

January 10, 2022

Development Review Board
via: Department of Permitting & Inspections
645 Pine St
Burlington, VT 05401
re: proposed demolition of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Dear DRB members:

As I cannot attend the in-person public hearing on 1/11/2023, I would like to add my voice to the chorus of opposition to the application to demolish the current building and destroy its landscape. Much has been eloquently written by many others as to the importance of this iconic late 20th century building designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes with landscape design by Dan Kiley, both renowned practitioners. At the time of its design and construction, I had the good fortune to have been employed in the Burlington office of Colin P. Lindberg, who provided the local connection to Barnes' office, and had opportunities to assist in the shop drawing and construction review process with the Barnes' construction team.

The Catholic diocese had the insight and foresight to engage a nationally renowned team to design this cathedral to replace the one destroyed by fire several years earlier. The design included the removal of the relatively non-descript former Cathedral High School, which created the opportunity to utilize nearly a full city block. Having made the decision to build the design created by its architect, a design which has been nationally recognized, I believe the diocese needs to accept the wisdom of its predecessors and honor the contribution this building makes to our City, and for the diocese to seek other ways (there are options) to deconsecrate this building, as it has done for other churches in the state of Vermont.

Adaptive reuse of this building will no doubt present some challenges, but unless those challenges have been thoroughly explored and understood, it would be a tragedy to allow the demolition of this iconic structure for the immediate financial gain it might represent for the diocese.

Please, at the very least, require a thorough review of what the options and challenges of maintaining this building and its integral landscape would be, prior to even thinking about allowing its demolition. It's too precious to tear down.

Sincerely,



Bob Duncan, RA, AIA