

September 18, 2019

To the Members of the Committee of Adjustment - Re. Château Laurier Addition

I write to oppose the design to the Château Laurier Addition and, therefore, to the minor variances to the Heritage Overlay policy.

I ask you the Committee of Adjustment to oppose the minor variances to the Heritage Overlay policy.

I am an expert with 35 years experience of local, regional, national and international experience. I am the Chair of the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Committee. I am the former NCC Chief of Federal Design Approvals, Heritage and Archeology. I have designed The Vimy Foundation Centennial park on Vimy Ridge in France which was subject to the rigours of the review of the office of the Architecte des Monuments de France. because of its close proximity to the Vimy Memorial.

This addition is neither subordinate, complementary or compatible. But you have heard from many experts. May I suggest that not only experts be considered but for one moment, listen to the thunderous voice of the many from Ottawa and far away who are making clear their expectation that you deliver the public good.

That public good is our shared experience of public urban spaces and streetscapes, created over time and belonging to everyone, placed in your sacred trust, never to be handed over to private interests. **That is our common wealth of views as we walk along the Rideau canal, or on the promontory of Parliament Hill, where we and visitors look to the Chateau Laurier as one of the prestigious calling cards of our City.**

The Chateau Laurier's proposed addition has a negative impact on the significant Cultural Landscapes that surround it and to which it belongs.

The Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (2.6.1) states that: "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural landscapes shall be conserved."

and that “Municipalities are to protect properties with cultural heritage value or interest.”

The Chateau Laurier is a National Historic site, it is a significant built heritage resource, and it is a property that has cultural heritage value and interest. It is surrounded by cultural landscapes that are properties with cultural heritage value and interest. These many cultural landscapes that together may be considered as making up one large ‘contextual’ cultural landscape are identified herein.

The conservation of significant cultural heritage landscapes considers not only the preservation of specific features which make up the landscape but also the relationships of such features inside and outside its boundaries. Consideration is also given to the surrounding context within which a cultural landscape is located.

The Chateau Laurier addition communicates a barrier. Contrary to standard 11 of the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada¹ (which are to be read with this document) applied to the Cultural Landscape, the addition blunts the landscape spatial configuration, instead of ensuring a smooth transition between built form and landscape of Major’s Hill Park. This jarring relationship will be visible at a distance, including from the cultural landscape of Parliament Hill. The addition fails to demonstrate its compatibility with the cultural landscape up close and at a distance.

The North side of the Chateau Laurier is equal to the three others. It is a pavilion in the cultural landscape, visible from all sides It belongs to our shared experience of the rich cultural landscape to which belong the significant heritage resources and cultural landscapes of Parliament Hill, the Ottawa Locks and the Rideau Canal World Heritage site, Major’s Hill Park, Cornelia Oberlander’s award winning Taiga Landscape at the National Gallery of Canada containing an invaluable collection of artwork, the noble Peace and Reconciliation Monument, the ceremonial route including Mackenzie Avenue, Confederation Square National Historic Site,

1 <https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

Nepean Point with Champlain's commemorative statue and Roxy Paine's 100 Foot Line, and the majestic Ottawa River a designated Heritage River², all from or across which the addition will indeed be seen within Ottawa this Capital City or within this Capital region considering the City of Gatineau also. Not to mention that it is seen from aboriginal territories.³

To this ensemble of built heritage resources and cultural landscapes, are the spires of the Chateau Laurier which contribute their extraordinary medieval/renaissance architectural splendour as a landmark. The spires not only belong to the building; they belong to the landscape! They bring communion between architecture and landscape.

This ensemble of cultural landscapes has been captured in art work and most symbolically on the Canadian dollar bill. The image of architecture, defined by spires, set against a scene of rushing water, treed escarpment, open sky, creates an unforgettable tableau that changes with the time of day and the seasons. This 'tableau' triggers human awe and emotion. It is not a purely cerebral intake. The whole picture has to 'sing'.

The term 'Picturesque' has meaning in landscape architecture that goes back to the 18th century. Here, on the shores of the Ottawa River, is one of the most exquisite Picturesque compositions in the world, and the Chateau Laurier is one of the defining elements of the tableau.

