

Letters to the Editor, Globe and Mail, Wednesday, May 1, 2013, p. A10

Re Housing Great Art, At The Cost Of Renouncing It (Arts, April 27):

The problem Lisa Rochon cites exists in Saskatoon also, where the renovation/expansion plan for the much-beloved, architecturally significant, structurally sound Mendel Art Gallery has been jettisoned by council in favour of a far costlier alternative.

Once finished, the renamed and relocated gallery/event centre would be an overscaled, multi-utility, undistinguished boxy structure jammed behind a theatre complex and up against an elevated freeway.

Like the projects mentioned in the article, this initiative is highly controversial and divisive.

The Freudian-sounding "edifice complex" – defined at jargondatabase.com as "the tendency of politicians to have large buildings and stadiums built as a concrete reminder of their 'legacy' " – is one explanation at work in these cases.

A headline on a column in The Guardian put a finer point on it: "Size is everything to a mayor consumed by edifice complex."

David Geary, Saskatoon