

Friends of the Farm Letters and Responses to Encroachment on the Central Experimental Farm

December, 2014: Friends' [Farm Notes December 2014](#) draws attention to 60 acres decision.

November 14, 2015: One year later, [Ottawa Citizen article](#) recaps 60-acre decision.

February 1, 2016: Friends' [letter](#) to Minister McKenna for an opportunity to discuss.

December 2, 2016: Friends of the Farm board of directors' [statement](#) on the selection of the Sir John Carling Building as the new Ottawa Civic Hospital Site.

January 29, 2017 Friends' [letter](#) to Minister McKenna to strengthen the National Historic Site Act regarding the Central Experimental Farm.

February 1, 2017: Friends [interview](#) on the Baseline Rapid Transit Corridor plan that contributes to 'erosion' of Central Experimental Farm.

February 7, 2017: Friends' [letter](#) to the NCC on concerns and impacts of the Sir John Carling site decision for TOH. Here is an excerpt:

April 19, 2017: Minister McKenna's [response](#) to Friends January 29 letter described above.

April 28, 2017: Dr. Kristmanson's [response](#) to Friends February 7 letter described above.

September 14, 2017: Friends [response](#) to the City of Ottawa planning department on Zoning By-law Amendments for CEF hospital lands.

January 16, 2018: Friend's [letter](#) to Minister McKenna on the Report on Historical Buildings and Sites, Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow.

February 28, 2018: Minister McKenna's [response](#) to Friends January 16 letter described above.

December, 2014: Friends' Farm Notes draws attention to 60 acres decision:
Land Transfer from the Farm to NCC
It's not just a cornfield

In his decision in November to sever 60 acres of Central Experimental Farm fields, the Honourable John Baird, minister for the National Capital Commission, has made it clear that, unlike in other countries, a national heritage site designation offers no guaranteed protection from development and doesn't even trigger consultation with stakeholders.

While the Friends of the Farm support a new hospital, it doesn't need to result in the loss of this valuable land with national historic status and ongoing long-term research. Friends' President Eric Jones and former FCEF presidents, along with the media, historians, researchers, heritage and community advocates have written about the land transfer.

In his exploration of responses to the land transfer announcement, Peter Anderson of Carleton

University noted that many see the Farm as [empty fields](#) that are "untapped, wasted" which is totally unfounded. Julie Harris, heritage specialist and co-author of the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site Management Plan, notes that these "empty fields" are, in fact, [open-air laboratories](#) where important agricultural research continues to be conducted." It is land on which detailed scientific data has been recorded for over a century.

For more than 125 years of cropping research at the Farm, there have been many scientific [success stories](#) including 260 varieties of improved corn, many high-protein, pest-resistant soybean varieties, wheat varieties resistant to the devastating Fusarium head blight, 28 new milling oat varieties and 50 lines of hullless oats, as well as the development of new techniques and methods of cultivating, fertilizing and screening for plant diseases. As Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz pointed out this week regarding the new grain legislation, "the sector generated about \$23 billion last year in grain and oilseed farm cash receipts."

It is clearly not just a cornfield. There are immense benefits to Canadians and to Canada's agriculture and food industries from such research, which depends on continuity in the field experiments using the same testing grounds year after year.

November 14, 2015: One year later, [Ottawa Citizen article](#) recaps 60-acre decision. Here is an excerpt:



“River Ward Councillor Riley Brockington, whose ward borders the proposed site, has tried for months to hold a public meeting with hospital officials to explain to community members how the site was selected and what comes next. He is still waiting.

He is meeting with new Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, though, whose riding includes the farm. On Thursday McKenna said she had been “hearing from residents” with concerns about it, but wasn’t aware of any plan to review the decision. The issue is the responsibility of Mélanie Joly, the new Liberal minister of Canadian Heritage who was unavailable for an interview on the subject.”

