

A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

311 Somerset Street at O'Connor Street Ottawa, Ontario



SUBMITTED TO: GEMSTONE DEVELOPMENT LTD.

PREPARED BY: JOHN STEWART COMMONWEALTH HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

April 2022 Revision V5

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1.0 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 construction of a residential high rise at 311 Somerset Street at O’Connor Street. The vacant property is in the Centretown Heritage Conservation District (HCD), which was designated by the City of Ottawa under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) (Bylaw 269-97). The development site is subject to the Zoning By-law Section 60, and the Centretown Community Design Plan 2012.

The CHIS is intended to evaluate the impact of the proposed new development in a manner that is consistent with the City of Ottawa Official Plan Section 4.6.1. This CHIS follows the content outline recommended by the City of Ottawa for Cultural Heritage Impact Statements.

The following documents were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Guidelines for the Preparation of Cultural Heritage Impact Statements, City of Ottawa.
- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada 2010
- The Centretown Heritage Conservation District Plan, 1997, City of Ottawa.
- Centretown Community Design Plan 2012.
- Formal Pre-consultation #1 File No.: PC2019-0115 May 29, 2019,
- Formal Pre-consultation #2
- OUDRP Presentation Comments May 2020.
- City of Ottawa Zoning By-law. Mature Neighbourhoods
- Heritage Overlay Section 60.
- Tall building Guideline City of Ottawa
- Plans Elevations, Section and Renderings prepared by Figurr Architects Collective October 2021
- 234 O’Connor Street CHIS prepared by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management June 27, 2016.

Present Owner and Contact Information

Address:

2nd Floor, 851 Industrial Ave.,
Ottawa, ON. K1G 4L3

Current Owner and Contact:

Gemstone Corporation
Neil Zaret neil@gemstonecorporation.com

1.2 Site Location, Current Conditions, and Introduction to Development Site

The property is located within the Centretown HCD at the corner of Somerset and O’Connor Streets. The block is bound by O’Connor to the east, Somerset Street to the south, Bank Street to the west and Cooper Street to the north. The development site is an amalgamation of three lots 234 and 236

O'Connor and 311 Somerset Streets. Most of the property has been vacant with a parking lot since 1976. The remaining red brick house at 234 O'Connor Street was demolished in 2016 after a fire caused structural damage.

Concise Description of Context

The site was initially developed in the late 19th and early 20th century as a residential area. Beginning in the late 1950's a number of residences within the block were demolished and converted to parking lots, some of which have been recently redeveloped with multi-unit residential buildings.

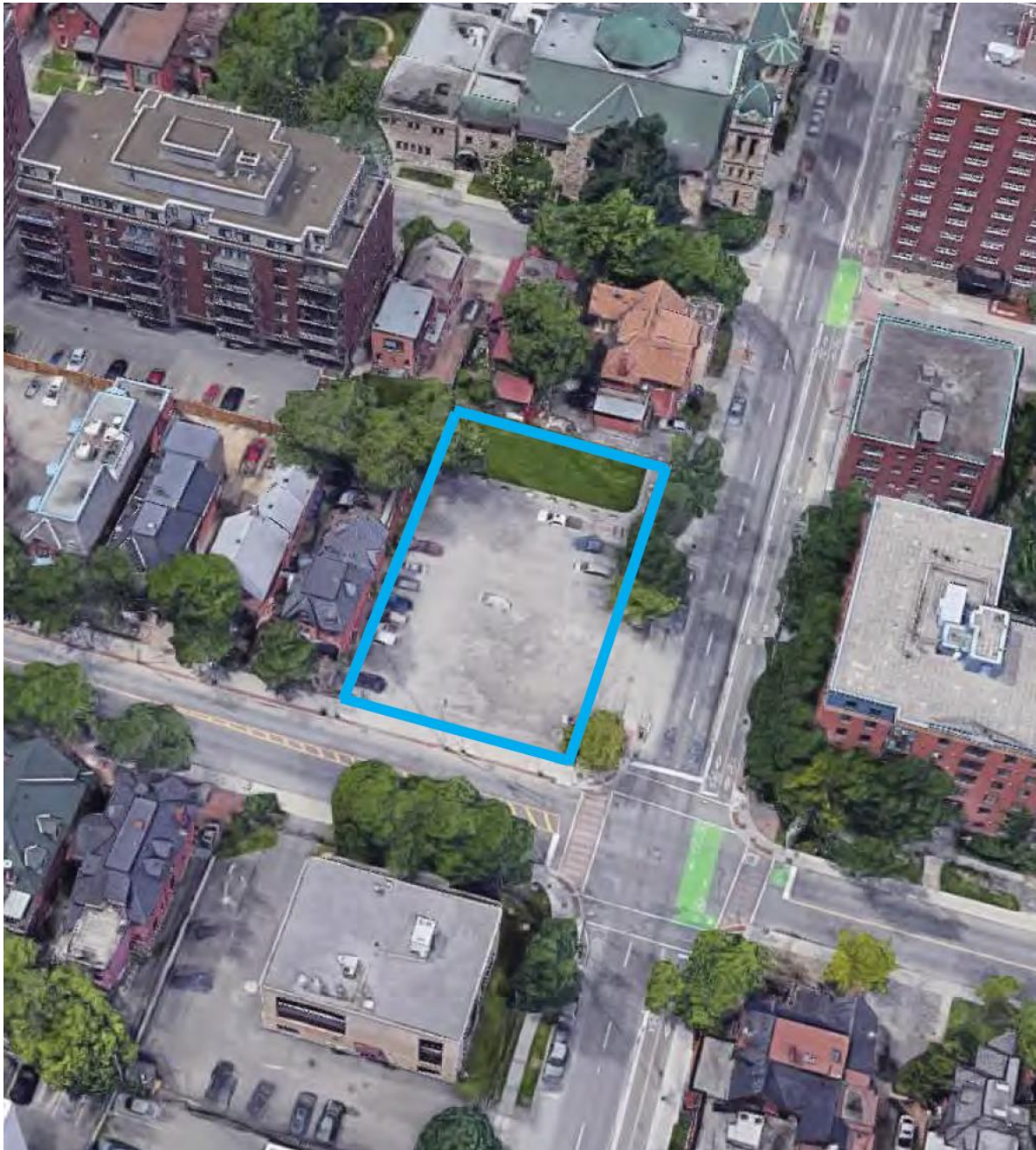


Figure 1: Aerial view of the property showing its context within Centretown. Site delineated in blue. Credit: Google Earth 2020

