



Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

December 2020 Volume 47, No. 4

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A Landmark Year for Heritage Ottawa

Message from the President



Photo: architectsAlliance

Rendering of proposed new addition to Chateau Laurier.

On October 28, we finally convened our 2020 Annual General Meeting, about five months after the normal May date, and electronically because of the restrictions on public meetings during the pandemic. It was Heritage Ottawa's 50th annual meeting.

In the last year there have been many unusual and positive developments, including during the last seven months when we have not been able to meet in person in any numbers, and while we have also been more or less locked out of our Daly Street office in Arts Court. So, let me tell you about three highlights that made 2019/20 a truly landmark year for Heritage Ottawa.

Operating Funds

First, in developing our submission for a City of Ottawa operating grant under the Heritage Service Program, we formulated an ambitious three-year plan and requested a substantial increase in our operating grant. The City agreed to this 50% funding increase.

An Administrative Officer

Second, with the assurance of additional funding, in addition to a generous private donation, Heritage Ottawa was finally able to hire a permanent Administrative Officer, working four days per week. Our new employee is Jennifer Fink, who among other duties helped coordinate

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Heritage Ottawa is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Ottawa's built heritage.

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Heritage Ottawa acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Ministry of Culture

A Landmark Year continued...

arrangements for our general meeting, and who will be providing essential administrative back-up to the many volunteers who create and manage our range of programming. Welcome Jennifer, we expect to keep you busy.

Saving the Chateau Laurier

Thirdly, of course, the single heritage advocacy activity that has commanded much of our time and energy over the past 18 months was the campaign to save the Chateau Laurier, perhaps Ottawa's most noted and beloved national historic landmark, from an inappropriate, monolithic horizontal addition. In the course of fighting this design - even after City Council approved its site development plan - Heritage Ottawa worked with a group of engaged citizens who dubbed themselves the Friends of the Chateau Laurier, and between us we brought national attention to the issue, and developed a huge fundraising campaign to support a legal challenge.

At the Committee of Adjustment, we won a favourable ruling on one of two requests for a minor variance. Both Heritage Ottawa and the owners appealed the rulings to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), the provincial level appeal authority. The LPAT anticipated spring hearing date was delayed by the Covid-19 epidemic. In February, at the request of the owners, we entered into a round of negotiations to see if a new design for the addition to the Chateau would meet our approval. We engaged the volunteer assistance of four nationally-known heritage architecture experts, and made a number of recommendations for a design that would be compatible with the historic building and that would meet the requirements of the federal *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of*

Historic Places in Canada. The owners and their architect accepted. And in July, we signed an agreement with the owners on this new design.

The outside experts who so willingly devoted time to look at the designs were Phyllis Lambert, founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal; Christina Cameron, chair of Built Heritage research at l'Université de Montréal and former Canadian representative to UNESCO; and Lyette Fortin, professor at the Azrieli School of Architecture at Carleton University. The fourth was Ottawa's most renowned heritage architect, Barry Padolsky, who was a member of our working group.

The campaign is not over yet. We are still waiting for an LPAT date to confirm the agreement, but I would like to acknowledge the work of our brilliant legal counsellors, Marc Denhez, Barrister and Solicitor, and Michael Polowin and Jacob Polowin of Gowling WLG.

And that is not all

Despite the restrictions on gatherings this past summer, we have continued as much as possible with our programs. We organized ten socially-distanced and responsible walking tours, using online bookings and limited-number participation. Every one sold out. We have experimented with - and liked - colour additions to our Newsletter. Our websites and social media offerings have gone from strength to strength. We are hoping to offer some lectures online even before the lecture halls are again opened to the public.

So here is a wish from Heritage Ottawa that you have kept safe and well through the pandemic, and that we shall see you again soon.

