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November 21, 2022

Ms. Mary O'Neil
Office of Permitting & Inspections
City of Burlington
P.O. Box 849 Burlington, VT 05402-0849

Re: ZP-22-576 / Demolition Permit Application for Burlington Cathedral

Dear Mary,

I am writing to support preservation and adaptive reuse of the former Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the surrounding planned landscape.

On a personal level, my family lives and owns property in the Ward 3/Downtown district. The church and grounds have been an important part of how we've experienced downtown Burlington since 2014 when we bought a condominium on St. Paul Street, then moved to the Old North End with our children in 2019. Preserving the serenity and unspoiled beauty of this parklike property, with its unique architecture and landscape features, is more important than ever in a downtown undergoing great change. And unlike most of our built heritage the cathedral was constructed for devotion, not profit. This quality 'completes' our downtown, offering an unhurried and peaceful respite from the hustle and bustle. The idea that this unique property is threatened with demolition is upsetting to all of us, and an outcome that should be avoided however possible.

From a professional perspective, I have had the good fortune to have been engaged in historic preservation in Vermont for 30 years. Among the 2200+ regulatory reviews I've managed was the downtown bus terminal on behalf of VTrans. Considerable effort was invested by all stakeholders to arrange the terminal space and design to respect the abutting National Register-eligible Church property, with its Edward Barnes modern architecture and Dan Kiley designed landscape. It is true that my work occasionally involves removal of older buildings where circumstances warrant, but there are none I can foresee that would justify demolishing this downtown landmark property. Moreover, I very much doubt there is a qualified preservation professional that would advocate for demolition in this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Scott Newman', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

D. Scott Newman M.Sc., REDFP
Principal, 106 Associates