

Dear Minister Kang, Assistant Deputy Minister Dhaliwal, and Assistant Deputy Minister Azam,

I write to voice my concern for the government's intention to turn the Law Courts Inn into government offices. I write as a concerned citizen, but my opposition is informed by my work as a lawyer, as a past and current board member of various legal and community organizations, and as a guest to events held there, including weddings.

Its existence reinforces the idea that the courts are for the public. When I attend public events at the Law Courts Inn, non-lawyers consistently tell me that attending the event (and the features of the space itself such as being so open) makes the courts seem less imposing and abstract to them. It facilitates connection within the legal profession and with the profession and the greater community. By turning it into private offices, all this is lost.

I also write as someone who immigrated from a country where the elimination of professional meeting spaces was part of a larger trend to quash dissidence. I find it disturbing that the executive branch wants to take over a space where another branch, an independent judiciary, meets for lunch, attends events, and where I have personally seen the attorney general attend to answer the profession's questions. The symbolism and practical impact of that is not lost on the profession, I'm sure.

For these and other reasons, I truly hope you reconsider your decision not to renew its lease. It is an important meeting area, facilitates meaningful community engagement, and holds symbolic significance that should not be underestimated.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Mia Taghizadeh