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To: rcampbell@mta.ca, regents@mta.ca
Subject: to MtA Board of Regents (Bruce McCubbin)

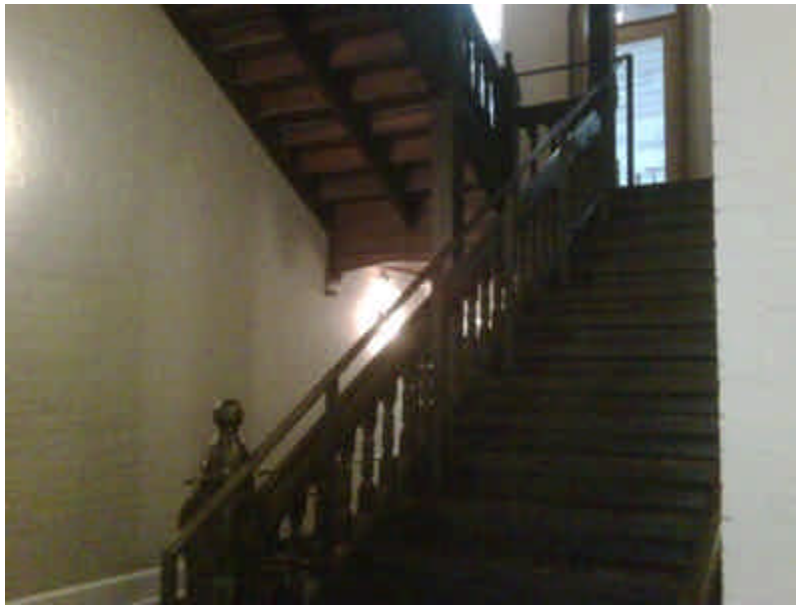
Date: Tue, 1 Feb 2011 16:23:37 +0000

Good morning all,

I'm writing as a concerned Allisonian about the apparent intention to demolish the Memorial Library. I'm fortunate to have some perspective on the place and function of heritage buildings, particularly in the Performing Arts and especially in my current position, as I have the great good fortune to work for an institution that recently completed a renovation and expansion of a heritage building that has received international acclaim. I'm speaking, of course, of the RCM's Telus Centre for Performance and Learning, which opened in Sept 2010 and has received rave reviews. President Campbell and a group of alumni had the opportunity to see this venue during his Presidential tour last fall.

I applaud Mount A's wish to build a Fine and Performing Arts Centre, and would like to urge those in a governance position to consider the tactic that worked so well here. This renovation showcased the original scholastic building, which was built in 1881. Around it was added an L-shaped addition designed to complement the architecture of the original, while adding thoroughly modern facilities (rehearsal studios, classrooms, as well as a concert hall that is already regarded as one of the world's finest). To give wee examples of the detail, I'm forwarding some snapshots of the heritage building entrance. It showcases a grand staircase as many buildings of that era did - but building code back then didn't stipulate a minimum height for the banisters so ours is far too low. As you can see from these snapshots, a solution was found:





These heritage buildings are a tangible link to a piece of our history. Granted, an old building doesn't meet today's construction code but there are ways to correct those deficiencies while maintaining the elegance of the original. Additionally, in the case of the Memorial Library, we are in danger of disrespecting the purpose for that dedication: a tribute to the veterans who fought for us in the world wars, primarily. Younger generations are fortunate to be further and further removed from the atrocities experienced by those who lived through them, but that's certainly no reason to destroy the tangible reminders of a grateful nation's respect.

I urge those responsible for the growth and development of Mount Allison to consider a strategy for this expansion that successfully marries the old and the new. That gives Mount Allison even more opportunity to be unique, as so few academic institutions now have the same link to history. Surely an architectural firm can be found that can satisfy a mandate to incorporate the old with the new. I know at least one!

With respect and best wishes,

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