

# 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*

**March 2021**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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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.
- The Centretown Heritage Conservation District Plan, 1997, City of Ottawa.
- Centretown Community Design Plan 2012.
- Formal Pre-consultation File No.: PC2019-0115 May 29, 2019,
- City of Ottawa Zoning By-law. Mature Neighbourhoods
- Heritage Overlay Section 60.
- Tall building Guideline City of Ottawa

#### **Present Owner and Contact Information**

##### **Address:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 851 Industrial Ave.,  
Ottawa, ON. K1G 4L3

##### **Current Owner and Contact:**

Gemstone Corporation  
Neil Zaret [neil@gemstonecorporation.com](mailto: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.

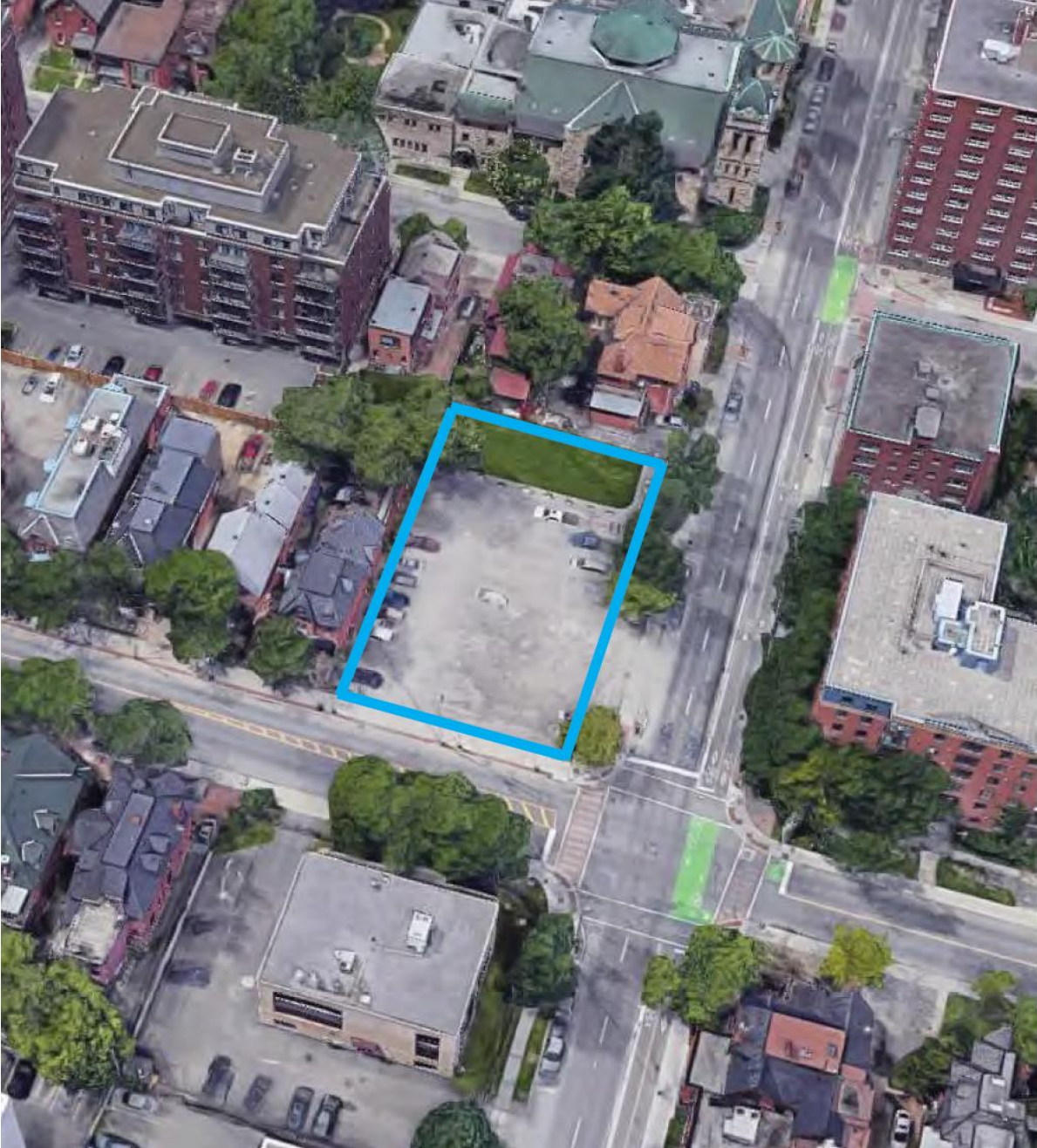


Figure 1: Aerial view of the property showing its context within Centretown. Site delineated in blue. Credit: Google Earth 2020



