

## Nova Scotia ready to move forward on Dennis Building redevelopment

Province hopes to have development in place within five years

By Jean Laroche, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2016 3:10 PM AT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2016 3:10 PM AT

The Nova Scotia government is moving closer to getting concrete development plans for a prime piece of downtown Halifax real estate.

Discussions between the province and developers about the property at the corner of Granville and George streets, currently the site of the Dennis and Acadian Recorder buildings, along with a municipal parking lot, had so far been informal.

On Thursday, the government issued a formal request for information.

- [Heritage group fights for Halifax's Dennis Building](#)

The request asks interested developers to submit their vision of what should be built on the provincially owned land. They have until July 28.

A request for proposals or direct negotiations with developers could follow, depending on the submissions.

## Development will take time

Labi Kousoulis, the minister responsible for the project, says whatever happens, it won't be a quick and easy process.

"A developer would still have to go through the process of getting their engineering drawings done, their architectural drawings done, submit them to the city, have them (approved)," Kousoulis told reporters following a cabinet meeting in Baddeck.

That process could take more than a year, he said.

"We would like to have approval for construction within two years, and the building fully constructed within five."

## Heritage protection a factor

One of the two buildings, the Acadian Recorder, or Hansard Building as it is also called, has municipal heritage protection. The Dennis building does not, but the province wants the facade preserved.

- [Historic Dennis Building in Halifax facing demolition](#)

The province placed scaffolding around the building two years ago to protect the public from falling bricks and masonry, but the minister claims it is structurally safe.

"That building should have been dealt with decades ago," said Kousoulis. "Structurally the building, for now, is fine."

Some development ideas that surfaced during informal talks include:

- Turning the Dennis Building into a boutique hotel.
- Using the entire site for a mixed-use building with office space and apartments.
- Constructing a building with ground-floor businesses and offices above, and installing above-ground parking in the shell of the Dennis Building.

## Design and cost

"Every developer had a different vision for the Dennis Building and that is why we left this RFI open to the developers coming forward and bringing us their ideas," Kousoulis said.

"Whichever one ties in the best with the legislature, and with the area there, and whichever one is the most cost-effective to government would be the proponent going forward," he said.

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