

A Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

267 O'Connor Street, Ottawa



Prepared For: Taggart (O'Connor) Corporation
By: Commonwealth Historic Resource Management
October 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) has been requested by the City of Ottawa. The purpose of the CHIS is to identify the cultural heritage resources and values that may be impacted by the phased construction of two high-rise towers at 267 O’Connor Street. The proposed development is located in the Centretown Heritage Conservation District (CHCD), which was designated by the City of Ottawa in 1997 under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) (By-law 269-97).

This CHIS follows the content outline recommended by the City of Ottawa for Cultural Heritage Impact Statements. The following documents were used in the preparation of this report:

Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act;
Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study, 1996-1997;
Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP), Urban Strategies Inc., Delcan, ERA Architects, City of Ottawa. May 2013;
Centretown Secondary Plan, Official Plan, City of Ottawa;
Heritage Survey and Evaluation Forms: 270 MacLaren St.; 307 and 330 Gilmour Street;
Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, Second Edition, 2010;
Pre-Application Consultation Meeting Notes, PC2020-0131, Tuesday June 30, 2020; and
Plans, and rendered perspective views. Hobin Architecture August 2020.

Pre-consultation Summary of Heritage Comments (MacKenzie Kimm)

- *Previous comments from heritage staff still apply*
- *Under the Ontario Heritage Act, application for new construction is required.*
- *The Centretown HCD update is in progress*
- *Transition will be a component to consider in the design along with materiality.*

Owner and Contact Information

Address: 267 O’Connor Street, Ottawa, Ontario

Owner: Taggart (O’Connor) Corporation

Contact:

Emily McGirr | Development Coordinator

Taggart Realty Management

<https://www.taggart.ca/>

1.2 Site Location, Current Conditions and Introduction to Development Site

The property is located within the Centretown Heritage Conservation District. The property runs between MacLaren Street to the north, Gilmour Street to the south, with frontage on O’Connor Street to the west. The land abuts 270 MacLaren Street and the double lot at 307 Gilmour Street to the east. The site currently has a six storey non-contributing office building on the north-west corner with asphalt surface parking to the south and east.

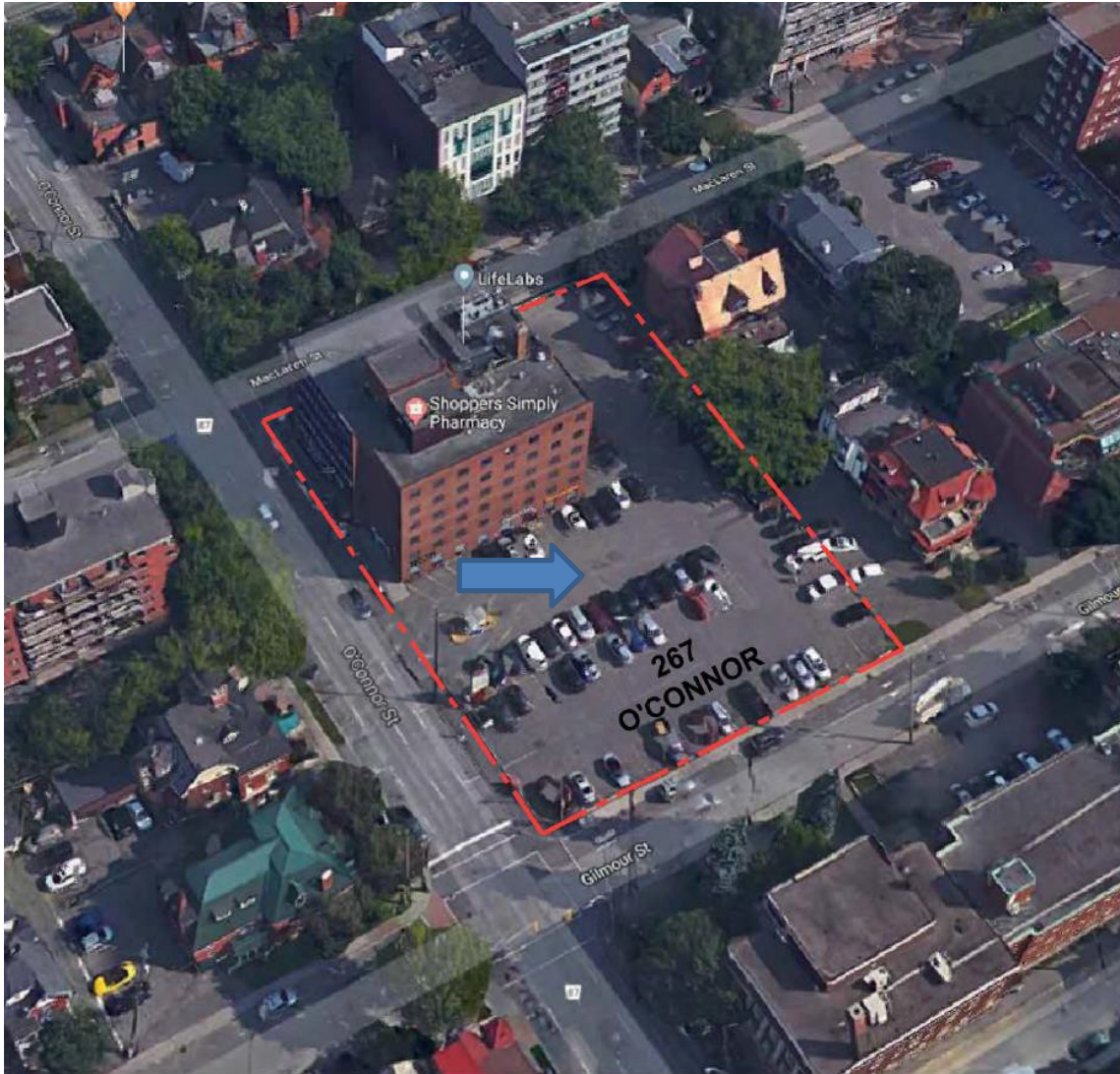


Figure 1: Aerial view illustrating the built context within the block and adjacent to the development site. Site arrowed. Source: Google Earth

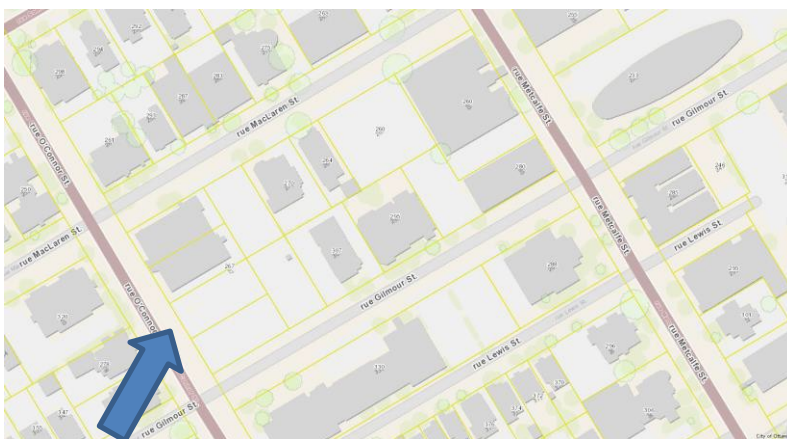


Figure 2: Block plan illustrating the built context surrounding the development site Source: Geoottawa

1.3 Built Heritage Context and Street Characteristics (Neighbourhood Character)

MacLaren Street extending from O’Connor to Metcalfe was developed in the last quarter of the 19th century with detached residences. The built form on the north side of MacLaren consists of three brick clad two-and- one-half storey Victorian style detached residences within the block, two at the corner of O’Connor (261) and MacLaren (293) across from the development site and a third at 275 MacLaren. The remaining lots in the block (287, 293, and 263 MacLaren) were redeveloped beginning in the mid-1950’s with mid-rise office and apartment buildings.

