



**ARCHITECTURAL
CONSERVANCY
ONTARIO**

Media Release

November 10, 2022

**Bill 23: Ford Drops Bomb into Ontario's Heritage System
Response to More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022**

“Whether intended or not, the changes proposed for the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) in Bill 23 will make it practically impossible to protect most of Ontario’s identified heritage properties. This can only be seen as a knee-jerk response to a vindictive attack by the development industry on our heritage system. There was no consultation or consideration of the destructive impacts of these proposals across Ontario”, says ACO Chair Diane Chin. “Why drop a cluster bomb of changes into the heritage system that will not create a single unit of affordable housing? The proposed changes to the OHA must be dropped from Bill 23”, adds Ms. Chin.

Two of the proposals stand out. Forcing communities to drop “listed” properties from their heritage registers if they are not designated in two years and requiring that the standard for designation of properties be hiked from at least one of Ontario’s heritage criteria to two.

Requiring a property meet two of the legislated criteria for designation, instead of one, will make it challenging to protect the often-humble buildings and places associated with the historic contributions of Black, Indigenous, Franco-Ontarian, multicultural, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to Ontario. This will seriously hamper communities like Little Jamaica or Kensington Market currently seeking heritage status and protection.

Ironically this effort to stymie advancements made in recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity is being promoted by the “minister of heritage,” the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Michael Ford.

The change to the treatment of listed properties is equally confused, baffling, and counter productive. Listing — placing a property on the local Heritage Register — recognizes cultural value without the expensive and cumbersome process required to “designate” under the Ontario Heritage Act. Listing is an important planning tool, imposing no conditions on property owners save for requiring 60 days notice of intent to demolish.

“Why make it so much harder to keep listed properties on the Heritage Register,” asks Ms. Chin. “Designation should not be seen as the holy grail of heritage protection; listing is easy to implement and does the job in most cases. Why is the Ford government forcing unnecessary designations on municipalities and heritage property owners?”

In most of Ontario, identification and protection of heritage is undertaken by volunteer organizations and members of Municipal Heritage Committees. Most listed properties are not in any danger, so listing is an adequate tool for local councils to identify and celebrate their cultural heritage. The changes to listing requirements proposed in Bill 23, forcing either designation or the dropping of thousands of properties from the register within two years, leaving them with no heritage status, will undermine decades of volunteer work identifying and honouring local properties of value to their respective communities.

Architectural Conservancy Ontario is the largest voice for heritage in Ontario, founded in 1933 with branches in 17 communities across the province.



For more information contact: Diane Chin President, president@acontario.ca or Will Coukell, Chief Operating Officer will@acontario.ca 416 367 8075