



April 9, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

**Re: 24 Sussex**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Heritage Ottawa respectfully recommends that the Government of Canada accepts the generous offer made by former Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper to raise funds privately to restore 24 Sussex. This generous offer, made in the spirit of bipartisanship, would result in the rehabilitation of a national treasure that belongs not to prime ministers, but to all Canadians.

Heritage Ottawa is the foremost non-profit group in Ottawa dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of our National Capital's built heritage and special places. We have campaigned long and hard for the rehabilitation of 24 Sussex, to be used ultimately either as a home for prime ministers, or for another public use.

As you are very aware, this is not just any home. It is a nationally significant place that belongs to all Canadians. It is part of a suite of buildings designed in the Gothic Revival Style erected at the time of Confederation. 24 Sussex (built 1867-68 by Joseph Merrill Currier, lumber baron and Member of Parliament), along with Earnscliffe (home to Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald), and the Parliament Buildings themselves are all part of an elegant landscape of structures, located on one of the most dramatic – and iconic – landscapes in Canada that speaks to the creation of our nation. It has been the setting for many important political events. For these reasons, 24 Sussex is a Classified Federal Heritage Building.

It is tragic that the building has been allowed to degrade. The National Capital Commission has done its best to stabilize the structure, but a political decision concerning the future of 24 Sussex needs to be made.

Good heritage conservation allows for buildings to be upgraded and to evolve. In the case of 24 Sussex, it is the exterior walls and landscape which have been identified as historically significant. That given, there is great scope for imaginative and creative rehabilitation and new design. The greenest buildings are those that are already there or that are renovated for use. Please do not condemn this fine building to landfill.

We hear the voices of those who feel that rehabilitation of this house during a housing crisis sends the wrong message. But is it not also a wrong message that an otherwise sound structure is sent to landfill? That it continues to lie vacant? That a property that is nationally significant is allowed to fall into ruin?

It is lamentable that federally-recognized places have no legislative protection in Canada; we are the only G7 country to lack such protection.

Please accept the former prime ministers Chrétien and Harper's generous offer and let this project stand as an example of our respect for Canadian heritage.

Sincerely,



Katherine Spencer Ross

President, Heritage Ottawa

CC

The Hon. Stephen Guilbeault, Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Ms. Sheila Copps

Tobi Nussbaum, CEO, National Capital Commission

Dr. Patricia Kell, Executive Director, National Trust for Canada