

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Built Heritage Sub-Committee / Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti
8 February 2018 / 8 février 2018**

and / et

**Planning Committee / Comité de l'urbanisme
27 February 2018 / 27 février 2018**

**and Council / et au Conseil
28 February 2018 / 28 février 2018**

**Submitted on January 29, 2018
Soumis le 29 janvier 2018**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:
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Manager / Gestionnaire,
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Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department / Direction
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Ward: RIDEAU-VANIER (12)

File Number: ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0003

**SUBJECT: Application to permit the demolition of the Ugandan High
Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, a property located in the Wilbrod
Laurier Heritage Conservation District and application for new
construction on the same site**

OBJET: Demande de démolition du haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, au 231, rue Cobourg, une propriété située dans le district de conservation du patrimoine Wilbrod Laurier, et demande de nouvelle construction sur le même emplacement

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Built Heritage Sub-Committee recommend that Planning Committee recommend that Council:

- 1. Approve the application to demolish the Ugandan High Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, submitted by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. and received on December 8, 2017;**
- 2. Approve the construction of a new building at 231 Cobourg Street according to plans by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. received on December 8, 2017;**
- 3. Delegate authority for minor design changes to the General Manager, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department;**
- 4. Issue the heritage permit with an expiry date of either:**
 - (a) two years from the date of issuance; or**
 - (b) two years from the date that decisions on applications under the *Planning Act* are final and binding, whichever is later;**
- 5. Suspend the notice required under Subsections 29 (3) and 34 (a) of the *Procedure By-law* to consider this report at its meeting on 28 February 2018, so that Council may consider this report within the statutory 90-day timeline.**

(Note: The statutory 90-day timeline for consideration of this application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* will expire on March 9, 2018.)

(Note: Approval to alter this property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* must not be construed to meet the requirements for the issuance of a building permit.)

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Comité de l'urbanisme de recommander à son tour au Conseil :

1. D'approuver la demande de démolition du haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, situé au 231, rue Cobourg, présentée par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. et reçue le 8 décembre 2017;
2. D'approuver la construction d'un nouveau bâtiment au 231, rue Cobourg, conformément aux plans soumis par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. le 8 décembre 2017;
3. De déléguer au directeur général de Planification, Infrastructure et Développement économique le pouvoir d'apporter des changements mineurs de conception;
4. De délivrer le permis en matière de patrimoine assorti de l'un ou l'autre des délais d'expiration suivants :
 - (a) deux ans à compter de la date de délivrance; ou
 - (b) deux ans à compter de la date à laquelle les décisions relatives aux demandes sont définitives et exécutoires aux termes de la *Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*, la date la plus tardive étant retenue;
5. De suspendre l'avis requis en vertu des paragraphes 29 (3) et 34 (a) du Règlement de procédure pour permettre au Conseil d'examiner ce rapport à sa réunion du 28 février 2018 dans les limites du délai réglementaire de 90 jours.

(Nota : Le délai réglementaire de 90 jours d'examen de cette demande, exigé en vertu de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, prendra fin le 9 mars 2018.)

Nota : L'approbation de la demande de modification aux termes de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario* ne signifie pas pour autant qu'elle satisfait aux conditions de délivrance d'un permis de construire.

BACKGROUND

The Ugandan High Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, is located at the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Streets in the Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District

(HCD) (for Location Map, see Document 1). It was constructed in 1945, replacing a large nineteenth-century house. After years as a residential dwelling, the building was purchased for use as the Ugandan High Commission in 1985. The two houses directly to the east of the structure were also constructed after the demolition of the earlier structure, making a group of three 1940s buildings on the north side of Wilbrod Street (please see Fire Insurance Maps, Document 2). The remaining two houses on the north side of Wilbrod Street between Cobourg and Charlotte Streets were built in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and there is an early twentieth-century apartment building at the corner. The south side of the street between Cobourg and Charlotte Streets has four late nineteenth- / early twentieth- century houses, and an anomalous high-rise apartment building. Many of these structures are owned by foreign legations and used as embassies, official residences and auxiliary office space.

The current Ugandan High Commission is a flat-roofed, rectangular, two-storey, red brick structure with brick quoins and a modified cornice with simple brick detailing. The front door is symmetrically placed and features a door surround with a broken pediment. There is an octagonal window above the door (see photographs, Document 5).

The property was evaluated as part of the Sandy Hill HCD study and was given a score of 44 out of 100, making it a Category 3 building and placing it at the lower end of what is considered in the HCD to be a contributing building. Category 3 buildings in Sandy Hill are those that received a score between 40 and 55. Since the initial evaluation by the consulting team in 2010, further research has revealed that former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson lived in the building from 1955 to 1958 while he served as Minister of External Affairs. It is expected that had the consultants discovered this information, the score on the building would have risen from 44 to 49 out of 100 to account for Pearson's brief tenure (for Heritage Survey Form, see Document 4). It should be noted that, unlike Pearson's house at 243 Augusta Street, which was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage in 1982 because of its association with Pearson, this house was not widely known as one of his residences until recently perhaps because his tenure was brief and during that time he is more frequently associated with where he worked, rather than where he lived.

Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. has filed an application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to demolish the existing structure and to replace it with a purpose-built high commission. As a property located in a heritage conservation district, a heritage permit issued by City Council is required prior to demolition and new construction. A Zoning By-law amendment application and Site Plan Control approval are also being considered for this property.

DISCUSSION

Recommendation 1

In 2014, the Ugandan High Commission was declared unsafe due to cracking caused by ongoing differential settling of its foundations and walls and, after about 20 years serving as the high commission, its occupants abandoned the building. In the years leading up to the vacating of the building, efforts were made to repair the cracking and shifting of the structure. However, because of the presence of unstable soils and the character of the building, none of the solutions to the structural damage to the building solved or halted its ongoing deterioration. Since it was abandoned, further cracking and damage to the interior has occurred (for photographs of cracked foundations, please see Document 5, for Engineer's Report, please see Document 6). The cost to complete the repair of the structure is very high, and given that there are other issues related to the building such as universal accessibility and its ability to serve the needs of a high commission in the twenty-first century, the Government of Uganda decided to apply to demolish and replace the existing structure.

There has been interest in the structure on the part of some individuals and Action Sandy Hill because of its associations with former Primer Minister Lester B. Pearson who lived there from 1955 to 1958 while he was Minister of External Affairs. It was during this time that he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in the resolution of the Suez Crisis through the development of a peacekeeping force to ease British and French troops out of Egypt. Although Pearson lived at 231 Cobourg Street, it is the house at 243 Augusta Avenue that most closely associates him as a Sandy Hill resident. The house bears his name and is where he lived from 1947 to 1954 when he launched his political career. After 1957, the last year that Pearson lived at 231 Cobourg Street, he became the leader of the Liberal Party (1958) and then lost the general election to John Diefenbaker (1958). He rebuilt the party, eventually leading a minority government from 1963 to 1968, during which time the Canadian Flag was approved and the country celebrated the centennial of Confederation.

As one of Canada's best known twentieth-century prime ministers, Pearson has been commemorated across the country and schools, an airport and the federal headquarters of Global Affairs Canada have been named for him. In addition, his grave is a national historic site. He resided at 231 Cobourg Street for a relatively short time and the place is not explicitly and meaningfully associated or identified with his work as Minister of External Affairs.

Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan

Section 4.4.2, “Demolition and Relocation,” of the Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan (the Plan), has the following guidelines related to demolition:

1. Demolition of contributing buildings will not normally be supported.
2. Any application to demolish a building in the HCD must be accompanied with plans for a replacement building.
3. Where a building is approved for demolition, the building must be recorded at the direction of Heritage staff and the information should be deposited at the City of Ottawa Archives. In addition, consideration should be given to salvaging historic materials as the building is demolished.

Heritage staff reviewed the engineering reports associated with this building and toured the structure and concluded that it was not practical to retain it. Subsequent to this decision, heritage and planning staff worked very closely with the applicant to ensure that the replacement building respected the guidelines in the Wilbrod Laurier HCD Plan. The heritage consultant to the project has completed as-found drawings of the property and will be deposited at the City Archives. Finally, no heritage materials will be salvaged for reuse in the building, but the proposed front façade will feature an octagonal window above the front door as a reference to the building.

Conclusion

ROWHUD has no objection to the demolition of 231 Cobourg Street because:

- The initial structural damage to the building was a result of unstable soil conditions that caused differential settling that rendered the building unsafe and was not the result of demolition by neglect.
- Its association with former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was short and there is no indication that the house was critical in the decision-making process that lead to the development of the UN’s peacekeeping force, his major foreign affairs accomplishment at the time.
- The existing structure at 231 Cobourg is a marginal building within the Wilbrod Laurier HCD that makes limited contribution to the Cultural Heritage Value of the HCD. The council-approved HCD plan defines the District it as “an excellent example of a late 19th century upper-middle class residential neighbourhood. Identifying features include its historic street pattern, consistent house to lot

ratios, generous front yard setbacks and tree lined streets.” As a mid-20th century building, built with its two easterly neighbours to replace an 19th century house, the Ugandan High Commission does not reflect the identified heritage value of the District as a “late-19th century upper-middle class residential neighbourhood.”

Recommendation 2

The building proposed for the new Ugandan High Commission is a flat-roofed, three-storey, red brick structure with a central door facing Cobourg Street. It is located roughly on the footprint of the existing structure. The third storey will be offset from the rest of the building clad in dark grey porcelain panels and will have a recessed rooftop terrace.

Heritage and planning staff worked closely with the project architect during the design process to address concerns with the design. Staff recommendations included: reducing the amount of surface paving, repositioning the location of the rooftop terrace to reduce its visual impact, having only one staircase to access the entrance facing Cobourg Street, lowering the ground floor to grade to allow the handicapped ramp to be reduced in length, installing basement window wells on the north façade, substituting grey panels for white panels on the third floor, and setting back the third floor and rooftop terrace.

