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Dec. 6, 2012

House of Commons
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Canada Post Main Post Office Building-349 West Georgia

On behalf of Heritage Vancouver, I am writing to register the concerns of our members regarding the future of Vancouver's Main Post Office, one of Vancouver's last completely intact mid century modern buildings. Although this building is on the city's list of important modern buildings it is not on the city's heritage register and Canada Post has not placed any heritage protection status on the building. Canada Post has put the building up for sale and interested parties have now submitted their bids. Knowing that the sale of this building was imminent and had no heritage protection, Heritage Vancouver ranked the Post Office #1 on our Top Ten Endangered Structures List for 2012.

McCarter & Nairne's Canada Post building is significant historically and architecturally at both broad and specific levels. Key to the public expression of the building is the Georgia Street façade complete with pedestrian colonnade, and the grand double height postal hall, which runs the full width of the building. The most impactful elements from the overall material palette include granite and marble cladding on columns and walls, terra cotta wall tiles – one of the last uses of this material in the city, cast concrete wall panels, ceramic wall tiles, terrazzo floors, and aluminum window frames. In addition several traditional murals and bas-relief sculptures that were created specifically for the building remain in situ. The building also represents the strength of a Canadian Modernist architectural culture that was applied to civic and institutional projects throughout the city at this time.

Heritage Vancouver takes the position that the overall historic integrity and most significant architectural features of the Canada Post building should be preserved and that the overall redevelopment of the building and site should incorporate civic and cultural uses/spaces that Vancouver currently lacks. Due to the high number of jobs that will be lost to the City of Vancouver with the Post Office's move to Richmond we also see opportunities on this site to replace these job losses.

Given the heritage significance of this building Heritage Vancouver urges the Federal Government to require that the Post Office follow federal guidelines. As a federally owned building more than 40 years old, the Post Office should be fully evaluated using the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) evaluation criteria so that its heritage value can be fully understood. The Post Office was able to avoid taking this step because it is a Crown Corporation and not obliged to follow this government policy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Leduc", written in a cursive style.

Janet Leduc
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society

Cc.