

# THE ADVOCATE

*"Of interest to the lawyer and in the lawyer's interest"*

VIA EMAIL

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Dear Mr. Dhaliwal and Mr. Azam:

**Re: The Law Courts Inn (Vancouver Courthouse)**

*The Advocate* is a publication of the Vancouver Bar Association and has been published continuously since 1943. It is circulated six times per year to all members of the bar in British Columbia as well as to members of the judiciary and others throughout the Commonwealth.

The undersigned editorial team of *The Advocate* write to express our dismay at the idea of the provincial government not renewing the lease of the Lawyers Inn Society which has operated the Law Courts Inn at 800 Smithe Street for 40 years on behalf of the public and the legal profession.

We are aware of the letter to you from the Law Courts Inn dated June 25, 2020 and we fully endorse the arguments advanced there promoting the hundreds of events regularly held in the space for members of the profession and members of the public. In our experience, the Law Courts Inn is a unique and significant space which serves to preserve the collegiality of the bar, provides much-needed space for continuing legal education (often at discounted rates to the organizations that use it) and advances connection between bench, bar and the public.

For 40 years the original artwork which graces the cover of our magazine has decorated the walls of the Law Courts Inn commemorating the many remarkable lawyers, judges and registrars who have served the province, its people and the cause of justice. These original works of art help preserve the history of the profession and its significant role in shaping British Columbia. The Law Courts Inn is a place where any member of the public is welcome to interact with lawyers, the law and the unique history of the Lawyers Inn Society. The Law Courts Inn houses a table made from the original timbers of the Inner Temple in London – a gift to the Lawyers Inn Society from that august 14th century entity.

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The idea of converting such beautiful and important public space for unspecified office use saddens us deeply. Many of us have been present at events too numerous to mention which have hosted judges and dignitaries from overseas as well as Chief Justices, Premiers, Governors General, Attorneys General, and every level of counsel from across Canada and the Commonwealth. With the current pandemic affecting all British Columbians we can think of no urgency that would necessitate the acquisition of this space at the expense of the profession without further consultation with affected individuals and groups. Bear in mind that the Law Courts Inn is a space which has hosted political debates, fundraisers for various charities, and forums for specialized groups administering justice to all strata of society.

In our respectful view, the historical, cultural, professional and social aspects of the practice of law in British Columbia can only be harmed by the removal of this resource for practitioners, judges, mentors and students of the law. That, in turn, can only serve to harm the public interest which is what is ultimately served by this public space.

We respectfully ask that you reconsider the decision which will negatively impact so many within the profession and many more who rely on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Michael Bain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line at the end.

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