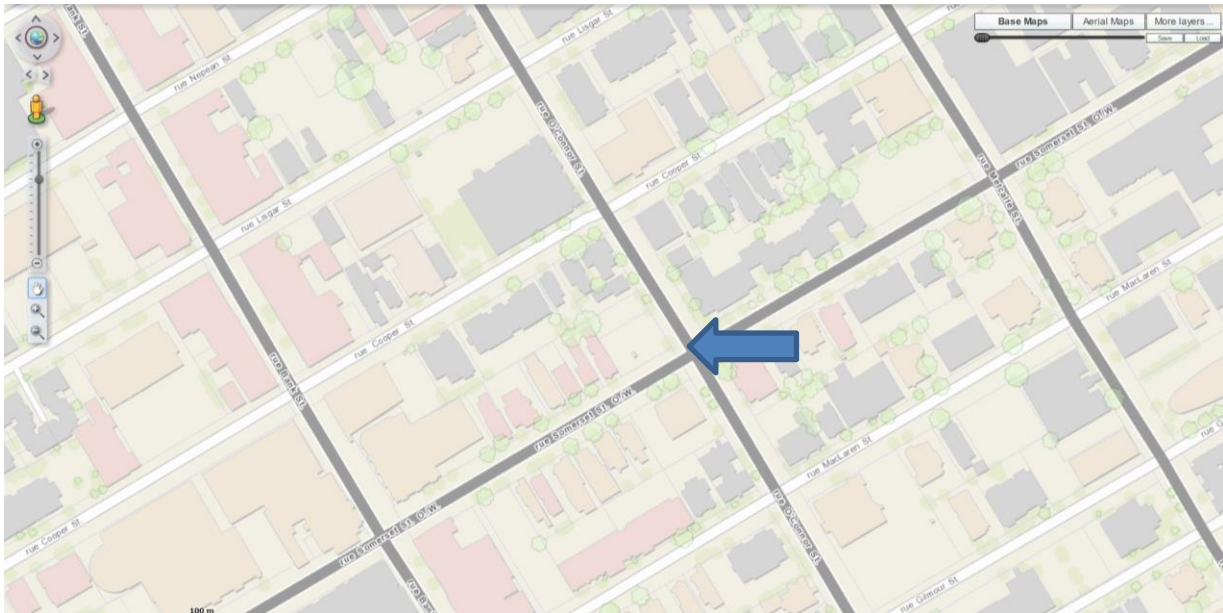


Figure 2: Block plan of the site illustrating surrounding context and lot divisions. Site Arrowed. Credit: Geotowna.



Figure 3: 1965 aerial view of the site (arrowed). Note the two residential buildings to the south of the site, which were demolished between 1976 and 1997. Credit: Geotowna

1.3 Built Heritage Context and Street Characteristics

The area around Somerset and O'Connor Streets was developed in the 1880's as a residential neighbourhood consisting of two and three storey brick residences typically fronting on the east west streets (Cooper and Somerset) with mid-block residences fronting on O'Connor. The development pattern remained stable up until the early part of the 20th century when low-rise apartment buildings

were built, and Dominion-Chalmers United Church was constructed. A second wave of apartment buildings were constructed in the area in the 1940s and 50s one of which is located across the street from the site. Beginning in the late 1950s through to the mid 1960s, there was a rash of residential properties demolished within the block. The consolidated lots under one owner have served as parking lots.

The property to the north of the site was infilled circa 1970 when a three-storey residential addition was constructed in the vacant space between the L plan residence at the corner of Cooper and O'Connor. (Figures 6).

Somerset Street

Somerset Street is a continuous two-way east-west link through the downtown linking Chinatown, Somerset Village, the LGBT/Gay Village, the Corktown Bridge, the NCC multi-use path system, the University of Ottawa and Sandy Hill. The section between Bank and O'Connor Streets is known as Somerset Village where residences have been converted to commercial uses. This section has some recent streetscape upgrades. The new development at the intersection of Somerset and O'Connor Streets will complete the street edge and provide both commercial and residential anchor.



Figure 4: Context view of the site (left) with the adjacent buildings along Somerset St. Credit: Google Earth.



Figure 5: 350 Somerset at the corner of Bank is a 4-storey red brick that creates a bookend with the 2 1/2 storey buildings along Somerset Street. Source: Google Maps

O’Connor Street

O’Connor Street is a four-lane arterial high volume south-bound conduit to the Queensway. O’Connor Street carries high peak traffic volumes in the afternoon. Two lanes are used for off-peak parking.

The east side of O’Connor Street was redeveloped in the 1940s or 1950s with the construction of a four-storey brick apartment building typical of the period (Figure 6). Subsequently, the remaining older residential buildings on the east side of O’Connor were demolished except for a two-storey residential building at 231 O’Connor. The vacant sites were redeveloped with a five-storey mixed use building in the 1990’s (Figure 6 left background).



Figure 6: Context view of the site (right background) with the adjacent building at the corner of Cooper St. The one-way street tends to be narrow with narrow sidewalks and buildings on lot lines. Credit: Google Earth.



Figure 7: Surrounding context (D) looking south-east towards the intersection (E) looking west along Somerset and (F) looking north along O’Connor. Source: Figurr Architect Collective.



Figure 8: Neighbouring buildings adjacent to the site on Cooper Street are a mix. The corner building has been modified with the addition of a three-storey addition, with newer low-rise apartments at the midblock. The two buildings noted on the plan as B and C are designated under Part 5 OHA and are “contributing”. The circle in red illustrates requirement for a twenty-metre radius between tall buildings and adjacent existing residences. Source: Figurr Architect Collective.



Figure 9: Views of the surrounding neighbourhood illustrate the predominant use of red bricks throughout the neighbourhood. Source Figurr Architect Collective.