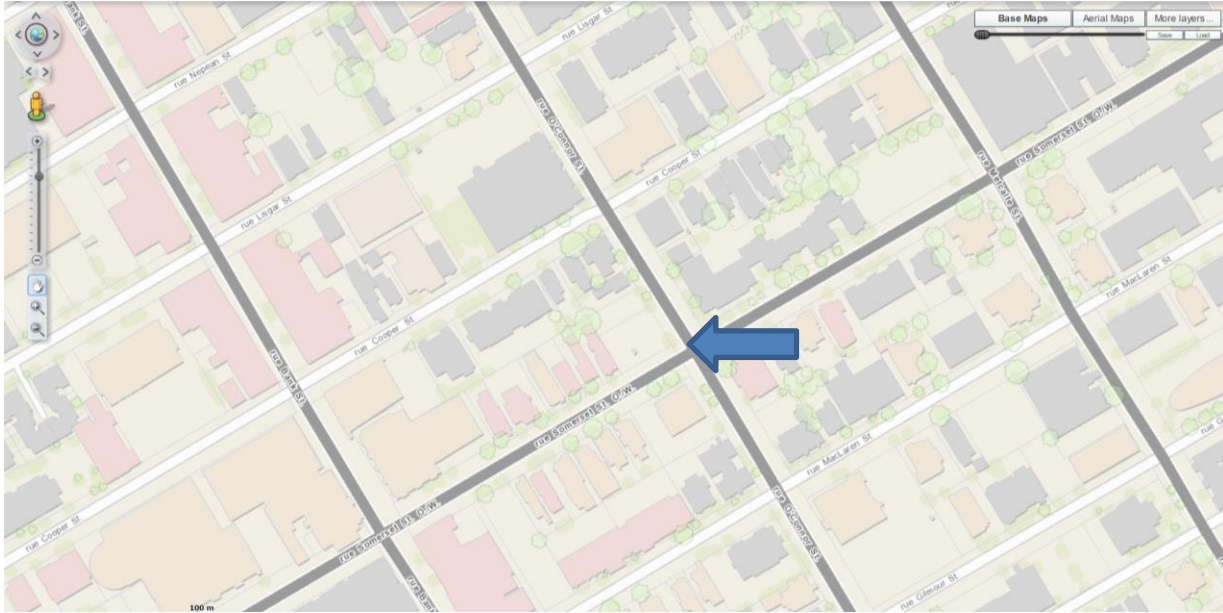


Figure 2: Block plan of the site illustrating surrounding context and lot divisions. Site Arrowed. Credit: Geottawa.



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: Geottawa

### 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 5 & 17).

### **Somerset Street**

Somerset Street is a continuous two-way east-west link through the downtown linking Chinatown, Somerset Village, the GBLT/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.

### **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 5). 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 5 left background).





Figure 5: Context view of the site (right background) with the adjacent building at the corner of Cooper St. The street tends to be narrow with narrow sidewalks and buildings on lot lines. Credit: Google Earth.



Figure 6: 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 6: 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 7: Views of the surrounding 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 9: Elevations of buildings along the south side of Cooper Street. 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

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 demolition proposal and include:

### Heritage Conservation District Plan 2020 in Progress

This is intended to update the Centretown Heritage Conservation Study 1997.

### 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 in order to achieve objectives of the Official Plan. These are general guidelines to be used as a checklist for evaluating a proposal.



Figure 8: A portion of the Centretown Heritage District indicating group 1, 2, 3, and 4 resources.

## 2.0 HERITAGE RESOURCE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

### 2.1 Centretown History

The 1997 Heritage Conservation District Plan 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.

