
From: Creighton Barrett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2015 11:23 AM
To: Minister of Communities, Culture & Heritage; Office of the Legislative Counsel;
mmaacdonald@navnet.net
Subject: Do not weaken the Heritage Property Act

Dear Hon. Tony Ince, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage,

I am writing express my opposition to planned changes to the Heritage Property Act that are to be discussed before the Law Amendments Committee on November 23. In particular, I am concerned about the following changes:

1. Clauses 1, 3 and 8 of Bill 118 will make it much easier to delete a building from the list of protected heritage properties in Nova Scotia. The clauses will allow deregistration of heritage properties on the basis of "significant financial difficulties" or "undue hardship to the owner." This wording is subjective and open-ended. Who will define "undue hardship?" This kind of vague language will privilege wealthy and resourceful developers and municipal governments who can easily navigate the deregulation process. Registration or deregistration should be based on the historic and architectural merits of the properties, NOT on the financial situation of the property owners.
2. Clause 9 of the Bill will repeal the permanent protection for municipal heritage properties in heritage conservation districts. I understand that the proposes changes will eliminate Section 19B(1)(b) of the Heritage Property Act. Municipal heritage properties in conservation districts will no longer have permanent protection; an owner, who applied to demolish a heritage building, could carry out the demolition three years later, unless the municipality bought the property or entered into an agreement. Several municipalities have established Heritage Conservation Districts to protect their heritage neighbourhoods. This change will weaken these special districts.
3. Clauses 2 and 7 will make it easier to deregister parts of heritage properties. Since a hearing is necessary to register a municipal heritage property, a hearing should also be necessary to deregister part of the property. Otherwise properties can be deregistered without public knowledge.

Again, I feel that these changes will unfairly privilege wealthy developers and municipal governments who may find heritage registration a burden and who may seek to use these "streamlined" changes to deregister and demolish heritage properties across the province.

We need stronger heritage legislation, not weaker legislation. I fully support modernization of heritage protection and hope that your team is looking at the world's strongest and most responsive legislation for inspiration. We need creative ideas and we need those Toronto ad executives to use our build landscape to help make our province a destination. Please, do not make it easier to register properties simply because developers don't want to bother with the additional costs of owning and maintaining a heritage property.

Respectfully,

Creighton Barrett
Livingstone Place, Halifax

cc.

Hon. Diana C. Whalen, Chair, and Members of the Law Amendments Committee
Maureen MacDonald, MLA Halifax Needham