



22 March 2018

Ottawa City Council
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

The National Historic Sites Alliance has grave concerns about the proposed design for the addition to the Chateau Laurier National Historic Site.

Our network of like-minded owners and managers of National Historic Sites across Canada, which includes several of the impressive Chateau Style hotels, does not consider the proposed addition to be architecturally appropriate, given the reason why the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) recommended its designation in 1980. For every National Historic Site commemoration, importance resides in the place's reasons for designation and its commemorative integrity.

The idea of commemorative integrity does not mean changes cannot occur at a National Historic Site. It does mean that changes to the building must be made with care and sensitivity, and respect its reason for designation. In the case of the Chateau Laurier, it was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1980 because:

- *it is a Chateau-style hotel, which is of national significance as an architectural type.*

The key character-defining elements of the hotel are its romantic setting, its proximity to Parliament Hill, its elements which typify Chateau-style railway hotels, its limestone walls, ornate finishes, its picturesque silhouette, its late medieval and Renaissance allusions in the Canadian context, its relationship to a Victorian urban park and Confederation Square. All these elements create a place that is related to the early 20th century emergence of the national capital and have created a unique and especially meaningful place.

The proposed addition compromises the building's commemorative integrity:

- It is not compatible with the existing building;
- it does not account for the heritage values of the place;
- it is the antithesis of the romantic Chateau.

While there are superficial nods to the Chateau's design, the overall appearance and architectural meaning does not complement the National Historic Site.



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Being a National Historic Site in Canada comes with ethical and moral responsibility, whether or not it is in private or public hands. The reason why people from around the world choose to experience the Chateau Laurier is because of its charm and luxury. The decorated box proposed for a certain clientele is a poor response to such a majestic place and may ultimately negatively impact the hotel's brand.

There is still the opportunity to consult and revise the design so that a positive legacy will enhance the grand building. We hope that for the sake of your Council's reputation, you will not be known in future for approving the addition of a glass box to the venerable Chateau Laurier.

We do not know whether the HSMBC was approached to review the proposed designs, but we, as members of the Alliance, are available for consultation to bring a better design to the Chateau Laurier.

Please consider alternatives to the proposed addition. It will benefit all stakeholders for generations to come if you simply step back and re-examine the path you are taking towards building an addition to the Chateau Laurier.

Yours sincerely,

Executive Board, National Historic Sites Alliance

cc:

Art Phillips, Larco Investments
Bill Fatt, CEO, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts
Hon. Catherine McKenna, MP, Ottawa Centre
Daniel Watson, CEO, Parks Canada
David Jeanes, President, Heritage Ottawa
Emmanuelle van Rutten, Member, Urban Design Review Panel
Mona Fortier, MP, Ottawa-Vanier
Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers, MPP, Ottawa-Vanier
Dr. Richard Alway, OC, Chair, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada
Hon. Yassir Naqvi, MPP, Ottawa Centre