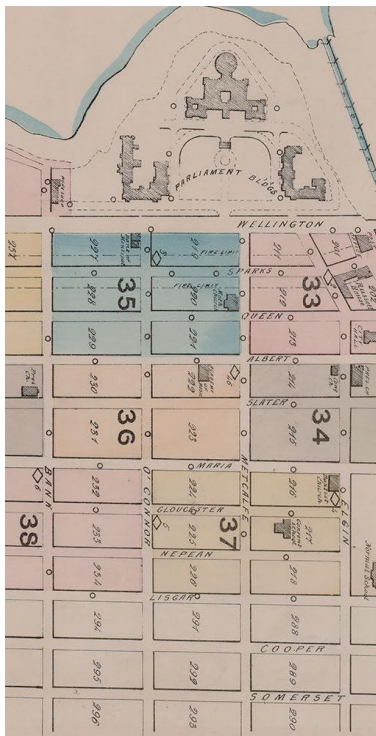


Figure 9: 1878 Fire Insurance Key Plan showing the development pattern at the time when the site was undeveloped. Credit: LAC

Figure 10: 1888 Fire Insurance Plan Sheet 53 showing the development pattern at the time. Credit: LAC





Figure 11: 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

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### 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 16-storey residential tower fronting onto Somerset Street, consist of a three-storey red brick podium that wraps around the entire base. At the fourth floor the footprint is recessed and further defined by a dark finish. The fifth to the ninth floor are treated with a light off-white brick. The upper 7 floors are further set back from Somerset in a darker grey finish.



Figure 13: Street context showing the planned development in relation to the existing buildings on the north side of Somerset and the west side of O'Connor Streets. Source: Figurr Architect Collective.

<b>LEGAL DESCRIPTION:</b>		
LOTS 5 AND 41, REGISTERED PLAN 12281	0419-2013, 0214, 0215, 0216	
CITY OF OTTAWA PIN NUMBER		
294-236 O'Connor Street + 311 Somerset Street West, Ottawa		
<b>SITE INFORMATION</b>		
LOT AREA	1372.3 sq m [14771.6 sq ft]	
LOT FRONTAGE	30.09 m [98.7 ft]	
LOT DEPTH	34.204 m [112.2 ft]	
OFFICIAL PLAN DESIGNATION: GENERAL URBAN AREA TRADITIONAL MAIN STREET		
SCHEDULE 1A: AREA X		
ZONING: TRADITIONAL 1/4 STREET ZONE T1(2185)		
ADJUTING ZONES: NORTH (COOPER ST.: R1B, 482) F1.3 (1)		
SOUTH (SOMERSET STREET): T1 (2185) H1B)		
WEST: T1(2185) H1B)		
EAST: T1(2185) H14.5)		
<b>BUILDING INFORMATION</b>		
BUILDING AREA:	885 m <sup>2</sup> [9510.8 sq ft]	
BUILDING FLOOR AREA:	11638 m <sup>2</sup> [125249 sq ft]	
PROPOSED USE:	APARTMENT DWELLING, HIGH RISE	
<b>UNIT BREAKDOWN:</b>		
LEVELS 2:	7 UNITS	-
LEVELS 3 - 4:	11 UNITS EA.	-
LEVELS 5 - 9:	11 UNITS EA.	-
LEVELS 10:	8 UNITS EA.	-
LEVELS 11 - 16:	7 UNITS	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>139 UNITS</b>	-
<b>ZONING TABLE</b>		
	<b>T1(2185) REQUIRED</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
MINIMUM LOT AREA	NO MINIMUM (ZONING)	1372 m <sup>2</sup>
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH	NO MINIMUM	N/A
FRONT YARD SETBACK	1/4 MINIMUM: 0m 1/4 MAXIMUM: 3m	2.69 m
SETBACK FROM HYDRO UTILITIES	POLE: 6m	6.5m FROM HYDRO LINE RESULTING IN 2.99m SETBACK FROM PROPERTY LINE
INTERIOR SIDE YARD SETBACK	3m MAX (RUB + WITHIN 5m: 1.5m BEYOND 21m: 6m)	WEST: 1.2m
CORNER SIDE SETBACK	3m ADD 2m ABOVE 15m	6.65m AT GROUND FLOOR 4.06m SECOND FLOOR AND ABOVE