Richard Belliveau
President, Heritage Ottawa

Our History in Trees

By Allison Margot Smith

Earlier this year, the National Capital Commission (NCC) published a volume showcasing the special trees of the region, entitled *A Living Legacy: Remarkable Trees of Canada's Capital*. Using the author's own "remarkability" criteria, the book documents a collection of unique specimens growing on the NCC's federal public lands, including the Greenbelt, Central Experimental Farm, Dominion Arboretum, and Gatineau Park, as well as other urban parks. The idea for the project was conceived by botanist and author Suzanne Hardy, who carried out the historical research and writing, as well as provided many of the photographs.

Four representative species from the book trace the history of this land and the people that lived on it. Indeed, the stories of these four species encapsulate the transformation of the land and

*"The groves were God's first
temples. Ere man learned/
To hew the shaft, and lay
the architrave"*

— *A Forest Hymn* by
William Cullen Bryant, 1824

offer glimpses into the lives of the people who lived under their canopy.

Beginning with the black spruce, a tree normally found in the northern tundra regions of Canada, but also in the Mer Bleue Bog, east of Ottawa, which provides the sort of tundra-like terrain that enables this unusual (to this area) species to thrive. The Mer Bleue Bog, like other similar bogs, began to form 10,000 years ago when the last glaciers retreated and the land was temporarily flooded by the Champlain Sea. When the sea subsided, black spruce specimens appeared on the bog, where they can still be seen today. The female's cones may remain on these trees for up to 30 years, slowly releasing seeds, but in the event of a forest fire, all of the seeds are released en masse.

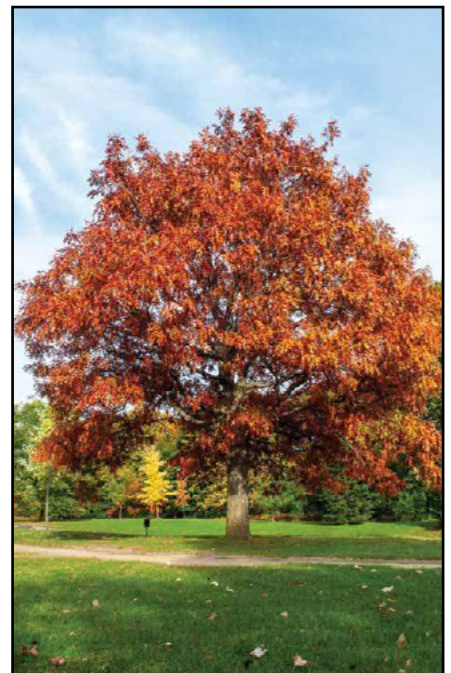
Eastern hemlocks can be found throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence forests, including the National Capital region. Some of the oldest specimens may be found in the Gatineau Park, around Meech Lake and the Skyline Trail. Eastern hemlocks live 600 years, on average, and some for as long as 800 years. The Anishinaabe-Algonquin people boiled the bark and shoots of this tree to produce a tea with sufficient vitamin C to prevent scurvy, as well



Eastern hemlock

as to make a poultice for treating rheumatism. The tree's polyphenolic tannins reduce inflammation and were used to heal wounds.

The white oak is a native species that grows throughout the region. It was an important product in the lumber industry that was central to the origins of Bytown (now Ottawa)



White oak



Black spruce



American beech

and Wright's Town (later called Hull and now Gatineau.) Its wood was valued for its water- and rot-resistance, and used for barrels, farm tools, furniture, fences, railway ties, shipbuilding and construction. Valued internationally, it was harvested and floated down the Rideau, Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to Quebec City for transfer to Britain and the East Indies. But as E. Russell Smith tells in his 2004 book, *The Raft of the Skedaddlers*, white oak

doesn't float, so it had to be floated downriver on pine rafts.

A beautiful white oak specimen can be seen in Jacques-Cartier Park. It is the site of Charron House, built between 1826 and 1841 on land rented to François Charron and Sophie Miville by Philemon Wright, who was the first commercial logger in the region and founder of Wright's Town. The park is also the site of the former International

Pulp and Paper Company, and the Gilmour & Hughson Company, which operated a sawmill at this site from 1873 to 1930. Its former headquarters building is still extant in this park.

