



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO : Chair and Members of the Built Heritage Committee

DESTINATAIRE: Président et membres du comité du patrimoine bâti

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SUBJECT: Heritage Watch List Update

OBJET: Mise à jour de la liste de surveillance des biens à valeur patrimoniale

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a periodic update on the City's Heritage Watch List and initiatives to enhance monitoring and improve outcomes for these properties.

BACKGROUND

The Heritage Watch List was initially created in 2016 as an outcome of the Mayor's Heritage Task Force. The goal of the Watch List was to create an inter-departmental approach to monitoring vacant and at-risk designated heritage buildings across the city. The core team is made up of staff from Heritage Planning, Building Code Services, and

By-law and Regulatory Services. The team also works closely with staff in Legal Services and Finance.

Staff have periodically provided updates to the Built Heritage Committee on the status of properties on the Heritage Watch List since its inception but not on a regular basis since the end of the Heritage Task Force in 2022. Staff most recently provided an update on the Watch List at the March 2024 Built Heritage Committee meeting where members indicated a desire for more frequent, regular updates.

DISCUSSION

Status of Watch List

Since the February 2024 update, there has been one property removed from the list and no properties added to the list. The removed property is 30 James Street which was removed because it is now occupied. There are currently 30 buildings on the Heritage Watch List. Since the last update, there have been two fires in buildings listed on the Heritage Watch List resulting in Built Heritage Committee approving an application to demolish 7 Crescent Road in September 2024 and an active application to demolish 79 Guigues Avenue. The semi-detached house at 1 Maple Lane/1112 Lisgar Road was also approved for demolition this year.

New Initiatives

Staff are working collaboratively on several new initiatives to further bolster efforts to protect and encourage the rehabilitation of properties on the Heritage Watch List, and by extension all individually designated properties and those within heritage conservation districts. These initiatives can be summarized as follows:

- **Application Fees**

The Delegation of Authority by-law provides staff with the discretion to reduce or waive heritage permit application fees for applications related to fire or catastrophic events such as collapse. As a mechanism to further disincentivize leaving designated heritage properties vacant, this discretion will no longer be used to waive heritage permit application fees for properties listed on the City's Heritage Watch List that have been subject to fire or collapse.

- **Proactive engineering inspections**

- The Heritage Watch List Team coordinated proactive inspection site visits and building reviews with a conservation engineer at the end of November

2024 of 14 properties listed on the Watch List and considered to be most at risk. The results of these inspections will be used to inform future proactive enforcement and monitoring of these buildings. Staff will provide further details on this initiative at the next update.

- **Amendment to the Development Charge By-law**

- City Council recently approved an amendment to the Development Charges By-law to remove a disincentive in the redevelopment of designated properties that have been deemed derelict. Until the recent amendment, properties deemed “derelict” were not eligible to access redevelopment credits as part of a new development.
- City-wide, staff estimate that there are between 10 and 15 designated properties that have been deemed “derelict”. Such properties include some of the most challenging properties that the City has been addressing through the Heritage Watch List: 352 Somerset Street West (Somerset House), 287 Cumberland Street (former Our Lady School), and 1119 Wellington Street West (Magee House). All of these buildings have been vacant and in a derelict condition for more than five years, but the owners are required to retain these buildings through Council direction under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- City Council approved a minor amendment to the policy framework to allow designated heritage properties that are deemed derelict to continue to be able to access redevelopment credits. This exemption will only apply where redevelopment includes the heritage building on the site. Projects where the heritage building is to be demolished would not be eligible for the credit.

Staff will monitor this amendment over time to determine if it has the intended impact of activating the properties on the Heritage Watch List, while at the same time contributing towards the creation of new housing stock, increased development charge revenue, higher property taxation revenue, and lower enforcement costs for the City.

- **At-Risk Heritage Building Workshop**

- Heritage Planning Staff are working collaboratively with the Chair of BHC and Heritage Ottawa to coordinate a presentation and workshop related to

at-risk heritage properties early in 2025. The session will include presentations from City staff on the processes and tools currently available and a brainstorming session seeking feedback and new ideas on how to better protect and incentivize the rehabilitation and conservation of these properties.

- Staff intend to invite members of BHC, Community Associations with HCDs, Heritage Ottawa and other relevant members of the heritage community to this session.
- **Special meeting with Global Affairs Canada**
 - There are ongoing challenges with diplomatic and foreign-owned properties on the Heritage Watch List. Enforcement and communications can be challenging and there are instances of non-compliance such as the demolition of 235 Mariposa Avenue without the benefit of an appropriate permit under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
 - Staff are coordinating with staff from Global Affairs Canada to arrange a meeting in early 2025 to discuss on how to best address these matters.

CONCLUSION

Staff will provide a fulsome update on the properties on the Heritage Watch List and the outcomes of these new initiatives in Q2 2025.

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