

12 December 2022

Mary O'Neil, Principal Planner, AICP
Office of Permitting & Inspections
City of Burlington, Vermont

RE: Preservation of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Burlington, Vermont

Dear Ms. O'Neil:

Please pass along this letter to the Members of the City of Burlington Development Review Board and Design Advisory Board.

I am writing to urge you to save the building and surrounding landscape located at 20 Pine Street. This property, which incorporates design by Edward Larrabee Barnes, Dan Kiley, and others, encompasses significant cultural, historic, and architectural resources that should not be lost to demolition. Both Barnes and Kiley were noteworthy twentieth century designers and it would be shame for Burlington to lose this outstanding example of collaborative modern design and the most significant work in Vermont of one of its "native sons." The building and landscape embody a rare form of modest modernism that is difficult to find in today's designs.

Do not be deceived by simplicity into thinking this is an insignificant Barnes building, or that the Kiley landscape is dispensable. They are not. Burlington is fortunate to have a major commission designed jointly by these two significant designers. The building is one of several religious structures designed by Barnes, including the Christian Theological Seminary in Indiana and the Unitarian Universalist Church in New York. Edward Larrabee Barnes grew up as part of a deeply religious family and was named after Edward Larrabee, a Bishop in the Anglican Church. Given his background, the opportunity for him to design this Cathedral was particularly important and the project received his personal attention. While the building has the formality of a church, its modest simplicity allows it to be easily converted to community uses. Reuse of the building and Dan Kiley's grove of trees offers Burlington an opportunity to create something truly unique.

As an architect and planner who has been involved with several historic preservation projects including buildings and cultural landscapes, I am keenly aware of the importance of protecting buildings and places of merit. Putting this building and landscape to creative new uses is a time-honored tradition that would enrich the fabric of Burlington while preserving the past for future generations. I urge you to pursue a creative solution to preserve this this place as a reinvigorated and integral part of the city that accommodates a wide range of activities.

As Ed Barnes' son, I have clear memories of my father (and mother) working on the design of the Cathedral along side their dear friend Dan Kiley. Please give serious consideration to adaptive reuse of this landmark property and do not destroy it.

Thank you.
John Barnes

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