

Château Laurier site plan control application As We Heard It Report

Consultation overview

The City received a site plan control application for an addition to the rear of the Château Laurier in December 2016. City staff deemed the application complete in February 2017.

Residents had an opportunity to comment on the site plan control application from February 14 to March 15. The City notified residents of the initial comment period by:

- Placing a development sign on the Château Laurier property
- Making **an announcement** on February 13
- Presenting to **Planning Committee** and providing a **Council update** on February 14
- Inviting feedback through the project web page, the **Planning and Development e-newsletter** and the City's **Twitter** and **Facebook** accounts

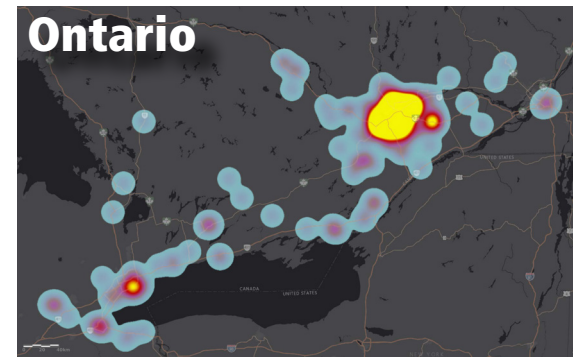
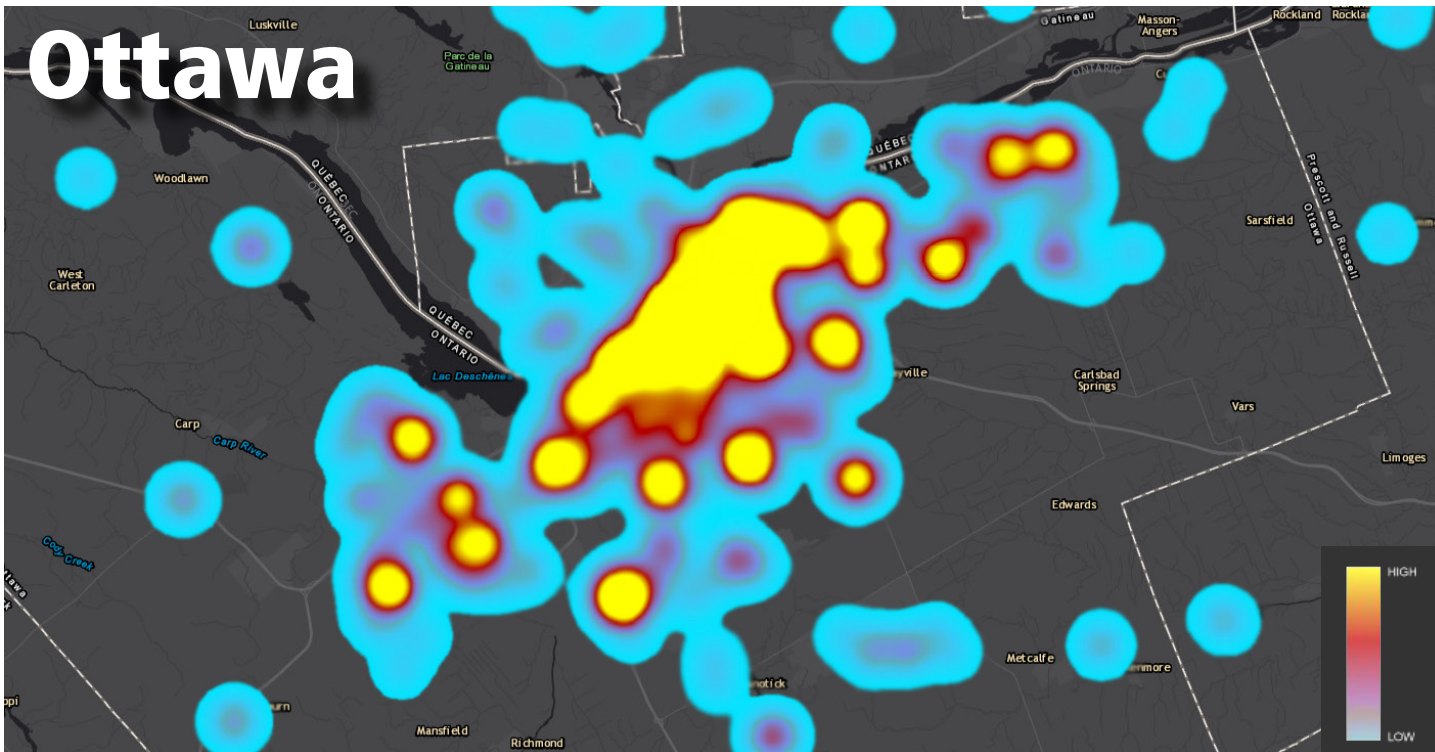
The City collected public comments through an online feedback form, by email and phone. This As We Heard It report only summarizes the feedback form submissions.

