



**Marit Stiles**  
MPP / Députée, Davenport

**Queen's Park**

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Hon. Lisa MacLeod  
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON  
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July 26, 2021

Minister MacLeod,

I write to you to highlight a tremendous opportunity for the provincial government to support Toronto's arts and culture sector.

1117 Queen St. West, a decommissioned former post office owned by Canada Post, has been put up for sale on the private market. This part of my riding has a long history as a home to artists, galleries and performance spaces. Over the past decade, that creative energy has led to a development boom that has actually forced out many artists from housing, working space and gallery space.

Those that have hung on, including the neighbouring Theatre Centre, have become a vital oasis in the area and draw thousands of tourists each year. The Theatre Centre is part of a group of cultural organizations and advocates who are pushing to see this public building remain in public hands, as a cultural hub for the area. Over 1,200 residents have signed a petition calling for action from all levels of government.

Toronto City Council recently passed a motion calling on the federal government to stop the sale of this public building and they stand ready to protect it as both a heritage property and a future cultural hub. So far, the federal government has ignored the pleas of council and our community. Canada Post has only offered a one-week extension for prospective buyers from the non-profit cultural sector to compete with private developers.

As MPP for the area, I am asking for your government's support to keep this important building in public hands by offering to partner with the City and local arts organizations. Leveraging provincial funding, alongside the stated support from the City, could convince the federal government to halt this sale and work with us to secure this badly-needed space as a home for local cultural organizations.

Your government's support would help bolster our local arts community who have been hit hard by this pandemic and would help them bounce back. Supporting a thriving local arts community here in Davenport will directly contribute to Ontario's economic recovery.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you further about this at your earliest convenience, before this cherished local building is gone for good.

Sincerely,



**Marit Stiles**  
**MPP Davenport**

**c.c.:**

Queen West Neighbours in Action for 1117 Queen Street West, c/o Aislinn Rose, General and Artistic Director, The Theatre Centre

Ana Bailão, Councillor Ward 9 and Deputy Mayor of Toronto

Julie Dzerowicz, MP for Davenport

Jill Andrew, MPP for Toronto—St.Paul's and Official Opposition Critic for Culture