



ACO strongly opposes Rebuilding Ontario Place Act

Architectural Conservancy Ontario strongly opposes the Rebuilding Ontario Place Act.

Ontario Place is recognized as a Provincial Heritage Property of Provincial significance -- the highest of all possible designations, given only to sites worthy of the utmost protection. Ontario Place has been internationally recognized as a globally significant example of 20th Century architecture and landscape design by organizations like The Cultural Landscape Foundation, Docomomo, the National Trust for Canada, and the World Monuments Fund, which in 2020 placed it on a level with the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

To plow ahead with developing the highly criticized Therme Spa, the Ontario Heritage Act says the Ontario government would need to prove this development would not harm the cultural significance and heritage value of this internationally renowned site.

For months, Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) has been saying the Ontario Heritage Act won't permit this to happen. The introduction of the New Deal for Toronto Act proves ACO was right. Rather than argue their proposal to cut down 850 trees and build a megaspa does not undermine the designated heritage features of Ontario Place -- an argument they would surely lose -- rather than play according to the rules the provincial legislature passed for the protection of Ontario's cultural heritage, this government just says, we'll change the rules.

Not only that, we'll give our Minister of Infrastructure, Kinga Surma, the right to make up her own rules, via Ministerial Zoning Orders, as she goes.

By exempting Ontario Place from the protection of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Rebuilding Ontario Place Act not only threatens one of Canada's most important contributions to modern design, it threatens all provincially owned heritage properties.

If the OHA can be tossed aside for such a frivolous, irresponsible project that Ontarians clearly do not want --and that will embarrass us all in front of the world-- then all provincially owned heritage properties are at risk.

Where is the Minister responsible for the protection of Ontario's heritage in all this? Why are we not hearing from Michael Ford? Ever since he was appointed, ACO has been trying to meet Minister Ford. To date, we haven't even had any acknowledgement of our requests.

ACO deplores this Act of Cowardice (aka Rebuilding Ontario Place Act).

Media Inquiries:

Bill Greaves
416 835 5982
wsgreaves@yahoo.com

References:

Kapusta, Beth. "Imminent Threat to Ontario Place." *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*. Nov 17, 2023. <https://www.tclf.org/imminent-threat-ontario-place>

Change.org petition "Save Ontario Place", launched Nov 17, 2023. 14,309 signatures as of Nov 28 https://www.change.org/p/save-ontario-place?source_location=search

Ashby, James, McLelland, Michael. "Ontario Place." *Docomomo*, 2014. <https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/ontario-place-toronto>

Docomomo. "Urgent action required: Ontario Place." <https://docomomo.com/urgent-action-required-ontario-place-toronto-canada/>

National Trust for Canada. Ontario Place: Top Ten Endangered Places, 2012. <https://nationaltrustcanada.ca/nt-endangered-places/ontario-place>