REAR YARD SETBACK	7.5m SETBACK	6.65m AT GROUND FLOOR 4.06m SECOND FLOOR AND ABOVE
BUILDING HEIGHT	MINIMUM: 4.5m GROUND FLOOR MAXIMUM: 20m (6 STOREYS) (RUB + H1(7M)) (DENTRETOUW SECONDARY PLAN = 63m)	GF: 4.8m
LANDSCAPED AREA	3m ABUTTING RESIDENTIAL ZONE REDUCED TO 1m WITH 1.4m HIGH FENCE	
MAX. FLOOR SPACE INDEX	NONE	N/A
VEHICLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS (AREA X, RUBER URBAN, SCHEDULE 1A)	0 FOR FIRST 12 UNITS 0.5 PER DWELLING UNIT (34 SPACES)	P1 PARKING = 12 SPACES P2 PARKING = 26 SPACES RES. TOTAL = 38 SPACES
VISITOR PARKING REQUIREMENTS (AREA X, SCHEDULE 1A)	NON-RESIDENTIAL 0 WITH GFA 200 m <sup>2</sup> OR LESS	13 SPACES
AMENITY AREA REQUIREMENTS	6m <sup>2</sup> PER DWELLING UNIT (840m <sup>2</sup> )	BALCONIES/TERRACE: LVL 1: 9 m <sup>2</sup> LVL 2: 38 m <sup>2</sup> (355 SF) LVL 3-6: 253 m <sup>2</sup> (2701 SF) LVL 10-16: 245 m <sup>2</sup> (2632 SF) TOTAL: 631 m <sup>2</sup> (6792 SF)  COMMUNAL AMENITY: LVL 1: 151 m <sup>2</sup> (1628 SF) LVL 2: 205 m <sup>2</sup> (2202 SF) LVL 10: 146 m <sup>2</sup> (1570 SF) TOTAL: 541 m <sup>2</sup> (5823 SF)  TOTAL: 631 m <sup>2</sup> (2 BALCONY AREA + 2) + 541 m <sup>2</sup> (COMMUNITY AMENITY) = 1172 m <sup>2</sup>
BICYCLE PARKING SPACES	0.5 PER DWELLING UNIT	

Figure 12: Legend providing site and building information,





Figure 14: View looking north east of the proposed development illustrates the stepping of the tower and the integration of the development along Somerset with the defined step backs and material changes.



Figure 15: View of the planned high-rise looking north west from the intersection of Somerset and O'Connor Streets. Source: Figurr Architect Collective.



Figure 16: The podium on Somerset. Source: Figurr Architect Collective



Figure 17 and 18: View of the South Elevation on Somerset and the east elevation on O'Connor Streets. Source Figurr Architect Collective.



