

July 18, 2024

Reference No.: 508311887-001

To: City Council

From: Kent Snyder, Branch Manager

Subject: **UPC Motion re: Alexander Circle and City-owned historic resources in Glenora (Clr. Stevenson)**

This memo provides City Council with information regarding the March 19, 2024 Urban Planning Committee motion moved by Councillor Stevenson:

“That Administration connect with Glenora residents to explore advancing a municipal heritage designation of Alexander Circle and other city-owned historic assets in the Glenora neighborhood and provide a memo to Council.”

Administration met with the Old Glenora Conservation Association, shared information with the Glenora Community League, and had one-on-one conversations with other interested residents. On the basis of these connection efforts and technical meetings between relevant City departments, Administration plans to initiate the process of designating Alexander Circle Park as a Municipal Historic Resource, and to make the future sale of two City-owned houses in Glenora conditional on their designation.

Administration hopes that these actions will encourage private owners of historic resources in Glenora to likewise consider heritage designation as a means of achieving The City Plan’s direction to “Encourage the identification and preservation of historic resources and cultural and natural landscapes.”

Alexander Circle

Alexander Circle is a prominent feature of the Garden Suburb layout found in Glenora south of Stony Plain Road. At a time when previous subdivisions in Edmonton had been planned without parks, Glenora’s designer deliberately incorporated green spaces into residential areas for public recreation and enjoyment. Eventually, public parks came to be seen as a necessary element of all neighbourhoods. Alexander Circle is thus a precursor to neighborhood parks across Edmonton.

Alexander Circle’s symmetrical design is also one of Edmonton’s best examples of the formal landscape architecture that originated in the Baroque gardens of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Designers of these landscapes often placed circles at the intersection of key axes. Alexander Circle’s central fountain, walkways connecting to the

intersecting streets in the four cardinal directions, and symmetrical plantings give the park an ordered beauty that has made it a local landmark and attracted visitors for decades.

As a result of its significance and discussion at Urban Planning Committee, Alexander Circle has been added to the Inventory of Historic Resources. The Inventory addition was recommended by the Edmonton Historical Board at its meeting on May 22, 2024 after reviewing an evaluation package prepared by heritage planners in accordance with criteria established by Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women. The evaluation package had earlier been reviewed and recommended by the Historic Resources Review Panel, a subcommittee of the Historical Board, at its meeting on May 14, 2024.

The City's open space planning and design teams are supportive of its heritage designation. Glenora residents who Administration engaged with are either supportive of an Alexander Circle heritage designation or do not object to it. Some members of the Old Glenora Conservation Association requested that the City designate the other green spaces in the neighbourhoods in addition to Alexander Circle.

Alexander Circle was renewed as part of Glenora Neighbourhood Renewal in 2014-16. No capital investment is needed for additional renewal or maintenance at this time.

City-Owned Historic Homes

Two City-owned houses in Glenora are listed on the Inventory of Historic Resources: the De Wynter Residence at 10446 Connaught Drive NW and the Montgomery Residence at 10327 - 134 Street NW. The De Wynter Residence was purchased by the City in 2023 because of the impacts of adjacent LRT construction and is a well-preserved example of the Arts and Crafts style home. The Montgomery Residence, which the City purchased to eliminate vehicular access that would have conflicted with LRT operations, is a rare example of Spanish Revival-style architecture in the neighbourhood. Heritage designation of these two properties aligns with City policy:

- The City Plan directs us to "Encourage the identification and preservation of historic resources and cultural and natural landscapes."
- The draft District Policy more specifically "Encourage[s] properties on the Inventory of Historic Resources in Edmonton to become designated Municipal Historic Resources."

Designating these two homes as Municipal Historic Resources would demonstrate the City's leadership in preserving historic resources. Although there are 132 properties in Glenora on the Inventory, only three properties are designated as protected Municipal Historic Resources. The last Municipal Historic Resource designation in the neighbourhood was in 2007.

Since the City does not have funding to rehabilitate the two homes, rather than designating them as Municipal Historic Resources now, Administration plans to make their designation a condition of their sale after completion of the Valley Line West LRT construction. The future owners would be eligible to access rehabilitation grants from the Heritage Resources Reserve of up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum matching

grant of \$100,000. Following rehabilitation of the homes, their owners would be eligible for maintenance grant funding from both the City and Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

The Real Estate Branch advises, however, that requiring heritage designation of the two homes as a condition of sale might impact their marketability and the revenue that could be derived from their sale. Considering their location in a central community with close proximity to many urban amenities, these sites hold significant redevelopment opportunities.

KS/eb

c: Executive Leadership Team
Aileen Giesbrecht, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk

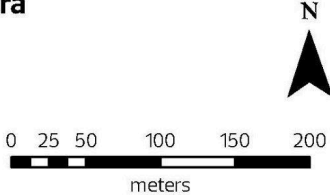
Attachment(s):

1. Location map of the De Wynter Residence, Montgomery Residence and Alexander Circle
2. Photo of the De Wynter Residence
3. Photo of the Montgomery Residence
4. Photo of Alexander Circle

Location Map for the De Wynter Residence, Montgomery Residence and Alexander Circle



City-Owned Historic sites in Glenora



Attachment 2

Photo of the De Wynter Residence



Front elevation of the De Wynter Residence, looking to the west from Connaught Drive.

Attachment 3

Photo of the Montgomery Residence



Front elevation of the Montgomery Residence, looking to the east from 134 Street. Note that the detached garage at the left of the photo has since been demolished related to LRT right-of-way requirements.

Attachment 4

Photo of Alexander Circle



West elevation of Alexander Circle, looking east from 103 Avenue NW.