The American beech can be found, in decreasing numbers, across eastern North America. Early settlers quickly associated this species with the rich soil in which it grew, and many of its original number were cleared for farmland. As a species, it was easy to spot. Its beechnuts were a favourite of the passenger pigeon, and huge flocks of these birds would descend on these trees during their fall migration. Today the American beech is afflicted by the beech bark disease. However, several specimens, that are over one hundred years old, can be found in the woodlot of Hampton Park. This land was originally developed by J.C. Brennan in 1910, before being purchased by the Federal District Commission in 1927, during a period when this area, west of the Civic Hospital, was being cleared for residential housing. This woodlot now represents a rare forest ecosystem with some of the oldest trees in the city.

Today, as always, trees give us shade and help protect our environment. They provide food for squirrels and birds, and even, from time to time, for ourselves. But despite our local history in the logging industry, we no longer harvest our urban trees. In fact, many of our trees are now protected by municipal bylaw at a time of urban intensification.

Allison Margot Smith is an historian and historical documentary filmmaker. She is a member of the board of Heritage Ottawa.

Hardy, Suzanne. *A Living Legacy: Remarkable Trees of Canada's Capital*. National Capital Commission, 2020.

Kilmorie House: Ottawa's Lost Heritage?

Photos: Heritage Ottawa



A hard fought community effort by the City View Community Association and the Kilmorie Heritage Society to save the lushly-treed two-acre estate at 21 Withrow Avenue, including the heritage-designated Kilmorie House, ended last March. Property owners in the City View, Crestview/Meadowlands and Ryan Farm neighbourhoods voted against a special levy of approximately \$128/year per property to raise the funds needed for the City to purchase the site on behalf of the community. The plan was to operate the house as a community facility with public access to the surrounding grounds.

The developer, Theberge Homes, who was granted permission last November to construct 13 infill houses on the property, wanted \$3.95 million for the house and site.

Built in 1842, Kilmorie House is one of Ottawa's oldest stone houses and

was once owned by Confederation poet Wilfred William Campbell.

Heritage Ottawa in 2016 supported designating Kilmorie House under the *Ontario Heritage Act* "including enough surrounding land to provide adequate setback and context." Heritage Ottawa also submitted

a written appeal to Planning Committee in November 2019 urging delay of the zoning bylaw amendment and Plan of Subdivision, to no avail.

"Kilmorie by Theberge," as the subdivision is now called, advertises a "streamlined, vibrant lifestyle with plenty to see and do."

What you can no longer "see" is Kilmorie House. The once lovely treed grounds with a curved driveway off Withrow Avenue leading to the old limestone farm house nestled in a picturesque surrounding, is gone. And we will never get it back.

Today, the Withrow Avenue frontage has four large single family homes blocking anything but a slim sightline to Kilmorie House. Once four new additional houses are built behind them, even that sightline will be gone.

The value of Ottawa's heritage should extend beyond stones and mortar to include context and visibility. Protecting context for such properties has become the latest challenge for heritage conservationists.



Increased heritage protection coming to Centretown

By Avery Marshall

The City of Ottawa is moving ahead with its commitment to protect built heritage in Centretown, one of the oldest residential neighbourhoods in Ottawa. Earlier this year, the City's consultant, ERA Architects Inc, delivered a series of recommendations as part of the Centretown Heritage Study. These recommendations were the outcome of documentation, evaluation and classification for approximately 3,000 properties located within the Centretown Heritage Study area.

The recommendations have a range of impacts including:

- Priorities for individual Part IV designations
- Priorities for listing on Ottawa's Heritage Register
- Contributing and Non-contributing Properties within

Centretown's Heritage Conservation Districts

- Landmark Streetscapes within Centretown's Heritage Conservation Districts
- New HCD Study of Dundonald Park and its surrounding properties

Full recommendations are outlined in Section 6 of the consultant's report, Centretown Heritage Inventory, available at ottawa.ca/centretownheritage

The recommendations were shared with property owners and community stakeholders through an online consultation from June 15, 2020 to July 31, 2020. Staff received 77 responses ranging from information requests to comments against increased heritage protection and feedback in support of heritage conservation.