Cooper Street

Cooper Street defines the northern edge of the development. Where Somerset is almost completely intact only 354 and 356 Cooper Street represent the original character of the street.



Figure 10: Elevations of buildings along the south side of Cooper Street illustrate the predominance of red brick. Source: Figurr Architect Collective.

1.4 Relevant Information from Council Approved Documents

Section 60 Heritage Overlay

The provisions outlined in Section 60 are applicable to the site if redeveloped in the future and include: *General Provisions (1) Where a building in an area to which a heritage overlay applies is removed or destroyed it must be rebuilt with the same character and at the same scale, massing, volume, floor area and in the same location as existed prior to its removal or destruction. (By-law 2014-289) (By-law 2015-281) (By-law 2014-289).*

Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study

The HCD was designated under Part V of the OHA by the City of Ottawa in 1997 (By-law 269-97). The HCD study includes a Heritage Character Statement for the area, and recommendations (Italic), which are applicable in the assessment of this development proposal. The study is presently being revised. Because the Centretown HCD Study was concluded prior to 2005 and does not include a plan, there is uncertainty as to whether it is legally enforceable.

Heritage Conservation District Plan in Progress

This is intended to update the Centretown Heritage Conservation Study 1997 with a full plan.

Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP), 2013

The CCDP provides a Heritage Approach (Section 6.5), and a heritage context that provides guidance for new buildings that are located adjacent to a heritage building or streetscape. The CCDP also provides guidance on the built form (Section 6.4) for high-rise infill that is adjacent to a low-rise neighbourhood.

Mature Neighbourhoods, By-law 2012-147

The development site is located within the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay and therefore, is affected by the Mature Neighbourhoods By-law. The by-law applies when developing a new dwelling on a new infill lot or on an existing lot, therefore, requiring a Streetscape Character Analysis.

Urban Design Guidelines for Tall Buildings

The Urban Design Guidelines are to be used during the preparation and review of development proposals that include a high-rise building to achieve objectives of the Official Plan. These are general guidelines to be used as a checklist for evaluating a proposal.

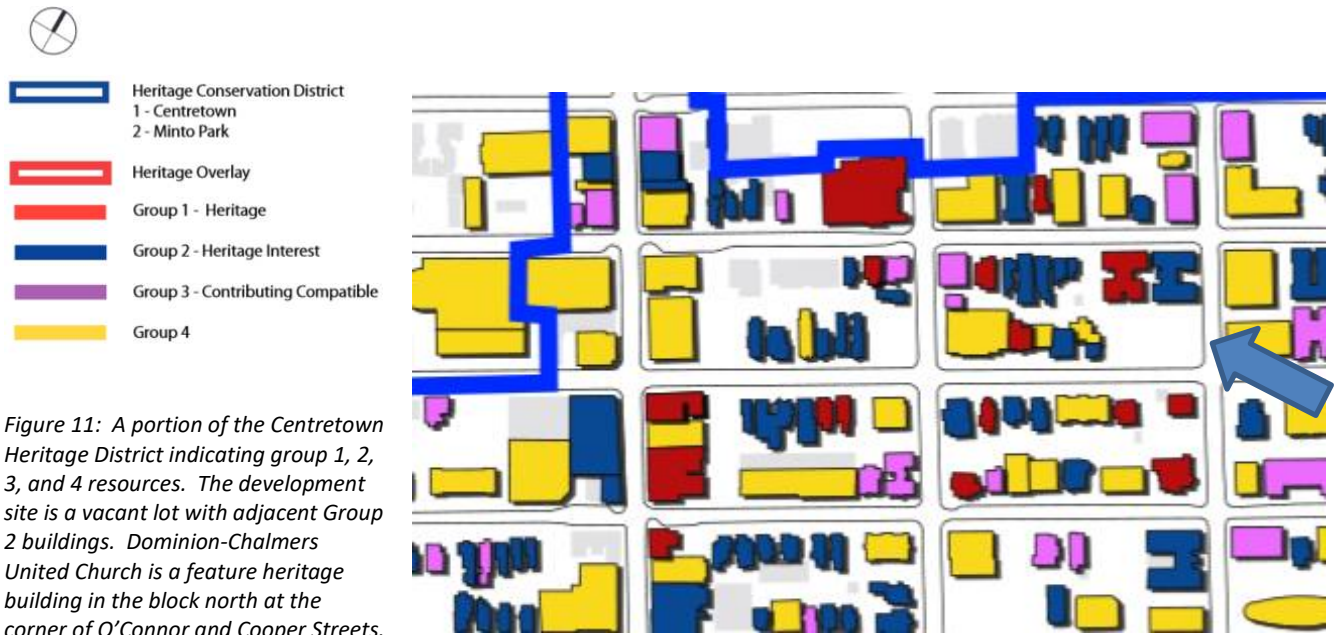


Figure 11: A portion of the Centretown Heritage District indicating group 1, 2, 3, and 4 resources. The development site is a vacant lot with adjacent Group 2 buildings. Dominion-Chalmers United Church is a feature heritage building in the block north at the corner of O'Connor and Cooper Streets.

The Centretown Heritage Inventory completed in May 2020 has a more nuanced assessment of the adjacent residential form heritage properties. The proposed classification system is divided into categories ranging from Significant Resource corresponding to Group 1 properties, Character Defining Resource corresponding to Group 2 properties, and Character Supporting Properties corresponding to Group 3 properties. The revised Inventory identifies the properties along Somerset as Character Defining Properties (Group 2, 1997) and the adjacent properties along Cooper as Supporting (246 O'Connor), Significant (354 Cooper), and Character Defining (356 Cooper) Resources. Dominion Chalmers United Church on the north side of Cooper at O'Connor is a Significant Resource.

2.0 HERITAGE RESOURCE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

2.1 Centretown History

The 1997 Heritage Conservation District Study outlines the history of Centretown. The O'Connor Street block south of Cooper Street developed as a residential area between 1880 and 1890. (Figures 15 & 16). The urban renewal that occurred in the 1960's within the blocks north of Cooper Street often resulted in the demolition of the buildings that were on site and the creation of surface parking lots some of which have served the area for more than 50 years.

