



TO: Planning Advisory Committee
FROM: Marc Buske, Building Official II
DATE: September 25, 2024
RE: Site Inspection of 19 Spring Street, Amherst, NS (PID 25031626)

Registered Owner: Walter E Wells

Property Address: 19 Spring Street, Amherst (PID 25031626)

Date of Inspection: May 28, 2024

Requested by: Emily Wainwright, Dangerous and Unsightly Administrator

Building Type: Two-story, wood-framed building with two residential units.

Overview

An inspection of the property at 19 Spring Street, Amherst, Nova Scotia was conducted on May 28, 2024, at the request of the Dangerous and Unsightly Administrator, Emily Wainwright. The building is a two-story, wood-framed structure containing two residential units. The following conditions of the structure are laid out, with example pictures attached in a separate document, as they were observed.

Authorities:

National Building Code of Canada 2015

The National Building Code (NBC) sets out technical provisions for the design and construction of new buildings. It also applies to the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings.

The NBC establishes requirements to address the following five objectives, which are fully described in Division A of the Code:

- safety



- health
- accessibility for persons with disabilities
- fire and structural protection of buildings
- environment

For full scope and application of the Building Official, please reference the Building Code Act and the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations as documented below in this report.

Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations made under Section 4 of the *Building Code Act*

Scope and Application

Scope

6 *These regulations apply to the administration and enforcement of the Act in the*

(a) design, construction, erection, placement and occupancy of new buildings;

*(b) **alteration, reconstruction, demolition, removal, relocation, occupancy and change of occupancy classification of existing buildings; and***

*(c) **work necessary to correct unsafe conditions in existing buildings that are reported to a building official or observed during an inspection.***

(2) If a building or any part thereof is altered, these regulations apply to the parts of the building that are altered.

(3) If the whole or any part of a building is relocated either within or into the area of jurisdiction of a municipality as the authority having jurisdiction, these regulations apply only to the parts of the building that are being altered or constructed.

(4) If the whole or any part of a building is demolished, these regulations apply to

(a) the work involved in the demolition; and

(b) the work required to any part of the building that remains after demolition, to the extent that deficiencies occurring or remaining after demolition require correction.

*(5) **If a building is damaged by fire, earthquake or other cause, these regulations apply to the work necessary to reconstruct damaged portions of the building.***





Obligations of Building Official

Appointment and qualification of building officials

46 A person appointed by a municipality as a building official must meet all of the following qualifications:

- (a) they must hold a valid diploma from the Nova Scotia Building Code Training and Certification Board;
- (b) they must be a member in good standing of the Nova Scotia Building Officials Association.

Nova Scotia Building Officials Association – Qualification & Scope of Practice

To work as a Qualified Building Official in Nova Scotia, you must receive a Diploma of Qualification from the Nova Scotia Building Code Training and Certification Professional Studies Program.

Level II Qualifications:

Prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level I Qualification • Completed 120 inspections as a Level I Building Official • Regular Member of NSBOA in good standing
Required Training Courses	<p>All courses from the Intern Program, Residential, and Level I, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 3 – Complex Buildings • Part 3 – Large Buildings (ACBOA) • Part 3 – Plans Examination
Field Training	<p>Must complete 120 inspections Level II field inspections under the mentorship of a Level II Building Official.</p>
Scope of Practice Upon Completion	<p>Plans examinations and field inspections on all buildings covered by the Nova Scotia Building Code.</p>



Inspection Report: 19 Spring Street

Exterior Conditions

1. Roof Condition

The roof on the front section of the building remains in good condition. However, the rear section, including the area adjacent to the driveway, is in a state of significant disrepair. Multiple shingles are missing or curled, with exposed sheathing visible in certain areas. This deterioration has allowed water infiltration, which is exacerbating existing structural damage to the building.

2. Siding

The siding on the building is severely deteriorating, allowing water and weather to penetrate the structure, compromising its weather-tightness and enabling rodent intrusion. In contrast, the siding on the front of the building with the currently occupied unit, remains in relatively good condition.

3. Windows and Doors

Most of the windows and doors are in relatively good condition. However, a few windows are either broken or missing, compromising the weather-tightness of the structure. There were 4 windows missing. Two of the windows are on the back of the house with the unoccupied unit, and two more in the basement allowing unobstructive entry into the building.

Structural Conditions

1. Flooring

A section of the floor at the rear of the building has collapsed due to extensive rot and decay caused by continued water infiltration. This structural failure is placing significant stress on the remaining walls, flooring, and ceiling, further weakening the building. If not addressed, this ongoing stress is likely to result in a major collapse in the near future.

2. Interior Walls and Ceilings

The interior walls and ceilings on the unoccupied side of the building are in poor condition, primarily due to significant water damage. The insulation, vapor barriers, and finishes have also failed, and multiple holes are present in the walls and ceilings, leaving the interior exposed to the elements.



3. **Debris and Garbage**

There is an excessive accumulation of debris and garbage throughout the unoccupied side of the building, posing a significant fire and safety hazard. The debris obstructs exits and pathways, making it difficult for first responders to navigate the building safely in the event of an emergency.

4. **Fire and Smoke Separation**

There is currently no fire or smoke separation between the two units, further compromising the safety of the occupant. Additionally, in some areas of the unoccupied unit, wall and ceiling finishes have deteriorated and fallen off due to weather entering the building, resulting in further allowing fires to spread much faster.

System Conditions

1. **Electrical System**

The electrical system throughout the building, including the occupied unit, has been compromised and presents a significant safety hazard. Multiple exposed wires in the basement. Due to the collapse, there are electrical wires in and around the collapse area. I have no way of knowing what wires are live and what the load is on the system because of this collapse.

2. **Plumbing System**

The plumbing system throughout the building, including the occupied unit, has been compromised, affecting both units. Currently, the building has a single water line, which runs through the affected, unheated portion. With the colder weather approaching and no heat in the unoccupied side, the line is at significant risk of freezing. If this occurs, it will result in the loss of water supply to the occupied section of the building. Immediate preventive measures should be considered to avoid disruption of service. I am unsure of the specific layout of the sewer system for this building, but its my assumption both units are connected to the same system. Given that part of the structure is compromised due to the collapse, there is a potential risk that the sewer system has also been affected. This could lead to service interruptions or further complications.

3. **Heating System**

The heating system in the unoccupied unit is no longer functional due to the disconnection of electricity to the unit. While the heating system in the occupied unit is currently





operational, it is at risk of failing due to weather exposure affecting the basement, which serves both units.

Professional Opinion:

Based on the inspection findings, it is my professional opinion that the building is unsafe due to significant structural failures, including the collapse of the floor and extensive disrepair of critical systems. The deterioration of the building is progressing rapidly and will soon compromise the currently occupied unit.

Conclusion:

The building at 19 Spring Street is in a state of significant structural failure and presents an immediate danger to its occupant. The progression of deterioration will soon make the entire building unsafe. Demolition is the only viable solution to mitigate the risks.

Recommendation:

Option 1: Immediate Eviction:

Immediate evacuation of the tenant in the occupied unit is necessary to ensure safety. All personal belongings should be removed while access remains safe.

Option 2: Demolition:

The building's condition is beyond practical or cost-effective repair. It does not meet minimum safety or structural standards, and therefore, it is recommended that the building be designated for demolition. The demolition should be scheduled at the earliest feasible date to prevent further dangers.

Of the two options listed, at this time, I am recommending **Option 2**.

Attachments:

- 1) 20240925 19 Spring Street Inspection Pictures
- 2) Marc Buske Level II Qualification Diploma

Report prepared by: M. Buske

