 days of protection.

After 120 days the Notice ceases to have any effect, unless the Council has revoked it sooner, or the court has shortened the period, or unless the Council has passed a Bylaw designating the resource permanently.

Location Map for the Magrath Mansion



**6240 – Ada Boulevard NW**





Photographs of the Magrath Mansion



South and East Elevations



East Elevation





Entry Portico, East Elevation



## **Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance**

### **Description of Historic Place**

Completed in 1913, the Magrath Mansion is a large, two and one-half storey, red-brick, Classical Revival style residence, located on an expansive lot overlooking the North Saskatchewan River Valley in the Edmonton neighbourhood of Highlands. It is a prominent landmark, notable for its scale and grandeur.

### **Heritage Value**

The Magrath Mansion is significant as a rare example of Classical Revival style residential design in Edmonton and for its associations with the early development of the neighborhood of Highlands, real estate developer William Magrath and architect Ernest Morehouse.

Originally from Ontario, real estate developer and businessman William Magrath and his wife Ada arrived in Edmonton in 1904, attracted by the promise of opportunity in the west. By 1910, Magrath and his partner Bidwell Holgate had formed the Magrath-Holgate Company and purchased the land on what was then Edmonton's eastern boundary, where the contemporary neighborhood of Highlands is located, with the intention of developing a suburb catering to Edmonton's elite. Buoyed by the optimism of the pre-WW1 real estate boom, the Magrath-Holgate Company invested heavily in Highlands, which became part of Edmonton following its annexation in 1911. The Magraths took up residence in the stately mansion in 1913, just as Edmonton's economy descended into a prolonged recession with only 50 of the more than 550 lots the Magrath-Holgate Company had subdivided in Highlands having been developed. It would take decades for Edmonton to recover and for Highlands to finish building out, and Magrath died in 1920 well before the community was fully realized. By 1931, Ada Magrath was unable to continue to pay the property taxes for the mansion and it was seized by the City. Ada Boulevard that runs along the top-of-bank in front of the Magrath Mansion is still named for her.

Ernest Morehouse, who designed the Magrath Mansion, trained as an architect in Toronto before eventually moving to Edmonton in 1910. He was retained by the Magrath-Holgate Company to design the high-end residences of their ambitious new development. More than any other architect, he had a significant impact on the early development of Highlands, designing 13 of the buildings that were constructed there between 1912 and 1915. In addition to the Magrath Mansion, they included the Gibbard Block, Highlands Methodist Church and the Holgate Residence. Morehouse employed a broad range of architectural styles, which is embodied in the eclectic historic architecture of contemporary Highlands.

The Magrath Mansion's Classical Revival style architecture is most evident in the formal, symmetrical design of the south facing facade with wide central staircase and

projecting two-storey colonnade supported by classical columns and crowned by an entablature with a deep, bracketed cornice. It is an architectural style that was usually reserved for grand civic buildings like courthouses, libraries and post offices. The Magrath Mansion's Classical Revival style design was intended to convey the grandeur of Magrath's vision for Highlands and his commitment to it.

### Character-defining Elements

Key character-defining elements of the Magrath Mansion site include:

- Sightlines to the North Saskatchewan River
- The spatial relationship between the building and surrounding grounds

Key character-defining elements of the Magrath Mansion's exterior include:

- Form, scale and massing
- The pattern, style and construction of all window and doors
- Red brick exterior with quoins and sandstone belt course above foundation
- Hipped roof with moulded red clay roof tiles and gabled dormers with returned eaves and widow's walk
- Brick chimneys with corbels
- Projecting two-storey colonnade supported by classical columns with Ionic capitals and crowned by a entablature and a deeply projecting bracketed cornice
- Ground floor porch and second storey balcony extending the full width of the south facade and wrapping onto the east facade, terminating in a on-storey circular porch and porte cochere with ionic columns and entablature
- Architectural detailing including window hoods, balustrades and classical door and window surrounds

Key character-defining elements of the Magrath Mansion's interior include:

- Wood elements including doors, wainscotting, columns, capitals, arches, mouldings, trim, window and door surrounds, ceiling beams, built-in cabinets and staircase
- Ornate finishes including sculptured plaster ceilings, plaster cornices, inlaid parquet floors, stenciled and hand painted finishes, stained mahogany paneling in the dining room and hammered brass fireplace mantel
- French chandelier in reception area
- Remnants of luxurious period conveniences including intercom units