

COMMUNIQUÉ

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



HERITAGE WINNIPEG

WHY DO THE WAA AND TRANSPORT CANADA WANT TO DEMOLISH ONE OF CANADA'S FINEST EXAMPLES OF 20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE?

WINNIPEG, MB- Heritage advocates across Canada are acutely aware of the danger posed to the first-rate Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport Terminal building. Built between 1961 and 1964, by principal design architects David Thordarson and Bernard Brown, at a cost of 18 million. The Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport is widely recognized as one of the finest examples of mid-century modern architecture in Canada. Now Transport Canada and the Winnipeg Airports Authority (WAA) say they want to demolish this outstanding building.

In 2008, it was listed on Heritage Canada Foundation's top ten endangered buildings. The building is a key element of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada's aviation and architectural history. There is local, provincial and national support for keeping the building. Heritage Winnipeg and the Manitoba Historical Society are working together to ensure that the heritage value of the Terminal to Winnipeg and Canada is given full and proper consideration, and that as a federal building originally commissioned as part of an iconic group of architecturally significant buildings, that any process for change is transparent and involves the public.

The Winnipeg Airport Authority's landlord, Transport Canada asked the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) in Parks Canada to conduct a heritage character assessment of the building in accordance with Treasury Board policy of requiring a heritage review of federal buildings over 40 years old. FHBRO commissioned a substantial report documenting the historical and architectural value of the terminal building. In 2008, the federal government halted the heritage assessment. **Why did the federal government drop its responsibility for Canada's heritage?**

In November 2005, the WAA commissioned an Expression of Interest to reuse the terminal building and received a favourable response from Winnipeg-based Shelter Canadian Properties Ltd. As reported in the Winnipeg Free Press in November 2006, Shelter Canadian Properties and Huntingdon Real Estate Investment Trust were working on a re-development of the terminal building with the Western Aviation Museum and the WAA. Yet in June of 2007, it was rejected by the WAA without explanation other than, it did not meet their needs. We are requesting a full explanation of the reasons for the rejection and why no further redevelopment effort has been made.

Presently the WAA, which manages the property, claims, the building is in poor shape due to years of limited capital investment by Transport Canada. Why no investment? Poor shape? More questions. **Why so many unexplained actions, unanswered questions and why the lack of transparency?**

Background information provided.

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Heritage Winnipeg is a non-profit charitable organization, established in 1978, which promotes the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of Winnipeg's built environment.