February 16. 2022.

To: Executive Policy Committee
Dear Chairperson Bowman Committee Members,

RE: Heritage designation, 227 Provencher Blvd

Thank you for permitting me to address you on the above matter.

Firstly, if you will, allow me to introduce myself to you. My name is Guy Savoie, a sitting member of the City of Winnipeg city council, 1979 – 1989, representing Taché ward (The old Saint-Boniface area). Chairperson of the committee on the environment, 1983-84, Chairperson of the executive policy committee, 1985-86-87-88. Indeed, over the years, I have served on many other civic committees, several boards of directors for various community organizations and societies, both in the Saint-Boniface area and the city, i.e., Festival du Voyageur, (Pres. 1976-77-78), Brigade de la Riviere Rouge, (Pres. 1977 to 1989-Founding member), Union Nationale Metisse Saint Joseph du Manitoba (permanent Elder, pres., 1999-2000-2001.) , two different terms of the Winnipeg Convention board and many more too numerous to mention. Indeed, in view my advanced age, I presently sit on the boards of three organizations, one of them as president.

All this to say that over the years I have gained a vast experience not without knowing the pulse and aspirations of my community. In the above case, let me assure you that the community of Saint-Boniface is strongly in favor, **as I am**, of the "Heritage designation " of all the elements that make up le Carré civique de Saint Boniface or as was commonly known by the City of Saint-Boniface, the Civic Plaza.

The fact that there was an absence of representation on the community's part at the meeting of September 22, 2021, is certainly regrettable, also, that fact did give a free reign to the proponents of disallowing this designation. It is said that these proponents indicated a lack of interest by the community on this issue, of course without rebuttal. Sad, to say the least. However, nothing is further from the truth as indicated above.

Councilors, has the value of these heritage buildings to the community and the city been truly assessed? Let's give a thought to tourism! It is the rare tourist brochures featuring our city, be they from the Province, the Federal Government or others, that does not laud Saint-Boniface, "the French quarter", if you will. These highlight the area be it the Saint Boniface Basilica, the Saint-Boniface Museum, and others, and yes, the Saint-Boniface City Hall, "le vieux carre" tends to be at the forefront.

Let me relate to you an expression that was often used when I sat as the President of the "Convention Center Board": A city is like a retail establishment, remove the wares from the shelves, the said establishment will soon go under. Let us not reduce our cities amenities!
Prohibitive costs of renovations and architectural changes are another issue that is routinely used as an argument against the historical designation. Many times, this issue has been shown to be non-existent in several such works undertaken in heritage

buildings. As an example, I cite the Hotel Fort Garry, which, as you probably are aware, became city property, a result of unpaid property taxes. The hotel was sold to a Mr. Malenfant of Quebec City, P.Q. In his submission, Mr. Malenfant put forward a concise plan of renovation respecting the heritage designation.

Prior to the decision to sell to Mr. Malenfant, Mayor Norrie and myself were hosted by him in Quebec City. We visited a century old edifice which was indeed a heritage designated building that had been renovated by his company, certainly a work of art. When questioned concerning costs, he was quick to assure us that respecting historic regulations were not an impediment to doing the planned work and changes.
Mr. Malenfant also had us visit a window manufacturing plant which specialized in constructing multi-paned windows with a turn of the century motif. Upon examining these windows, you would have sworn that they were from the early 1900's. These types of windows are installed on the Fort Garry Hotel today. The Hotel under Malenfant was renovated to a large extent, the plumbing, wiring & lighting, kitchen and bar, all redone respecting the heritage designation. This fine gentleman volunteered that the costs had been competitive and certainly not impeded by the regulations. He was more than satisfied with the finished product as are the citizens of our fair city.

The purchasers of a part of the "Carré civique", (the City hall and Fire Station), paid a pittance for the buildings and the land. Might I remind you and my co-citizens, that, we are talking of a whole square city block situated a stone's throw from Portage & Main, the city's heart. An enviable asset on any company's balance sheet. Certainly, they must have considered a suitable impressive amount to cover their planned renovations and improvements. As Mr. Malenfant has shown us, with a bit of effort, goodwill and planning it seems that a heritage designation should not and will not be an impediment to their future renovations.
I can just imagine in a few years, without the designation, this square block of property developed into a commercial venture. The fine oral promises forgotten and ignored. A fate the community of Saint-Boniface and its history cannot abide, nor should it accept.
I would hope that we, The Saint-Boniface community, does not have to mobilize with marches on city hall and the legislature as was done in the 70's regarding the "French" question.
Therefore councilors, I strongly urge you, a vote in favor of the heritage designation. This is a must in this instance.
Sincerely,

Guy M. Savoie,
City of Winnipeg councilor, Tache ward. 1979-1989.