Minute No. 351
Report - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development - March 25, 2008

Item No. 1 Historical Buildings By-law No. 1474/77 - 153 Lombard Avenue
File G-3.1.1

On April 17, 2008, the applicant withdrew the application and, as such, the item was filed.

Report - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development - March 25, 2008

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On April 9, 2008, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 25, 2008, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development concurred in the recommendations of the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee and the Historic Buildings Committee and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Further, on March 25, 2008, the following were head with respect to the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee and the Historic Buildings Committee recommendation:

In Support

Councillor Gerbasi, Chair of the Historical Buildings Committee

In Opposition:

Ray Wan, Ray Wan Architects, on behalf of Cornelius and Armin Martens, owners of 153 Lombard Avenue

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On February 26, 2008, the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Historical Buildings Committee and forwarded the matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development.

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 31, 2008, the Historical Buildings Committee recommended that the Grain Exchange Building Annex located at 153 Lombard Avenue be placed on the Buildings Conservation List as a Grade III Historical Building with the following character-defining elements:

Report - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development - March 25, 2008

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued)

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued)

Exterior:

- The south-facing office building located on Lombard Avenue, adjoining its parent Grain Exchange Building to the west via a second floor bridge;
- Simple, elongated rectangular plan;
- South (front) elevation with smoothly-dressed limestone base with buff brick walls above: a centrally-located entrance framed by smoothly-dressed limestone accenting; symmetrical and grid-like arrangement of windows on all floors with limestone sills on the second floor and continuous sills on the third floor; an ornamental cornice and capped brick parapet;
- Ample and grid-like arrangement of fenestration on the east façade;
- West, east and north elevations with simple clay brick and modest detailing.

January 31, 2008

TO: CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE
ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS
LORD SELKIRK-WEST KILDONAN
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

RE: HISTORICAL BUILDINGS BY-LAW
NO. 1474/77 AS AMENDED

The Historical Buildings Committee recommends that the following building be placed on the Buildings Conservation List:

Name: Grain Exchange Building Annex

Address: 153 Lombard Avenue

Recommendation: Grade III with the following character-defining elements:

Exterior:

- The south-facing office building located on Lombard Avenue, adjoining its parent Grain Exchange Building to the west via a second floor bridge
- Simple, elongated rectangular plan
- South (front) elevation with smoothly-dressed limestone base with buff brick walls above; a centrally-located entrance framed by smoothly-dressed limestone accenting; symmetrical and grid-like arrangement of windows on all floors with limestone sills on the second floor and continuous sills on the third floor; an ornamental cornice and capped brick parapet
- Ample and grid-like arrangement of fenestration on the east façade
- West, east and north elevations with simple clay brick and modest detailing

The above recommendation was made by the Committee at its meeting on January 17, 2008.

HERITAGE PLANNER'S REPORT

The Historical Buildings Committee evaluated this vacant office building on January 17, 2008 at the request of the owner (letter attached) who is asking that the Grain Exchange Annex Building be demolished. The Annex has been vacant since 2004. They advise that the building blocks the access to the Grain Exchange Building and does not allow any redevelopment of the property.

The owners of the Grain Exchange Building state that they have been encouraged by the Winnipeg Parking Authority and the Forks North Portage Partnership to construct a parking structure to meet the demands on downtown parking created by the growth of Waterfront Drive and the pending Canadian Museum of Human Rights. The structure, if constructed on the site of the Annex, could access the skywalk system through the Grain Exchange Building.

In 1992 the main Grain Exchange Building, 167 Lombard Avenue, was placed on the Buildings Conservation List, as a Grade II property, at the request of the building owners who wished to have it designated historic in order to be eligible for a number of grants and tax credit programs. They have received a grant and credit on their property taxes for work to upgrade the building.

Under the terms of the Historical Building Bylaw No. 1474/77, the footprint of a building is designated that includes all later additions. The Annex is connected to the main building by means of a small overpass. In preliminary discussions with the owners, the Public Service advised that no part of a Grade II could be demolished. Demolitions of Grade III buildings could be allowed if the owners proved that it was necessary. Thus, the owners originally asked that the Grade be changed.

Subsequently, the owners agreed that the Annex would be placed on the Inventory of Buildings and evaluated as a separate property rather than change the grade of the very significant main Grain Exchange Building.

The Historical Buildings Committee evaluated the Grain Exchange Annex and recommended that the building be placed on the Buildings Conservation List for the following reasons:

1. The designation of the Exchange District by the Government of Canada as a National Historic Site in 1997 places a serious responsibility on the City of Winnipeg to make every effort to keep all significant and contributing structures protected and intact for all Canadians.

2. The building is an integral part of a significant streetscape on Lombard Avenue that provides continuity and character to the Exchange District.

3. The three-storey Annex was designed to architecturally match the main building in a reduced form and is an excellent example of the impact of new approaches for design in the 1920s.

4. This building serves as an excellent example of the variety of smaller tenants that were situated adjacent to the larger grain businesses in Winnipeg, initially a variety of grain companies and airlines and in time horse racing associations. During WW II the Canadian government occupied the whole building, later it was home to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 2000, all three levels of government signed the Exchange District National Historic Site of Canada Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS). It is a planning document that is to be considered when reviewing proposals within the District. The CIS suggests that decisions and actions concerning individual buildings and streetscapes respect historic and architectural values, as well as their contribution to the streetscape.

