



Anglican Church of the Messiah
messiahchurch.ca
613-235-0596

February 23, 2024

To whom it may concern,

RE: Designation of the Bible House 315 Lisgar Street, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, File No. ACS2024-PRE-RHU-0014

We received the letter dated January 24, 2024 advising of Council's intent to designate the Bible House at 315 Lisgar Street.

We are writing to object to the proposed designation pursuant to subsection 29(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act. We would also like to summarize and clarify the interactions with city staff and church staff over the last few months.

The church received the documents regarding the heritage designation consideration in October 2023. A staff member from the church called the city offices in November 2023 to discuss the documents and figure out what the designation's impact would be in terms of property value. For any property owner, particularly in an expensive and developing neighbourhood such as Ottawa's centretown/downtown, a substantive change in the zoning, heritage status, or any other aspect imposed by the city understandably raises severe concern about what will happen to the monetary value of the property. If a prospective buyer is faced with extra costs imposed on them in order to maintain and respect the newly established protected heritage characteristics, the negotiation of the sale, naturally, will be influenced negatively for the seller. And it is worth noting that the seller did nothing to instigate the heritage status consideration and was only called in to comment after the research project and campaign to grant the designation was well underway.

Based on the documents and discussion with city staff, it is apparent that very little consideration or respect has been given to the value of the property and what a designation would do to it. This is unfortunate particularly for a charity organization whose primary monetary asset is the property in question. Church staff emphasized this point, citing it as a major concern given that the church purchased the building in 2020 with the expectation that the property would appreciate in value given its location in a densifying neighbourhood with developers. City staff were asked repeatedly to clarify how the city can protect small organizations from the likely depreciation of value after a heritage status is designated. City staff were not able to provide any reassurance or proof to the contrary. The response was wholly unsatisfactory and disappointing. While our church appreciates the work and research that

went into the heritage report, it is shocking that a city would not consider the financial implications of such a decision.

The city invited church staff to participate in the Building Heritage Committee meeting scheduled for January 16th. Church staff attended via Zoom. The staff member remained on the call for the first two hours of the meeting at which point she needed to step off briefly. Given the pace of the meeting (and the technical difficulties) to that point, there didn't appear any danger of missing the presentation for 315 Lisgar. Unfortunately, that was not the case and 315 Lisgar was presented (evidently quite quickly given how short the church staff member was absent). We understand and appreciate that this was a time to present our opposition to the city council. However, we trust that this letter will act as a sufficient substitute for any presentation we could have made in the five minutes allotted at a busy committee meeting with a loaded agenda.

We respectfully request that the building not be designated under Part IV of the Heritage Act.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Josiah Haynes at admin@messiahchurch.ca if you have questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Sinclair", with a small plus sign at the end.

Rector, Church of the Messiah

613-235-0596

george.sinclair@messiahchurch.ca

cc: Council Members of Church of the Messiah
Councillor Ariel Troster, Ward 14 Somerset
Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
Councillor Rawlson King, Built Heritage Committee Chair
Barry Padolsky barrypadolsky@me.com