Two Victorian Style detached residences remain on the south side of MacLaren, one adjacent to the development site at 270 MacLaren and another at 264 MacLaren. The lots within the development site were redeveloped in the mid-1950 with the six-storey office building on the site, and the lot at 260 MacLaren is a surface parking lot.

The north side of Gilmour Street was redeveloped beginning in the mid-1950s. One two-and-one-half half storey Spanish Revival Style brick clad detached residence remains within the block (307 Gilmour) adjacent to the development site. Further to the east, is a recent brick clad mid-rise residential building. The south side of Gilmour is dominated by the three-storey brick clad Ottawa Board of Education building constructed circa 1923-1948.

The built form on the west side of O’Connor Street across from the development site consists of two-and-one-half storey brick clad detached residences (278 and 290) typical of the first decade of the 20th century, and a more recent 6-storey apartment building at 320 O’Connor.

Both MacLaren and Gilmour Streets have similar residential street characteristics; buildings are set back uniformly from the street with soft landscape consisting of a mix of turf, shrubs, and trees intermixed with hard landscape surfaces in the front yards. The area around the development site has a residential character even though many of the properties are shifting to either office or service uses. As figure 3 illustrates there are no green space/parks in the vicinity.



Figure 3: Aerial map of this section of Centretown showing the location of neighbourhood parks, which emphasizes the lack of green space and community parks. The Museum of Nature, five blocks south is one of the larger community accessible grounds associated with a landmark.

The heritage residential character within the block bound by O’Connor, MacLaren, Gilmour, and Metcalfe Streets featuring low scale residential development has been eroded beginning in the mid-1950s

continuing through to today. Five heritage buildings on the north and south side of MacLaren remain four of which are near the development site. Two heritage buildings remain on Gilmour both adjacent to the development site.

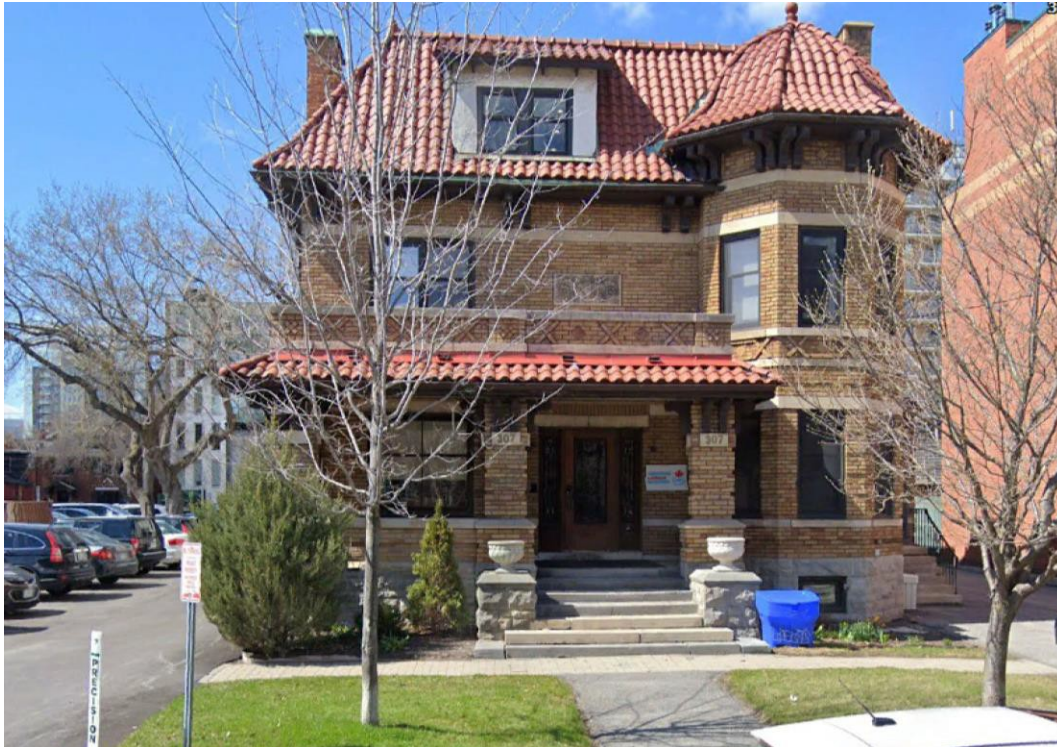


Figure 4: 307 Gilmour Street is separated by a surface parking lot from the south-east corner of the development site. The soft landscape is limited to the front yard of the property with the side yard treated as an extension of the parking lot on the development site. Source: Google Earth



Figure 5: Contextual streetscape view of the development site (right) and an adjacent property at 270 MacLaren Street. Note the hard and soft landscape treatment. Source: Google Earth



Figure 6: Contextual streetscape view of the side yard of 261 O'Connor Street to the north of the development site. Source: Google Earth

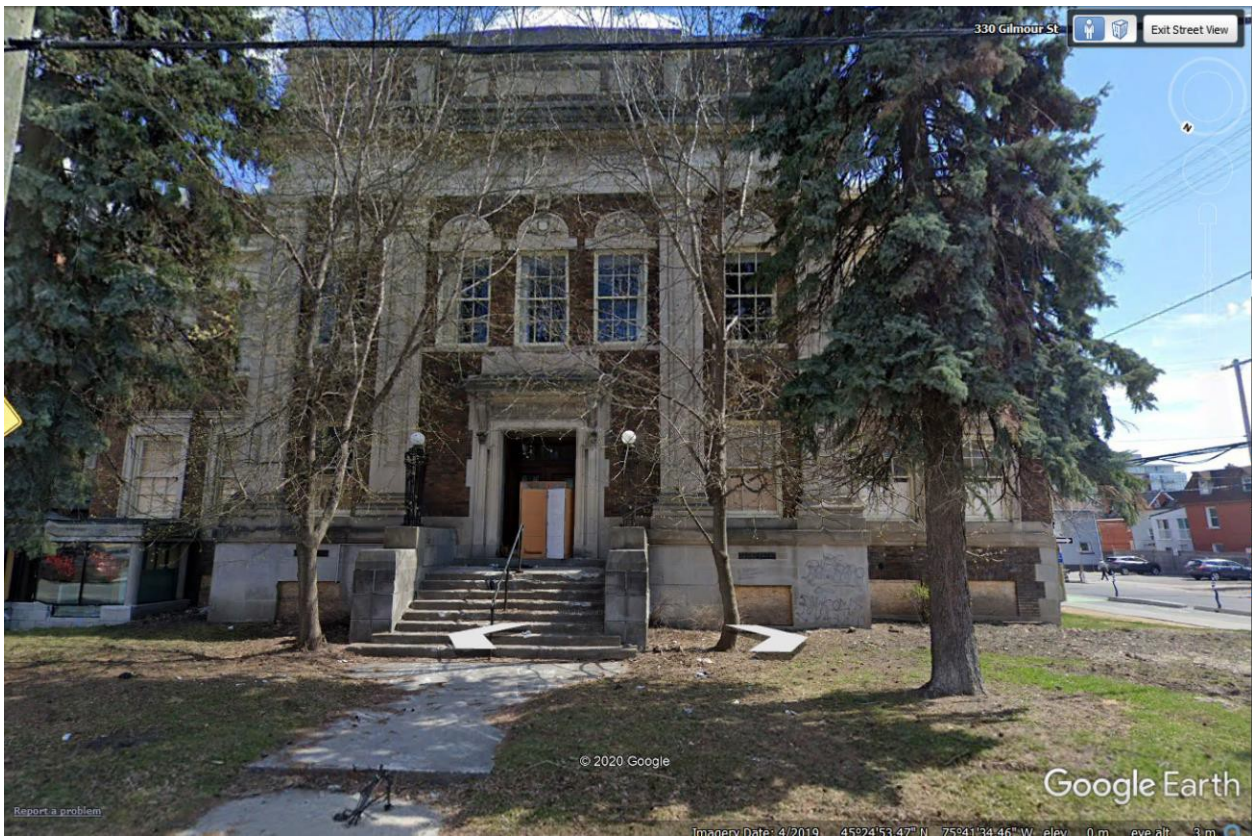


Figure 7: Contextual streetscape view of 330 Gilmour Street to the south of the development site. Source: Google Earth