Council endorsed the first report stemming from the Centretown Heritage Study recommendations by listing 309 Centretown properties on the Heritage Register at its meeting on October 28, 2020. This action delivers interim protection to hundreds of Centretown properties.

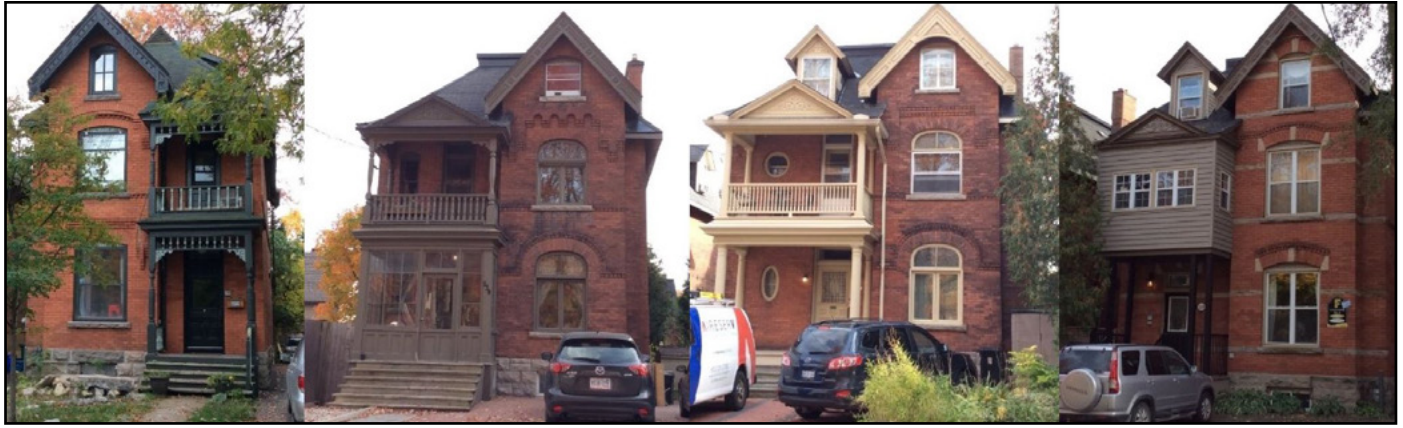
A second report recommending over 400 additions to the Heritage Register went to Council in November.

Heritage Planning staff are actively reviewing the remaining Centretown recommendations including:

- New Heritage Conservation District Plans for the existing Centretown and Minto Park HCDs as priority work plan items for 2021.
- Dundonald Park and surrounding properties have been identified as



Dundonald Park and surrounding properties were identified as a potential Heritage Conservation District.



Properties added to the Heritage Register on MacLaren Street.

a potential Heritage Conservation District. Further study is required, anticipated to begin in 2021.

- New individual Part IV Designations as an ongoing initiative.

For more information, please visit Ottawa.ca/centretownheritage or contact Heritage Planning staff at 613-580-2463 or heritage@ottawa.ca

Avery Marshall is a Built Heritage Researcher for the City of Ottawa.

Ottawa's Heritage Register

By Linda Hoad

At the Built Heritage Sub-Committee meetings in October and November over 700 Centretown properties were added to the Heritage Register as a result of the findings of the Centretown Heritage Study.

The Heritage Register, a tool mandated by the revised *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2005, requires an owner who wishes to demolish a listed building to provide 60 days' notice in writing to the City of their intent to demolish. Heritage staff may use the 60 days to further assess the property's cultural heritage value to determine if it merits designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The Heritage Inventory Project, a city-wide heritage study, began in January 2016 and was completed in December 2019. City staff studied Ottawa's urban, suburban and rural areas and evaluated buildings for design and

context, resulting in the inclusion of 3402 properties on the Heritage Register as non-designated listings.

Heritage Ottawa supported and indeed lobbied the Planning Committee and Council to make updating the Heritage Register a priority and to provide the funding necessary to carry out this important project. The result of significant research, public consultation, consideration by the Built Heritage Sub-Committee and Council, the Register is now available to the public, a significant improvement over the informal listing in the old Heritage Reference List, available only to City staff.

