

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 12, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Donald Ross Historic Designation

ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director School and District Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Meredith Colgan, Michael Ediger, Andrea Furness, Catherine Luck, Cindy Skolski

RECOMMENDATION

That an application be made to both the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta to have Donald Ross School declared a Historic Resource.

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In accordance with Board Policy FECA.BP the board shall determine whether an application will be made to Alberta Community Development for the designation of a building as an historic resource (Appendix I).

The administration, Planning and Archives and Museum Departments, have received a request from the Rossdale Community League that Edmonton Public Schools, as the owners of Donald Ross School, make an application to the Province and the Municipality for historical designation. The Community League has lobbied the district to apply for this designation to preserve and retain the historic feeling of the neighbourhood. Many buildings in this neighbourhood have been designated as historically significant including:

- The Rossdale Power Plant (EPCOR) Administration Building, Pumphouse #1, Turbine House, and the Low Pressure Plant - Provincial Historic Resources
- The Edmonton Brewing and Malting Co. - Provincial Registered Historic Resource status (this provides some funding but no protection for historical integrity)
- The Children's Shelter/Rossdale Flats Apartments - Municipal Historic Resource
- The Stark Residence and the Hudson Bay Company Stables - B List of Municipal Historic Register

Furthermore, the Rossdale Neighbourhood was the original location of the Fort and is where Edmonton began.

Donald Ross School was closed in 1974 and leased to various groups over the years including the Common Wealth Games from 1974 to 1978, the City of Edmonton,

Community Services Department from 1986 to 2001, and the World Track and Field Championships in 2001. The school is currently leased to Destination Conservation, a district partner who works with Edmonton Public Schools to improve school energy, water and waste management practices. The school is operated as an environmental resource centre, which houses groups such as the Toxics Watch Society, the Alberta Wilderness Association, the Alberta Environmental Network and the Sierra Club.

The district is currently considering either selling Donald Ross School or leasing the building on a long-term basis. Historic Designation of Donald Ross School would not affect the property value of this site, as most of the value in this case is in the land and not in the building.

Donald Ross School is currently on the Municipal Historic Register B List, indicating that the building has been identified as having merit for designation as a Municipal Historic Resource. Designation provides benefits such as:

- eligibility for financial assistance from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation,
- consultation with Alberta Community Development staff who will give technical advice to ensure that restoration/protection work is carried out in a manner that considers both owner's needs and resource sensitivity,
- widespread recognition, and
- a plaque which identifies the significance of the site and owner's interest in the preservation of Alberta's heritage.

As a government agency Edmonton Public Schools would not be able to access any funding but we may apply for designation on behalf of future owners or stakeholders. If the district is successful in obtaining historical designation certain construction standards would need to be followed in case of modernization to ensure that the historical integrity of the building is retained.

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APPENDIX I Board Policy FECA.BP