As a result of these discussions, the following changes to the design as submitted were undertaken; The height of the building was lowered to 10.44 metres from 10.89 metres, the handicapped ramp was shortened and relocated to the front (west) façade, the colour of the recessed third floor changed from white to grey, the third floor was stepped back one metre, the rooftop terrace was setback 1.5 metres from the roof edge, new landscaping, including a small front garden, and reduced signage that is residential in character was introduced on the Cobourg Street façade and more windows were added onto the south façade.

For before and after images please see Document 7, for elevations see Document 8, and for Landscape Plan, please see Document 9.

Section 4.6, Guidelines for Infill, provides guidelines for new infill development in the Wilbrod Laurier HCD. (Please see Document 10 for the complete Guidelines.) These Guidelines stress that new construction must be of its own time, should not detract from the heritage character of the HCD, must be sympathetic to the HCD in terms of massing, façade proportions, rooflines, cladding and the fenestration pattern, scale and setback.

The revised plans submitted to the City in December respect these guidelines. The new building, with its low profile, red brick construction with dark gray panels, contemporary expression, regular fenestration, simple landscaping that reflects the character of the area and subdued design is consistent with the mixed character of the buildings within the HCD and will be an appropriate contribution to it.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

Council adopted the “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada” in 2008 and are these used to evaluate applications under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Standards 1 and 11 are applicable to this application.

Standard 1: Conserve the heritage value of an historic place.

The proposed building will not have a negative impact on the heritage attributes and heritage value of the Wilbrod Laurier HCD. Its location on a corner lot and on the same footprint of the building that it replaces will conserve the character of the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Streets. There will be a visual impact to the neighbouring residential property to the east, as the building is higher than the existing; however, the applicant mitigated these impacts by reducing the overall height of the building and stepping the third floor and the rooftop terrace back from the façade. The landscape plan introduces a small garden and lawn that reflect the residential character of the area.

Standard 11: Conserve the heritage value and character-defining-elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

The use of brick and stone as well as regular window openings and cornices makes the proposed building compatible with the late nineteenth / early twentieth century character of the Wilbrod Laurier HCD.

Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

A Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) was prepared by Robertson Martin Architects and is Document 11 to this report. The CHIS analysed the context of the building, its design and function with regard to the Wilbrod Laurier HCD Plan and the existing character of the HCD. It made three recommendations about possible changes to the design.

Recommendation 1: Refinement of residential typology and scale at south.

ROWHUD believes that the inclusion of additional windows in the revised version provides a residential character to the south façade of the building.

Recommendation 2: Consider further refinement of the third-floor and roof access materiality.

ROWHUD will continue to address this issue and any changes undertaken will be approved through delegated authority.

Recommendation 3: Consider material expression of Entry Stair and Ramp.

The revised design of the front entranceway, with its relatively narrow stair and sidewalk access and small front garden between the edge of the barrier-free ramp and the sidewalk was specifically requested by PIED as a means to diminish the institutional character of the building.

The conclusion of the CHIS states:

The program of a small-scale office building, maintaining the same use as the existing, following the provisions of the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan regarding Demolition, Guidelines for Infill and Guidelines for Streetscape and Public Realm is appropriate. We are of the opinion that the proposed development adheres extremely well to these provisions and the replacement building is assessed as being not detrimental to the cultural value of the larger conservation district heritage resource.

For the complete conclusion, please see Document 12.

The department concurs with the findings of the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement.

Recommendation 3

Occasionally, minor changes to a building emerge during the working drawing phase. This recommendation is included to allow the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development to approve these changes.

Recommendation 4

The *Ontario Heritage Act* does not provide any timelines for the expiry of heritage permits. A two-year expiry date is recommended to ensure that projects are completed in a timely fashion and according to the approved heritage permit.

Recommendation 5

In order to meet the 90 timeline for City Council to consider this application, it must rise to Council on this day.

Provincial Policy Statement

Staff have reviewed this proposal and have determined that it is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

The Ward Councillor held a public meeting on January 25, 2018 at which the project team from Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. presented the final plans for the proposed replacement building. There were six members of the public present and there was no support for the proposed demolition and construction at 321 Cobourg Street.

Notification

Heritage Ottawa was informed of this application.

The Sandy Hill Community Association submitted comments in opposition to the original proposal in April 2017 (see Document 13).

Property owners within 30 metres of the property were notified by letter and offered the opportunity to provide comments on the heritage application to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee or Planning Committee.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR

Councillor Fleury provided the following comments:

"The demolition of 231 Cobourg is a loss to the contributing heritage stock of the neighbourhood. There is an ongoing debate amongst professionals as to what the value of the building actually is given its current state. However, that is not something that the neighbourhood agrees with. The proper investments were not made over the years to address the structural changes that appeared on the foundation and building which brings us to the current state of disrepair. The efforts of the Sandy Hill community to

build the Prime Minister's row initiative builds on connecting the lived experiences of the Prime Ministers who lived in our community."