We urge readers to consult the interactive map on Ottawa.ca where you can search all the properties on the Register, including photos and their architectural descriptions.

<https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/heritage-conservation/heritage-properties>

And the good news is ...

Although some property owners have expressed fears that listing on the Register will interfere with their right to alter their home, or lead inevitably to designation, heritage staff reported to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee that since Council adopted the Heritage Register in 2016, there have been 18 written notices of intent to demolish listed properties. In each case, the 60 days expired, and owners proceeded to request a demolition permit. No notice of intent to demolish resulted in a recommendation to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate.

Linda Hoad is a board member of Heritage Ottawa.

Survey of Farm Visitors

By Eric Jones

The Central Experimental Farm Advisory Council (CEFAC) undertook a survey of visitors to the Farm from February to May, 2020. The goal was to learn how people use the site and to better understand what they're looking for in their visits. Over 1000 people participated, most of them from Ottawa. The top four destinations for visitors were the Arboretum, the Agriculture and Food Museum, the Ornamental Gardens and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

The survey was started before the Covid-19 lockdown began. Since parking was prohibited at the Farm when the lockdown started, less than half said they traveled there by car during that time, compared to two thirds before the lockdown.

Dealing with rising traffic and access will require innovative solutions to ensure the nature, quality and purpose of the Farm are preserved.

A big take-away from the survey was that a large majority of the visitors understand the underlying purpose of the CEF (see graph). The survey reinforced the message that the CEF is a working institution rather than just a place to visit, and that research results are the key to its future.

Education was also identified by over 90% as important to the future of the Farm. It's clearly important to tell Canadians regularly what the CEF

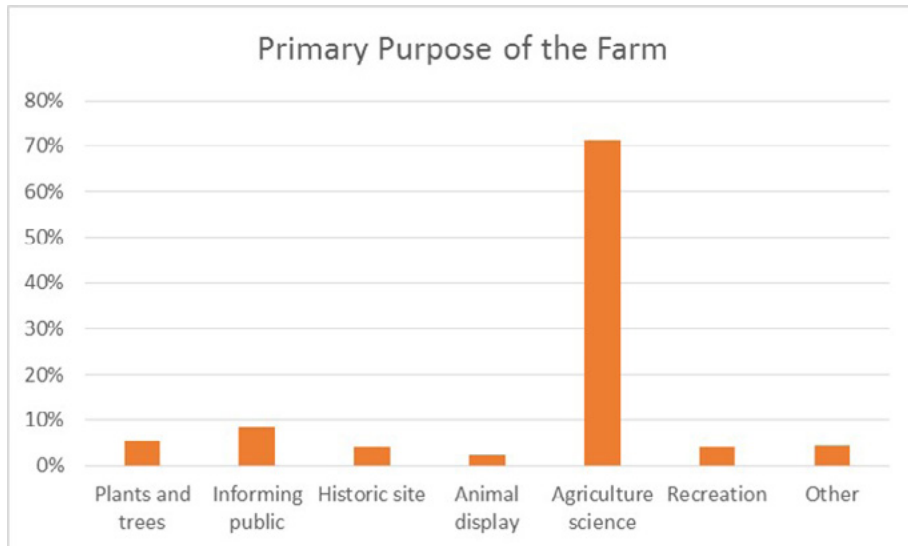
has done for them. Education at the Farm also includes other areas such as farming in Canada (Agricultural Museum), books and tours of the Ornamental Gardens and Arboretum (Friends of the Farm), native plants (Fletcher Wildlife Garden) as well as other topics.

Recreation was ranked slightly lower in importance to the future of the CEF, but still fairly high. During peak periods, recreational gatherings can put stress on facilities or conditions at the Farm, but they are also greatly appreciated by the public.

Wellness was ranked by 75% of visitors as important before the Covid-19 lockdown, but that rose to 86% after the lockdown. The need for urban green space is growing as the



CEF Promotional image, c. 1890



city grows, and the effects on health are starting to be better understood. Agricultural science is also linked fundamentally to health in terms of nutrition, farming practices and the environment, but that may not be well understood.

