

HERITAGE CANADA
NATIONAL TRUST



HÉRITAGE CANADA
FIDUCIE NATIONALE

*Patron: His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada*

*Président d'honneur : Son Excellence le très honorable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Gouverneur général du Canada*

December 6 2013

Stephen S. Poloz
Governor
Bank of Canada
234 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G9

Dear Governor Poloz and members of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Canada:

Re: Proposed Alterations – Bank of Canada Building

As the national voice for the conservation of heritage in Canada, Heritage Canada The National Trust is following with great concern the proposed alterations to the iconic Bank of Canada Building on Wellington Street in Ottawa, details of which have only very recently been reported in the media.

Given what is known about the project thus far, it appears that there has been a fundamental failure to understand the nature of the building and its architecture. We fear that this lack of understanding has resulted in a project with inappropriate scope and design, and could ultimately call into question whether public funds are being used judiciously, as noted below.

We offer our immediate assistance to advise you in taking the required steps to ensure an appropriate balance between meeting the Bank's evolving functional needs, and protecting key heritage elements of this important federal asset. We urge you to take action immediately to demonstrate the Bank's willingness to respect and protect this iconic national treasure.

The Bank of Canada Building is one of Canada's best 20th century buildings, which without a doubt has the highest order of historic, architectural and cultural significance. It is an extraordinary example of the creative integration of old (the original 1930s masonry building) and new (the sensitive Erickson-designed addition). As a federally owned building, it belongs to the people of Canada and should normally be afforded the highest level of heritage protection. The Bank of Canada's status as a crown corporation allowed it to avoid the usual processes for design review, however this is not appropriate given the buildings importance to Canadian architecture. Third-party design scrutiny and public consultation are required before any changes are made to the design. Please seek expert advice, and avoid further public censure.

We share concerns about the project expressed by Phyllis Lambert and others – namely: the removal of the garden; the loss of public access to the courtyard; the addition of new structures to the site; the uncertain future of some of the remaining furniture integrated in the Erickson design; and the modification of the curtain wall (despite the fact that the latter was replaced less than 10 years ago using public funds and based on expert advice).

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We've changed our name and renewed our vision! Nous avons changé notre nom et renouvelé notre vision!

We do understand that architecture must evolve to support operational needs. However we do not accept that notion that security can be used to justify most of what is proposed. We fundamentally question the basis for privatizing the public space, especially given its federal ownership. Historic public buildings the world over have managed security concerns by creating buffer zones and control points, with minimal impact on original fabric and architectural concepts. When physical changes cannot be avoided, they should be carefully designed with as much skill and care as the original work, including the potential for reversibility. Security matters, even when valid, can be dealt with other than by a radical conceptual distortion of the architect's plan and elimination of public access.

Governor Poloz, Directors, we urge you recognize the heritage significance of this building and avoid inflicting irreversible damage to it during your watch. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 613 237 1066 ext 222 or at nbull@heritagecanada.org.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Bull
Executive Director

cc. Tiff Macklem, Senior Deputy Governor, Bank of Canada
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, and Minister for the Arctic Council
Hon. Diane Finley, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada
Hon. Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance (Bank of Canada)
Michael Horgan, Deputy Minister of Finance
Hon. Shelly Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister for Official Languages
Hon. Scott Brison (Finance Critic, Liberal)
Hon. Gerry Byrne (PWGSC Critic, Liberal)
Hon. Stéphane Dion (Heritage Critic, Liberal)
Paul Dewar (Foreign Affairs and NCC Critic, NDP)
Marc Garneau (Foreign Affairs and NCC Critic, Liberal)
Megan Leslie (Environment Critic, NDP)
Pat Martin (PWGSC Critic, NDP)
Hon. John McKay (Environment Critic, Liberal)
Pierre Nantel (Heritage Critic, NDP)
Peggy Nash (Finance Critic, NDP)
Hon. John Baird (MP, Ottawa West-Nepean)
Hon. Mauril Bélanger (MP, Ottawa-Vanier)
Hon. Francois Boivin (MP, Gatineau)
Paul Dewar (MP, Ottawa Centre)
Royal Galipeau (MP, Ottawa-Orléans)
David McGuinty (MP, Ottawa South)
Hon. Pierre Poilievre (MP, Nepean-Carleton)
Nycole Turmel (MP, Hull-Aylmer)
Alain Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency
Jean-François Trépanier, Chief Executive Officer, National Capital Commission
Andrew Waldron, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, Parks Canada Agency