

Hon. Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
438 University Ave., 6th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

January 28, 2021

Dear Minister,

As you are likely aware, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is the self-regulating body for the profession of architecture in Ontario, established in 1899 to govern the practice of architecture and administer the *Architects Act* in order to serve and protect the public interest.

In March 2019, we wrote your predecessor, Minister Tibollo, stressing the need to protect Ontario Place and its legacy as a site of architectural distinction, cultural significance, and historical importance for the province. At that time, we emphasized the OAA is not opposed to the revitalization of Ontario Place and would welcome a reanimation of the property as a provincially owned urban park.

Given the significant heritage, tourism, and cultural significance of Ontario Place, we are encouraged to see the government's commitment under **Action Item #1 The Redevelopment of Ontario Place as a World-Class, Year-Round Destination** to retaining key heritage and recreational facilities. The OAA would again stress that the original intent of a public space for all to enjoy must be the driving force behind any revitalization.

Having had the opportunity to review the other action items listed in *Reconnecting Ontarians: Re-emerging as a Global Leader*, the OAA would also like to speak to **Action Item #4 Broaden Ontario's Volunteer Base** as it relates to emergency response. For many years, heritage architects watched with concern as buildings with significant cultural and historical significance were routinely demolished in the wake of a natural disaster.

While design, renovation, and retrofitting of these structures legally requires an architect, decisions about whether the buildings could be saved were perplexingly made without any involvement of an architect in the assessment. If an architect is required under provincial legislation for the design or general review of a structure in question, then an architect must also be part of the team that assesses the viability of a compromised structure.

Outside of this particular concern, the OAA would like to stress in a more general sense that Ontario architects—similar to our U.S. counterparts who regularly work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—are ready and willing to assist in post-disaster response. We encourage the Provincial Emergency Volunteer Unit to consider how architects in particular can be mobilized to respond to large-scale emergencies such as natural disasters or health crises. Most recently, our members have stood with fellow Ontarians to meet the challenges of

COVID-19, from 3D medical supplies to quickly designing and supporting the rapid delivery of temporary COVID-19 care units.

We thank you for inviting the OAA (and all Ontarians) to “be a part of this conversation,” and look forward to exploring these priorities further with your Ministry.

Regards,



Susan Speigel, Architect
OAA, FRAIC
President