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with implementing the recommendations of this report. Council may approve the application for demolition, or approve the application subject to conditions. Council may refuse to issue a permit for demolition. This application is governed by Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The owner has the right of appeal if the application is issued with conditions, or refused

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The proposed Ugandan High Commission will be a fully accessible structure with an accessible ramp and entrance, wide entrances, accessible washrooms and an elevator.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This project addresses the following Term of Council Priority:

- Governance, Planning and Decision Making

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE STATUS

The application was processed within the 90-day statutory requirement under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The 90-day time-period expires on March 9, 2018.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map

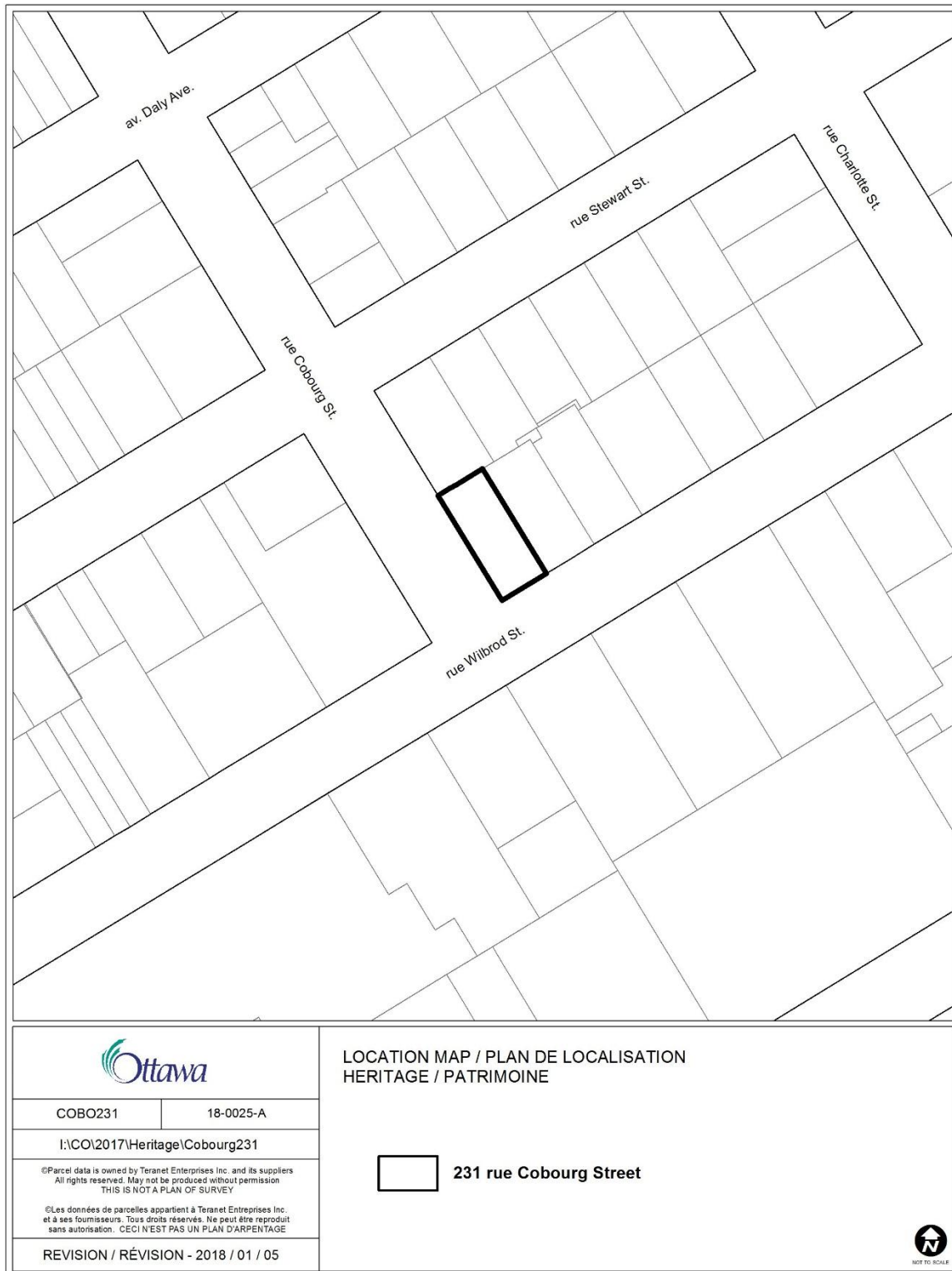
Document 2 Fire insurance plans

- Document 3 Current conditions
- Document 4 Heritage Survey Form
- Document 5 Photographs showing structural damage
- Document 6 Engineer's Report
- Document 7 Before and after images of proposed high commission
- Document 8 Elevations
- Document 9 Landscape Plan
- Document 10 Infill Guidelines, Wilbrod Laurier HCD
- Document 11 Cultural Heritage Impact Statement
- Document 12 Conclusion, Cultural Heritage Impact Statement
- Document 13 Comments from Action Sandy Hill

