



23 October, 2012

To: Planning Committee, 23 Oct 2012 Re: Proposed Demolition of 273 and 275-279 Sussex Drive
Ref No: ACS2012-PAI-PGM-0217

Thank you, Chair and Councillors for this opportunity to address you.

Heritage Ottawa opposes the proposal by the National Capital Commission to demolish several buildings on Sussex Drive (273 built 1946; 275-79 built 1903-05), because this would cause irreparable damage to the Lowertown West Heritage Conservation District.

City Council designated the Lowertown West a heritage conservation district under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* because, quote (from the 1993 District Study p. 119): "*The history of Lowertown West is the history of generations of Ottawa's working people, both French and English speaking, and the physical record of that social history, represented by both the institutions and the residential buildings, is a major cultural resource for the City of Ottawa.*" This designation means that the City has pledged to protect the heritage character of this area, as defined by its boundaries. This character has been under pressure from development, but it survives. In particular, the row house is significant because it is a Category 3 building which contributes to the character of the area: It "represents a common housing form in Lowertown West....typical of the local development pattern of the time, occupying the whole width of the lot, and its location close to the street line. The Lowertown West HCD study identifies the flat-roofed double house as the most prevalent historic house type in Lowertown West (E.R.A. CHIS, p. 10)." The Cultural Heritage Impact Statement commissioned to come to an understanding of the proposed demolition goes on to state that: "the buildings at 273-279 Sussex Drive contribute to the block pattern that is important to the character of the District. This block is important to the integrity of the northern boundary of the District, which has been undermined by urban renewal schemes. The value of 273-279 Sussex Drive lies in their role in completing the residential block pattern of the block bounded by Sussex Drive, Bolton Street, Parent Avenue, and Cathcart Street. It is also of cultural interest that Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada between 1999 and 2004, lived in 275-279 Sussex Drive for a period of time as a young girl." (p. 11). No where in either the Heritage Conservation District study, or in the Cultural Heritage Impact statement does it say that these buildings have no value.

Furthermore, the demolition of these historic buildings is contrary to Section 2.2.5 of the City's Official Plan, which is to "... Increase [ing] its collaboration with the National Capital Commission ... to promote the conservation and enhancement of Ottawa's cultural heritage resources."

Please don't buy the argument that these are ordinary structures and there are many more like it. That's the point: first this one is let go, and then another, and soon you have to question the credibility of Lowertown West as a heritage conservation district.

Please don't buy the argument that these buildings are just on the boundary and the value of the district is only at its core. The whole of the district is of value, as Council decreed when the HCD was created. Take these buildings down and then the next group of buildings now forms the periphery. And so are they the next ones to go?

Please don't buy the NCC's argument that these buildings don't represent their priorities and aren't important to the Mile of History. This is the City of Ottawa's heritage we are talking about here, our heritage, not what the federal government wants to impose upon us. What else are they going to take away from us? Wasn't LeBreton Flats enough?

Heritage Ottawa supports the Lowertown Community Association's ongoing efforts to work with the NCC and the City to find a creative outcome, which will allow these buildings to survive and to continue to bear witness to our collective past. Please do not eat away at the Lowertown West HCD, and erase part of our great city's history.

Thank you

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