

Peter Ker Walker

From: Peter Ker Walker <pkwalkerla@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2022 2:25 PM
To: Devin Colman
Cc: lml@05401.com
Subject: Cathedral, BTV

10 Dec 2022

We live at a moment of heightened awareness of global warming changes and its impact on our environment, our way of life and our very survival.

In Vermont there is recognition of the urgency of the concerns for the wellbeing of the region and the need for a greater in safeguarding global priorities.

I propose the creation of a Vermont Center for the Environment, to serve as a Forum for discussion, analysis and the determination for action in the global crisis, to be housed in the saved former Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Burlington, VT. In terms of retrofit the former Cathedral contains a superb congregation, auditorium space together with ample basement space for mixed use and offices space. Further the location is ideal, centered in downtown Burlington, within its Park and adjacent to the Transit Center.

It is recognized that purchase costs are to be addressed and that State wide support be engendered and engaged and participation made by the State of Vermont, educational, environmental, conservation communities and the business and private sectors. In concept the building and grounds would be under Burlington City ownership with running costs shared by the various interested parties, listed above.

This project is a demonstration of an optimum retrofit of the former Cathedral, revitalized for a noble agenda which befits Vermont and contributes significantly to global issues beyond Vermont.

Vermont, a place blest with a superb scenic landscape and possessing a balanced intrusion by human settlement. What better place from which to lead the Nation in response to Global changes?

Peter Ker Walker

Feb 18, 2019

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception,
Burlington, Vermont

Architect: Edward L. Barnes, New York, NY

Landscape Architect: Kiley Walker, Charlotte, VT

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LETTERS

I was a Principal in the Landscape Architectural firm of Kiley Walker. Alistair Bevington—Architect Edward L. Barnes' former Partner—and I are very concerned about the fate of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and its landscape. All too often the removal of a significant piece of the urban fabric is a drastic mistake in the continuum of the historic growth of our urban environment. The urban landscape is our greatest collective and cultural achievement.

The desire for the good life, at home, at work and opportunities for the pursuit of happiness, particularly for the enjoyment of the outdoors, have motivated people to come together and stay together. Such a sense of place is provided by the uniquely situated City of Burlington. The basic character of the "Queen City" derives from its site, at the edge of a historically important body of water. Consistent with its siting is the recognition of enhanced buildings and the provision of delightful outdoor spaces. Within the economic-political climate there must be a balance inclusive of the values of outdoor landscape spaces, established in an age of growth. The form of constructive environmental design cannot proceed by increasing development density at the expense of open space. The character of our age, the mood of urban life recognizes that an important, essential ingredient is that open landscape spaces be available and maintained, in the words of Olmsted, "for the enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it."

The critical consideration, at this moment, is to save the Cathedral and its Park, from destruction by demolition or destruction by inappropriate development. Change in the use from the original function of the building does not necessitate its removal and the Townscape is enriched by retrofit, in which a building, having outlived its initial program is given new vitality. The Park can be retained as a simple retreat, open lawn, with places to sit under a canopy of mature trees.

There will be public debate about Cathedral/ Park and that should be encouraged, but the principle must be maintained that the City cannot afford the loss of this hallowed ground, a significant historical feature in the urban center of Downtown Burlington.

PETER KER WALKER