



MEDIA RELEASE

CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM: PROPOSED TOWERS A THREAT TO CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

City's Planning & Housing Committee to re-visit rezoning application for 1081 Carling Ave this week

Ottawa, ON, September 19, 2023 -- Heritage Ottawa is joined by the Greenspace Alliance for Canada's Capital, Friends of the Farm, and the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association in calling upon the City's Planning & Housing Committee to protect the research fields at the Central Experimental Farm from the shadows cast by Taggart Realty's proposed 16 and 27 storey towers facing the Farm at 1081 Carling Avenue.

Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm (CEF) has been part of our city for 137 years and it remains the only working farm in a world capital. As stated in its [National Historic Site designation](#), the heritage value of the Farm lies in its research capacity; in its ongoing use. And as worldwide climate change threatens global food security, the worldwide importance of the CEF's research cannot be dismissed.

The City staff report, that justifies a recommendation to approve the rezoning, evaluated impacts to the CEF and concluded that the shadow impacts would not damage the Farm's heritage character, **somehow ignoring the key point that the heritage character of the Farm is its ongoing research capacity.**

The modified Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) prepared for Taggart Realty determines that the shadows cast by the excessive height of the two towers will have no impact on the heritage Character Defining Elements of the experimental fields. The Staff Report states that staff is "satisfied that the proposed development does not create an undue adverse impact on the CEF and the ability to continue research activities." **How did they draw that conclusion?**

Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) undertook its own detailed scientific shadow study that found the research lands would lose sunlight critical to the study of drought on crops -- everything from disease resistance to winter survival, rendering significant portions of the fields unusable for research purposes. **AAFC senior officials, who will be appearing at Planning Committee on September 20, are urging that the fields essential to research that help crops better able to endure climate change be protected.**

The CHIS does not include the shadow study graphics produced by AAFC in its report. Looking at the list of experts consulted in the preparation of the CHIS, there is no indication that any agricultural research scientists were consulted.

Heritage Ottawa Recommends

- that this development in its current iteration not be recommended for approval;
- that AAFC and the City engage in meaningful negotiations concerning the nature of development proposals in proximity to the CEF before this or any other development applications intended for proximity to the CEF are entertained;
- That the City find a mechanism, either through the zoning exercise about to be undertaken, or an amendment to the Official Plan, to provide clarity on any development that may be undertaken in proximity to the CEF, and to provide guidance for the protection of the Farm in line with the *Climate Change Management Plan*.
- That any subsequent proposal for this site be based upon an Impact Assessment that provides an informed understanding of the nature and degree of potential impacts to the CEF.
- That the Terms of Reference for the creation of Heritage Impact Assessments be revised, as clearly the bar needs to be raised.

For more information, please visit: heritageottawa.org/central-experimental-farm

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