

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY ONTARIO BACKGROUND #3

Prepared for: ACO Delegates to Heritage Advocacy Day, February 21, 2024

Ensure provincial land-use planning policies encourage Keep, Fix, Reuse approaches to existing buildings for housing and other purposes.

Request to Province:

Amend the (proposed) Provincial Planning Statement to prioritize the retention and re-use of Ontario's existing building stock by:

- o adding in Section 2.2.1 on Housing, "encouraging wherever possible the adaptive reuse and retrofitting of existing buildings, in view of the economic, job creation and climatic benefits of such an approach."
- o adding in Section 2.9 on Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change, a new clause in point 2.9.1: "Planning authorities shall plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate through approaches that..."encourage the reuse and retrofitting of existing buildings to reduce their lifetime greenhouse gas emissions."

Background:

- The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) gives provincial policy direction on key land use planning issues that affect communities.
- A proposed new Provincial Planning Statement will replace the existing document in 2024.
- The proposed PPS includes in section 2.2.1 on Housing, language "permitting and facilitating" the repurposing of existing commercial and institutional buildings for residential use.
- Additional language should be added to the section: "encouraging wherever possible the adaptive reuse and retrofitting of existing buildings, in view of the economic, job creation and climatic benefits of such an approach."
- A systematic literature review undertaken in 2023 found 23 studies reporting increased economic opportunities and 5 studies demonstrating an increase in affordable housing as a result of the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.ⁱ
- Section 2.9 on Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change highlights several important priorities in planning infrastructure and municipal design, but neglects the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from existing buildings.

- Building considerations **MUST** be included in good planning. Globally, buildings and construction account for 35% of GHG emissions, a percentage which rises to 65-70% in large cities. Retrofitting existing buildings is essential. We can't possibly replace all existing poorly insulated buildings in time to stop climate change, and even if we could, the greenhouse gases emitted would outweigh the climate benefits.ⁱⁱ [ref: Greenest Building study]
- To address this weakness an additional clause should be added to point 2.9.1: "Planning authorities shall plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the *impacts of a changing climate* through approaches that..."**encourage the reuse and retrofitting of existing buildings to reduce their lifetime greenhouse gas emissions."**

ⁱ Aigwi, Esther & Duberia, Ahmed & Nwadike, Amarachukwu. (2023). Adaptive Reuse of Existing Buildings as a Sustainable Tool for Climate Change Mitigation within the Built Environment. *Sustainable Energy Technologies and Assessments*. 56.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366820547_Adaptive_Reuse_of_Existing_Buildings_as_a_Sustainable_Tool_for_Climate_Change_Mitigation_within_the_Built_Environment

ⁱⁱ Preservation Green Lab (2012). The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse. https://living-future.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The_Greenest_Building.pdf