



18 June 2021

Heritage Ottawa to Sean Moore, Planner, City of Ottawa

Sent via email to: sean.moore@ottawa.ca

RE: Ottawa Hospital Master Plan

Hello Mr. Moore,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Hospital's Master Plan for the Sir John Carling site (SJC site).

As you know, Heritage Ottawa's mandate is to advocate for the protection and public appreciation of Ottawa's built heritage and special places. That said, we are particularly focused on potential impacts to the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site of Canada (CEF NHSC) upon which the hospital stands; the federally-designated buildings (FHBRO) on the Farm that are nearby; and the Rideau Canal NHSC and World Heritage Site (WHS). Given the importance of the original picturesque aesthetic and resultant landscape character of both the CEF and the Canal, and given TOH's commitment during the consultation process to respect and mirror those picturesque landscape qualities for the benefit of patient health, this review will also be looking at the landscape treatment of the hospital site itself.

Impacts to the CEF NHSC, Federally-Designated Structures, and the Rideau Canal NHSC / WHS

The Hospital committed to respecting and embracing the picturesque qualities of its site, not just out of respect for the surrounding historic properties, but even more so for the health benefits that such a naturalized setting confers on patients, staff, and visitors.

In the spirit of that commitment Heritage Ottawa offers these observations and recommendations:

1. Buffering between the Hospital and the Farm seems to be a modest line of trees, which does not appear to rise to the height or width of an effective separating berm. This has significant impacts to the Dominion Observatory Complex, the Saunders Building, the Nutrition Building (Building #59) and Heritage House (Building #60), all Recognized Federal Heritage Buildings.
Recommendation: create a substantial buffer (berm and plantings) between the SJC site and the CEF (certainly possible on the parking lot of the future Heart Institute) with trees and complementary vegetation that will provide a suitable buffer year-round.

2. There does not appear to be any kind of buffer between the staff parking and the Dominion Observatory Complex. **Recommendation: This area should also have a suitable berm and buffer of vegetation.**

3. Surface Parking: The Hospital originally asserted that there would be no surface parking, but now the Master Site Plan indicates a considerable amount of the site as surface parking. Heritage Ottawa recognizes that some surface parking will be necessary, but its expression (size, design) can be managed in a way that reduces impact to the surrounding CEF, and to the greenspace values of the site itself. **Recommendation: Surface parking could be reduced in area, especially the place-holder lot in the southern area identified for the future Heart Institute. Where there is surface parking, environmentally-friendly surfacing (permeable surfacing) should be used.**

4. Parkade: The Hospital also originally promised no above-ground parking. While only rising to four storeys above grade, the parkade nevertheless presents a prominent elevation towards the Rideau Canal NHSC & WHS. Height is not particularly the issue: rare is the parking garage that elicits gasps of wonder at the brilliance of its design. Gasps of horror, usually. UNESCO has already identified the proposed Hospital as a potential threat to the integrity of the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site. This would provide more reason for scrutiny. **Recommendation: Some kind of redesign and screening for the parkade itself would be appropriate; and consideration of off-site parking and a shuttle service to mitigate impacts to the Hospital site itself, and to mitigate overflow parking to neighbouring residential areas and the CEF NHSC.**

5. The Dominion Observatory Complex may once again become a functioning observatory for educational purposes. **Recommendation: minimizing light pollution from the buildings and from suitable landscape treatment and road lighting so as not interfere with the Observatory Complex** (and also not to impact negatively on the nearby residential neighbourhoods).

6. Bird life contributes to the environmental and heritage value of the site. Situated as it is between the Arboretum and neighbourhoods of mature trees, the Hospital should take care with the surfacing of the buildings, especially the patient towers, so as to minimize bird strikes. **Recommendation: consider minimizing glass surfacing on the patient towers, and adhere to the highest standards of bird-friendly glass wherever it is used.**

7. Planning for a Winter City: Ottawa is certainly lovely in the summer, but apparently it gets cold here. **Recommendation: Images in the site plan presentation should illustrate how the site will function in winter conditions, from both aerial and pedestrian street-level perspectives.** Views across the Canal showing cute children in brightly coloured snowsuits having fun on the Canal are a favourite of Ottawa developers but it doesn't wash.

8. The entrance off Maple Drive is very close to the buildings of the Dominion Observatory Complex, and especially the South Azimuth Building. It is, as the CHIS explains, under threat during construction and then subsequently during day-to-day access to the Hospital by emergency and other vehicles, including slow-moving farm vehicles. **Recommendation: Work with AAFC to revisit and better understand how the hospital site is accessed off of Carling Avenue to mitigate impacts to the CEF, to the Observatory Complex, and to minimize vehicle cut-throughs north-south through the CEF.**

9. Maple Drive and the entrance off of Prince of Wales are not for the exclusive use of emergency vehicles as the Master Site Plan asserts. There are parking areas to the north of the north patient tower and west of the ambulance entrance, and it is apparent that there are no other points of entry to serve these parking areas. **Recommendation: remove this surface parking to reduce the impact of additional vehicles and to increase the buffer zone with the Observatory Complex and the CEF NHSC.**

10. In addition, mitigations of impacts to the heritage buildings as **recommended by the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement should be followed.**

11. A Changing Vision: It has been disappointing that some actions which were initially promised have not been adhered to: no surface parking; integration of the LRT into the Hospital buildings proper; retention of the DARA Tennis Club¹. Bewildering was the lack of consultation with the Hospital's own Community Engagement Group during the very planning stages it was created to assist. We hope that there will not be further retreats from commitments made. **Recommendation: clarity as to who is responsible for the trees, landscape treatment and maintenance of the Hospital's greenspace, and a firm commitment to protect greenspace for the benefit of patients, staff, and visitors.**

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Recommendation:
Given the many, and extensive, impacts to heritage values, it is imperative that the Master Site Plan and its accompanying documentation be considered by the Built Heritage Sub-Committee, looking for their views and recommendations to Planning Committee. This is exactly the kind of project for which the BHSC was created.

already requested a meeting with the Program Manager of Heritage Planning and the Chair of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee (BHSC) to discuss this matter and to urge the City to reconsider the decision

¹ While the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (Table 3) notes the removal of the DARA Tennis Club, not a heritage resource, it does not acknowledge the impacts to heritage of the demolition of the FHBRO-Recognized Sir John Carling Annex.

not to have the CHIS submitted to the BHSC for recommendation, in a forum that allows public input. Information only is pointless.

In Conclusion

At the beginning of this process to build a new Hospital, Heritage Ottawa worked with others, including TOH, to find a win-win scenario in which the CEF retained its core research capacity and heritage values, and TOH found a suitable site for the new Hospital. We are almost there, and with the recommended constructive changes above, as well as the constructive recommendations offered by others, we will retain the heritage places important to Ottawans and to all Canadians, and we will have the world-class hospital that we all deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

David B. Flemming,
Chair, Advocacy Committee, Heritage Ottawa

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