

November 25, 2022

Ms. Jeannie Mah
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Mah,

RE: Delegation Submission of September 20, 2022

Thank you for the submission you provided to the RPL Board of Directors for their meeting on September 27, 2022.

We appreciate your dedication to Central Library's heritage, architectural value, and legacy as the centre of Regina Public Library's system and service delivery.

I would like to answer the questions you had included in your submission.

"Is it an oversight that the heritage value of Central Library is not mentioned in the RPL proposal for demolition, nor any mention of its official legal designation as part of the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District?"

The Needs Assessment and Project Plan does note that the current Central Library building is protected under the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District Bylaw, which was established to designate an area of heritage properties surrounding Victoria Park as a municipal heritage conservation district (Needs Assessment and Project Plan pg. 29, pg. 42). We do understand that any significant changes will require municipal approvals in compliance with the Bylaw.

RPL will work with City of Regina to obtain any required approvals. Like our predecessors, we will maintain important keepsakes including the plaque from the original Carnegie building, the Tyndel stone carved lintel in the lobby, and segments of the columns that flanked the main entrance.

"In 1962, the ramp was considered to be "state of the art" by Health and Welfare. Now it is now considered to be "inaccessible" because the handrail is 1.5cm too low."

I appreciate that you are concerned with accessibility; it is one of RPL's top concerns in all our facilities. The issue with Central Library's ramp is mainly due to its slope, which exceeds allowable slope according to building code.

Since 1962, our understanding of accessibility has changed. While replacing the ramp is possible, there are many other accessibility concerns throughout the building which are not easily modified. For example:

- There are lots of dark corners and dead ends which can be challenging for people with forms of dementia and those who live with visual impairment;
- The elevator and escalators often break down, and people with mobility issues can become stranded in the basement or the second floor;
- There is no washroom on the main floor so again, if people with mobility issues are stranded in the basement or on the second floor, there is no washroom for them to use (which is also a code violation);
- There is limited availability of low distraction, quiet environments for those who need them, such as people with forms of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or schizophrenia.
- Access to the children's area is inconvenient for strollers – you must come up the ramp to the first floor and then down the elevator to the basement.
- There is no independent access for people with mobility issues to after-hours film theatre screenings.

In a new building, we could achieve the gold standard in accessibility and consider it throughout every inch of the building.

The Board has carefully weighed our options and has determined the best approach is to build new. I assure you that we will honour the current building and the Carnegie Building in a new build.

Thank you again for your submission, Ms. Mah. If you have more questions, let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Barber', followed by a colon.

Jeff Barber
Library Director & CEO, Regina Public Library