Application # D07-12-22-0168: Approvals for Phases 3 & 4 of the Ottawa Hospital

Heritage Ottawa appreciates the opportunity to comment and offers the following.

Heritage Protection Plan

Heritage Ottawa appreciates the collaborative efforts of the City Heritage Planners, Parks Canada and the NCC to provide input on impacts to heritage. We particularly support the development of a Heritage Protection Plan, and we look to TOH and its design and construction team to ADHERE TO IT, including stop work where damage has occurred or is imminent.

Landscaping

The proposal to retain as many mature trees as possible on the escarpment is supported and appreciated.

The line of trees planned to act as a buffer on the northwest, west, and southwest edges is too thin to be effective, and should be widened. Given the extremely thin buffers proposed, the proposed view from Maple Drive towards the hospital appears to be far more robust than it actually will be.

Maple & Birch Drives

Both of these roads are currently narrow and thinly surfaced, and were never intended for the frequent trips and types of heavy vehicles that would be using these laneways during construction, and afterwards once the hospital is operational. The documentation does not examine impacts to the roads themselves or what might be necessary to make them suitable for the use envisaged. There is no insight into how these drives will be shared with farming vehicles.

Moreover, impacts to Buildings 59, 60, and the Saunders Building have not been adequately examined, given the heavy traffic envisaged. The Dominion Observatory Complex isn't the only heritage resource under threat.

Dust, vibration and noise will travel beyond the 60-meter impact area assessed. The fairly fragile heritage features such as the Greenhouse complex, the Arboretum, and the Ornamental Gardens should be similarly considered. Additionally, has the impact of dust possibly drifting over the science fields been examined?

Given the ongoing concerns with respect to the use of these two AAFC roads and consequent impacts to heritage resources, serious thought needs to be given to developing access points further east along Carling Avenue and farther northeast along Prince of Wales.

Buffers

Numerous documents illustrate how the hospital site will be 'covered' as far as tree canopy. However, submitted drawings accentuate how little is actually proposed along the east side of Maple Drive, both in terms of physical distance (7.5m width, 3 linear rows of plantings) and specimen/canopy tree plantings. There are references to emulating a 'shelter belt' as a historical reference/feature of the Farm and as a practical measure vis-à-vis mitigating winds and snow drifting near the Central Utility Plant (CUP).

The proposed planting along this portion of Maple Drive is significantly stark when compared to the 'unimpacted' area across the drive to the west with its characteristic plantings of specimen trees. It is also worth noting the area north/west of Road D - towards the Dominion Observatory - and the similar planting regimen there.

It would be advisable to seek a better balance, notably with a widening of the 'buffer', especially as it will be perceived from a pedestrian-level viewpoint.

Dominion Observatory Complex

The CHIS, p. 13 states that there are "no known plans to replace the telescope at this time." It is our understanding that the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Ottawa Centre has made it clear that there are indeed such plans.

The proposed expansion of TOH's north tower to widen it and increase its height (2035-45), and the subsequent impact to the DO Complex, has not been assessed at all.

The view from the steps/threshold of the Dominion Observatory towards the hospital could benefit from an increased stock of specimen tree plantings in the background. In this way, the physical presence/impact of the north wing could be diminished.

Prince of Wales Drive

On the southern edge of the site, where the future Heart Institute may come to rest, there is little thought given to buffering at this point, and to the potential impact to the Arboretum across the road. Thoughtful buffering and other landscaping features were applied along the PoW edge and the parkade, and similar design principles ought to be applied along the SW edge.

The views from Preston south along Prince of Wales Drive beg the question about the latter inevitably becoming four lanes of traffic? (as per the view north along PoW). How will this be managed/mitigated?

Saunders Building

A view is offered past the Saunders Building from the south/southwest towards the proposed hospital. A better perspective would be from the east side looking up Birch Drive. In either case, the view would benefit from increased tree plantings to remove the heightened wings of the hospital from view, and to accentuate the setting of the Saunders Building proper.

In conclusion, Heritage Ottawa supports the recommendations made by the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the Friends of the Farm, and the National Capital Commission.

Regards,

Katherine Spencer Ross
President, Heritage Ottawa
19 January 2023

Cc:

Jeff Leiper, Chair, Planning & Housing Committee, Councillor Kitchissippi Ward
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Yasir Naqvi, MP, Ottawa Centre
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Sharon Odell, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
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