

Harvard Design School



Mary O'Neil
City of Burlington
Principal Planner for Development Review

December 5th, 2022

I am writing to strongly object against approving ZP-22-576 / Demolition Permit Application for Burlington Cathedral. The building is designed by AIA Gold Medalist architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, and is exemplary of the design qualities that earned Barnes his status as among the most influential American architects of the 20th century. I myself worked with the project architect Alastair Bevington and Mary Barnes in designing the interior and furnishings of the cathedral.

Conceived in response to Burlington's history and identity, the building employs unique typologies for a cathedral inspired by meeting houses typical of New England townships. The resulting design creates new spaces that engage the community at large. The building is home to important art in its stained-glass windows and utilizes local materials such as Vermont slate and oak. Barnes's cathedral is integrated into Burlington's cultural fabric, and can easily be adapted to the community's current needs through creative adaptive reuse strategies.

The demolition of a soundly built and well-crafted building is not only environmentally unsound, but by destroying this master piece, Burlington will also lose the opportunity to retain and reinvent a piece of architecture with great potential to become a new asset and attraction for the town. Ed Barnes is an alumni of our school Harvard GSD and the school is home to his archives. A loss of one of his buildings through thoughtless development will rob academic opportunities for the study and enlightenment of students and scholars.

Please reconsider the application for demolition, and instead engage architects and the surrounding community to develop a plan for its adaptive reuse.

Sincerely,

Toshiko Mori FAIA
Toshiko Mori Architect
Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019 AIA/ACSA Topaz Medallion Laureate

*Toshiko Mori
Robert P. Hubbard Professor
in the Practice
of Architecture*

Department of Architecture
tel 617 496 1234
fax 617 495 8916

Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
George Gund Hall
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
www.gsd.harvard.edu