



CATHERINE
NASMITH
ARCHITECT

July 3, 2019

Chair and Members
Planning and Housing Committee
City of Toronto
c/o Nancy Martins
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

email: phc@toronto.ca

PH7.11 City-wide Heritage Survey Feasibility Study

Chair and Members:

I am writing in my capacity as a member of the Technical Heritage Survey Expert Panel (TEP) who advised staff through the Feasibility Study. I support the staff recommendations and the additional motion from the Toronto Preservation Board.

As one of the two signatures on the Toronto Star opinion piece which made the suggestion that a City-wide heritage survey was urgently needed, I am very pleased to be here to applaud the completion of the feasibility study, which, with your support, will move this major undertaking forward. As a former governor, I am pleased that The National Trust for Canada is applauding the City's initiative. It is precedent setting for the country, and it will not be the first time the City of Toronto has led the field in heritage conservation. While we would always love to see such projects move faster, it is also important to think carefully about how to approach such a major undertaking.

Frustration with the current pace of listing and designation has mounted across the City as we see our neighbourhood touchstones disappearing. Dealing with the current backlog is such an important first step and I am pleased to see this as a priority.

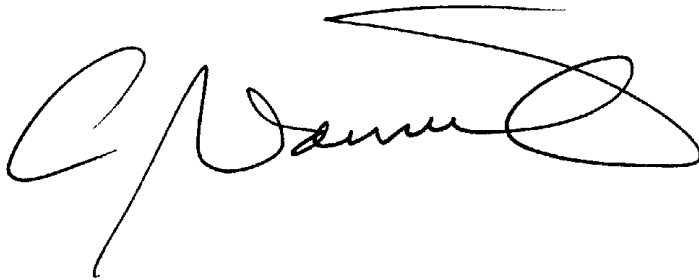
I worry that the recent changes to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) will make it harder to protect what is valued by communities, a principal enshrined in all versions of the OHA until Bill 108, which significantly weakens local decision making. The City of Toronto may need to find its own local system, as it had before the OHA was drafted in 1976, to avoid the endless stream of appeals which will inevitably follow the recent provincial introduction of new ways to circumvent the OHA.

Whatever tools we use to protect what we value; we need to know what is out there across the City and we need the City to engage with communities to gather that information.

I was invited to serve on the TEP as a heritage practitioner, and I was also able to be a bridge to the work being done by the Toronto Branch of the Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACOTO). In my volunteer capacity, I have been intimately connected with the development of TOBuilt with ACOTO. TOBuilt was developed as a tool to allow everyone who has information to share it. ACO is in a position to start working with neighbourhoods to gather what they know into TOBuilt where it can be a resource to City staff, other communities, and anyone interested in Toronto's built environment. It is by no means a substitute for the data-base the City must develop, but it will facilitate information gathering while the City develops its own process.

I look forward to working with Council, City staff, the architectural profession and communities to better understand the places that matter across Toronto and to find ways to keep them safe for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Nasmith', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Catherine Nasmith
OAA FRAIC CAHP

c.c. Matthew Zambri, President ACOTO
Leslie Thompson, President ACO
Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Program Manager
Mary MacDonald, Manager Heritage Preservation Services