Due to the significant volume of public comments received, a complete transcript of all the unedited comments is not included in this report. You may request the transcript by emailing chateaulaurier@ottawa.ca. Personal information is protected by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will not be included in responses to requests information.



1759
Feedback forms
completed

Respondents



Of the **1759** complete feedback forms the City received, **1417** of them were from Ottawa and **45** were from Gatineau. The rest came from other regions in Ontario and North America.

The majority of respondents accessed the feedback form from ottawa.ca/chateaulaurier and heritageottawa.org.

Questions

The City created an electronic feedback form containing seven open-ended questions to solicit public opinion on the development proposal.



Question 1 to 3

Please comment on how the proposed addition looks from: **Alexandra Bridge, Major's Hill Park and Confederation Square.**



Question 5

In your opinion, is the proposed addition **subordinate to the historic building?** Why or why not?



Question 4

In your opinion, is the proposed addition **physically and visually compatible** with the historic building? Why or why not?



Question 6

Does the proposed addition **fit well with its surroundings?** Why or why not? Can anything be improved?



Question 7

Do you have any other comments?

We asked these questions so that we could better understand what residents liked and disliked about the proposal and uncover the reasons why they felt a particular way. City staff themselves will also consider these questions when reviewing the proposal from the key views identified by the City and National Capital Commission and against the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Analysis of responses

The City used software called KH Coder to analyse the text within the responses. French responses were translated into English so that all of the feedback could be analyzed together. The responses to questions one to three were combined and analyzed together while the responses to questions four to seven were analyzed separately.

For each question, the software created a diagram showing frequently used words that appear together in the responses. The larger circles in the diagrams show the words that were most frequently used. The lines between the words show which words appeared in responses together.

The software also determined the five most frequently used adjectives in the responses to each question. For each of these adjectives, the software isolated their most common word pairings. From these most common word pairings, sample verbatim responses were selected to show how they were used in sentences.

Question 1 to 3

Please comment on how the proposed addition looks from Alexandra Bridge, Major's Hill Park and Confederation Square.

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Original

Original Building

"Either the addition should look like it's part of the **original building**, or it should look completely different. This doesn't go far enough in either direction, shows very little relation to the **original building** without marking a clear departure."

"The huge blocks of glass and stone stand in jarring contrast to the beautiful rows of delicate windows, the turreted roof and the minarets of the **original building**."

New

New addition

"The **new addition** obscures the historically significant portion of the Chateau Laurier and reduces the ambiance of the UNESCO World Heritage [Site], Rideau Canal."

"The **new addition** should try to open up the hotel to Major's Hill Park. Currently and in this design, the hotel turns its back on the park with no interplay between the two."

Modern

Modern addition

"No - it is distraction from the original building. It is starkly different, but not in a compelling way as some **modern additions** can be."

"The plans will ruin an iconic view. The proposed addition looks like a boxy monstrosity from most views.... Ruining the view by allowing this **modern addition** would be a crime."

Question 1 to 3

Please comment on how the proposed addition looks from Alexandra Bridge, Major's Hill Park and Confederation Square.

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Historic

Historic building

"To the architect: you don't have to recreate the old design, but you do have to design something that reflects the timelessness of Chateau Laurier as a **historic building**."


"Although the proposed addition shares the **historic building**'s colour palette, it is still too visually distracting to be compatible. The original edifice artfully employs symmetry and repeating patterns to splendid effect. The pleasant balance of the original design is ruined by the deliberate irregularities of the addition haphazardly tacked on one end."

Beautiful

Beautiful building

"The style of the new addition is inappropriate. It masks the **beautiful** old **building** from this view."

"This is going to ruin all the scenic photographs people come to take of the canal and a **beautiful building**."

 **This diagram** shows patterns in the words that were used to respond to this question.

Question 4

In your opinion, is the proposed addition physically and visually compatible with the historic building? Why or why not?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Compatible

Compatible addition

"The proposed **addition** is partially **compatible** with the historic building, in terms of scale and having a matching alignment with the base and parapet wall level of the original hotel. However, there is no effort to continue the original architectural styling of the hotel including the continuous limestone walls, punched windows, arched window openings at ground and first floor."

"In my opinion, the proposed **addition** is not physically and visually **compatible** with the historic building. The exterior design makes only the most meager attempt to reference the existing architecture. Aside from the horizontal reference line that separates the 3rd and 4th floors, all the other horizontal reference lines are completely wrong."

Historic

Historic building

"It doesn't have the same feel at all. It is too box-like. It doesn't feel fairy-tale-like enough. The angles are too stark It doesn't look timeless like the **historic building**. It looks like it will be out of date in a matter of years. It is too plain to sit next to or be attached to such a majestic and famous building."

