



September 17, 2013

From: Heritage Ottawa

To: Community and Protective Services Committee Meeting - September 19, 2013

Re: Agenda Item #9 - Strategy to Address Vacant Buildings – Update, September 12, 2013

Ref. No.: ACS2013-COS-EPS-0016

Heritage Ottawa is very pleased to see that the City is committed to enforcing existing property standards by-laws more rigorously, which will benefit heritage properties as well as non-heritage properties. We first suggested such an approach in December 2007 and worked with former Councillor Bédard and City staff in drafting a previous report to Council which was never implemented. We are especially supportive of the proposed Heritage Component of the Vacant Buildings Strategy, as it appears to be soundly based upon the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

We support the City's intention to limit or deny property tax reductions on vacant commercial and industrial properties, as these can be a disincentive to maintenance.

Draft By-Law

With respect to the wording of the draft document, we suggest the following revisions:

p.22 - Vacant and damaged heritage properties, (4) (a)

In the case of an unheated and not mechanically ventilated building where all the doors and windows are “fitted in a watertight manner” with covers, there will be a promotion of rot and mould growth on the interior. It is essential to fit louvers in a number of windows on all floors

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to promote cross drafts and keep interior doors ajar for the circulation of air. The National Building Code standards for attic spaces in residential construction might be a useful guide in this instance.

p.22 - Vacant and damaged heritage properties, (5)

The “unless required” at the end of this paragraph should be deleted. It could result in the destruction of heritage attributes to the building and may not be reversible. We can think of no instance where a properly fitted plywood panel would not suffice.

Enforcement

With respect to enforcement procedures, we recommend that the City insist on periodic inspections of interiors, especially of structures long-vacant, so that out-of-sight degradation can be addressed. Damaged and neglected roofs are often a source of water penetration and animal infestation, and especially if the roof is flat, the damage may go on undetected from outside.

Congratulations to City Staff, who have worked so hard to bring this forward, and we look forward to vigorous enforcement of these by-laws.

Leslie Maitland, M. Mus., CAHP.,

President, Heritage Ottawa

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