Figure 8: Contextual streetscape view of the southern portion of the development site. The Professional Institute of the Public Service building in the background is considered a local landmark building. Source: Google Earth

1.4 Relevant Information from Council Approved Documents

Official Plan

The City of Ottawa includes provisions for Cultural Heritage Resources in Section 4.6 of the Official Plan. Section 4.6.1 addresses the requirements for a CHIS when development has the potential to affect heritage resources contained within the development site that are designated under Parts IV and V of the OHA.

Section 60 Heritage Overlay

The development site contains a six-storey office building constructed circa 1955 described as a non-contributing building within the context of the CHCD.

Centretown Secondary Plan

See the planning rationale for relevant information.
Zoning, 9 storey height, and specified uses.

Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study

The development site is within the boundaries of the Centretown HCD, which was designated under Part V of the OHA By-law 269-97. The Centretown HCD Study prepared 23 years ago is currently under review; A heritage conservation district plan as defined in the OHA has yet to be developed.

Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP), 2013

The CDP provides guidance for the integration of heritage resources into new infill development. See the planning rationale for relevant information.

2.0 HERITAGE RESOURCE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

2.1 Neighbourhood History

The history of Centretown is outlined in detail in the 1997 Heritage Conservation District Study.

The block was developed in the last quarter of the 19th century as a residential subdivision with two and one-half storey detached residences set on single and double lots. The lots within the development site fronted onto O’Connor a residential high street at the time, and onto MaLaren and Gilmour Streets.

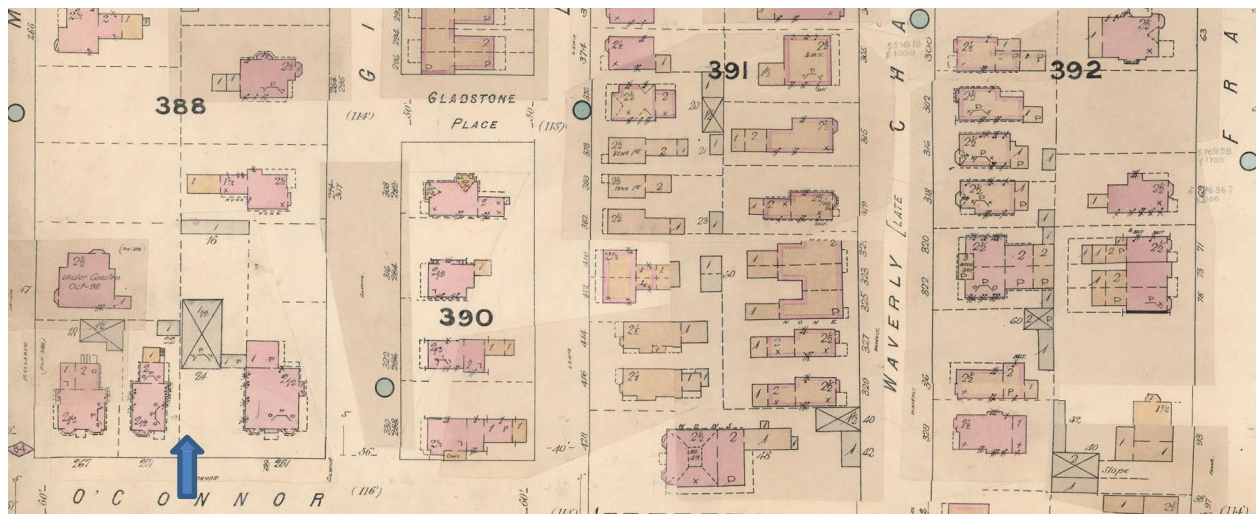


Figure 9: 1888 Fire Insurance Plan Volume 1 Sheet 54 Detail. The plan illustrates the street and block layout and built form at the time within the block. Development site is arrowed. Source: Archives Canada

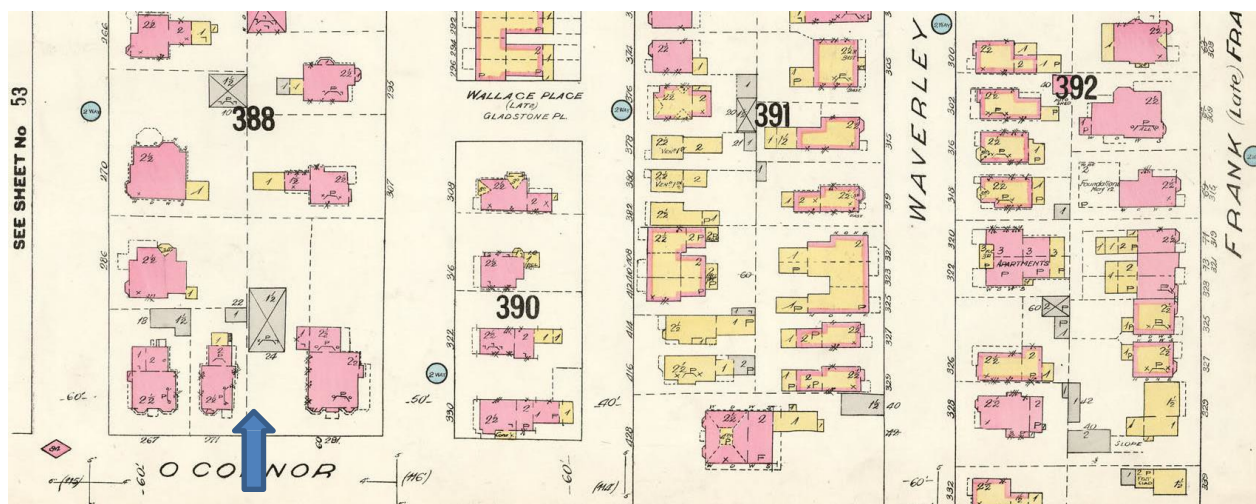


Figure 10: May 1912 Fire Insurance Plan Volume 1 Sheet 54 Detail. The plan illustrates the built context and block and street layout. Note the two heritage buildings to the east of the development site. (arrowed). Source: Archives Canada



Figure 11: 1965 Aerial view of the development site with the office building and surface parking. Source: Geotowa

2.2 Development Site History

The development site includes six lots, four fronting onto O’Connor, and one each on Gilmour and MacLaren Streets that were laid out in the last quarter of the 19th century and developed with two and three storey brick clad detached residences typical of the period. The buildings that were on the lots are illustrated on the 1912 Fire Insurance Plan (Figure 9). They were demolished circa 1958, and the existing six-storey office building constructed and surface parking installed (Figure 10).



