

Letter to the Editor: By Phyllis Trotchie, [The StarPhoenix ; December 11, 2009](#)

[Re: AGS good news story \(SP, Dec. 8\)](#) . When the city wanted to relocate the Mendel Art Gallery in 2005, Michael Lundholm, the consultant who developed the gallery's conceptual facility plan, said that it undermines an art gallery's stature to be located in a multi-use complex.

He said galleries need a strong identity and a strong visual image, and noted that the Mendel already is a strong institution with a national reputation.

"When you've got something that's working that well, you don't fool around with it," Lundholm said. Yet that's exactly what the city and Mendel board are proposing. Unfortunately, it appears that Lundholm has now been co-opted to help design the new gallery at River Landing.

Fred Mendel in 1965 presented a gift of 13 paintings from his own collection to the gallery, to be held in-trust. The city's actions have destroyed that 45-year historical bond and trust with Mendel and his family. This was done without any consultation with the people of Saskatoon or the Mendel family.

The city and the Mendel board should be ashamed.

On Jan. 8, Mayor Don Atchison and Mendel board chair Art Knight wrote to the provincial government praising the gallery's renovation plans, stating it is a "worthy and important project" that "will be successful." Less than three months they betrayed those plans.

Phyllis Trotchie, Saskatoon