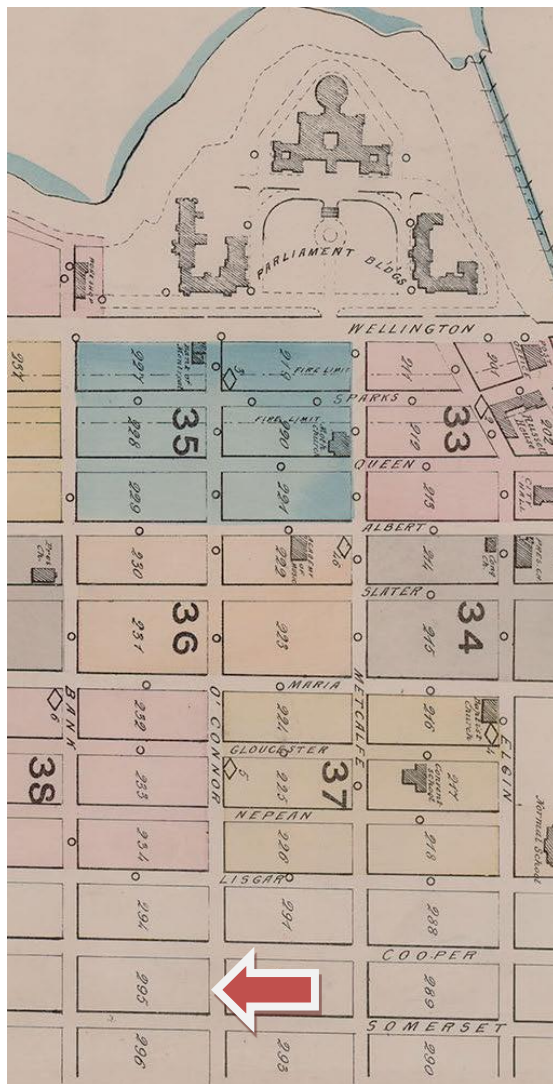


Figure 12: 1888 Fire Insurance Plan Sheet 53 showing the development pattern at the time. Credit: LAC



Figure 13: 1878 Fire Insurance Key Plan showing the development pattern at the time when the site was undeveloped. Credit: LAC



Figure 14: A 1938 view looking west on Cooper St. from O'Connor with Dominion-Chalmers United Church to the right. Note that 226 O'Conner (left to the north of the site) underwent a major redevelopment post 1938. Compare with Figure 6. Credit: LAC.

3.0 HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT CENTRETOWN HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3.1 Introduction

The following Statement of Cultural Heritage Value identifies the primary heritage values and attributes of the Centretown HCD.

3.2 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – Centretown HCD

The following statement of cultural heritage value provides a summary of the reasons for the designation of the Heritage Conservation District. The following text is taken from the Canadian Register of Historic Places:

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District is primarily a residential area, with some commercial corridors, within downtown Ottawa. Centretown as the name suggests is in the centre of Ottawa, south of Parliament Hill, north of the Queensway corridor and west of the Rideau Canal. Since its development, Centretown has served as a residential community and is linked to the government activities of Uppertown; it has been home to many of the civil servants and government ministers of the federal government. Buildings in the district were constructed between the 1880s and the 1930s. 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 has close associations with the governmental character of Uppertown to the north and developed as a desirable neighbourhood for the 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.

Most buildings within the Centretown Heritage Conservation District date from the 1880s-1930 period. This was a period of maturing tastes in 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.

The dominant character of Centretown remains residential. 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. Flat roofed, medium density apartment buildings also play a strong role in defining the character of the District. Also, 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 Stewarton 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 and continues to be 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. While Canada's official business was conducted around Parliament Hill, its Members of Parliament and civil service lived and met in the area immediately south. Centretown is ripe with evidence of behind-the-scenes politics, of the dedication, talent and character that have formed Canada.

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:

- 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
- its 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.
- its historical role as a meeting place for governmental and community groups, clubs, and organizations

4.0 DESIGN INTENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

The proposed development will be a residential tower constructed on three consolidated lots 311 Somerset Street and 234-236 O’Connor Street. The property is vacant with a small park along O’Connor and surface parking. The 18-storey residential tower fronting onto Somerset Street and O’Connor Street, consisting of a four-storey red brick podium that wraps around the base. At the fifth floor, the footprint is recessed at Somerset Street and further defined by a glazed finish. The sixth to the eighteenth floor is treated with a two-tone grey finish with projecting balconies.

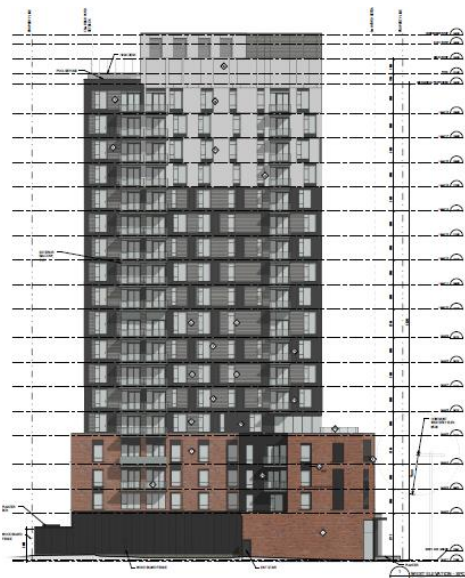


Figure 15: West Elevation



Figure 16: South Elevation along Somerset Street

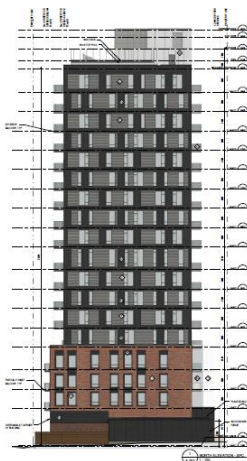


Figure 17: North Elevation



Figure 18: East Elevation along O'Connor

The design expression has undergone a number of iterations in an attempt to address a) community concerns, b) a split site with different allowable heights, and c) the expectations of a high-rise tower in the CHCD. The present submission was arrived at in consultation with the city. The red-brick podium is increased from three floors to four-storeys and aligned with the setback of neighbouring buildings. The overall tower treatment was simplified as a single expression extending from the 5th to the 18th floor with a setback from Somerset of 8 metres. The tower's set back from Somerset was increased, and the floor plate reduced. The step back along O'Connor was maintained, a step back was introduced at the west and two additional floors were proposed.



