

SUPPORT THE 380 WILLIAM ARCHIVES RENEWAL

SUMMARY: The City of Winnipeg Archives at 380 William Avenue has been closed since 2013 because of storm damage. This heritage building is the proper home of the City's archival collection, but it needs to be repaired and upgraded. We need your support in the form of a letter. Help let City council know it should put money into repairing and upgrading the 380 William site. Your support will help researchers get back into the proper home of the City of Winnipeg Archives. Your backing will assist the staff of the City of Winnipeg Archives return to their work place. And your support will help Winnipeg's downtown benefit from the cultural richness that the archives can offer. Below you will find a call for your support and assistance. Please take the time to make your views count.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION: The City of Winnipeg has a legislated responsibility to provide for stewardship of its records on behalf of its current and future citizens. The archival collection of the City of Winnipeg is one of the oldest, most complete municipal government collections in Canada. It includes records of the original City of Winnipeg and all amalgamating municipalities. These records date from 1873. The information contained within them is irreplaceable. The proper home of the City of Winnipeg Archives – the Carnegie Library at 380 William – is at a critical stage in its 110 years of service to the city.

In 2013, the City of Winnipeg Archives located at 380 William (a wonderful heritage building) was damaged during a tremendous storm. Since that time, the archives have been operating out of makeshift storage facilities that are of lesser quality, endangering the significant records that the City of Winnipeg has custody over, and impeding researchers from accessing records.

The 380 William Avenue site is also in need of an upgrade. Here is a list of issues relating to the 380 William site, dating to 2009:

1. absence of a fire suppression system.
2. significant temperature/humidity fluctuations throughout the building.
3. absence of appropriate storage space for specialized collections (i.e. maps and cartographic materials, architectural plans and artifacts).
4. excessive lighting levels combined with infiltrating exterior light in storage areas (window shades are torn, pockmarked, dirty and most are inoperable).
5. accessibility issues (both for the public – universal access – and for shipping and receiving record transfers).
6. problematic maintenance, safety issues, suitability for current use and load issues relating to the compact moveable shelving in the basement. This

shelving was not intended to hold cubic foot boxes. Bearing too much weight has caused mechanical problems – in particular, locking mechanisms frequently jam, thereby hampering access. The shelving material in the compact moveable shelving units and on combination steel/wood shelves elsewhere in the building is substandard for use in archives: wood products used in the existing shelving emit formaldehyde, which causes paper to become brittle over time, even though it is inside a storage container. The City is at risk to lose information through the degradation of paper records.

7. floor load, related structural integrity and code non-compliance issues as identified in the structural audit that require attention over the short, mid and long term. In the fall of 2006, 1600 boxes had to be moved out of 380 William Avenue due to imminent risk of failure of the flooring system.

Upgrades to remediate these issues were in the planning phases when the 2013 storm struck. Much of 2013 was spent responding to the June disaster. City council has not yet approved funding to get the initiative up and running again. Design and construction-ready plans are prepared. Now all we need is the support and budget from City council. No other site is suitable at this time to house the archives.

Additional benefits of repairing and upgrading the 380 William site:

- improved research culture in Winnipeg;
- improved foot traffic downtown;
- improved records storage and management systems for generations to come;
- experiential learning for post-secondary history and methods classes;
- public tours for heritage lovers;
- public gatherings and insightful talks in the event area.

Full details about the plans and the proposed budget are publically available.

Now that we have a new municipal government with an interest in revitalizing downtown, repairs to the building should be undertaken to restore and upgrade the proper home of the City of Winnipeg Archives.

CALL FOR SUPPORT:

This request is time sensitive - City council will be deliberating on these matters in mid June 2015. We have contacted you because your work has something to do with research or heritage management. You have a stake in seeing the City of Winnipeg Archives located at 380 William become operational again, as do all people who live in this city. You have a share in seeing the much-needed upgrades being completed. Here is what you can do.

Write a letter describing what the archives mean to you, and what you could do better if the 380 William site was repaired and upgraded.

Write a letter indicating how your group, organization or department will benefit from the repairing and upgrading of the 380 William site.

Write a letter indicating your thoughts about how Winnipeg's downtown will benefit from the repairing and upgrading of the 380 William site.

If you can provide your letter of support on the official letterhead of your group, organization or department, this would be very much appreciated.

Please email the letter of support to Kevin Walby
[k.walby \[at\] u.winnipeg.ca](mailto:k.walby@u.winnipeg.ca)

Or you can send by regular post:

Kevin Walby, University of Winnipeg, Department of Criminal Justice, Centennial Hall, 3rd Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2E9

We need your letter by June 1 2015.

For updates, you can also check:

<https://www.facebook.com/CityWinnipegArchivesFriends>

Help the City of Winnipeg Archives fulfill its mission:

To acquire, manage and maintain accurate, authentic and usable records in the public trust. To foster civic identity and awareness by connecting citizens to the sources of their past, their histories, their communities. To support the transformation of information into knowledge.

Thank you for your consideration. Please share with interested parties.

Kevin Walby, Associate Professor, Chancellor's Research Chair,
Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg