



22 October 2020

Mr. Michael Nadler, Vice-President, External Relations and Visitor Experience
Parks Canada Agency, Government of Canada
30 Victoria St, 2nd Floor (PC-02-E) Office # 244
Gatineau (Québec) J8X 0B3
Sent via email to Michael.Nadler@pc.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Nadler

Heritage Ottawa was pleased to participate in the Minister's Round Table 2020: Cultural Heritage, on 15 October, 2020.

Heritage Ottawa is the foremost organisation in the National Capital Region advocating on behalf of the protection and appreciation of Ottawa's built heritage. Given that so many national historic sites, federally-designated buildings and historic landscapes are located here, Heritage Ottawa often finds itself advocating for the conservation of our national heritage on behalf of all Canadians (attested to by the thousands of communications we received from across the country concerning the Château Laurier). As such, Heritage Ottawa has a special relationship with Parks Canada, the National Capital Commission, and other federal entities who are stewards of our national heritage in the NCR.

Heritage Ottawa hopes that the push to create **federal legislation** to protect Canada's heritage will not be abandoned. We are the only G-7 country that lacks legislative and effective regulatory protection for its nationally-significant sites. It is astonishing that there is no legislative protection for Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site, or any other national historic site. The overwhelming question raised during the Château Laurier debacle was: where is the federal government?

This legislation needs to have some teeth and it should:

- extend to Crown Corporations and Agencies;
- require owner departments to identify a percentage of their asset management budgets to heritage properties;
- require owner departments to establish management plans signed by ministers and tabled in Parliament, following the management regime of the *Parks Canada Agency Act*;
- oblige the federal government to prioritize accommodation in heritage buildings where new accommodation is required;

- Include *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* as the conservation standard for the federal government;
- Where designated properties must be removed from the federal inventory, property transfers should be governed by an enforceable conservation easement; and
- include reform of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and adherence to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

But even in the absence of federal legislation, the Government of Canada needs to use the **protective tools** it already has. It is possible to protect sites such as 24 Sussex and the Central Experimental Farm even in the absence of legislation. What appears to be lacking is the will to do so.

We support Dr. Richard Alway's comment that it is good to see the **Cost-Share Program** refinanced; but as he said, a million dollars doesn't go far, and almost raises false expectations. Nevertheless, please persist with this initiative.

Also under-resourced is the **Heritage Register**, a resoundingly successful federal/provincial/territorial initiative which brought Canada's heritage to the fingertips of every Canadian. It demonstrated a significant commitment to transparency, and empowerment of citizenry. Negligence of this tool, in which a great deal was invested, is representative of the culture of negligence that seems to persist in Canada, demonstrated more dramatically in the loss of a warehouse full of PPE. Larger scale. Same issue.

Heritage Ottawa embraces the new way being charted forward to embrace **Indigenous history and story telling, and the diversity of Canada's population**. Heritage Ottawa has made inroads in supporting others to tell their stories across this great city (the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin people). However, it will be difficult to tell these stories if the sites associated with them are neglected and disappear.

Volunteerism has its challenges. Even though we are a volunteer organisation without a single full-time staff person, we warmly embrace this challenge. We could do a better job at it if we weren't expending fifty percent of our human capital fighting the Government of Canada.

Heritage Ottawa respects and appreciates the dedication and hard work of Parks Canada Agency Staff, who work tirelessly to protect and present Canada's protected spaces and cultural heritage.

Parenthetically, I would like to note that the Zoom format in fact worked quite well, and afforded everyone the opportunity to be heard, and to hear, even more successfully than at the in-person MRT events.

Regards,



Leslie Maitland, M.Mus., CAHP

Board member, Heritage Ottawa

Cc:

Dr. Christina Cameron

Dr. Richard Alway

Sen. Serge Joyal