

Heritage committee fights to save Ottawa city hall

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

Describing Ottawa city hall as a significant public landmark, a city heritage committee has unanimously condemned a proposal to demolish the building.

In a statement drafted Tuesday, the committee advises Ottawa Council to retain the 29-year-old structure and incorporate it into a new civic complex.

Robert Hunter, an architectural historian, said committee members will meet informally with Mayor Jim Durrell and interested aldermen to discuss the issue before Aug. 5.

FULL TEXT

Describing Ottawa city hall as a significant public landmark, a city heritage committee has unanimously condemned a proposal to demolish the building.

In a statement drafted Tuesday, the committee advises Ottawa Council to retain the 29-year-old structure and incorporate it into a new civic complex.

On Aug. 5, council will decide whether to renovate and add to the present building on Green Island or demolish it in favor of a new structure.

The cost of both proposals is estimated to be \$60 million.

Meanwhile, heritage committee members will lobby to save the building.

Robert Hunter, an architectural historian, said committee members will meet informally with Mayor Jim Durrell and interested aldermen to discuss the issue before Aug. 5.

"It's a wonderful building and could be used as the nucleus for a sensational city hall complex," Hunter said.

The heritage committee's statement will be considered by the city's planning committee on July 28.

"Beautifully-proportioned, well-detailed and carefully finished, the Ottawa City Hall is a prime Canadian example of architecture of the modern era," the statement reads.

However, many aldermen have complained the building is too warm in the summer and cold in the winter, the roof

and underground parking garage leak, and the air circulates poorly.

Despite these complaints, heritage planner Cathy Raven says the building is still useful.

"It just isn't fair to argue that the building doesn't work, that it's ugly and should be torn down because, in essence, it does work."

Restoration architect Greg Utas said while it's clear city hall needs renovations, "what's not clear is that it is a building of quality."

Nine of 14 aldermen polled last week said they agree with a recommendation made by the city's policy committee to raze city hall.

Credit: CITIZEN

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