Figure 19: View looking northeast of the proposed development illustrates the stepping of the tower and the open balcony on the 4th floor referring the height of the older homes along Somerset with the defined step backs and material changes of the tower. Source: Figurr Architects Collective.



Figure 20: View of the planned high-rise looking northwest from the intersection of Somerset and O'Connor Streets. Source: Figurr Architects Collective.



Figure 21: View of the development looking southwest along O'Connor Street. Source Figurr Architects Collective.



Figure 22: The corner on Somerset Street. Source: Figurr Architects Collective.

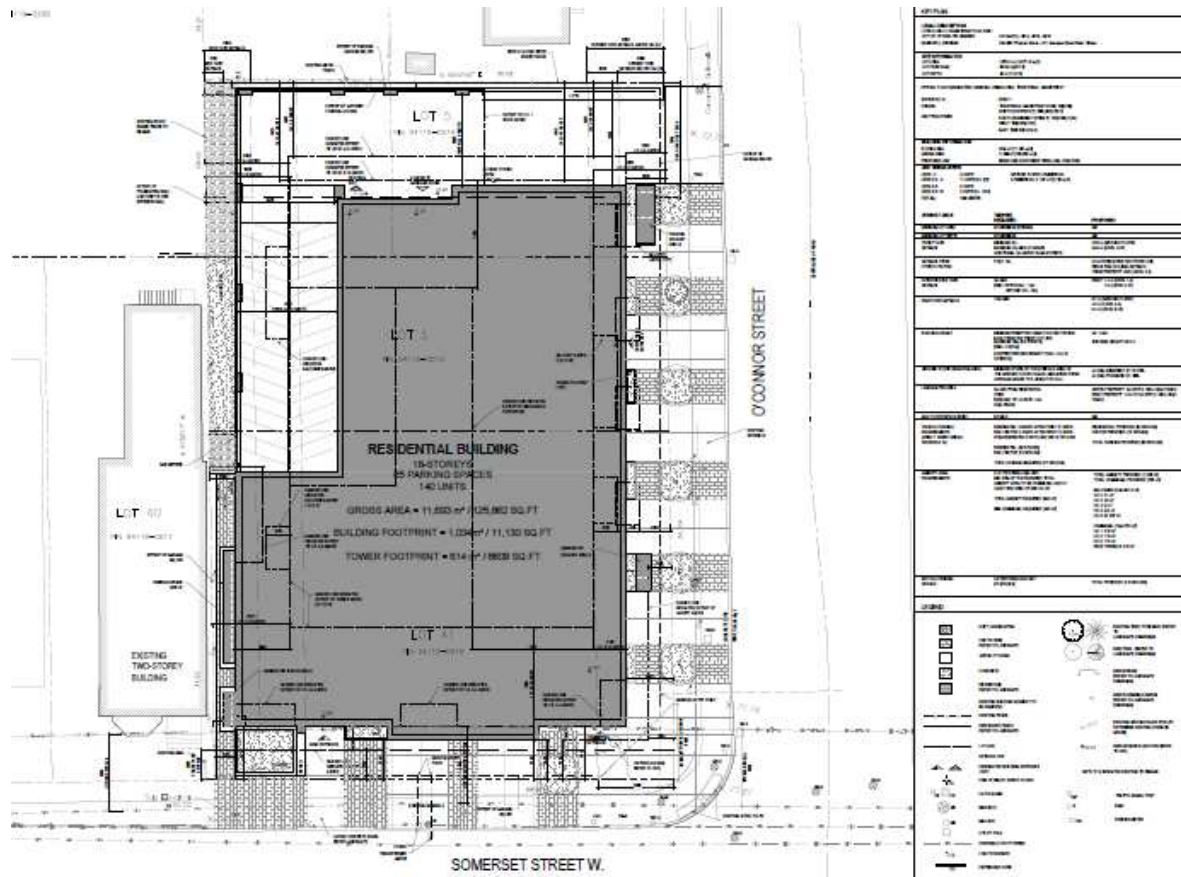


Figure 23: Site plan illustrating the paving treatment of the sidewalk with the front elevation of the Somerset facade set back in line with the existing houses. Source: Figurr Architects Collective.

5.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

This section specifically addresses the impacts of the development proposal on the cultural heritage values of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District (CHCD) from two perspectives:

- The integration of the new development with the neighbouring pedestrian realm.
 - The impact of an eighteen-storey high rise to the character of the area and the broader city plan.

The heritage attributes of the HCD are highlighted in Section 3.0 of this report. A number of documents were used to determine the impact. Section VII 5.5 of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District Guidelines were used to frame the discussion along with guidelines regarding new developments in Section 6.5 of the Centretown Community Design Plan (CCDP, the comments from the UDRP were referenced as were Guidelines for High-Rise Housing, and Standards and Guidelines for Historic Places were referenced.

5.2 Heritage Integration

*In response to the **Centretown HCD Study**, the following guidelines were taken into consideration:*

- *Infill should be contemporary design, distinguishable as being of its time. However, it must be sympathetic to the heritage character of the area and designed to enhance these existing properties rather than calling attention to itself.*
- *Infill should be sympathetic to the heritage character of the area.*
- *The form of new infill should reflect the character of existing buildings on adjoining and facing properties. The buildings should normally be 3-4 storeys in height, with massing and setbacks matching earlier, rather than later patterns in the area.*
- *Brick veneer should be the primary finish material.*

Neighbourhood Pedestrian Realm

The primary consideration relates to the transition of the proposed development with the adjacent heritage context of Somerset Street and neighbouring sites along Cooper and O'Connor Streets.

Discussion: The heritage buildings along Somerset Village create a cohesive grouping, between Bank and O'Connor. At street level the proposed development will wrap around to O'Connor and create a defining streetscape that supports heritage the character of the entire block as illustrated in Figures 20 and 24.

