

BYLAW 20985 - TO DESIGNATE ALEXANDER CIRCLE AS A MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That Bylaw 20985 be given the appropriate readings.

Purpose

To designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource pursuant to the provisions of the *Historical Resources Act*, RSA 2000, c H-9.

Readings

Bylaw 20985 is ready for three readings.

A majority vote of City Council on all three readings is required for passage.

If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, then prior to moving to third reading, Council must unanimously agree “That Bylaw 20985 be considered for third reading.”

Previous Council/Committee Action

March 19, 2024, Urban Planning Committee motion moved by Councillor Stevenson and carried unanimously:

“That Administration connect with the 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.”

REPORT

As directed in the March 19, 2024 motion and summarized in an August 6, 2024 Memo to Council, Administration connected with selected residents and groups in Glenora about heritage designation of City-owned historic assets in the neighbourhood. On the basis of that work,

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Administration is advancing this bylaw, as City Council approval is required for all designations of a site as a Municipal Historic Resource. Upon passage of Bylaw 20985, Alexander Circle will be designated a Municipal Historic Resource and the Maintenance Agreement (Schedule “B” of Attachment 1) will be approved and come into effect. Alexander Circle 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 site is owned by the City of Edmonton.

The portion of the Glenora neighbourhood in which Alexander Circle is located was subdivided in 1911 as Edmonton’s first example of Garden Suburb design. In Garden Suburb layouts, residential areas were consciously and carefully integrated with gardens and/or open spaces. Previous subdivisions in Edmonton had not been deliberately planned with parks. In subsequent decades, public parks came to be seen as a necessary element of all neighbourhoods. Alexander Circle could therefore be considered as a precursor to neighbourhood parks across Edmonton.

Within the overall framework of a Garden Suburb, Alexander Circle is an example of the formal, symmetrical urban design that originated in the Baroque gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries. Designers of these landscapes often placed circles at the intersection of key axes. Alexander Circle is at the intersection of 133 Street and 103 Avenue, is divided into orderly quadrants, and is surrounded by a ring of 16 mature American elm trees. Since the construction of the community-funded fountain in the middle of the circle in 1954, Alexander Circle has become a local landmark in Edmonton.

The City of Edmonton, the owner, has completed the application requirements to have Alexander Circle designated as a Municipal Historic Resource under the provisions of City Policy C450B. Administration is seeking to broaden the range of designated historic resources beyond structures. This bylaw will contribute to that broadening since Alexander Circle will be the first park in Edmonton designated as a Municipal Historic Resource.

The regulated portions of the park, as outlined in Schedule “A” of Attachment 1, will be preserved and maintained. Any future changes to Alexander Circle will be required to meet the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. A Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource memorandum was sent to City Council for review on September 6, 2024. A formal Notice of Intention to Designate letter from the City Manager was mailed on October 1, 2024 to the Community Services and Financial and Corporate Services Departments, which have administrative responsibility for the park. The Notice of Intention is valid for 120 days (Attachment 2).

Future Maintenance

Alexander Circle was renewed as part of Glenora Neighbourhood Renewal in 2014-16. No upgrades are required in conjunction with its designation as a Municipal Historic Resource. The park is already on the Administration’s “A” list for open space maintenance and receives a higher level of maintenance than open spaces on the “B” list. If Council approves its designation as a Municipal Historical Resource, Administration will monitor the adequacy of the park’s

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maintenance and will take additional actions as necessary to ensure that it receives an appropriate level of maintenance.

The boulevard trees on the edge of Alexander Circle are within public road right-of-way and not part of the titled area of the site, yet form a key character-defining element of the resource. Any tree on public land is protected under the Public Tree Bylaw and Corporate Tree Management Policy. The Alexander Circle trees are on a five year maintenance cycle with the last pruning being in 2022. If Council gives the park heritage designation, Administration will monitor the adequacy of the tree maintenance and will take additional actions as necessary to ensure that the trees receive an appropriate level of care.

Community Insight

Through the creation of The City Plan, Edmontonians advised that it was critical to retain and steward historic resources even as the City is redeveloped and modernized, recognized as The City Plan value of "Preserve." Administration has engaged with members of the Old Glenora Conservation Association and other residents, and informed the Glenora Community League regarding the proposed designation of Alexander Circle. Additional engagement with the public for this process is not a requirement under the *Historical Resources Act*. No concerns were raised.

Budget/Financial Implications

Alexander Circle is not currently scheduled for heritage rehabilitation work and will be maintained according to existing service levels. At this time, no funding from the Heritage Resources Reserve is required for this project.

Legal Implications

Once the Bylaw 20985 - Bylaw to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource is passed, Alexander Circle will be designated a Municipal Historic Resource and the City, as owner, will be responsible to comply with the provisions of the *Historical Resources Act* and the Maintenance Agreement.

Attachments

1. Bylaw 20985 - To Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource
2. September 6, 2024, Memorandum to City Council re: Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource
3. August 6, 2024, Memorandum to City Council re: Urban Planning Committee Motion Alexander Circle and City-owned historic resources in Glenora (Cllr. Stevenson)

Others Reviewing the Report

- M. Plouffe, City Solicitor