Figure 12: View of the development site from O’Connor and Gilmour Streets looking north. Source: Google

3.0 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

The following Statement of Cultural Heritage Value identifies the primary heritage values and attributes of the HCD. Source: Historic Places

3.1 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District is a primarily residential area, with some commercial corridors, within downtown Ottawa. Centretown is a large area in the centre of Ottawa, south of Parliament Hill, to the north of the Queensway corridor and to the west of the Rideau Canal. Since its development, Centretown has served as a residential community serving the government activities of Uppertown and has been home to many of the civil servants and government ministers of Parliament Hill. The buildings in the district were mainly constructed between the 1880s and the 1930s, and the original low to medium residential scale is relatively intact throughout the area.

The District was designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act by the City of Ottawa in 1997 (By-law 269-97).

HERITAGE VALUE

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District is closely associated with the governmental character of Uppertown to the north. The Centretown developed as a desirable neighbourhood for the transient population of government workers and ministers. Centretown still contains a large variety of intact historic streetscapes, reflecting the diverse nature of development that occurred in the area in order to serve the varied population. Throughout its development, the area reflected national politics and priorities of the time.

Centretown dates from the 1880-1940 period. This was a period of mature design and craftsmanship in the Ottawa area, related to the new prosperity of the expanding national capital and the availability of excellent building materials such as smooth face brick of Rideau red clay, a good selection of sandstones and limestones, a full range of milled architectural wood products, and decorative components in terra cotta, wrought iron and pressed metal.

While most buildings retain their residential use, many others have been converted for use as professional offices, or small retail or commercial establishments. The most common residential building type is the hip-roofed single family home, with a projecting gabled bay on an asymmetrical façade. Along with flat roofed, medium-density apartment buildings, it also played a strong role in defining the character of the District. In addition, a few commercial corridors, most notably Bank Street, run through the area while still reflecting the low scale and architectural character of the rest of the district.

Centretown's landscape is unified by historical circumstance. Both Stewart and the By Estate opened for development in the mid 1870s and developed under consistent pressures. Together they constituted the entire area within the boundaries of Centretown. The idea of a separate residential neighbourhood close to downtown was relatively rare, although the concept became increasingly popular in Canadian cities as the nineteenth century ended. Along with residential Uppertown, Centretown has provided walk-to-work accommodation for Parliament Hill and nearby government offices. As part of the residential quarter of official Ottawa, Centretown was a sensitive mirror of national politics.

Centretown is the surviving residential community and informal meeting ground associated with Parliament Hill. Its residents have had an immense impact upon the development of Canada as a nation.

Source: Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study, winter 1996-1997, City of Ottawa.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Character defining elements that contribute to the heritage value of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District include: * Elements specifically applicable to the O'Connor Street site

- The heritage residential character of the district, featuring low to medium scale development;
- The original grid block layout and plan;
- Relatively intact residential streetscapes;
- Predominant use of Rideau red clay decorative brick veneer with trim details in stone, wood and pressed metal;
- Its varied building types and styles due to the diverse populations of the area;
- It's single-family homes executed in a vernacular Queen Anne style, with substantial wood verandas and elaborate trim, varying in size;
- Its low-rise apartment buildings with similar detailing to single-family dwellings but featuring horizontal layering and flat roofs;
- Its commercial corridor on Bank Street, consisting of low-rise commercial and mixed-use buildings set close to the street;
- Its development during a significant period in the growth of Ottawa as the government centre of Canada;
- Its connection with Uppertown and the governmental activities which occur there;
- Its associations with many people and institutions of national prominence who have played an important role in shaping Canada; and,
- Its historical role as a meeting place for governmental and community groups, clubs and organizations.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal is to construct two residential high-rise towers containing four levels of below grade parking accessed from Gilmour Street. The development includes a 28-storey south tower containing 264 units that will be completed in Phase 1, and a 30-storey north tower containing 283 units that will be completed in Phase 2. The two towers are set on three-storey brick clad podiums separated by a landscaped circulation area, activity spaces, and pocket park. Limited retail and or amenity uses are proposed in both towers on the ground floors of the podiums. A design brief can be found at Appendix A.

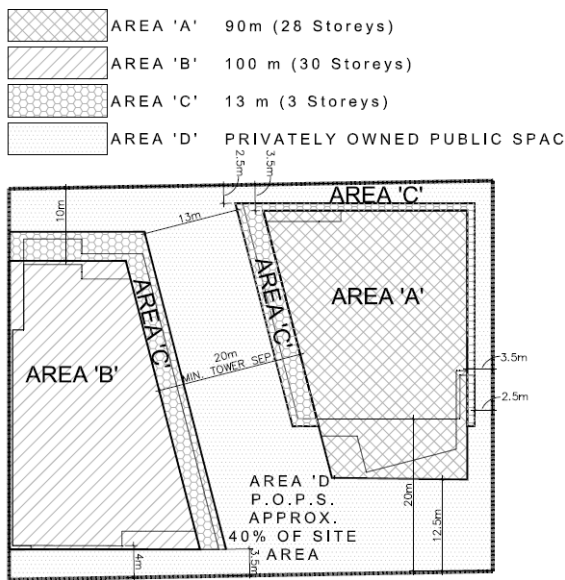


Figure 13: The plan illustrates the podium area, the towers setbacks and heights and separation from the lot lines. Source: Hobin Architecture 2020.

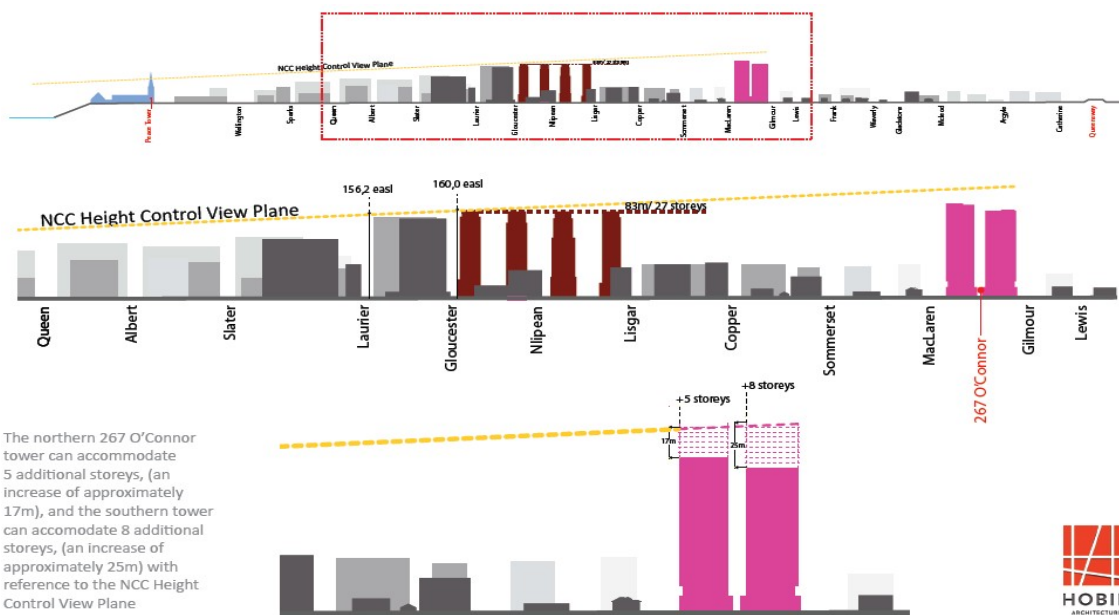


Figure 14: The NCC Height Control View Planes as they apply to 267 O’Connor Street. The north-south cross section illustrates the overall height approach (top) and suggested building height for each of the character areas. The proposed heights of the two towers are well below the current view plane approvals. Source Hobin architecture 2020

In accordance with the Federal Government Height Regulations “If proponents of particular development applications within Centretown wish to pursue building heights up to the maximum identified in this CDP, the specifics of these requests must be reviewed and approved in the context of the "Ottawa Views" study, which was prepared for the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa, and, which addresses the “Visual Integrity and Symbolic Primacy of the Parliament Buildings and other National Symbols”, as implemented by the City of Ottawa Official Plan and the City of Ottawa Comprehensive Zoning By-law; and shall also adhere to any design guidelines.