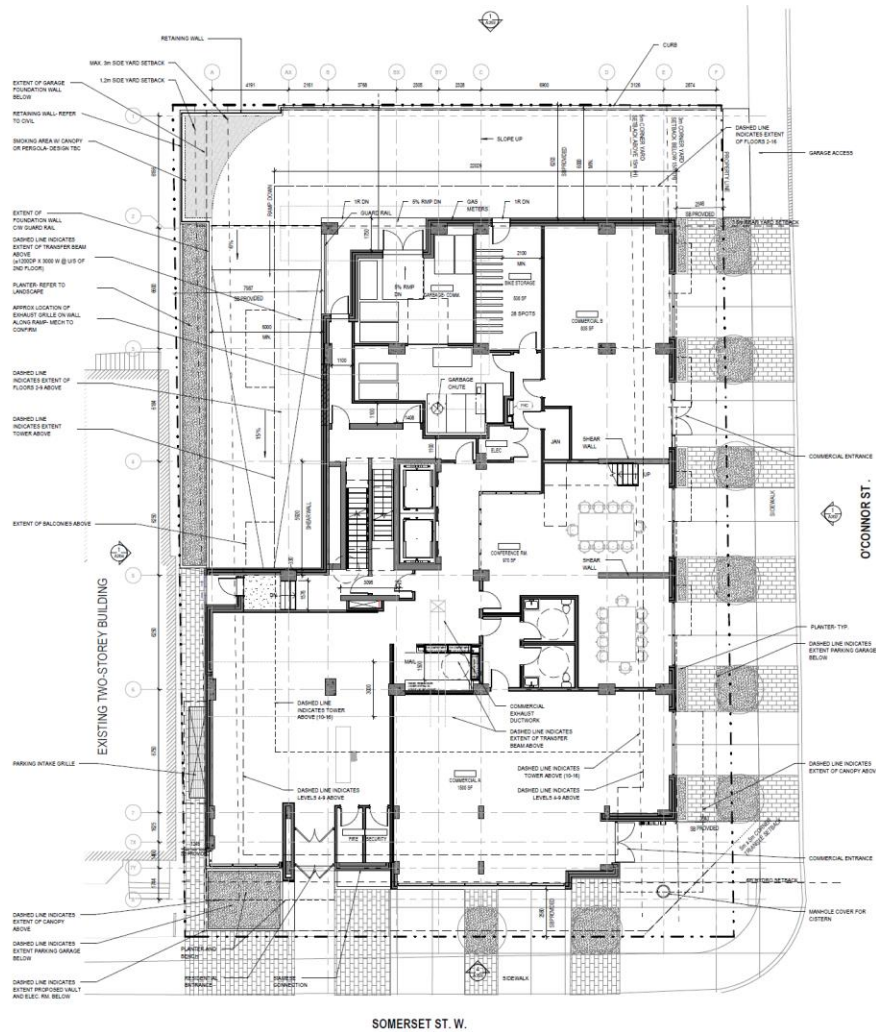


Figure 18: Ground Floor site plan illustrating the landscape treatment on Somerset and O'Connor Streets. Source Figurr Architect Collective



## 5.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

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### 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 a sixteen storey high rise to the character 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.

### 5.2 Heritage Integration

*In response to the **Centretown HCD Plan** the following were taken into consideration:*

- *All 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 character of the entire block as illustrated in Figure 15.



Figure 19: Streetscape context illustrating the massing along Somerset, datum lines, programming that interprets the cadence, and rhythm. Street detail including the arched windows balconies and materials are introduced in a contemporary expression being carried into the new building treatment for the first three floors. Source Figurr Architect Collective.

The additional 7 storeys next to the buildings on Cooper Street challenges the heritage district goals. However, the separation distance from Cooper Street and location next to lots unsuitable for high-rise development provides visual separation, mitigating to some extent the potential that the development overwhelms or diminishes the positive elements of the neighbourhood.

### **Materials and Finishes.**

The finishes and palette of materials and colours of the 3- 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 17). 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 (figure 16).

## **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.

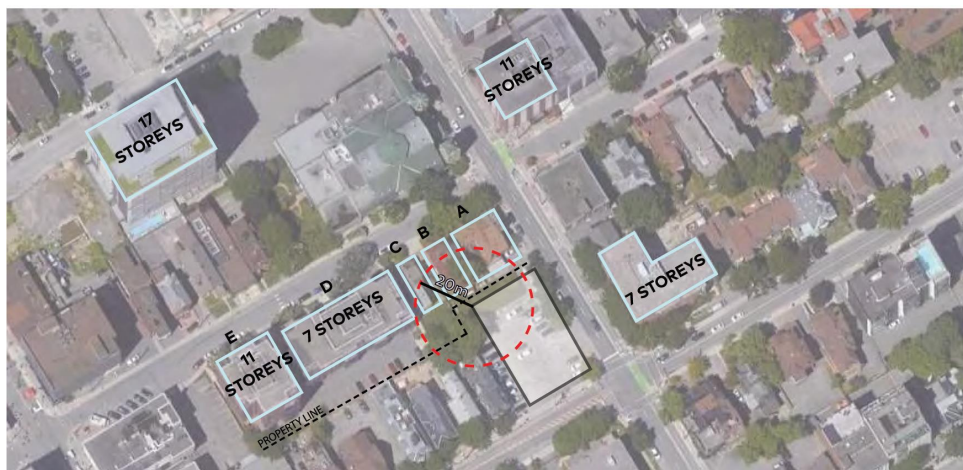


Figure 20: neighbouring buildings with heights noted.

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 the overhead hydro meter requires an additional setback with a 1.0m front yard setback at grade that increases to 3.0m above the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. At the 9th floor the building steps back more. The rear yard 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 provides a pedestrian scale to the neighbourhood. The lower levels (three-storey base) of the tower extend this character along the street. As illustrated in Figure 15.