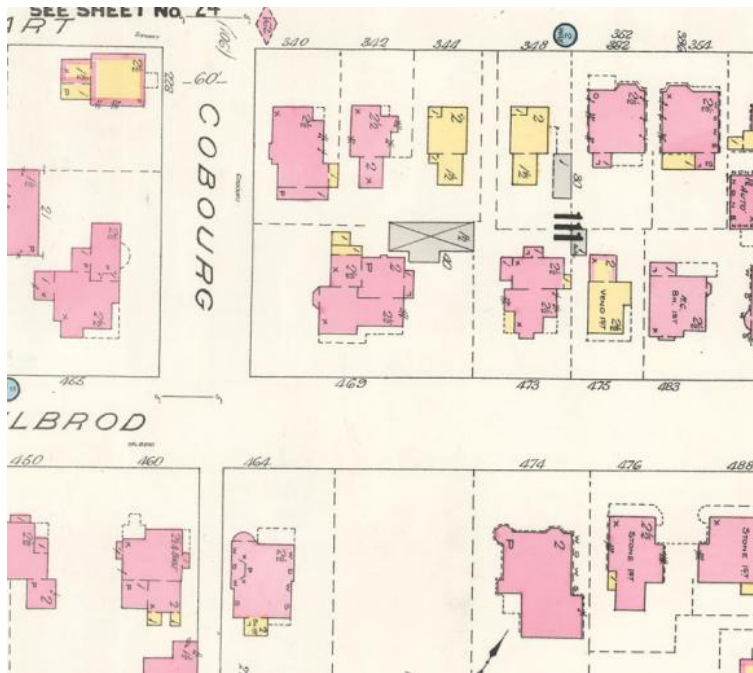
DISPOSITION

City Clerk and Solicitor Department, Legislative Services, to notify the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision.