Figure 15: Throughout the neighbourhood, the urban fabric is predominantly brick with a mix of three and four storey flat roof buildings and earlier two and half to three storey late Victorian residential forms.

BUILDING ARE GROUNDED WITH STRONG MASONRY PODIUMS AND THE HIGH-RISE MASSES ARE INTENDED TO FEEL LIGHT AND DYNAMIC. MATERIALS THAT SUIT THIS CONCEPT WILL BE USED TO COMPLIMENT THIS CONCEPT



BUILT FORM



Figure 16: The collage of images provides context for the two towers and illustrates design inspiration.

Materiality and Design

The three-storey podium proposes a masonry and glass edge condition at grade. The generous glazing will provide an open and engaging atmosphere at street level which supports strong notions of retail visibility and animated uses. Red masonry echoes the nearby heritage buildings which served as inspiration when considering materiality and form. The three-storey podiums are intended to ground the new development and provide context.

A distinct material change and setback between the masonry podium and the glazed surfaces of the upper portions of the two towers helps position the building with base middle and top. The upper floors will be composed of lighter materials which will complement the height and massing of the towers. A two-storey grid will help to visually break up the mass. The treatment is a simple consistent grid that is animated by adjusting the thickness of the piers and panels. Offsetting the tower forms from one another helped to reduce the overlapping of views which in turn increases sun exposure and maximizes views. In addition, private roof terraces will be available in both phases.



Figure 17: A view of the South tower. The materials for the upper part of the buildings are intended to be light. There is a break between the masonry podium and the glazed surfaces of the upper portions of the two towers. Source: Hobin Architects 2020.

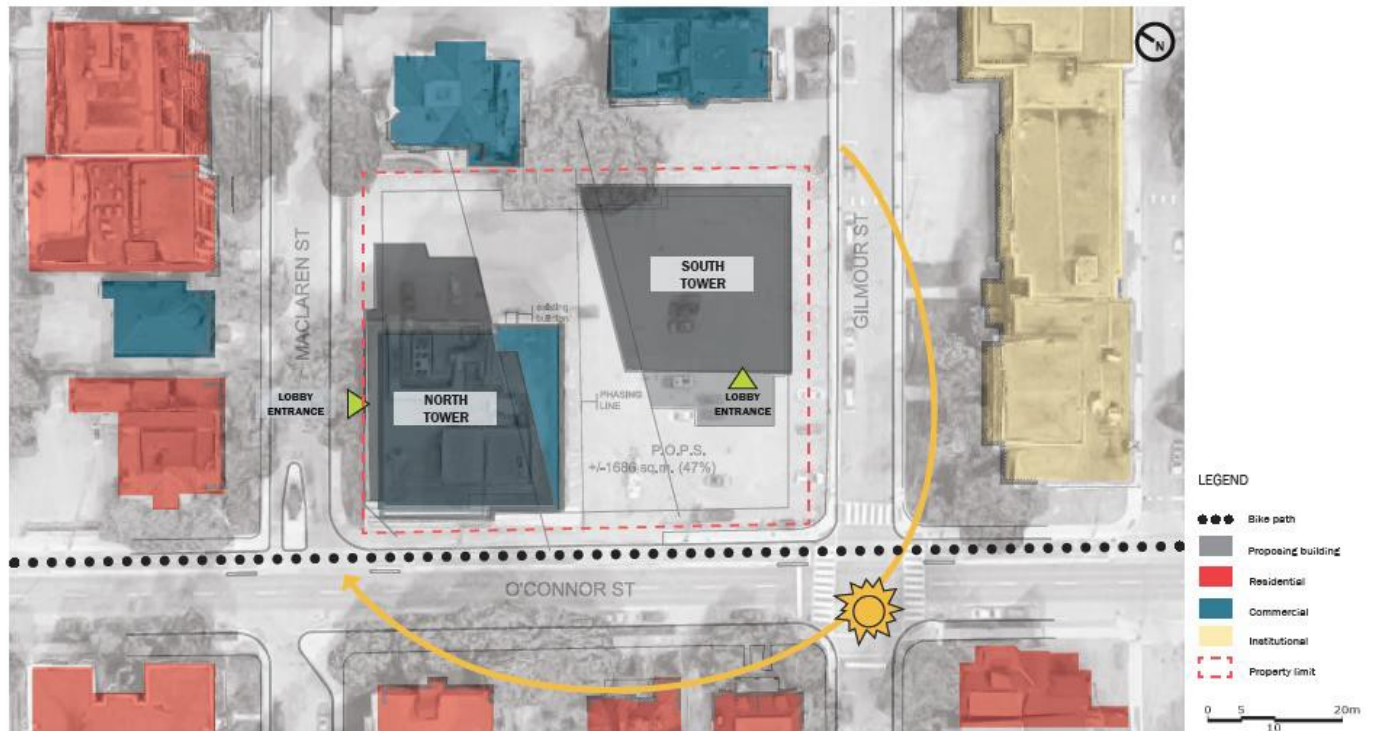


Figure 18: The placement of the two towers on the lot takes advantage of the southern exposure. Both towers are positioned proud of the setback of existing heritage buildings along MacLaren and Gilmour Streets. Source: *Projet Paysage 2020*.



Figure 19: Site plan of the proposed development illustrating the proposed landscape treatment and circulation pattern within the site. Source: *Projet Paysage 2020*.



Figure 20 and 21: Views of the public space. Using a balance of hard and soft landscaping, the POPS will feature three distinctly programmed areas; the main project plaza; an outdoor amenity zone; and the ‘pocket’ park. Source *Projet Paysage*.





Figure 22: Perspective view from Maclaren illustrating the podium height and its relationship to adjacent two and three storey heritage properties. Rideau red clay decorative brick veneer with trim details in stone are character-defining features of the CHD. Source: Hobin Architecture 2020