February 1, 2016: Friends’ [letter](#) to Minister McKenna for an opportunity to discuss. Here is an excerpt:

“Dear Minister McKenna,

Representatives of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (FCEF) would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the importance of the Central Experimental Farm as a national heritage site, a renowned research facility, and a public green space.

We understand from recent media reports that you may review the previous government’s decision to provide 60 acres of Farm land for a new hospital. We are also aware that City of Ottawa officials have suggested taking a strip of Farm land along Baseline Road to improve the city’s East-West Transportation Corridor. **We believe that any decision to radically change the nature of National Historic Sites such as the Farm should consider the full impact of that decision on the intrinsic value and significance of that site.”**

December 2, 2016: Friends of the Farm board of directors’ [statement](#) on the selection of the Sir John Carling Building as the new Ottawa Civic Hospital Site. Here is a summary:

“We were very disappointed to learn that despite the National Capital Commission’s recommendation of Tunney’s Pasture, the Federal Government will offer land from the Central Experimental Farm to the Ottawa Hospital for a new Civic Campus. We are thankful for all of the work done by so many people to draw attention to the value of the Farm as a place of national heritage and research. **The Friends understand there will always be important land needs to be considered but continually encroaching on National Historic Sites should not be the easy answer.** The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm will continue to support the importance of both the ongoing work and public areas of the Farm.”

January 29, 2017 Friends’ [letter](#) to Minister McKenna to strengthen the National Historic Site Act regarding the Central Experimental Farm (page 8, Spring Newsletter).

February 1, 2017: Friends [interview](#) on the Baseline Rapid Transit Corridor plan that contributes to 'erosion' of Central Experimental Farm. Here is an excerpt:

"In general, our organization is disappointed at any encroachment onto the farm property," said Judy Dodds, president of Friends of the Central Experimental Farm. **"It is a heritage site, and we would like to see the entire property maintained as a heritage site."**

"The farm is a national historic site. It is a place not only of research, but of green space in the city. It's a space of public gardens," she said.

"I think we in general should be more respectful of those places that we have designated as national historic sites."

February 7, 2017: Friends' [letter](#) to the NCC on concerns and impacts of the Sir John Carling site decision for TOH. Here is an excerpt:

"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."

April 19, 2017: Minister McKenna's [response](#) to Friends letter described above.

April 28, 2017: Dr. Kristmanson's [response](#) to Friends letter described above.

September 14, 2017: Friends [response](#) to the City of Ottawa planning department on Zoning By-law Amendments for CEF hospital lands. Here is an excerpt:

"To: Sean Moore Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department City of Ottawa. Comments on Zoning By-law Amendment Application File Numbers D02-02-17-0075 and D01-01-17-0016.

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm urge the city to establish zoning bylaws that will support the maintenance of the heritage nature of the remaining

portion of the Central Experimental Farm to the greatest extent possible. This includes excluding development not directly needed for the hospital to function properly.”

January 16, 2018: Friend’s [letter](#) to Minister McKenna on the Report on Historical Buildings and Sites, Preserving Canada’s Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow. Here is a summary:

“In December of last year, a House of Commons Standing Committee released a **Report on Historical Buildings and Sites, Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow**. It recommends the federal government introduce legislation to ensure the government does not take actions that impact on the integrity of national historic sites of Canada and respects the heritage values of Canada's national historic places.

The Central Experimental Farm (CEF) was designated a [National Historic Site in 1997](#) by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Parks Canada. An Advisory Council was established in 1999 to ensure public participation in the CEF’s management and to safeguard the historic site. Despite these, the federal, provincial and municipal governments have made decisions that have given parcels of land of the CEF away for other uses.

The Friends of the Farm have once again written to Minister Catherine McKenna, responsible for heritage sites, following the release of the above-mentioned report urging her and the government to strengthen the National Historic Site Act so that the remaining acreage of the CEF is protected from further intrusion.”

February 28, 2017: Minister McKenna’s [response](#) to Friends January 16 letter described above.