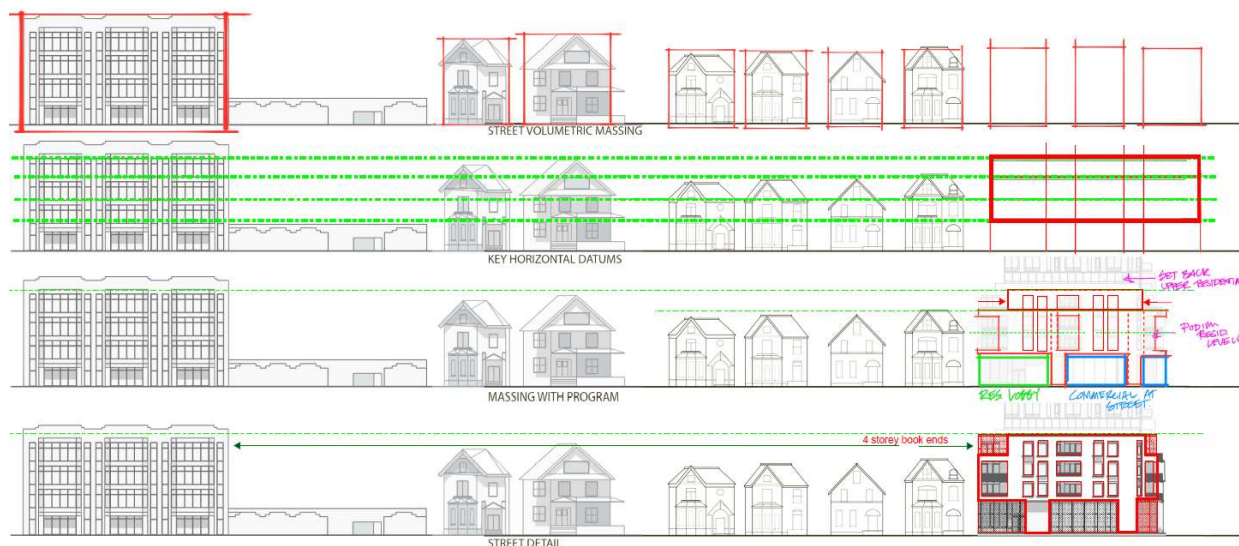


Figure 24: Street context illustrating the planned development in relation to the existing buildings on the north side of Somerset Street. The 4-storey podium and the corner building at Bank Street establish a scale and frame the six residential buildings in between. The cadence and the rhythm of the 2 1/2 storey buildings are interpreted in terms of datum lines, street volume and massing. The use of red brick cladding also unifies the block. Source: Figurr Architects Collective.

Materials and Finishes.

The finishes and palette of materials and colours of the 4-storey base is a traditional red brick that is in keeping with buildings throughout the neighbourhood. Because of the importance of the Somerset Street buildings (as character defining features of the conservation district), the treatment of the podium respects datum lines (Figure 23). The use of the traditional red brick of existing buildings establishes the foreground at the street level that carries along the frontage of the proposed developments for both Somerset and O'Connor Streets (figures 20 & 21). On the east side of O'Connor, the 7-storey red brick helps to frame the intersection.

5.3 Centretown Community Design Plan

The guidelines contained in the CCDP provide direction for new high-rise infill in the HCD. The CHCD Study provides the heritage context for the district. 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 7 storey mid-rise buildings, an 11 storey and a 17-storey high-rise on the blocks north of Somerset Street.

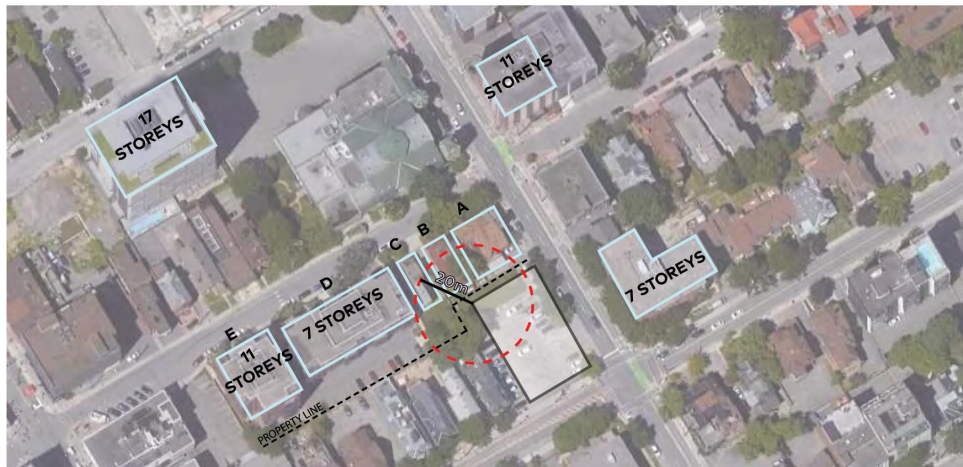


Figure 25: Aerial view illustrating the height of buildings around the development site.

The applicable sections of the CCDP include Sections: 2.4 Heritage; 6.4 Built Form Guidelines; and 6.5 Heritage Approach. Applicable guidelines taken from the CCDP are in *italic* and a discussion follows.

CCDP Section 6.4.2 Mid-Rise pg. 53

Guidelines included in this section are applicable to the ‘podium’ portion of a tall building.

- ii *Extend infill the length of the site on all street frontages.*

Discussion: The development extends the length of the site and respects an existing separation adjacent to the heritage building to the west of the podium.

- iv *When higher than 6-storeys, a front (1.5 to 3 m) and sideyard (minimum 3 m) building setback should be introduced to maintain access to light and support a pedestrian scale. The determination of the setback location should be based on context, adjacent building relationships, and building proportion. Generally, the building setback should be introduced above the sixth storey but can also occur below. To promote well-defined street edges and enclosures, building setbacks directly above the ground floor will not be permitted.*

Discussion: Along Somerset Street, the overhead hydro meter requires an additional setback with a 1.0m front yard setback at grade that increases to 4.0m above the 4th floor. At the 5th floor a glazed solarium steps slightly proud and from the 6th to the 18th floor the finish of the façade is a two-tone grey finish. The setback to the north abutting the neighbouring building lots along Cooper Street, is 7.5m.