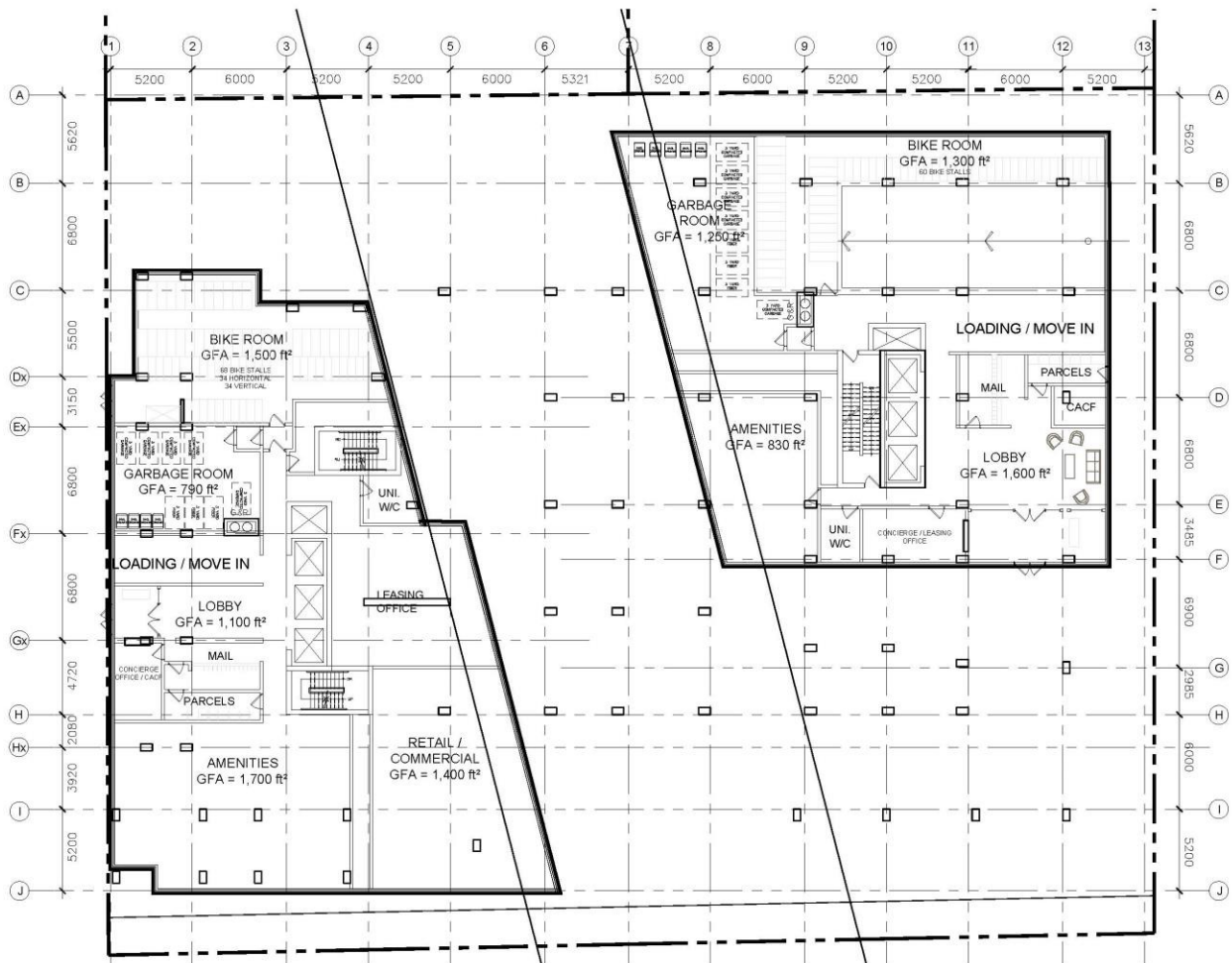


Figure 23: Ground floor plans of the two towers illustrating garage access from Gilmour Street, and a proposed retail / commercial use in the north tower fronting onto O'Connor Street. Source: Hobin Architecture July 2020.



Figure 24: Rendered perspective view looking east from O'Connor Street illustrating the materiality of the storey podiums, the proposed landscaping and internal circulation. Source: Hobin Architecture August 2020.

5.0 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This section specifically addresses the impacts of the development proposal on the cultural heritage values of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District (CHCD). The guidelines contained in Section 6.5 of the Centretown CDP, and Section VII 5.5 of the Centretown Heritage Conservation Study are used to assess the impacts. The heritage attributes and character-defining features of the CHCD are itemized in Section 3.0.

5.1 Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study Guidelines Section VII 5.5

A heritage conservation district Plan as defined in the Ontario Heritage Act has not been prepared for the CHCD. The city is presently preparing a Heritage Conservation District Plan as defined in the 2005 changes to the Ontario Heritage Act to accompany the 1997 HCD Study. Prior to the update of the act demolition could be postponed for a 60 day period not blocked. Over the years, the lack of a plan has been addressed through the Heritage Overlay, as well as guidelines contained in the CCDP.

5.2 Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP)

The Centretown CDP came out strongly in favor of reviewing the Centretown HCD, including the boundaries and categorization of heritage resources (Group 1, 2, 3, and 4). As stated in the CDP, a *“finer grain approach would more clearly define where the specific intact groupings of heritage buildings are on a street by street basis. This street-by-street approach would also allow for infill development based on their relationship to their immediate context and the character of the street.”*

The Residential designation applies to areas where significant change is not anticipated. Proposals for significant intensification are not encouraged in Residential Areas. Infill may be considered if it supports an appropriate and compatible height, massing and scale with the surrounding context. The prevailing building type will be the predominant built form of development.

Discussion: The prevailing building type within and adjacent to the block is a mix of two to three storey detached heritage residences with mid-rise infill development that occurred beginning in the mid 1950s. More recent development includes mid-rise buildings not exceeding six storeys.

Section 6.2

Section 6.4.3 Mid-Rise Mainstreet Infill Typologies Transition

Sections 6.4.3 Mid-Rise Integration, 6.4.4 Built Form Guidelines High Rise and 6.5 Heritage Approach of the CDP contains heritage policies regarding integration and context. An assessment of how the proposed development responds to the general guidelines contained in Sections 6.4.3 Mid-Rise Infill Typologies Transition, 6.4.4 High Rise Infill, and Section 6.5 Heritage Approach follows. *Guidelines* are in italic.

i. Ground floor should be level with the sidewalk and lined with active street-related retail/commercial uses.

Discussion: The guideline applies to mainstreet infill typologies. The design and uses need further development. Ground floor retail and commercial uses are being proposed fronting onto O’Connor Street.

ii. Ground floor façades should be transparent and articulated.

Discussion: The guideline applies to mainstreet infill typologies. The design needs further development.

iii. Multiple fine-grained retail units are encouraged.

Discussion: The present plan includes one retail unit facing onto O’Connor. This is suitable for the context. The site is located between Bank & Elgin Streets which are higher-intensity retail streets.

iv. The building should have a grained rhythm street frontage to reflect the adjacent building and character of the mainstreet.

Discussion: The design needs further development.

v. Lobbies fronting onto a mainstreet should be limited in width in order to maximize retail uses.

Discussion: Guideline applies to mainstreet infill typologies. The two lobbies are oriented to Gilmour and MacLaren and are narrow. O’Connor has a bike lane and is less conducive to situating lobbies on this street.

vii. Buildings should be built to the adjacent property lines and leave no gaps in the street wall. A front and side setback will still be required for buildings over 4 storeys, as per the general mid-rise guidelines.

Discussion: The guideline applies to mainstreet infill typologies.

viii. Existing group 1 and 2 heritage buildings must be integrated in the development.

Discussion: There are no contributing buildings within the development site.

ix. The lower portions of the building should be respectful of the context and any adjacent heritage elements. This can include, but is not limited to, building setbacks, cornice lines, façade horizontal and vertical articulations, opening sizes, proportions and rhythms, and building materials.

Discussion: The podium design needs further development. Parts of the podium could be more residential in character and pick up cornice lines, horizontal and vertical articulations, and opening sizes that are characteristic of adjacent properties.

x. Taller elements should be clearly differentiated from the building base and should be stepped back at least 3m from the face of the podium facing the mainstreet after the 4th storey. Building recess and material changes can also be considered in addition to the building setback.

Discussion: The design needs further development.

Section 6.4.4 High-Rise - Podium

The general mid-rise guidelines generally apply to the podium section of a tall building. Additional guidelines include:

i. The podium height shall not exceed 6 storeys. In residential development, ground-oriented units such as townhouses or townhouse-type units that wrap around a podium are the preferred approach for defining the base and integrating with existing smaller scale development.

