



Sent by email on February 7, 2017

Dr. Mark Kristmanson, National Capital Commission mark.kristmanson@ncc-ccn.ca
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Dear Dr. Kristmanson,

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (FCEF) were very supportive of the NCC process and review of the new site for the Ottawa Hospital. Unfortunately, the decision to choose a site on the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) has prevailed. We believe that the potential impact of this decision on the grounds of the CEF needs to be stated.

The specific site chosen for the hospital will challenge the public areas that are an integral part of the history and *raison-d'être* of the Farm. Public interaction has always been part of the mandate of the Farm, and that objective is reinforced in the National Historic Site Management Plan.

The Dominion Arboretum provides many benefits to residents and visitors to the capital: removing air pollutants, reducing stress, cleaning groundwater, providing a cool retreat, reducing climate change, supporting wildlife and much more. In addition, the Arboretum provides a living historic record of trees planted on the Farm site since 1889.

The Ornamental Gardens are of historic and natural significance to all Canadians, as explained in a new FCEF publication, *Blooms: An Illustrated History of the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm*. These gardens comprise unique plant collections found nowhere else in Canada. FCEF volunteers provide thousands of hours annually, under the direction of AAFC staff, demonstrating invaluable community involvement.

The first challenge to both of these areas by the intended development can be seen in the layout plan for the new hospital, including the location of parking areas. Buildings and paved surfaces will be located across Prince of Wales Drive from the Arboretum, changing both sight and sound of the area. The construction will also directly displace many trees and hedges that were planted on the northwest side as an extension of the Arboretum. It's also worth noting that while a number of Farm buildings, i.e., the Dominion Observatory complex and other heritage buildings, will be in the buffer zone between the research fields and the new construction there won't be a similar buffer zone on the east side of the development.

The second significant challenge will come from the re-design of roads and traffic management on the repurposed site. Any widening of Prince of Wales Drive to accommodate increased traffic and emergency vehicles will diminish both the Arboretum and the Ornamental Gardens. Any change to the NCC Driveway, Birch



Drive or Maple Drive will have a similar impact. Both will interfere with the intended landscape design as specified in the CEF National Historic Site Management Plan.

A third and most significant threat will come from the precedent that this project will make for future development. New encroachment could come from another border of the Farm, or it could come from the hospital administration's interest in continuous improvement to its facilities.

The Friends of the Farm are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the public areas of the Farm. We believe that the NCC should be very specific in its guidance on this project, drawing on the NHS Management Plan, the CEF Advisory Council, and all resources available to protect these invaluable grounds. The NCC will be in a unique position to influence the design and construction so as to minimize the damage and additional encroachment on this National Heritage Site. We urge you to exercise your full oversight responsibilities to ensure the Farm is preserved for all Canadians.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Dodds,
President, Friends of the Central Experimental Farm
c.c.

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