



# PORTLAND MAINE

*Strengthening a Remarkable City, Building a Community for Life • [www.portlandmaine.gov](http://www.portlandmaine.gov)*

Lee Urban - Director of Planning and Development  
Jeanie Bourke - Inspection Division Services Director

March 13, 2008

Deb Andrews  
City of Portland  
Historic Preservation Manager  
Planning and Development Department  
389 Congress Street  
Portland, ME 04101

Dear Deb,

I would like to comment, for the record, the City of Portland Building Inspection Division's position on the St. Lawrence Church sanctuary located at 66 Congress Street. In the most recent 10 years, the sanctuary portion of the building has experienced significant deterioration and decay, such that in 2004 a building permit was approved for structural shoring and stabilization. In April 2006 a reinspection was performed by John M. Wathne, PE, President of Structures North Consulting Engineers, INC, following some apparent movement and recent damage that had been noticed the preceding week. As a result of his report, an emergency stabilization plan was implemented for further structural support.

On Monday, 10 March 2008, I visited the Saint Lawrence Sanctuary with Joe Delany, Deirdre Nice, and Rob Ruesch of the Friends of St. Lawrence Church, to observe a recent failure. A 7' high by 2' wide section of granite façade, along one side and over an arched window, had released off the building into the side yard of the abutting neighbor. It appears the structural brick work behind the façade is relatively sound, but it is now more exposed to the elements

Notwithstanding the Friends of Saint Lawrence efforts over the years to stabilize this beautiful historic building, it is the opinion of the City that dismantling should take place at this time. Therefore, per Section 14-699, I have determined this structure cannot be abated by reasonable measures and it represents an immediate hazard to the public health and safety.

As director of building inspections, I request the process for complying with historic review be placed at the forefront of urgency in the interest of public safety for the citizens of Portland.

Sincerely,

Jeanie Bourke  
Inspection Services Division Director