"I actually love the contrast between the **historic building** and the addition (I'm also a fan of the addition to the ROM!); it's very different, but complementary, and looks like it'll tie in well with the entrance (to the government building that used to be the photography museum) visible in the bridge on Wellington Street side."

Original

Original building

Original structure

"You've taken a block of glass that doesn't tie into the **original building**, and super-glued it on the side."

"This proposed addition should feel more integrated into the **original structure** than it is. The ground floor windows should be rounded at the top, the rear entrance should reflect the main entrance, the corners of the addition should be softer more rounded, as should the roof which should also have copper and turrets incorporated into it."

Question 4

In your opinion, is the proposed addition physically and visually compatible with the historic building? Why or why not?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Modern

Modern addition

"The Château Laurier is a unique architectural and historical "statement", representing Ottawa and more than 100 years of history. The **modern addition** will detract from this iconic image that is, and has been, associated with our city."


"I think it tries too hard to match it, and as a result makes the entire building look less interesting. You could never build an addition that perfectly matches the style of the old building, and the new addition should complement the old building, but this is ... too boring to heighten the beauty of the Château and instead takes away from its beauty. I'm happy to see a **modern addition**, but embrace the modernity and do something daring that will make the old world beauty of the Château stand out."

Same

Same materials

"Using the **same materials** does little to make the addition mesh with the original building. This is just as ugly as if they covered it in vinyl siding because it is so visually different from the original structure."

"Absolutely not compatible. If the **same materials** are available why not simply replicate the original design of this beautiful historical building?"

 **This diagram** shows patterns in the words that were used to respond to this question.

Question 5

In your opinion, is the proposed addition subordinate to the historic building? Why or why not?

This question was commonly misunderstood. Subordinate generally means having a lower or less important position, or being inferior in status or rank but not necessarily in quality. This word appears in Standard 11 of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which is one of the documents that City staff use to evaluate an addition to a designated heritage building. Standard 11 requires an addition to be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

Standard 11 explains that for an addition to be subordinate, it “...must not detract from the historic place or impair its heritage value. Subordination is not a question of size; a small, ill-conceived addition could adversely affect an historic place more than a large well-designed addition.”

The City also acknowledges that there is more to consider in heritage conservation and additions to heritage buildings than Standard 11.

Question 5

In your opinion, is the proposed addition subordinate to the historic building? Why or why not?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Subordinate

Addition subordinate

"When viewed from the rear, however — from Major 's Hill Park — it would be ludicrous to call the **addition subordinate** given its scale and how it obscures the view of the historic hotel."

"The proposed **addition** is **subordinate** to the historic building in some vantage points, but in one of the views it almost completely obstructs the view of the historic building."

Historic

Historic building

"The proposed addition is definitely not subordinate to the **historic building**. It dominates the building, drawing your eye away from the classic architecture and towards the expansion. The rectangular copper roofing competes with the classic copper peaked roof and the glare off of all the glass draws your eye towards the expansion. The texture of the expansion also draws your eye away from the classic architecture."

"Only when looking directly at the main entrance of the Château Laurier is the proposed addition subordinate to the **historic building**. Rotating from any other angle, as the addition comes increasingly into view, it increasingly contrasts negatively and clashes with the historic views surrounding it, and quickly becomes the primary draw."

Original

Original building

"Yes, it is completely subordinate and takes away from the beauty of the **original building**."

"No - it is distraction from the **original building**. It is starkly different, but not in a compelling way as some modern additions can be."

Question 5

In your opinion, is the proposed addition subordinate to the historic building? Why or why not?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

New

New addition

"Despite the fact that the revised proposed addition is shorter than the historic building, it is not subordinate. The modern style of the proposed addition overpowers the historic building.... The **new addition** obscures the historic building so it is not subordinate."


"In one way it is - it doesn't try to be more ornamented than the original, but in its massing and form, it is not sufficiently subordinate. The similar heights of the two parts of the building make the **new addition** insufficiently subordinate in this way. It should be one storey shorter."

Modern

Modern addition

"The owners have been very respectful of the historical significance of the Château and provided a **modern addition** that is very aligned to the character of the old."

"I don't really understand the question. Physically, any **modern addition** is inappropriate. The historic nature of the building is more important than any addition. The historic building should not be interfered with."

 **This diagram** shows patterns in the words that were used to respond to this question.

Question 6

Does the proposed addition fit well with its surroundings?
Why or why not? Can anything be improved?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Original

Original building

"The addition fits well in the surrounding but not with the **original building**. It may work as a separate building but not as a continuation."

"It fits neither with the **original building** nor with the landscape. It has no sense of place while the original [building] responds to the romantic landscape."

