Trinity Baptist Church
Freely Receive | Freely Give

549 Gertrude Ave.
Winnipeg MB
R3L 0M9
p. 204-475-5976
f. 204-475-5980
www.trinitybaptistwinnipeg.com
office@trinitybaptistwinnipeg.com

To the Members of the Standing Policy Committee, June 6th, 2018

As a representative of the members of Trinity Baptist Church in Winnipeg, I want to thank you for all the hard work you do on our behalf and on behalf of all Winnipeggers. We love our city and know that you bear a great responsibility in providing good leadership in many matters that impact our day-to-day lives- so again, thank-you!

We would like to clearly express our opposition to our church building at 549 Gertrude Ave. being placed on the List of Historical Resources on the basis of the value which we place on our autonomy from the state. If you take a few minutes to "google" Baptist Core Beliefs, you will quickly discover that Baptists believe strongly in freedom of conscience (sometimes called "soul liberty"). This means, it is up to the individual Baptist Christian in fellowship with their local church to work out their religious convictions. As many of the websites will correctly point out, this has resulted in Baptists historically holding to two theological positions: "The Separation of Church and State" and "The Autonomy of the Local Church".

Allow me to briefly explain each. "The Separation of Church and State" means we must remain free to make our own decisions without interference from the state or any lawmakers in regards to all aspects of our faith and doctrine, including how we assemble and worship as a local church. "The Autonomy of the Local Church" simply means that we see each church as free and autonomous to make decisions without interference from any denominational hierarchy or leaders outside our local congregation.

So, what does this have to do with our church being placed on the List of Historical Resources? The congregation of Trinity Baptist Church Winnipeg believes that if the City of Winnipeg and more specifically the Historical Planning Property and Development department has the power to veto decisions which we can make regarding the space we use for worship, that there is a high probability that at some future time we will experience state interference in decisions we believe we should be free to make. For example, if our congregation believed that changes to our church building, (made according local building codes and safety regulations) would be necessary to meet our core mandate of reaching our community, we would view restrictions from the state based on aesthetic or historical criteria as a potential violation of our religious rights and freedoms.

Our building is beautiful and is an historic treasure to be sure, but it is also a place of worship, built by our Baptist forebears for assembly and worship in accordance with our long-held Baptist beliefs. We ask that you continue to respect our right as a local congregation to make decisions about our building according to those beliefs, including decisions concerning the aesthetic and historical aspects of our building.

Sincerely,

Reverend Brad Warkentin,
on behalf of the Board of Directors