Discussion: The design needs further development to determine if ground floor residential is viable.

ii. The general mid-rise transition guidelines (section 6.6.3 Mainstreet Mid-Rise Infill) should apply to the podium section of a tall building.

Discussion: See Section 6.6.3.

iii. The podium street facade(s) should be well articulated and large blank areas or walls are to be avoided.

Discussion: The street façade has a strong commercial rhythm of openings to solid with no blank areas. The design needs further development.

Top

i. The top portion of a tower or the last few storeys, should contribute to the city skyline with a difference in articulation or special architectural treatment.

Discussion: This is intended as a landmark development with a design that contributes to the city skyline.

ii. Mechanical penthouses should be architecturally integrated in a manner, which is consistent with the overall character of the tower.

Heritage Integration

When integrating a heritage structure into a new infill building, the following guidelines apply:

- New development should respect and be sensitively integrated with the heritage building and context and consistent with existing heritage plans and policies. It should be distinguishable and of sympathetic contemporary design, which does not detract from or overpower the original building.*

Discussion: There are no heritage buildings that are being integrated into the development. The existing six-storey office building is a non-contributing building within the context of the CHCD.

- New development should be respectful of key heritage elements. This can include, but is not limited to building setbacks, cornice lines, façade horizontal and vertical articulations, opening sizes, proportion and rhythm, and building materials. New development should maintain a cornice line consistent with the existing heritage building through appropriate stepback(s).*

Discussion: There are no heritage buildings that are being integrated into the development. The requirements for setbacks for the two buildings next to the property will be addressed as the design evolves.

- Where heritage buildings are low scaled, the podium of a new building will respect and reflect the urban grain and scale, visual relationships, and materials of the surrounding historic building(s). Compatible building materials should be used. Creative use of materials is encouraged.*

Discussion: The design needs further development. The predominant materials of adjacent heritage buildings on MacLaren are a red brick with limestone foundations and lintel and sill detailing. The predominant materials on Gilmour are brick and limestone finishes.

Heritage Context

When adding a new building or additions to existing buildings on a site adjacent to a heritage building or streetscape, the following guidelines shall apply:

- *use compatible materials.*

Discussion: The podium is clad in a red brick that is compatible with adjacent heritage buildings.

- *Use setbacks, front and side, to appropriately transition with adjacent building heights.*

Discussion: The settings for heritage buildings next to the development site have been enhanced. The proposed open space provides separation from the towers and creates a visually rich foreground for the buildings.



Figure 23: the view looking south illustrates the relationship between the two neighbouring heritage buildings. On MacLaren Street, the separation distance of 12m is enhanced with the setback of the tower. On Gilmour Street, the 35m side yard long with a minimal separation from the development site. Source: Hobin Architecture October 2020.

- *Minimize the use and height of blank walls.*

Discussion: The design needs further development, but the intent is to minimize blank walls.

- *Inform new development with adjacent building ground floor heights and heritage character to enhance the public realm.*

Discussion: The podiums are respectful of adjacent building height using the podium, and a stepped back and material change at the tower. Along MacLaren and Gilmour Streets, the design of the podium could be more residential in character.

- *Modulate façades with vertical breaks and setbacks in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding heritage structures.*

Discussion: The podium could reflect the original lot pattern on both MacLaren and Gilmour Streets.

6.2 Federal Government Height Regulation

Granting Additional Height:

Any development proposal accessing additional height beyond the as-of-right must prove that the site is appropriate for a tall building and that the design of the building is compatible with the area’s context and meets the design standards for tall buildings. As a planning control, these tests should be undertaken as part of the City’s rezoning process. Final heights must reflect the intentions of the CDP with regard to general building heights and location of tall buildings.

In addition, increases in height and density in excess of the existing zoning deemed suitable through a rezoning process may be considered by the City under Section 37 of the Planning Act as well as the Tall Building Landmark provisions described above. Section 37 secures identified community benefits when permitting such increases in height and/or density (refer to Section 7.2 for additional details on Section

37). Tall Landmark Building provisions to ensure that any proposed taller buildings are true civic or national landmarks that make both significant and exceptional contributions to the public realm when permitting such increases in height and/or density (refer to Section 7.2 for additional details). **Discussion:** The design of the building is compatible with the area’s context. The use of traditional red brick for the podium, its height and the setback treatment between it and the body of the tower help ground the development. The proposed landscape in terms of both size and quality will benefit the community. Within this part of Centretown, there is a need for publicly accessible green space.



Figure 24: Traditional red brick for the podium, its height and the setback treatment between it and the body of the tower help ground the development. Source Hobin Architecture August 2020.

5.3 Development Impacts

Positive impacts of the proposed development on the cultural heritage values of the Centretown HCD include:

- The proposed massing and building heights correlate to the Centertown Community Design Plan, which designates 267 O’Connor as a landmark site.
- The height of the two towers is respectful of the NCC view plane.
- Introducing a landmark is a welcomed exercise in town planning that could benefit Centretown’s maturing image.
- The proposed development incorporates a large, privately owned public space (POPS) at the corner of O’Connor and Gilmour that will occupy roughly 40% of the site while providing a thoughtfully programmed landscape space for public enjoyment.

- Access to new sources of funds to allow for the creation of a landscaped publicly accessible space.
- This part of Centretown will benefit from the introduction of a well landscaped open space. The cross-site access and the location of a POPS on the south west corner across the street from the school creates a sunny well positioned open space.
- The two heritage buildings next to the site will have enhanced settings as part of the park’s green space.
- The height of the podium and the use of Rideau red brick integrates nicely with the surrounding residential stock and helps establish a comfortable pedestrian realm.

Adverse impacts of the proposed development include:

- The towers are positioned proud of the existing building setbacks along both MacLaren and Gilmour Streets.
- The uniformity of the podiums and the commercial character at the ground level with only minimal retail.

6.0 ALTERNATIVES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

6.1 Alternatives and Mitigation measures

In consideration of the guidelines contained in the CCDP, the following alternatives should be considered:

- Shifting the entrance of the tower to the corner of MacLaren and O’Connor would support the hierarchy of streets, give more prominence at the corner, and introduce a steady flow of pedestrian traffic to support the retail being proposed.
- Acknowledge the hierarchy of streets with portions of the podium developed in a more residential character along MacLaren and Gilmour.
- Further study to identify potential landscape treatments that address the transition from the south tower to the 207 Gilmour Street residence.
- A more pronounced difference in the height of the two towers can be achieved by re-allocating density to the north tower while retaining the proposed number of total storeys.

6.2 Conclusions

The proposed development at 267 O’Connor Street is a well-conceived reuse of this property where the buildings offer visual porosity at ground level and a generous publicly accessible open space. It is an appropriate location for a tall landmark building that will support the identity of Centretown and contribute to the public realm.

Public Realm

This project addresses the public realm, interfaces with the surrounding building stock, and introduces much-needed green space. Centretown will benefit from the introduction of a well landscaped publicly accessible open space. The cross-site access and location of a POPS on the southwest corner across the street from the school creates a sunny well-positioned open space. The main pedestrian areas are linked with a seamless connection to the sidewalk. Glazing is provided at the pedestrian level and loading, servicing, and utilities are screened from

Built Form

The two buildings are ‘point tower building design’, with distinctive bases, middles, and tops. Their placement on the site is appropriate given the lot orientation. They are organized to minimize shadow and wind impacts and provide varied experiences as one moves across the site. The bases have been designed to be animated and transparent. The masonry podiums ground the proposed development and reference back to the original lots and provide context. The distinct podium using Rideau red brick and defined datum lines helps reference existing buildings. There is a distinct change of materials between the masonry podium and the glazed surfaces of the upper portions of the two towers.

