



CHAIRE DE RECHERCHE DU CANADA  
EN PATRIMOINE BÂTI  
CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR  
ON BUILT HERITAGE

419 Hinton Ave  
Ottawa, ON  
4 February 2021

**To:** Members of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee and Planning Committee, City of Ottawa

**Re:** **Application to Alter the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau Street, a Property Designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act***

Dear Committee and Sub-Committee members,

I would like to thank the members of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee and the Planning Committee for the opportunity to present my views on the important matter of the proposed addition to the Chateau Laurier.

My views have been shaped through fifty years' experience in the field of heritage conservation as Director General of National Historic Sites at Parks Canada and more recently as the Canada Research Chair in Built Heritage at the University of Montreal from 2005 to 2019.

Over a year ago, I urged the Planning Committee to reject the fifth iteration of the Chateau Laurier addition. In my view, the fifth version of the proposed addition did not meet the requirements of Standard 11 of the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada which requires a new addition to respect the historic place and to be compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from it. In addition, version 5 lacked community support and would have negatively impacted the surrounding setting and views.

Since that time, a new version of the addition design (version 6) is before you for consideration. This new version responds to many concerns expressed following the city's approval of version 5. In this revised version, visual connections have been strengthened between the existing Château Laurier National Historic Site and the proposed addition. These improvements relate to the arrangement of the addition into two distinct pavilions, the massing of each pavilion into three sections aligned with the facades of the heritage building, the picturesque treatment of the roof and the increased use of similar materials, in particular Indiana limestone and bronze/copper roofing. In addition, the pavilion arrangement opens up important views to and from the Château Laurier and the adjoining park.

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Standard 11 directs that “an appropriate balance must be struck between mere imitation of the existing form and pointed contrast, thus complementing the historic place in a manner that respects its heritage value.” It seems clear that almost no addition to the Chateau Laurier will gain universal approval. People will have differing views on what constitutes an “appropriate balance” depending on their own perspectives and judgment.

I support this sixth version because, in my view, it does conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements of the Château Laurier while making the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place, as required by Standard 11. I am grateful for the leadership of Heritage Ottawa, the Friends of the Château Laurier and the many individuals who worked collectively towards an acceptable design for the new addition. This achievement is rare and a tribute to the determination of civil society.

Yours sincerely

Professor Emeritus  
University of Montréal