- vi *Ground level units should be well articulated to reduce the scale of the building and introduce a finer grained rhythm to the street frontage.*

Discussion: Buildings along Somerset street are free standing residences that articulate the street and provide a pedestrian scale to the neighbourhood. The lower levels (four-storey base) of the tower extend this character along the street as illustrated in Figure 20.

The commercial style glazing at the ground floor reference's retail; the use of unit masonry and a traditional colour palette support the character, and the vertical rhythm of the upper floors introduces a distinct character to the frontage.

ix Inset balconies behind the street wall to reinforce the street edge and public realm. Above the setback, projected, balconies are permitted but are not to exceed the setback width.

Discussion: The balconies for the lower levels of the tower are integrated into the facades. The tower above is set back along Somerset with balconies projecting on the east and west facades.

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: The tower is designed with a mechanical penthouse setback and reduced cap using a similar material, architecturally integrated in a manner, which is consistent with the overall character of the tower.

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: Ground floor retail and commercial uses are being proposed fronting onto both Somerset and O'Connor Streets.

ii. Ground floor façades should be transparent and articulated.

Discussion: The ground floor is presented as a series of retail spaces with glass extending to the sidewalk.

iii. Multiple fine-grained retail units are encouraged.

Discussion: The present plan includes three retail units facing onto O'Connor Street. This is suitable for the context on the corner. The site is located between Bank & Elgin Streets, which are higher-intensity retail streets.

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

Discussion: The podium treatment is respectful of key datum lines and attempts to establish massing at the corners of the building with setback open balconies. In keeping with the scale of adjacent buildings the tower portion is set well back from the street frontage.

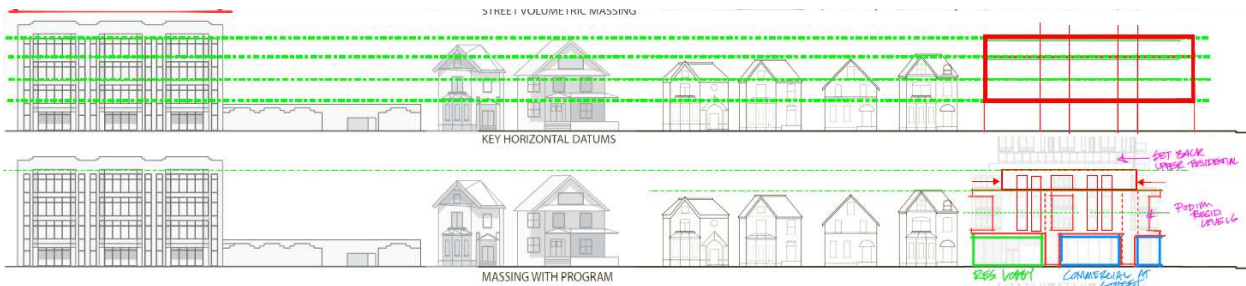


Figure 26: The block between Bank and O'Connor has undergone revitalization of the pedestrian realm and rehabilitation of the street frontage of existing buildings. This cadence has been carried into the new podium treatment with a breakdown of the façade's massing.

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

Discussion: The lobby is positioned on Somerset Street. O'Connor Street has narrower sidewalks and a bike lane and is less conducive to situating a lobby on this street.

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: See figure 24.

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 upper floors exhibit a change in materials and are set back from the base along Somerset and to a lesser extent on O'Connor Street.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2010)

As this is a new 18 storey development there is no specific conservation treatment. It is in a conservation district requiring consideration of

STANDARD 11: (NEW WORK AND ADDITIONS) make the new work physically and visually Compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

Response: Recognizing the need for visual compatibility and subordination the new building serves to reinstate the historic built street-edge condition and to reinstate the traditional commercial activities, including retail glazing, on-street pedestrian entrances to the ground floor, outdoor seating and lighting. The following measures are incorporated into the building design:

- The high-rise portion of the building is set well back from Somerset with lesser setbacks on the east and west facades above the fourth floor.
- There is a change in material finishes and colour palette between the podium and the tower.
- The traditional red-brick podium treatment and site/landscape design acknowledges the heritage values and character defining elements of the neighbouring buildings.

- The development is setback in-line with neighbouring buildings with a 4-storey podium, commercial ground use and commercial glazed units along O’Connor Street, all providing universal access.

GUIDELINE 4.1.4 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION (CULTURAL LANDSCAPE)

- At Bank Street the building is 4-storeys and helps to define the intersection of Somerset and Bank Streets. The new development creates the eastern bookend for Somerset Village; and replaces a surface parking lot on the corner.

GUIDELINE 4.1.5 VISUAL RELATIONSHIPS (CULTURAL LANDSCAPE)

- The ground plane and setting of the proposed development includes an outdoor sidewalk/terrace and active streetscape to O’Connor Street.

GUIDELINE 4.3.1 EXTERIOR FORM AND SETTING (BUILDINGS)

- The podium of the new residential mixed-use building has a sculpted eave line referencing the asymmetrical character of the Victorian neighbours; is aligned with the datum lines of neighbouring buildings along the street.

5.4 Development Impacts

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

- Recognizing that Somerset Village (between Bank and O’Connor) is a significant streetscape in the Centretown HCD, the transition to the properties to the west along Somerset has been creatively considered.
- The form and materiality of the building’s podium will integrate with the neighbouring properties. The O’Connor streetscape introduces a commercial ground floor with glazing and helps define the corner.
- The use of red brick is a prominent character defining feature along Somerset and throughout the District. Its use for the new development’s podium supports this attribute.
- The proposed tower is on the north side at the intersection, which is a logical transition with the existing high-rise buildings to the north of the site.
- From the south no views or vistas are affected by this proposal. Views looking east are contained and improved.
- By in-filling the existing surface parking lot at the corner, the project serves to reinstate the historic built edge condition and to reinstate the historic continuous activities, including on-street pedestrian entrances to the ground floor retail stores residences, and restaurants.

