

Dear Law Amendments Committee Members,

I am dismayed by the lack of foresight among Halifax City Council members who continue to support the needless destruction of our built heritage. I was born, grew up in, and lived in south end Halifax my entire life, only leaving following my retirement in 2009. Never have I witnessed so much rampant destruction as has occurred within the last few years, and this year it seems the destruction is out of control.

Halifax City Council seems to believe that preserving the 'facade' of a historical building is sufficient: that is akin to believing that Hollywood sets are real. Perhaps they have never travelled to other parts of the world where historic buildings and districts are valued, preserved and have become tourist destinations. People do not go to Montreal, Quebec City, London, Paris, Rome, etc., to see another glass and steel high-rise, Condos or parking lots. They go to experience the history and culture that abounds, and marvel at the ingenuity which allows these buildings to be preserved and repurposed, intact. Our heritage is what gives us our sense of the present, and charts the path to our future. Halifax is sadly all too quickly becoming Anonymous-city.

Much time, effort and money has been spent over the years to develop plans which are supposed to ensure thoughtful development of our capital city. It would seem that the efforts put into these plans by citizens are wasted, as the plans are all too easily derailed when 'exceptions' are continually granted to developers. A meaningful plan would not allow for these exceptions in the first place. A meaningful plan should be *set in stone* for a period of years, at least 15 - 20, validating the hard work that went into it, and giving developers a clear understanding of what they can and cannot do.

Our current Heritage laws do not seem to be worth the paper they are written on. City council seems to have no interest in the built heritage of our city either, or the idea that neighbourhoods should not be sacrificed to profit. The Wellington Street decision is only one example, and the Steel parking lot debacle another.

While I am no longer a resident of the Halifax, and thus have no representation on city council, I am still a resident of Nova Scotia, and Halifax is my capital city, and thus my concerns and interest in its preservation are valid.

As such, I insist that changes must be made to Bill 177- to Amend the HRM City Charter and the Municipal Government Act to allow for effective protection of built heritage, and our neighbourhoods. Amendments to the Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter must allow the HRM Municipal government to effectively control the issuance of demolition permits. The development of policy concerning our built heritage must be a priority, and must be written by those genuinely interested in the preservation of this resource, and not by those interested in ensuring that there are sufficient loopholes to allow developers to have their way when the time comes. Furthermore, the recommendations of these Heritage advisors should be binding.

No demolition permits should be issued until until these new policies are in place.

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