

Dear Messrs. Dhaliwal and Azam;

I read with great disappointment that the Ministry of Citizens Services has taken the decision not to renew the lease of the Law Courts Inn to The Lawyers Inn Society.

I have read and echo the very valid argument in favour of renewing the lease contained in the open letter of June 25, 2020 to yourselves from Mr. Howden-Duke on behalf of The Lawyers Inn Society.

I will offer an additional, personal perspective on the impact of your decision. The Law Courts Inn serves as a meeting place for counsel, their clients, and witnesses. For clients and their families who are in the midst of any kind of litigation, be it civil, family or criminal, it serves as a place of refuge and refreshment where they may destress in what is, in my experience, a generally quiet environment, but which keeps them within easy access of counsel and the Court. There have been several occasions when I have sent people to that place for that very reason – they were in need of a break in a calming environment, but I needed them to be near to hand for counsel.

For counsel, it is a place where one can find a quiet corner to conduct work while getting a proper meal over lunch in the midst of trial.

It is appropriate that the largest, busiest courthouse in the province maintain this space for the purpose for which it was intended. This is all the more the case given that the Law Courts Inn is a viable commercial enterprise. It is not as if the Province is engaged in a charitable endeavour in having the Law Courts Inn occupy the space.

I ask that you reconsider the Ministry's decision. Please maintain this space as it is. If the Ministry has need of office space for others, please find space that is already fitted out for that purpose. One suspects, in the wake of the Covid crisis, that many businesses which may have discovered they function quite efficiently with people working remotely will be looking to reduce their leasehold footprints in the coming months to a year. One suspects that downtown office space might be secured at a very reasonable sum in the coming months.

Please re-engage with The Lawyers Inn Society with a view to negotiating terms for renewal of the lease to the Law Courts Inn.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours truly,

Kathleen S. Duffield

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