Adverse impacts of the proposed development include:

- The introduction of a high-rise development within the CHCD and its potential as a precedent for other developments. This is partially mitigated by the high-rise buildings north of Somerset that frame the development.
- The proximity of the high-rise to the neighbouring historic properties on Somerset and on Cooper Streets. This is partly mitigated with the grouping of existing buildings along Cooper

establishing the foreground of views and in effect, creates a continuous frontage that integrates into the design when being looked at from the north.

- The designated buildings on Cooper Street portion of the project north of the new development are designated heritage buildings found within 35 metres and will be impacted. However, building heights of 9-16 storeys are permitted next to these buildings under the secondary plan.
- O'Connor Street is a one-way arterial street with predominant views focused south along the street. The north façade of the proposed development is well articulated, with the brick podium focusing views and supporting the pedestrian realm.



Figure 27. View of the north elevation

6.0 ALTERNATIVES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

6.1 Alternatives

The setback of the tower from Somerset at the 5th floor is generous and alleviates the scale.

Extending the red brick of the podium at the north facade would improve views of the development from the north and the relationship to neighbouring properties.

The removal of the canopy on both corners of the 4th floor helps to reduce the height and massing of the podium. This is further enhanced with the removal of the canopy over the balcony at the centre. It would help maintain the massing and datum lines along the street.



Figure 28: Removing the canopy over the fourth-floor balconies breaks up the eave line and reinforces the cadence of buildings along the street.

6.2 Mitigation Measures

Throughout the design process, there have been suggestions/recommendations from the UDRP, the City, and the community that have shaped the design and brought about alternative designs and mitigation measures. The treatment of the podium and integration with Somerset is a significant recommendation that has been successfully embraced as part of the design. Others include the

reduced floor plate and single expression of the tower; the commercial treatment of the O'Connor streetscape and setback of the development in line with existing buildings along Somerset.

Most of the recommendations have been incorporated into the design.

- Setting the tower on a 4-storey base mitigates the scale and helps to transition to the heritage buildings as does the recessed footprint and elimination of the setbacks above the 9th floor.
- Along Somerset the podium height, the articulated street frontage informed by the built context along the street as well as the linking of material and colour palette, and the height of the adjacent heritage buildings draws the eye away from the tower and continues the relationship of solids and voids.
- The grouping of existing buildings along Cooper establishes the foreground of views and in effect, creates a continuous frontage that integrates into the design when being looked at from the north. This is further enhanced with the brick treatment of the podium extending the full facade.
- Retaining the urban grain and scale of the neighbouring heritage buildings, with glazing, traditional unit masonry finishes, increased ground to ceiling height on the ground floor commercial and landscape treatment in keeping with the rest of the street all contribute to the public realm experience.
- The extended sidewalk and street trees carry the public improvements to the corner of Somerset and around the corner along O'Connor Street.

6.3 Alternative Measures

- An alternative that might be considered would be to use a different tone of red brick in the tower to reinforce the fabric and colour palette of the district.

6.4 Conclusions

Relationship to the Public Realm

The project, through the incorporation of existing datums, scale, massing and materiality of the podium and the setback of the tower will mitigate adverse impacts on Somerset Streetscape and the adjacent six designated heritage buildings between 350- 311 Somerset on the north side of Somerset Street. The programming of the base is carefully thought out and suits the street. The wide sidewalk on Somerset and potential for animation at grade will add to the Somerset Village place-making and integration of the development into the neighbourhood.

The low scale, massing, rhythm, and contemporary language contribute to the variety and character of building styles on Somerset Street and complement the six heritage buildings on the north side of Somerset as well as building on the south side. The existing viewscales and views along the street are contained and enhanced by the new development. The 4-storey scale helps frame the street and mirrors the scale of the building at Bank and Somerset

The podium treatment and the stepped back tower are designed in a manner that respects and complements the adjacent heritage buildings and enhances the pedestrian experience of Somerset Village as a commercial niche. The contemporary design, massing and architectural character of the development respects the heritage value and character defining elements.

UDRP Recommendations May 2021

The two illustrations below provide a comparison of the May UDRP presentation and the revisions incorporated into the design:

- reduce the height of the base to four storeys to reflect the scale of Somerset Street and stepping back the tower 8m above the podium as a single mass.
- aligning the setback on Somerset Street with the low-rise building to the west.
- introducing a stronger vertical, rather than a horizontal, expression of the base with the rhythm following the established cadence of the low-rise streetscape.
- compatible character and placemaking at grade to integrating into the heritage context and provide universal accessibility.
- Incorporating red brick.



Previous UDRP submission May 2021



Present submission October 2021

Reducing the height and respecting the existing zoning with a mid-rise development is another recommendation and although this is in a heritage district with expectations for buildings to be kept much lower, the design team and planners feel that they have a reasonable rationale for pursuing a taller building in this location. The design team considered several options before arriving at this submission. In consultation with the city, the overall tower treatment was simplified as a single expression extending from the 5th to the 18th floor. The tower's setback from Somerset was increased, and the floor plate reduced. The step back along O'Connor was maintained with a larger setback at the fourth floor on the east elevation. Two additional floors were proposed, and the podium increased by 1 floor and aligned with the neighbouring buildings setback.

The separation distance from the buildings along Cooper Street and location of the proposed development next to lots that are unsuitable for high-rise housing mitigates to some degree, the potential that the development overwhelms and/or diminishes the neighbourhood's heritage attributes.

In Conclusion, it is the author’s opinion that the 18-storey development will impact the low-rise heritage character of the heritage conservation district. This is mitigated in part by the development’s location at the northern edge of the district where taller buildings are part of the skyline, the use of red brick, and the podium designed as an integral part of the Somerset Village streetscape and Cooper Street.

The aerial view (below) illustrates the development in relation to its surroundings. The use of red brick is a character defining feature as are the end gable low rise house form along both sides of Somerset Street with more substantial buildings defining the intersections at Bank and at O’Connor Streets. The removal of the canopy over the 4th floor balconies creates a notched eave and emphasizes the two-bay character of the podium.



7.0 AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATIONS

Commonwealth Historic Resource Management is consulting firm that offers a range of professional services related to conservation, planning, research, design, and interpretation for historical and cultural resources. The firm was incorporated in 1984.

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.



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