Historic

Historic building

"The proposal does not fit with **historic** surroundings of the area. The **building** imposes modern architecture over historic structures. If the addition were shorter, it would not obscure as much of the structure in particular the roof line and would better complement the existing building."

"The addition is situated on a picturesque and gorgeous spot, probably one of the most scenic spots in the entire city. However, it does not reflect the natural beauty of the escarpment, nor the **historic buildings** that surround it. To fit better with its surroundings ... it needs to react to the buildings that surround it (including, but not limited to the Château) and especially the natural elements. There is no attempt to use the river, canal, or park in the design."

Modern

Modern design

Modern addition

"It is respectful of its surroundings, by being a simple, elegant **modern design**."

"I do not believe that the proposed building fits well with the surroundings at all. Part of what makes the locks, and the downtown core of Ottawa beautiful are the historical buildings. By making the **addition** so **modern**, I believe it would ruin the landscape - especially that of the Château Laurier and the beautiful views from the locks and river."

Question 6

Does the proposed addition fit well with its surroundings?
Why or why not? Can anything be improved?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Same

Same look

Same style

"The historical and aesthetic nature of the surroundings are blocked by these modern additions. If the idea is to keep the **same** modern **look** of the additions, their height ought to be significantly lowered so as not to block the overall view of the Château and its iconic view of the river and the bridge (including Major's Hill Park)."


"It does not fit in well with its surroundings as it is a completely different style. Lining the canal, you have the east block of parliament, the original chateau and the addition. The addition does NOT fit in with these other buildings or feel of the canal (another historic site). Anything new that is added in this area with these fore-mentioned historic sites should be designed to be in the **same style**. Lots of stone, texture, a moderate amount of glass and lots of thought into the finishing or small details."

New

New addition

"The **new addition** stands out from its surroundings — in a bad way."

"You see Parliament on the right side of the Canal and the Château on the left. The buildings ... complement each other and this symmetry enhances the beauty of each other and the Canal. The **new addition** distracts from the view of Parliament and creates discord with the view of the Canal locks."

 **This diagram** shows patterns in the words that were used to respond to this question.

Question 7

Do you have any other comments?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Historic

Historic building

"Why would anyone propose a modern extension on a **historic building**?"

"I am not opposed to the idea of replacing the existing parking garage with something more functional, but I feel the current design is not appropriate and detracts from the architecture of a classic, **historic building**."

New

New addition

"This **new addition** and upgrade to the hotel will bring in more revenue for Ottawa tourism as well."

New design

"As a person born and resident of Ottawa all my life, I feel that beautiful area of Wellington down to the river and the Sussex area should be kept to showcase our heritage. The **new design** is simply unattractive and out of place."

Modern

Modern addition

"While there are some **modern additions** that have made good transitions to older buildings I don't think this is one of those. the addition is lacking in overall design and has few references to the main building or the heritage buildings in the area."

Modern architecture

"**Modern architecture** has no place in that location and just comes across as strange."

Question 7

Do you have any other comments?

Top Adjectives

Connected words

Sample responses

Original

Original building

Original design

"The Château Laurier is the second most iconic building in the city after the center block. It literally represents Canada at Disneyworld. The architecture of the addition is terrible, it blocks key vistas and distracts from the **original building**. It has no redeeming qualities."

"There are ways to extend the Château Laurier building that are both modern and also in keeping with the architectural style of the building. This proposal is not one of them. I am not in favor of its approval, and think the design should be scrapped in favor of one more closely aligned with the **original design**."


Beautiful

Beautiful building

Beautiful city

"I believe this elegant **beautiful building** should remain an iconic landmark, and not become an eyesore with such a modern add on."

"The old Château is beautiful; however, the rooms have few windows and lack some modern conveniences that travelers expect. I would much prefer to stay in the new rooms with more light, heat, A/C and better views of our **beautiful city**."

 **This diagram** shows patterns in the words that were used to respond to this question.

Next steps

1. The Heritage Working Group has met three times and will continue in an advisory role as required. The group's advice will be summarized in the future Built Heritage Sub-Committee report.
2. City staff will review all public and technical comments and provide feedback to the applicant for response.
3. The applicant will consider the feedback and prepare a response, which may include revising some of the previously submitted plans and studies.
4. The City will share the applicant's resubmission with the public when it is received.
5. The Urban Design Review Panel's formal review is expected to occur in the summer. A public meeting, Committee of Adjustment and heritage application submissions are expected to occur in the fall.

Residents may provide feedback on the development proposal until the City approves the Site Plan Control application. Please refer to the **process timeline** for more information.

City staff will notify individuals on the notification list of all meeting dates, project updates and decisions by email. Please email **chateaulaurier@ottawa.ca** to be added to the notification list.