The Chateau Laurier addition detracts from the relationship between nature and architecture, and is not compatible with a Picturesque landscape. The addition is too conspicuous in the cultural landscape to be considered subordinate, and is too blunt to be considered 'compatible'.

The addition must achieve a good, compatible fit in this Picturesque landscape where the silhouette of the primary rooflines of the Chateau

2 <https://www.watercanada.net/quebec-designates-ottawa-river-a-heritage-river/>

3 <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/politics-law/algonquin-territory>

Laurier National Historic Site⁴ and of the Parliament Hill National Historic Site, and of the Centre Block, West Block and East Block, and the Supreme Court of Canada National Historic Sites lead the eye to the sky which responds to a human fascination with the sky. This is a character defining element of this particular 'post-card' collection of buildings along the Ottawa south shore of the water's edge.

The design of the addition should have responded to this fundamental heritage character defining element of the building and of the landscape, BUT IT DID NOT. Students at the Carleton University Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism demonstrated at its recent Forum that this could be done in a compatible, contemporary, creative (the 3 Cs !) expression without being slavish to the existing form.

To these areas of cultural landscape concerns is also the matter of view protection.

This paper should be read with the Queen's University document entitled *New Tools for View Controls in Canada's Capital*⁵, which illustrates the Chateau Laurier and with the NCC document entitled *Canada's Capital Views Protection Protecting the Visual Integrity and Symbolic Primacy of Our National Symbols* November 2007⁶.

The Chateau Laurier is situated in the lateral view of Control Viewpoint 6 which establishes background controls west of the canal.

An important direction which the NCC document on Views Protection provides in section 4.6.6 is the following:

"The protection of visual corridors in the foreground areas is closely tied to the specific nature of each development proposal;

4 <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=14549>

5 [https://www.queensu.ca/geographyandplanning/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.dgppww/files/SURP/Project%20Course%20Documents/S824_FinalReport_APPENDIX_Digital_Compromised%20\(7\).pdf](https://www.queensu.ca/geographyandplanning/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.dgppww/files/SURP/Project%20Course%20Documents/S824_FinalReport_APPENDIX_Digital_Compromised%20(7).pdf)

6 http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/ccn-ncc/W93-23-2007-eng.pdf

the full range of critical visual issues cannot be identified and explored in advance of the proposals coming forward. Similarly, the further definitions of visual integrity and symbolic primacy represented by selected benchmarks and other standards, as they relate to foreground views protection, are also developed as each site specific study proceeds”.

It does not appear that a foreground study was satisfactorily completed to take into account all factors discussed today.

I agree with all the speakers who oppose the minor variances to the Heritage Overlay and ask you, the Committee of Adjustment, to unequivocally oppose them so that the cultural landscape of Canada's capital continues to be a source of pride to its citizens and to the nation and that it continues to be known for its picturesque beauty that tourists from all over the world come to admire.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Linda Dicaire

Linda Dicaire BSC BLA MA
Fellow Canadian Society of Landscape Architects,
Member Ontario Association of Landscape Architects
Member International Council of Monuments and Sites / ICOMOS Canada
Chair Rockcliffe Park Heritage Committee
Board Member Carleton University Local Advisory Board Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Landscape Architect of the Vimy Foundation Centennial Park, Vimy Ridge, France, and Designer of the Vimy Bench manufactured by Hauser
Former NCC Chief Federal Design Approvals, Heritage and Archaeology
Recipient of the OALA award for Public practice

Appendix 1 The following are all excerpts from the document:
NCC Canada's capital views protection : protecting the visual integrity and symbolic primacy of our national symbols.

Du Toit Allsopp Hillier et al

November 2007

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/ccn-ncc/W93-23-2007-eng.pdf

1.1 The Value and Care of The National Symbols

The National Symbols – Canada's parliamentary, judicial and cultural buildings and their landscape setting, form a unique and memorable ensemble of great civic, national and international significance. They are part of, and represent, the nation's identity. They belong to the country at large.

The care and protection of the National Symbols is both a national obligation and a civic responsibility. The Federal Government and Municipal Councils are the custodians on behalf of present and future generations of Canadians, whether citizens of Ottawa and Gatineau (Hull) or of other communities across the country.

