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Heritage Plan

Recently there have been a number of historic buildings demolished in downtown Halifax. The extensive list to be demolished in the near future signals that it is finally time to legislate a heritage law/plan that will save our built heritage.

I propose the following measures:

- An HRM heritage department should be created.
- An HRM heritage fund should be established.
- The tax rate on registered heritage properties should be reduced by 50%.
- No demolition permit should be issued on registered heritage properties.
- If a non-registered building is demolished the assessment of that property should not be reduced. This measure could eliminate the incentive to demolish buildings to lower the assessment.
- The heritage department should actively seek out architecturally significant buildings and assign them with registered heritage status.
- Alterations to heritage properties should be subject to very strict guidelines. A deposit should be submitted by the developer before alterations begin. If the changes do not pass inspection then the deposit should go to the heritage fund.
- Any new development within a prescribed radius of registered heritage buildings should be subject to a surcharge payable to the heritage fund.
- The heritage fund should be used for heritage loans, heritage awareness and heritage preservation awards.
- To de-register a heritage property, a deposit along with a written submission should be made to the heritage department stating just cause. If the de-registration is approved the deposit would go to the heritage fund.
- Heritage districts should be created. These districts would benefit from the same regulations that applies to registered heritage buildings
- Demolition permit applications for non-registered buildings should be accompanied with an extensive justification for demolition along with a deposit. Demolition for the purpose of subdivision should not be accepted unless the replacement is of greater design value to the community.

What is required to save our built heritage is the same level of restoration that has been invested in Historic Properties, Government House, AGNS, the Citadel, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Lieutenant Governor's residence, the post office on Bedford Row, the Delta, the Provincial Government building on Barrington and Founders Square. HRM must protect its valued buildings rather than download the responsibility to developers and private citizens. The lack of proper safeguards for our built heritage has placed the entire stock at risk. It is time that registered heritage properties and built heritage in general are protected like Historic Properties.

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