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Another infill build destroyed by fire

Saskatchewan Dr. blaze prompts builder to consider extra security

JASON HILLS

A single-family home under construction in south Edmonton burned down Sunday night, the sixth fire involving infill projects in weeks, with four cases ruled arson.

Edmonton Fire and Rescue Services (EFRS) was on the ground at the 7139 Saskatchewan Dr. suspicious blaze by 11:20 p.m.

Sunday, after being called to the area about five minutes prior. The house, nearly ready for the owners to move into, was found fully engulfed in flames, with firefighters getting it under control at 1:06 a.m. and declaring it officially extinguished at 3:49 a.m. Monday, EFRS said in an email.

The couple who owned the home, too distraught to share more, were set to relocate in the

new year from their current home just a block away.

By Monday afternoon, the fire was out, long firehoses snaking through the sodden mud around the ruined home.

Plans were underway to take the ruins down Tuesday with heavy equipment.

Fire investigators were on site and city police brought in a drone to hover over the building's burned-out shell. A steady stream of dog-walkers stopped by in the dog park across the quiet street overlooking the North Saskatchewan River.

One next-door neighbour re-

called being awakened from a sound sleep by her daughter. Her first thought was to pack up important documents and get her family into the car and out of harm's way.

Fire trucks were already at the scene, she said, describing a burst of flame as the blaze erupted from the first floor.

"It's really traumatizing," said Elmie Aloria, recalling the panic of not knowing what to do.

A contractor with hundreds of units underway spoke to Postmedia on Monday, asking not to be identified.

SEE FIRE ON A4



Thick smoke billows from what remains of a single-family infill home under construction on Saskatchewan Drive early Monday morning. The fire is the sixth to hit infill projects in the city in the last few weeks. Four have already been declared arson. SHAUGHN BUTTS

Province proposes mandatory K-3 literacy, numeracy assessments

CINDY TRAN

Alberta is proposing amendments to the Education Act that would make math and literacy screenings for students in kindergarten to Grade 3 a legislative requirement, rather than just policy.

Bill 6, the Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act 2025, if passed

would legislate school boards and independent early childhood services (ECS) operators to conduct reading and math screenings for those students.

Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides said the province is proposing to make the numeracy and literacy assessment law to ensure "standardization across the province" and to ensure it is

a significant priority. He said the assessments would help identify the needs of students and ensure students receive help early on.

"We can all agree that getting the foundations right in those early formative years should be one of the most significant objectives of our entire education system," Nicolaides said.

"That's why it's critical and es-

sential that it be established in law, so that we retain our focus and all successive future governments retain that focus on ensuring success in literacy and numeracy."

According to officials, there are currently no provincial assessments that are legislated — only in policy.

Mandatory numeracy and literacy assessments began in 2022-2023 for students in Grade 1 and Grade 3. Last December the province announced it will begin assessments for kindergarten students with the first assessment beginning in January 2025.

SEE EDUCATION ACT ON A4

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