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC RESEARCH

This small, three-storey office building set beside and attached to a towering structure to its west, is an important building as a tangible reminder of the expansion of Winnipeg's important grain and commodities trading role during and after World War I, a rare downtown example of 1920s architecture and, as the 20th century progressed and needs within the grain sector changed, the building adapted to other uses and tenants.

In 1906-07, the colossal Grain Exchange Building (167 Lombard Avenue), on the northeast corner of Rorie Street was completed – at the time one of the British Empire's largest office buildings. The new tower's modern offices were filled with grain dealers, elevator and seed companies, farmers' co-operatives, government officials and other agriculture-related businesses. On the sixth floor was the large trading room, separated into two pits for the buying and selling of wheat and other grains on the futures market and on a cash basis.

British demand for Canadian wheat during World War I caused prairie farmers to boost production to new higher levels, while the Canadian government regulated prices through a temporary Wheat Board. During the 1920s, grain production continued to increase along with Canada's reputation as a major exporting nation. The 1920s were the most exciting at the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. The expansion of the business carried on by the Exchange was mirrored in the expansion of its building – major additions were built in 1913, 1914, 1916, 1922 and 1928 to bring the Grain Exchange Building to its present height and dimensions.

In 1920, the Annex was constructed to the east of the main building, connected by a second storey overhead bridge. It was intended to give additional office space for grain-related businesses and it quickly filled with companies such as Great West Grain, Erie Grain Company, Gillespie Terminal Grain, Canadian Government Elevators, Northwest Grain Dealers Association and the executive offices of the Board Grain Commissioners.

Architecturally, the Annex is an important transitional design – a modern translation of the historic architectural language of the neighbouring Grain Exchange Building. The use of classically-based ornamentation – the stone base, centrally-located entrance with stone accenting and flat roofline embellished with a modest cornice and capped brick parapet – is part of the early 20th century architectural styles. The cleaner lines, minimalized front façade and the grid-like arrangement of the plain rectangular windows on all four elevations is based in the more modern approach to architecture that would gain in popularity worldwide after 1930. The Annex is a perfect blend of old and new and is one of the few remaining structures of this type in Winnipeg.

Tenancy in the building began to slowly change in the 1930s, several horse racing related groups, including the Winnipeg and Manitoba Jockey clubs and the Prairie Thoroughbred Breeders Racing Association, occupied space in the building. During World War II, the federal government took space in several downtown office buildings as part of the war effort; the Annex was headquarters for the Veterans Land Act and the Department of Veterans Affairs. By the 1960s, grain companies were again in the building, although it was not as concentrated as before – credit unions, chartered accountants and other professionals were renting space – part of the consolidation of grain companies and the evolution of the grain sector away from individuals and the subsequent reduction in amount of office space required.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Gerbasi
Chairperson, Historical Buildings Committee

cc: Mr. A. Robinson, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. B. Gray, Manager, EPC Secretariat
Mr. J. Paterson, FCSLA, Acting Director, Planning, Property & Development Department

CITY OF WINNIPEG

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

BUILDING EVALUATION FORM

Location: 153 Lombard Avenue

Name: Current - Grain Exchange Building Annex
Original - Grain Exchange Building Annex

Owner: Artis REIT
c/o Marwest Management Canada Ltd.
300-360 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3Z3

Present Use: Vacant

BUILDING GRADE III

Evaluation Date: January 17, 2008

Recommendation: To list as Grade III with the following character-defining elements:

Exterior:

- The south-facing office building located on Lombard Avenue, adjoining its parent Grain Exchange Building to the west via a second floor bridge
- Simple, elongated rectangular plan
- South (front) elevation with smoothly-dressed limestone base with buff brick walls above; a centrally-located entrance framed by smoothly-dressed limestone accenting; symmetrical and grid-like arrangement of windows on all floors with limestone sills on the second floor and continuous sills on the third floor; an ornamental cornice and capped brick parapet

- Ample and grid-like arrangement of fenestration on the east façade
- West, east and north elevations with simple clay brick and modest detailing


SGS

Richard Kachur
City Clerk
City Hall
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1B9

December 30, 2007

Demolition of the Grain Exchange Annex

Dear Richard;

Giles Bugailiskis has suggested we write you to request a change in designation of the Grain Exchange building such that the owners can demolish the free standing Annex.

This is a formal request to change the designation of the Grain Exchange building from a Grade Two to Grade Three.

The Annex has been vacant, without services, since 2004. The Annex blocks the access to the Grain Exchange Building and does not allow any redevelopment of this valuable downtown property.

The owners of the Grain Exchange building have been encouraged by both the Winnipeg Parking Authority and the Forks North Portage Partnership to construct a parking structure to meet the demands on downtown parking created by the growth of Waterfront Drive and the pending Canadian Humanities Museum. The structure, if constructed on the site of the Annex, could access the skywalk system through the Grain Exchange Building.

Please consider this request and contact me at 230-6951 (mobile) or 221-0772 to discuss.

We have applied for a demolition permit.

Yours very truly;

Syd Storey