The commercial style glazing at the ground floor references 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. Above the 9<sup>th</sup> floor the tower's footprint is reduced and the balconies project 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 grained rhythm street frontage to reflect the adjacent buildings and character of the mainstreet.*

**Discussion:** See Figure.

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

**Discussion:** The lobby is positioned on Somerset. O’Connor 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 stepbacks, cornice lines, façade horizontal and vertical articulations, opening sizes, proportions and rhythms, and building materials.*

**Discussion:** See figure 15.

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 stepback.*

**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.

## 5.4 Development Impacts

**Positive impacts** of the proposed development on the cultural heritage values of the Centretown HCD and Argyle Avenue 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 carefully 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 help define the corner.
- The proposed tower is on the north side at the intersection, which represents a logical transition with the existing high-rise building to the north of the site.
- From the south no views or vistas are affected by this proposal.

**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.

- The proximity of the high rise to the neighbouring historic properties on Somerset and on Cooper Streets.
- On O'Connor the sidewalk width is overall very narrow. The level and speed of traffic along O'Connor Street has created unpleasant pedestrian conditions and potentially restricted development interest. The scale of the building and reduced setbacks on O'Connor may accentuate this perception.
- O'Connor Street is a one-way arterial street going south with focused views as drivers move along the street. The north façade is not as well articulated with stepbacks and does not address the importance of these views.

## 6.0 ALTERNATIVES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

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### 6.1 Alternatives

The set back of the tower from Somerset at the 9<sup>th</sup> floor is generous and alleviates the scale. An alternative would be to set the tower closer to Somerset and provide a greater step back on the north. The rear yard setback from the north property line, could be increased and may be more acceptable given the existing and future development potential on the neighbouring properties. The shifting of the tower would also help address the articulation of the north façade.

### 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 mitigation measures. The treatment of the podium and integration with Somerset is primary recommendation that has been successfully embraced as part of the design.

Most of the recommendations have been incorporated into the design.

- Setting the tower on a 3-storey base mitigates the scale and helps to transition to the heritage buildings as does the recessed footprint and 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 palette and the height of the adjacent heritage buildings draws the eye away from the tower and mitigates the relationship.
- The grouping of existing buildings along Cooper establishes the foreground of views and in effect, creates a continuous frontage that integrates into the design.
- 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, and commercial glazing all contribute to the public realm.
- The extended sidewalk and street trees carry the public improvements to the corner of Somerset.



## **6.3 Conclusions**

### **Relationship at Grade**

The programming of the base is well thought out and suits the street. The wide sidewalk on Somerset and level of animation at grade will add to the Somerset Village place making and integration into the neighbourhood.

### **UDRP recommendation**

Recommendations have been interpreted including:

reduce the height of the base to three storeys to reflect the scale of Somerset Street, and step back the upper building above, aligning the setback on Somerset with the low-rise building to the west.

Introducing a stronger vertical, rather than horizontal, expression of the base with the rhythm following the established cadence of the low-rise streetscape.

Reducing the height and respecting the existing zoning is another recommendation. The design team feels that they have a reasonable rationale for pursuing a taller building in this location. 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.

## 7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY / PEOPLE CONTACTED

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### Bibliography

- Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Guidelines for the Preparation of Cultural Heritage Impact Statements (City of Ottawa)

### List of People Contacted

Neil Zaret Gemstone Developments, City of Ottawa.

Ashley Kotarba Heritage Planner city of Ottawa

## 8.0 AUTHORS QUALIFICATIONS

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**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.

Commonwealth has completed a number of Cultural Heritage Impact Statements for the private and public sectors including the following:

185 Fifth Avenue, Mutchmor Public School Addition, Ottawa, Ontario.

2489 Bayview Avenue, CFC Canadian Film Institute, Toronto, Ontario.

1015 Bank Street, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Ontario.

Algoma District Wind Farm Proposal, Lake Superior Shoreline, Ontario.

1040 Somerset Street West, Ottawa, Ontario.

Laurier Friel Redevelopment Sandy Hill, Ottawa, Ontario.

Cumberland /Murray Streets, Lowertown West, Ottawa, Ontario.

1120 Mill Street, Manotick, Ottawa, Ontario.

Ontario Place, Waterfront Park and Trail Toronto, Ontario.

Fort William Historical Park, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Allen/Capitol Theatre 223 Princess St., Kingston, Ontario.

101-109 Princess Street and 206-208 Wellington Street Kingston, Ontario.

Greystone Village, Oblate Lands Redevelopment, 175 Main Street Ottawa, Ontario.

Bradley/Craig Barn 590 Hazeldean Road, Ottawa, Ontario.

LeBreton Flats, IllumiNATION LeBreton Redevelopment, Ottawa Ontario.