The tower forms are offset from one another, which helps to reduce the overlapping of views, increases sun exposure and maximizes views. The treatment of the upper floors is a simple consistent grid that is animated by adjusting the thickness of the piers and panels. The materials for the body of the buildings are intended to be light with the top portions of the towers set at different heights to create a stepped architectural treatment on the city skyline. Private roof terraces will be available in both phases.

Figure 25: A view of the north and south towers looking west



7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY / PEOPLE CONTACTED.

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- Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP)

8.0 AUTHORS QUALIFICATIONS

Commonwealth Historic Resource Management is an integrated consulting and management firm that offers services related to conservation, planning, research, design, and interpretation for historical and cultural resources. A key focus of the practice is planning and assessment of heritage resources as part of the development process.

John J. Stewart, B.L.A., O.A.L.A., C.S.L.A., CAHP, a principal of Commonwealth is a specialist in the planning and design of cultural resources, building conservation, and commercial area revitalization. A graduate of the University of Guelph, he received additional training at Cornell University (USA) and Oxford University (UK) and holds a diploma in the Conservation of Monuments from Parks Canada, where he worked as Head, Restoration Services Landscape Section. Before Commonwealth’s formation, Stewart served for four years as the first director of Heritage Canada’s Main Street Program.

Stewart is a founding member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals. He has served as the Canadian representative of the Historic Landscapes and Gardens Committee of ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects. Stewart is a panel member with the Ottawa Urban design Review Panel and a board member of Algonquin College Heritage Carpentry Program.

Ian Hunter is a specialist in the research and assessment of cultural heritage resources and building conservation. Experience in the heritage conservation field extends over 30 years primarily working for Commonwealth Historic Resource Management.

Ian Hunter undertook the research and project file; John Stewart managed the project and prepared the report.

9.0 APPENDIX A DESIGN BRIEF

September 29th, 2020



267 O’Connor DESIGN BRIEF

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Centered in the heart of Ottawa, between Bank Street and Elgin Street, 267 O’Connor Street is well situated to benefit from these vibrant arteries and access to the downtown employment hub. The site has known a fairly stable history without significant evolution over the years.

Originally, in the 1920’s, the neighborhood was primarily characterized by single family homes. The site didn’t see its first change until the 1950’s where the homes at the corner of O’Connor and MacLaren were demolished and replaced with an office building. The lots at the corner of O’Connor and Gilmour were converted to a parking lot. Gradually, the adjacent sites to the west were acquired to accommodate the additional demand for vehicular parking. A new addition was added to the office building in the early 1970’s to accommodate the demand for office space. Since then, the site has retained its use as an office building. The existing office building has hosted various tenants, but in our recent history, it has been primarily occupied by medical services. These services have been welcomed by the community and were seen by many as a local asset. In recent years, however, the building has seen an increased vacancy rate, which has forced the ownership group to re-evaluate the viability of this asset and to reconsider the future use of the site in its larger residential context.

The proposal seeks to redevelop the land into two high-rise mixed-use residential towers. The development would likely be broken down in two phases. The south phase would be the first to be constructed.

KEY DESIGN NARRATIVES

There are several key design narratives that were carefully considered for this development which helped guide our massing and design considerations.

1- PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE & PUBLIC REALM

Creating a strong pedestrian experience was a central goal in the vision for this site. Weekend or weekday, all of the streets bordering 267 O’Connor are regularly used by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Due to the inherent pedestrian nature of neighbourhood, it is important that the development contribute to the pedestrian experience by incorporating appropriately-scaled edge conditions, along with suitable programming along those streets. Generally, the surrounding streets host various types of residential and small office uses. It is important to note that recent upgrades to O’Connor Street introduced a dedicated north-south artery for cyclists.

Our proposed development incorporates a large, privately owned public space (POPS) at the corner of O’Connor and Gilmour that will occupy roughly 40% of the site while providing a thoughtfully programmed landscape space for public

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enjoyment. This important feature will intersect the site and provide porosity that will allow pedestrians to meander through the site. Using a balance of hard and soft landscaping, the POPS will feature three distinctly programmed areas; the main project plaza; an outdoor amenity zone; and the ‘pocket’ park. We see this plaza as a positive urban contribution for the community where people can take a moment to rest during their daily bike commute, enjoy a coffee with a friend, or simply rest and enjoy a moment during a sunny day.

2- STREET ANIMATION

Carefully selecting appropriate uses at the ground level is imperative in creating and maintaining a vibrant and animated urban experience for both the existing community and the proposed development. We anticipate small commercial/retail tenants will be animating the POPS and sidewalk spaces with their own programs. In addition, our proposed landscape plan proposes a carefully developed public space where people can rest and interact with residents of this development and the broader community.

3- RETAIL VISIBILITY

Retail visibility is critical for any commercial or retail viability. Ensuring that retailers are highly visible and are functionally supported by their required logistical requirements is critical in attracting key tenants. Selection of suitable retail/commercial tenants is important when considering the synergy of the development and existing context. Selecting tenants that encourage pedestrian traffic and animation will further support the success of an animated public space.

4- URBAN FABRIC & BUILT FORM

Considering the existing and future context of the site was instrumental in developing an appropriate massing and architectural response for the proposed development. The proposed massing and building heights correlate to the Centertown Community Design Plan, which designates 267 O’Connor as a landmark site. Despite the provision for a tall building form on this site, understanding the surrounding built environment around the property enabled us to establish appropriate materiality, podium heights and plan key functional elements for the development.

The built form breaks down the massing of the proposed towers into three distinct elements: the three-storey podium with defined ground level edge condition; the main body of the towers; and the articulated tops of both towers.

The three-storey podium proposes a masonry and glass edge condition at grade. The generous glazing will provide an open and engaging atmosphere at street level which supports strong notions of retail visibility and animated uses. Red masonry echoes the nearby heritage buildings which served as inspiration when considering materiality and form. Masonry remains a noble and durable material that is familiar to all.

Offsetting the tower forms from one another helped to reduce the overlapping of views which in turn increases sun exposure and maximizes views. In addition, private roof terraces will be available in both phases.



The upper floors will be composed of lighter materials which will complement the height and massing of the towers. A two-storey grid will help to visually break up the mass.

5- PARKING & SERVICING

We are proposing a four-storey underground parking garage which would provide parking for both residents and visitors. The garage will be accessed from Gilmour street. A short-term loading space for move-ins will be available at the ground floor located next to the parking garage entrance.

PHASE 1 – SOUTH TOWER DEVELOPMENT

The South phase proposes a 28-storey mixed-use development with approximately 259 units featuring a corner plaza at the intersection of O'Connor and Gilmour Streets. A four-storey underground garage will provide parking for both the visitors and residential tenants. This phase would have small commercial/retail tenancies at the ground floor to further support the animation of the public space. The ground floor will host some key amenity spaces that will benefit from the exposure to the central landscape area. Indoor and outdoor bike parking will be available and accessible at grade in both phases. Rooftop amenity spaces will be provided.

PHASE 2 – NORTH TOWER DEVELOPMENT

The North phase proposes a 30-storey mixed-use development with approximately 282 units featuring a corner plaza at the intersection of O'Connor and MacLaren Streets. Connected to the Phase 1 parking garage, Phase 2 will have a four-storey underground garage providing parking for its residents and visitors. Similar to Phase 1, this phase would have small commercial/retail tenancies at the ground floor to further complement the animation of the public space. The ground floor will host some key amenity spaces that will benefit from the exposure to the central landscape area. A combination of indoor and outdoor bicycle parking will be available and accessible at grade in both phases. Rooftop amenity spaces will be provided.