



February 2, 2024

Lawren Campbell
President
Association Heritage New Brunswick
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Lawren Campbell:

Thank you for your letter which was received on October 10, 2023, in which you were seeking our views on matters related to conservation, preservation, interpretation and appreciation of the province's heritage resources in both official languages. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you.

You had asked how the Progressive Conservative Party plans to safeguard and preserve the province's heritage sites and museums. As you know, the *Heritage Conservation Act* (2010) provides the Department of Tourism, Heritage, and Culture (THC) with the tools to safeguard archaeological and built heritage. Qualified departmental staff actively participate in Crown project reviews and collaborate with all levels of government, First Nations, developers, and others to ensure responsible development while prioritizing the conservation of archaeological and built heritage resources. The department also allocates more than \$3.1 million annually for built heritage conservation, community museums, and historical societies to provide essential resources to industry and empower them to share our province's rich heritage with a broader audience.

The department is proud to support the staff and board of the New Brunswick Museum in revitalizing the provincial museum. To date, the board has successfully secured \$8.4 million in funding to support the new museum's design and has engaged the services of the award-winning architecture firm Diamond Schmitt and a dedicated project manager to ensure the project remains on schedule.

The New Brunswick Museum has been proactive in seeking public input, conducting in-person and virtual engagement sessions throughout the province, and ensuring that all stakeholders' voices, including your members, are heard, and valued. The board expects land work to start mid-to-late 2024 and the building to be open by the second or third quarter of 2026.



Ongoing and constructive discussions surrounding heritage conservation and reconciliation continue between the provincial government and First Nations. This past September marked a significant milestone as THC and the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik signed a formal agreement on archaeology. This agreement is the first of its kind in New Brunswick. It ensures that archaeological work in Peskotomuhkatiyik is conducted with respect for both governments' laws, customs, and values. Additionally, it supports the conservation of non-renewable archaeological resources.

You also asked about any initiatives being considered or undertaken to enhance the number of skilled workers for heritage buildings. Staff from the Archaeology and Heritage Branch recently met with the Association to discuss strengthening the relationship and the potential of collaborating on projects that our department views as key in supporting the museum and built heritage industries. I hope this was the first of many constructive discussions between our organizations.

As to the question of retrofitting buildings as a possible solution to address the province's need for housing, it is something that is being explored and presents one visible solution where there are buildings which can be refurbished provided the cost aligns with what is financially and environmentally reasonable. The department of Tourism Heritage and Culture allocates more than \$3.1 million annually for heritage building conservation, community museums and historical societies to provide essential resources to industry and empower them to share our province's rich heritage with a broader audience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blaine M. Higgs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Blaine M. Higgs