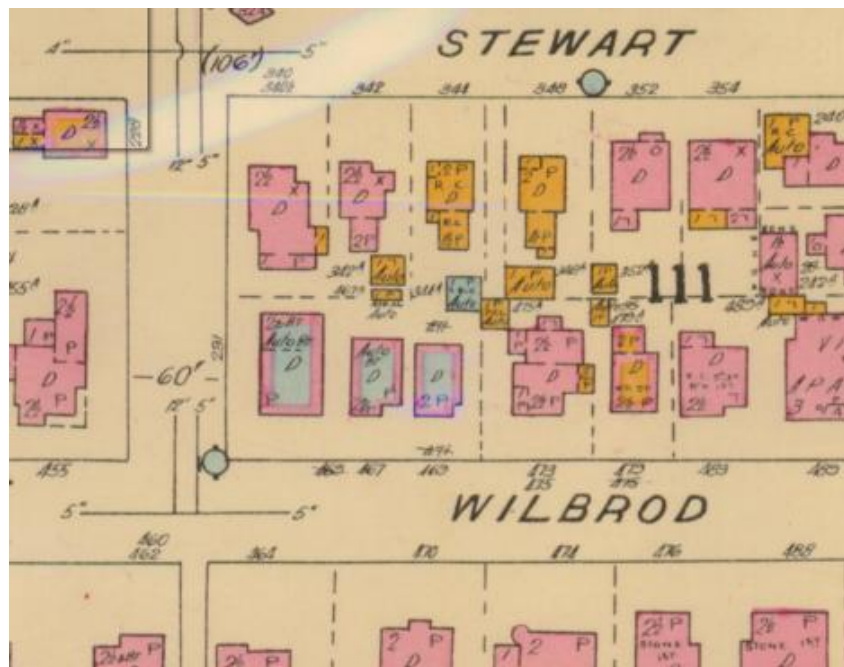
Document 1 – Location Map



Document 2 – Fire Insurance Plans

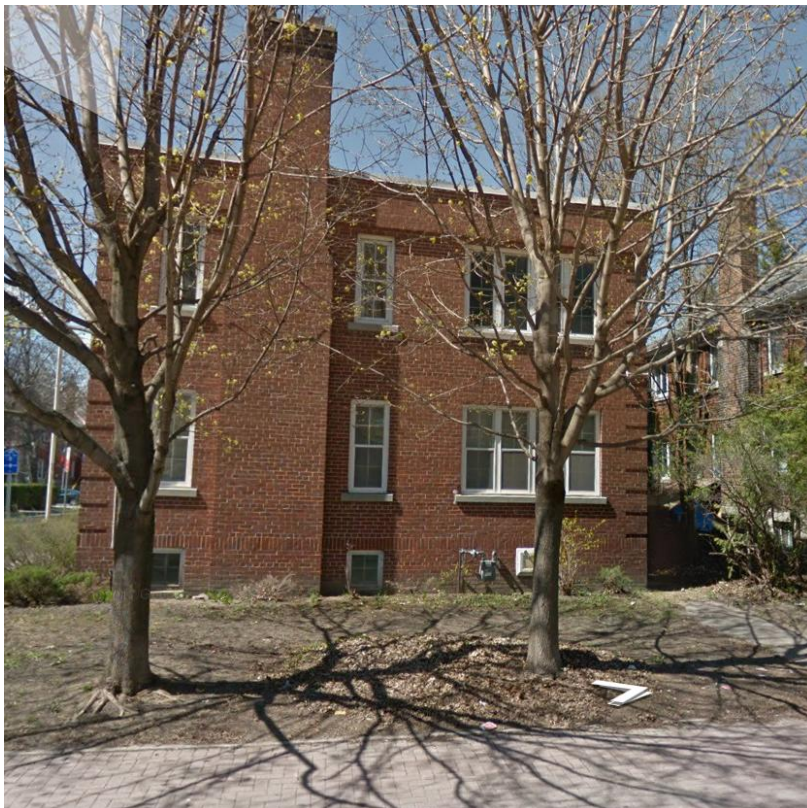


Plan showing original building, 469 Wilbrod Street, at the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Street



Plan showing three replacement buildings constructed after the demolition of 469 Wilbrod Street

Document 3 – Current conditions





Document 5 – Photographs showing structural damage



Cracks in floor slab



Cracking in foundation wall



Exterior cracking

Document 7 – Before and after images of proposed high commission



Front and south façades as originally presented.



Front and south façades after revisions undertaken in consultation with heritage and planning staff.



Front (west) façade, before revisions.



Front façade after revisions



North façade, before revisions.

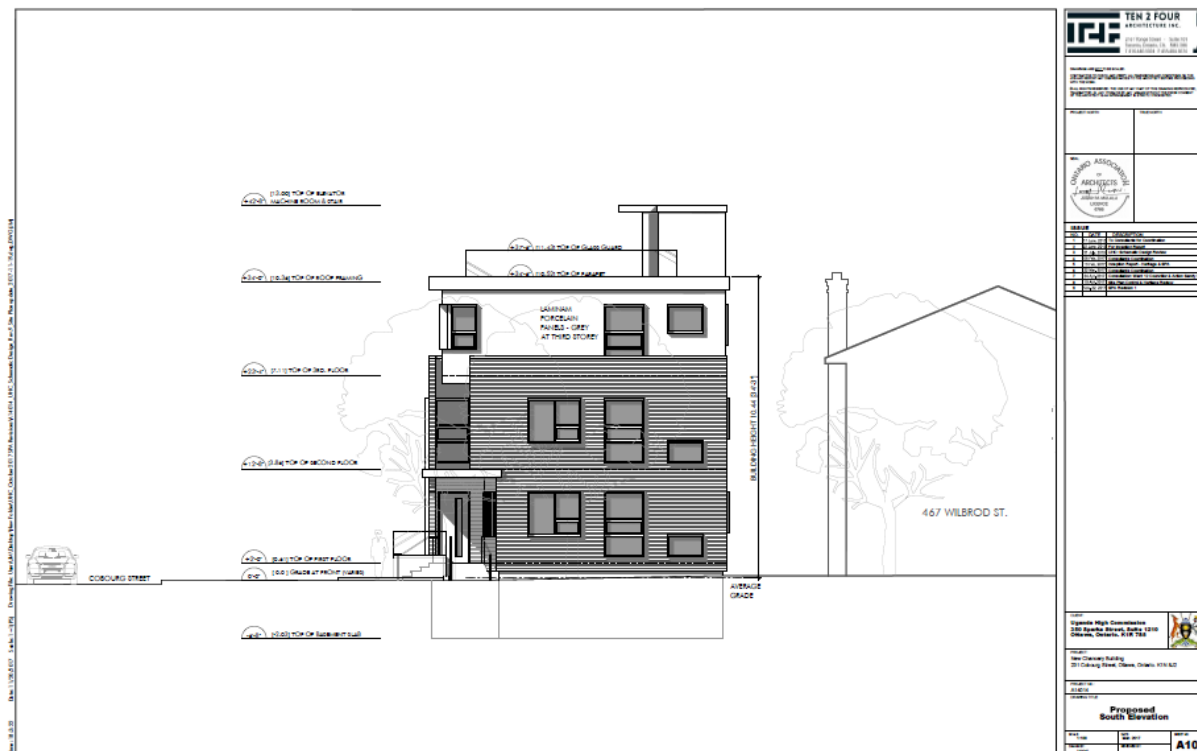
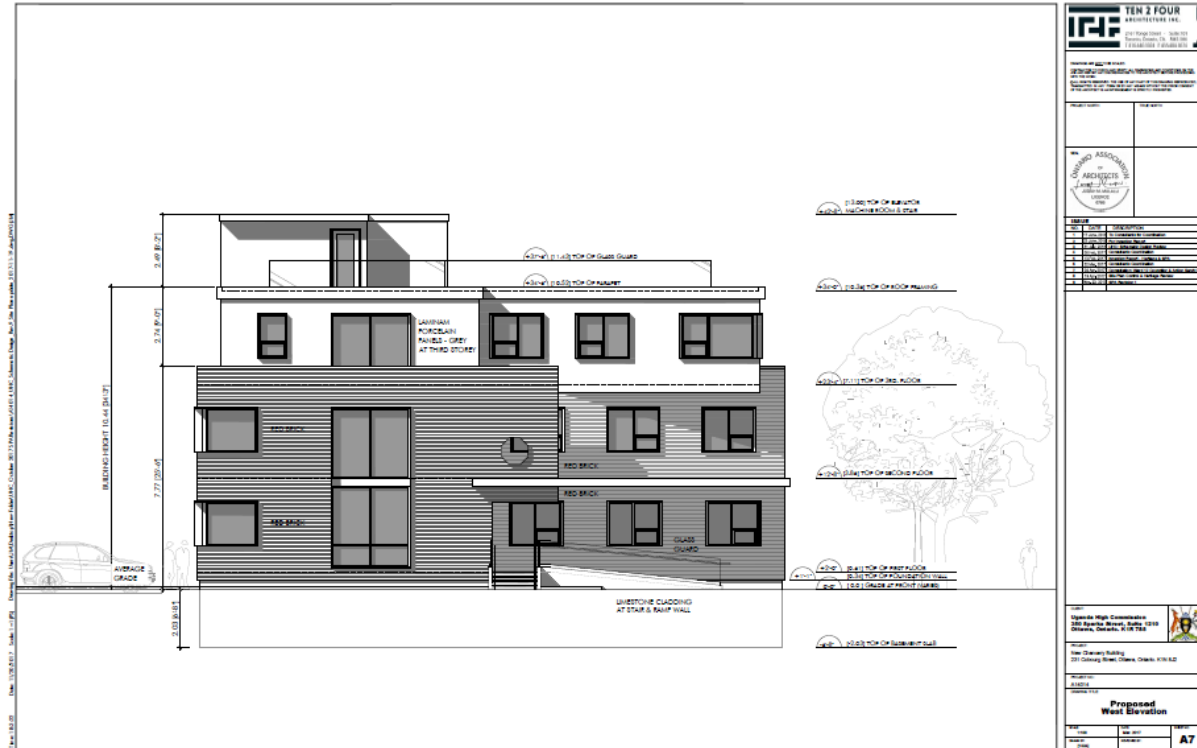


