



September 25, 2023

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe  
City of Ottawa

**RE: The future of the Central Experimental Farm**

Dear Mayor Sutcliffe,

A recommendation from Planning and Housing Committee (P&H) on a Zoning Bylaw amendment for the construction of two high-rise towers adjacent to the Central Experimental Farm is to be considered by Council on Wednesday, September 27. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada stated at P&H Committee that approving this application would have a "significant, costly and enduring impact" on the CEF. Our view is that approving this application, the first of many already in process, would put the long term survival of the research function of the Farm in jeopardy.

The significance of the Farm as a national historic site rests on its **historic and ongoing use**; in other words, its viability as a functioning agricultural research institution. Heritage Ottawa was very concerned that members of the P&H Committee were being asked to make a recommendation based upon two significantly flawed documents, both the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement and the city's own Staff Report. Both denied, or minimized the impact to the ongoing research function at the Farm, but offered no justification for their conclusions.

Surely decision-making at City Hall should be evidence-based.

The Deputy Minister, in answer to questions from Committee members, indicated that they are ready to enter immediately into discussions on the building heights that would be workable from their perspective. However, rather than taking them up on this offer, members pressed for the number of floors that would be acceptable right there and then in committee, an unfair request outside the scope of this delegation's expertise.

Given the magnitude of the impacts of this decision we urge you to defer the decision until these discussions, which all parties agree are required, have taken place, and an impact assessment and a staff report are prepared that are based on factual information and sound reasoning. P&H must base its

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recommendations on the *Planning Act*, but nowhere in the *Planning Act* are municipalities required to make decisions based upon flawed documentation.

Sir, you are the mayor of Ottawa, but you are also the mayor of the National Capital. Decisions made here impact the whole country, especially decisions which impact Canada's ability to respond to the challenges posed by the impact of climate change on our food security. Please don't rush this through.

Leslie Maitland and David Flemming  
Advocacy Committee, Heritage Ottawa

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