The value of the National Symbols is economic as well as symbolic. The economic value stems from their attraction to visitors and tourists, and also to private building developers who seek to capitalize on proximity to the places of national significance. In this latter regard, the attraction of the National Symbols also carries with it the seeds of their potential devaluation and erosion. Commercial development, in quest of the income-generating potential of adjacent privately owned sites, can too easily visually overwhelm and diminish their value.

The custodianship of the National Symbols requires an extremely long-term vision. As part of its mandate to safeguard and enhance the national treasures and to instill pride in Canadians in their Capital, the National Capital Commission (NCC), in collaboration with the municipal governments and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), has long been involved in seeking to regulate development in order to preserve the visual integrity of the National Symbols.

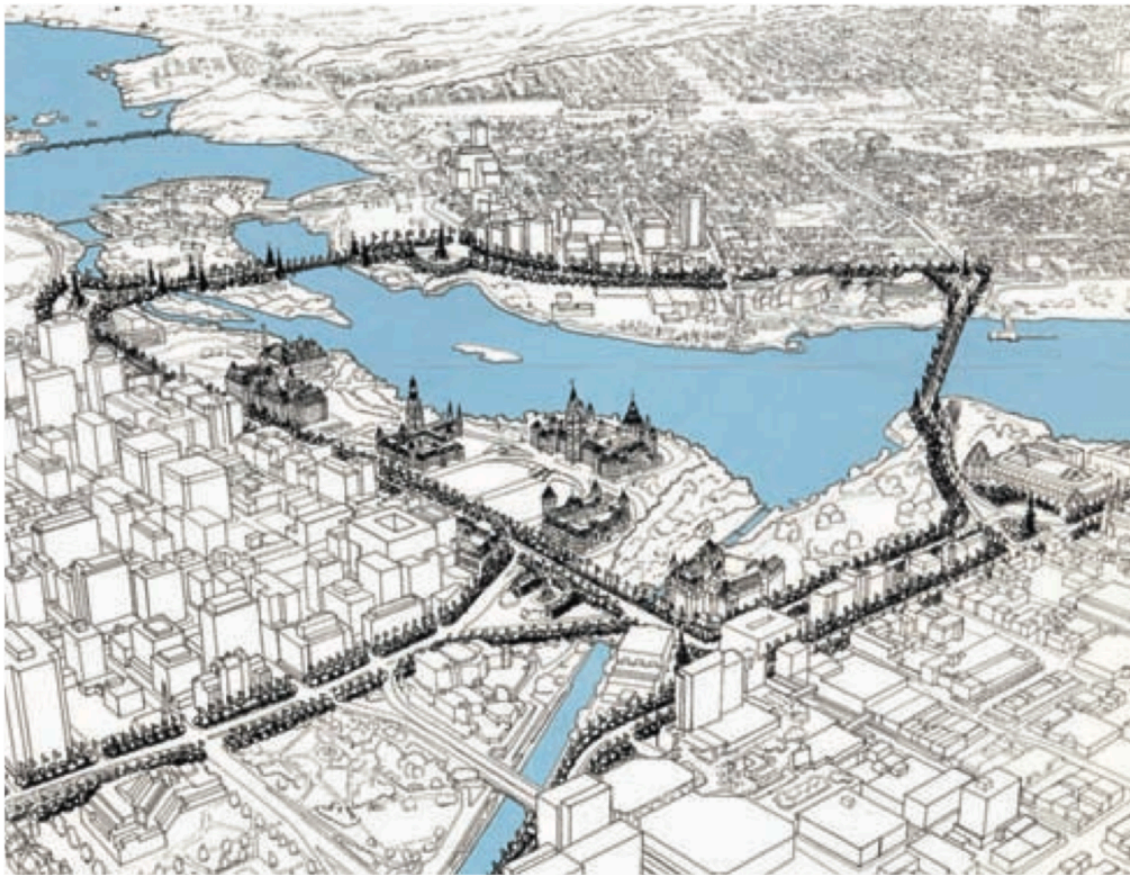


Figure 23: Confederation Boulevard – Conceptual Perspective (NCC, 1985)