South façade before revisions.



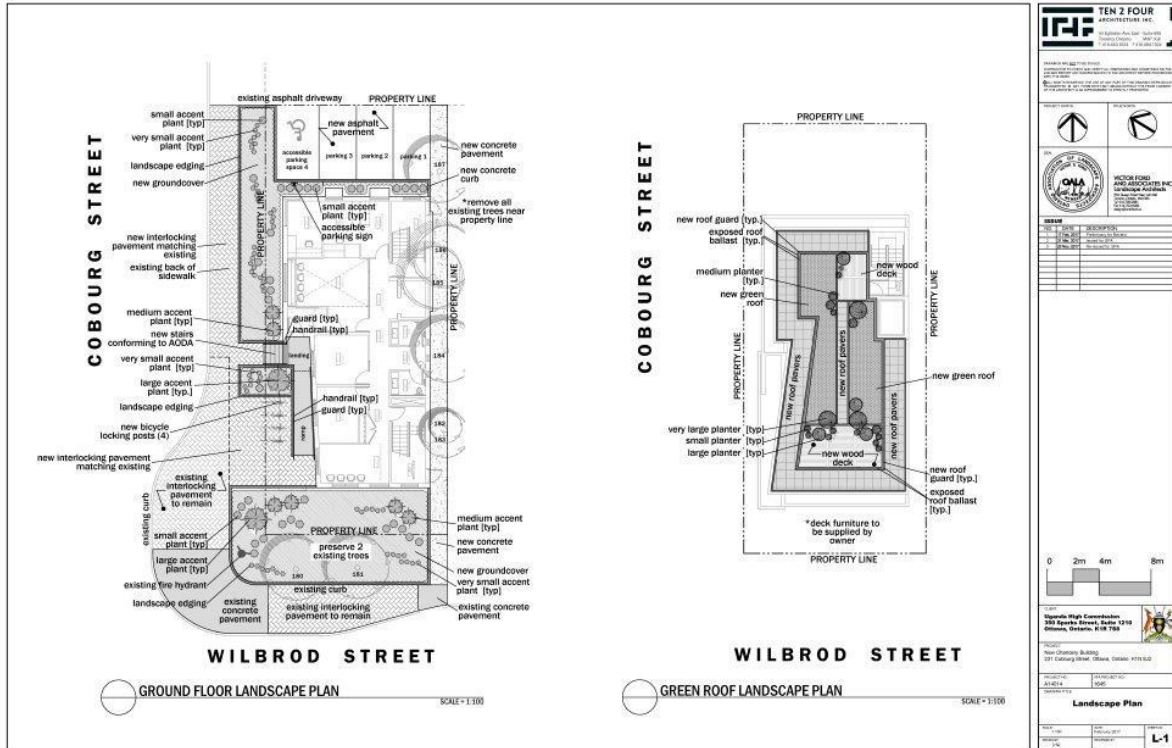
North and South façade after revisions. Differences include fewer windows on east façade, more windows on south façade to reflect residential fenestration patterns along Wilbrod Street, increased inset of third floor, further inset of rooftop terrace.