Another significant survey result is the extent to which people value the Farm. An open-ended question drew forth many expressions of appreciation and fond recollections of Farm experiences over the years. There is obviously a deep emotional connection between the public and the site.

Looking Ahead

The survey suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between visitors and the Farm. It also shows that there are some areas that could be strengthened.

Travel in the urban setting is always difficult and will be more challenging due to the trend toward intensification at the perimeter of the CEF, and the addition of the new hospital campus on site. Dealing with rising traffic and access will require innovative solutions to ensure the nature, quality and purpose of the Farm are preserved.

The need for better education of the public is important because there are so many aspects of the Farm's work that are relevant today. Also, competing interests will continue to press for use of the site. There is an opportunity to engage groups that are interested in assisting with outreach so that education will reach a wider audience. This will be critical to the future of the CEF.

Eric Jones, Chair, Central Experimental Farm Advisory Council.

A Tribute to Louise Fox



Photo: L. Fox

Louise Fox finished her service with the HO Board of Directors at our AGM in October, and with that she is stepping down as well as Secretary on the executive.

Louise worked for many years as an artifact conservator and policy analyst with Parks Canada. Louise joined the Heritage Ottawa Board in 2013, and took on the responsibilities as Secretary in 2015. For the past five years she has been the meticulous, thorough and reliable curator of our official records, and is responsible for the organization of our many exciting Annual General Meetings at the Glebe Community Centre.

Heritage Ottawa has also benefitted from Louise Fox's outstanding generosity in providing a large annual grant to Heritage Ottawa to fund the position of a heritage intern, a position which has now provided three interns with work opportunities, and laid the basis for the position of a permanent Administrative officer which we were able to create this past year.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Louise for her dedication and generosity to Heritage Ottawa, and look forward to seeing her frequently in the years to come as an active and interested supporter of the organization.

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Negotiable Heritage?

By David Flemming

For heritage advocates, commemoration of our built heritage seems simple enough. Based on sound research and the presentation of a case for recognition, properties with heritage potential can be designated federally as a National Historic Site of Canada (NHSC) or in the case of a Federal Government owned property under regulations of the Federal Heritage Building Review Office (FHBRO) or Provincially by Ontario Municipalities under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Of course, both Federal designations afford limited protection, however that's a matter for another article.

In Ontario, we should expect that a heritage designation for an individual property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* should assure its preservation especially if the designation was accompanied by a thorough Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) which formed part of a re-zoning and site plan approval.

Thus, when the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate agreed to sell its extensive property on Main Street to the developer Regional Group for its extensive Greystone Village, the community was heartened by the developer's decision to support the heritage designation of L'Édifice Deschâtelets Residence (1885) including the interior of the 1950's

chapel addition. As part of the 2013 approval by Ottawa City Council, the new owner agreed to find a re-use for the building either as part of its extensive development of the site or to find an alternative use, perhaps with a new owner.

In 2019, Regional Group agreed to sell L'Édifice Deschâtelets to Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est for use as a school and possibly for a community centre, gym and affordable housing. After much deliberation with the City, it was decided that the chapel wing could not be retrofitted for any of these adapted re-uses. Regional Group then announced its wish to have the heritage designation of the chapel rescinded as a prelude to demolition.

Although the community generally welcomed the use of the building as a school, it was split on whether to sever and demolish the chapel wing or retain it for some future use. Many residents felt that the demolition afforded a "trade-off" that the community should accept if they could be guaranteed that a new, modern community centre complete with a shared gymnasium with the new school would be built on the site.

Others felt that the chapel was an important vestige of the Oblates

long association with the community and that the chapel wing should be retained until a new use could be found. What is more important to a religious institution than its chapel?

Heritage Ottawa felt that neither the City nor the developer had made a persuasive argument to justify the demolition of the chapel and suggested that it should be stabilized while the City and Regional Group tried to find another partner to enable them to live up to their commitment to preserving the building.

