



February 2, 2021

To: Members of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee and Planning Committee

Re: Application to Alter the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau Street, a Property Designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

This letter is to express support for the staff recommendation for this application.

Contrary to the proposal that had been approved by City Council in 2019, the revised proposal for an addition to the Château Laurier **is no longer a monolithic boxy structure** that forms a physical barricade that has an alien architectural expression unrelated to the existing building that turns its back to the surrounding romantic setting. The revised proposal **is now a compatible contemporary addition** to the Château Laurier, a National Historic Site. The revised design's, **shape and form, pattern and rhythm, materiality and relationship to the setting** achieve a respect for the heritage values of the National Historic Site as expressed in detail below.

Shape and Form

The addition now shaped into two pavilions, provides a multiplane dynamic relief, accentuates the asymmetry of the hotel, and extends the East and West wings of the existing building, prominent characteristics of the Château.

The slenderer form of the pavilions which align with the height of the existing wings of the building, reinforce the vertical thrust of the building, a significant feature of the Châteauesque Style architecture.

The low horizontal shaped transparent glass connection between the two pavilions opens-up the courtyard, a distinctive attribute of the Château.

The roof massing echoes the mass of the existing roof, reinforcing the prominence of the roofline.

The stepped-back roof shape suggests, in a contemporary abstract manner, the idea of an angle-roof, which complements the skyward reaching roofline, fundamental to the picturesque qualities of the Château.

Pattern and Rhythm

The addition reinterprets, in a contemporary architectural expression, the **tri-partite pattern** of the existing building – **base, mid-section and roof** – a dominant character defining element of the existing architecture.

The **addition's base**, expressed by a colonnade on the ground floor, extends the rhythmic pattern and aligns with the prominent base of the existing building, emphasising, on all sides, the public spaces. On the West façade, the rhythm of the window openings to solid stone reinforces the pattern of the original train tunnel along the Rideau Canal.

The **addition's mid-section** takes cues from the existing building to convey, in a modern mathematical approach, the solid to void (stone to window) proportions of the existing building, a key character defining component of the hotel. The floor levels of the new addition visibly align with the rhythm of the existing hotel's floor levels respecting the scale of the architectural fabric adding animation to the composition.

The crenelated pattern of the **addition's roof**, drawn from – in an abstract manner – the intricate dormer pattern of the existing roof, adds richness to the roofline, a trait of the Château.

Materiality

The envelop of the addition is predominantly made of Indiana limestone complementing the primary exterior material of the Château.

The addition's roof made largely of copper/bronze harmonizes with the copper roofs of the Château. The material will, with time, develop a patina that will blend-in with the weathered copper roofs of the existing Château.

Relationship to Setting

The courtyard of the Château Laurier is now open to views revealing the picturesque silhouette and strengthening the important relationship to the romantic landscape of Major Hills Park. The base colonnade and the glass walkway on the North façade create transparency and openness enhancing the visual connections to and from Major Hill's park.

The relationship to the Rideau Canal is physically strengthened with pedestrian connection to the terraces and visually reinforced with the large open glass openings in the ground floor colonnade.

The revised addition now offers significant sights of the picturesque Château from the surrounding setting's many viewpoints: from the Québec shore of the Ottawa river; from the Canadian Museum of History; from Parliament Hill; from the National Gallery of Canada; from Major Hill's Park; from the Rideau Canal; from Confederation Boulevard; from Confederation Square; from the National Art Center; from the Byward Market and;

from properties along the street that border the Château Laurier. These views form part the heritage values.

In my professional opinion, based on the reasons outlined above, the latest proposal for a contemporary addition to the Château Laurier now meets Standard 11 of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* which states that *when creating any new additions to an historic place, a) conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements and, b) make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place.*



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