Document 8 – Elevations





Document 9 – Landscape Plan



Document 10 – Infill Guidelines

4.6 Guidelines for Infill

Presently, there are no vacant lots in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD but vacant lots could be created through demolition of non-contributing buildings, fire or natural disaster. The guidelines in this section are intended to ensure that new buildings in the HCD contribute to its character and are consistent with the goals of the HCD.

1. New buildings will contribute to and not detract from the heritage character of the district.
2. New building should be of their own time and not attempt to replicate a historic style, but must be sympathetic to the character of the HCD in terms of massing, facade proportions, rooflines, cladding materials and the fenestration pattern.
3. Any new residential development in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD should be in keeping with the traditional scale of residential buildings in the district. New construction should match the immediate neighbours in terms of setback, footprint, and massing.
4. Windows in new buildings should be vertically aligned from floor to floor in keeping with the historic character of the HCD.
5. White vinyl windows and horizontal sliding windows are not appropriate to the character of the HCD and should not be used.
6. Cladding materials should reflect the character of the HCD. Appropriate materials include stucco, brick, natural stone, wood siding or fibre cement board.

Document 12 – Conclusion, Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

The proposed demolition of this former residential apartment structure, converted for office use over three decades ago, is regrettable but understandable given the structural, geotechnical and environmental issues, supported by thorough professional assessment.

The program of a small-scale office building, maintaining the same use as the existing, following the provisions of the *Wilbrod/Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan* regarding *Demolition*, *Guidelines for Infill* and *Guidelines for Streetscape and Public Realm* is appropriate. We are of the opinion that the proposed development adheres extremely well to these provisions and the replacement building is assessed as being not detrimental to the cultural value of the larger conservation district heritage resource.

The overall massing of the development on a corner lot will maintain connections to the residential neighborhoods in the same manner as the existing building.

The increased westerly side yard setback, and maintaining northerly and southerly setbacks in alignment with the adjacent properties is appropriate and represent an improvement. The redesign of the entry stair landing forecourt contributes to landscaping and public realm space on this corner lot. All existing mature trees will be retained and additional landscaping added to what is a fairly bare flat site.

The material expression is contemporary in nature but makes references to prevailing material typologies in the district. The use of a red brick second floor datum line references the existing/original building, while demarcating the upper floor setback and material changes...

Taken in balance and in its context, the development proposal is assessed as not being detrimental to District Character and overall, may be seen as a compatible approach for the heritage resource's identified Design (architectural), Cultural and Historical and Contextual Values."

Document 13 – comments for Action Sandy Hill



25 April 2017

Jim Watson, Mayor – Ottawa
Tobi Nussbaum, Chair – Built Heritage Sub-Committee
110 Laurier Ave W, Ottawa (ON)

Re: Ugandan High Commission Chancery – 231 Cobourg Street, Ottawa

Dear Mayor Watson and Councillor Nussbaum,

Last week, a committee of Action Sandy Hill met with the architect for the proposed demolition and replacement of the above noted building, which is identified as a contributing building in the Willbrod/Laurier Heritage Conservation District. A tour of the building revealed that it was in an appalling state of repair due in part to being vacant and unmaintained for the last four years. Given the condition of the building, we were regrettably prepared to consider demolition.

However, thanks to the research efforts of some of our members, we have now ascertained that Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson lived at this address from 1955 to 1958 inclusive. John English's biography of Pearson, *The Life of Lester Pearson, Vol 2* (Knopf, 1992) notes that Pearson's wife purchased the duplex at 231 Cobourg Street in 1954. According to the *Ottawa Directory*, 1-231 Cobourg is listed as the home address of Lester B. Pearson, MP for the years 1955-1958 inclusive. In 1958, he is listed as "leader of the Liberal Party", as well as an MP. It is also worth noting that Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 while he was living at 231 Cobourg; this remains the only Nobel Peace Prize won by a Canadian.

The above noted information about Pearson's ownership and residency in this building does not seem to be reflected in either the City's assessment of the heritage value of the building, or in the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement prepared for the Ugandan High Commission. We hope that City staff can correct this oversight and reassess the scoring of the heritage significance of this building.

Given this new information, ASH vehemently opposes the demolition of the existing building at 231 Cobourg; and we hope that we can count on your support in our efforts to ensure that this significant heritage building is retained and restored.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chad Rollins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chad Rollins
President, ASH

Cc: Mona Fortier, MP – Ottawa/Vanier
David Jeans, Chair – Heritage Ottawa
Mathieu Fleury, Councillor – Ward 12
Sally Coutts, Coordinator – Heritage Services Section, City of Ottawa
Douglas James, Planner III – Development Review Services, City of Ottawa