After much deliberation on the proposal to demolish the chapel wing and following a deadlock at Built Heritage Sub-Committee, both Planning Committee and City Council agreed to the removal of the chapel wing subject to the documentation of the building and relocation of some of the stained-glass windows prior to demolition, to permit the rest of the Deschâtelets Building to be converted to a school. and that City staff work with the owners to mount a display and historic plaque that would commemorate the chapel.

What Council did not note (but Heritage Ottawa and others did) was that Regional Group had been given approvals over the years to develop this 11 hectares of prime real estate along the Rideau River which enabled them to build 900 residential units and a nine-storey, 85-unit apartment dwelling.

This begs the question – was it too much to ask that Regional Group agree to maintain the chapel wing until a new tenant or owner could be found? It seems so. Heritage seems to be "negotiable" despite the legislative protections, community significance and heritage advocacy when there is money to be made.

David B. Flemming, Chair, Heritage Ottawa Advocacy Committee



Photo: H. McGill

EARNSCLIFFE: British High Commission Building New Chancery on the Grounds of National Historic Site

By Carolyn Quinn

The British High Commission (BHC) recently announced it has awarded the contract for the construction of a new “green” office building and gatehouse on the grounds of Earncliffe, the residence of the British High Commissioner at 140 Sussex Drive since 1930. Designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1960, it is also the home where Sir John A. Macdonald lived and died.

Perched on a steep cliff overlooking the Ottawa River, the picturesque Gothic Revival style stone villa (c.1855) with its cross-pitched roofs and dormers, ornate bargeboard and chimney pots is a visible landmark along Sussex Drive and from the Ottawa River and Macdonald-Cartier Bridge. As well as the Official Residence, the property included stables and a coach house that were converted into offices by the BHC in 1931.

These old offices were without heritage protection and were recently demolished to make way for a new three-storey building along with a new security guardhouse and gate at the entrance. The office building will replace the High Commission’s current chancery, a multi-storey office building located at 80 Elgin Street, a block from Parliament Hill, which will be sold. Purpose built in 1962-63, it housed over 200 employees. The new chancery on the Earncliffe property will be much smaller, accommodating closer to 60 staff members.

The new building will be a modernist design in an international style clad in honed limestone veneer, bright white ceramic panels, aluminium frames and clear glass and tongue-and-groove panels. The BHC is reported to be using locally sourced recycled



Photo: British High Commission

Rendering, proposed new British High Commission building on the Earncliffe site by HKO Architects.

materials and state-of-the-art solar technology in the construction. The building will be set behind a stone wall along Sussex Drive.

Heritage Ottawa participated in two meetings hosted by the BHC about the proposed new plans for the site along with representatives from the New Edinburgh Community Alliance and the Lowertown Community Association. In November 2019, Heritage Ottawa sent a follow-up letter to the High Commissioner expressing appreciation for the excellent care the British government has taken over the years to preserve Earncliffe, but also elaborating on concerns that the new two-storey wing along Sussex Drive that extends to the entrance gate and links with the guardhouse would create a “visual barrier” to the historic site from the street.

Heritage Ottawa encouraged the BHC to share its plans with the public and to commission the preparation of an arm’s length independent study of impacts the new development would have on the historic residence and grounds.

The resulting *Cultural Heritage Impact Statement*, prepared by Robert

Martin Architects and ContentWorks, concludes that the demolition of the old office building (former stables and coach house) will have an “adverse impact” on the site in terms of the original lot patterns that were part of Earncliffe’s history. Its replacement with a larger and taller contemporary building and the redeveloped entrance with guardhouse and stone wall will also impact the view to the site and the Official Residence from Sussex Drive.

The study also concludes that the “historic visual hierarchy” that saw the old office building subservient to the Official Residence will be changed, as the new office building will be much more visible in the landscape and will rival the Official Residence in scale.

The positive heritage impacts identified in the study include the containment of the development almost entirely to the south portion of the property on the Sussex side, leaving most of the original grounds and all of the Official Residence intact.

Carolyn Quinn is a member of the Heritage Ottawa board and Vice-chair of the City’s Built Heritage Sub-committee



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