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ARCHITECTURE

Project Description
180 Lansdowne Road S
Application for Permit Under the Ontario Heritage Act

The Property and Heritage Significance

180 Lansdowne Road is a prominent residential lot situated within the Village of Rockcliffe Park, Ontario—one of Ottawa’s most distinctive and historically significant neighbourhoods. This portion of Lansdowne Road runs in a north–south direction along the ridgeline that overlooks McKay Lake, offering dramatic yet peaceful natural vistas. The property lies on the east side of the street, where the grade at the front aligns closely with the roadway, while the rear of the lot descends sharply toward the lake’s escarpment. This topography creates a striking slope at the back of the property and presents both opportunities and constraints for architectural intervention.

The existing two-storey dwelling, constructed in 1950, is primarily clad in yellow stucco beneath a red-tiled sloped roof with a faux colonial Spanish aesthetic. The garage is positioned prominently at the forefront of the façade, diminishing the legibility of the main entrance and contributing to an automobile-centric presence along the streetscape. The *Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan* (RPHCDP) identifies the property as a Grade II resource—considered less significant within the district’s hierarchy. This assessment is reflected in the property’s Heritage Survey and Evaluation Phase Two score of 23/100 (2010). 180 Lansdowne Road South is positioned between two Grade I properties (190 and 170 Lansdowne) and across from two additional Grade I properties (193 and 187 Lansdowne), three of which feature stone cladding.

Over time, the structure has deteriorated considerably. Issues including mould, structural rot, asbestos, and persistent dampness migrating through the exposed rock face in the basement compromise the building’s safety, durability, and habitability. Given these deficiencies and the property’s relatively modest heritage value, the proposal seeks to remove the existing building and construct a new residence that provides a healthy living space and better aligns with the architectural character of Rockcliffe Park.

The Proposal

The proposed new home will have a Gross Floor Area of approximately 733.7 m² and a Floor Space Index of 0.373, incorporating the lower level and all double-height interior volumes. The architectural expression is contemporary yet contextual, featuring a carefully composed series of forms. At the street, the house reads as two storeys, with the upper volume strategically set back to reduce perceived massing and maintain compatibility with the neighbourhood’s scale. Toward the rear, the natural grade allows for a walkout lower level that capitalizes on the site’s dramatic slope and offers unobstructed views toward McKay Lake.

The exterior material palette—split-faced limestone, bronze, and slatted wood—has been selected to create a warm, enduring, and site-sensitive architectural identity. These materials reference both the natural landscape and the refined built character found throughout Rockcliffe Park, making for a modern look that is sympathetic to the context and materiality of the neighbouring homes. Larger, thoughtfully placed windows will provide generous daylighting, promote indoor-outdoor visual connectivity, and reinforce the contemporary

aesthetic. These windows have been placed primarily to the front and back, retaining privacy for the adjacent homes, which is further supported by the heavily treed lot that is being maintained. In contrast to the existing dwelling, the garage will no longer dominate the front façade; instead, it will align with the entry plane and feature concealed doors that blend seamlessly into the architectural composition.

The siting, height, footprint, and orientation of the proposed residence remain largely consistent with those of the existing structure, while incorporating a front yard set back that is further from the street, minimizing site disturbance. The design maintains the existing grading and retains all mature trees apart from two on the east side of the property, which would be required to be removed during any construction, renovation or otherwise, due to the need to get equipment to the rear of the property. Both of the trees are sugar maples, one of which has significant damage to the trunk, needing removal for safety in the future regardless of construction. These trees will be compensated with additional appropriate trees to replace the loss, ensuring that the landscape character of the lot—and its contribution to the district—remains intact. The rear of the property is to be largely left as is, ensuring that the heavily treed surroundings, as viewed from around the lake, remain as natural as possible, with minimal sightlines to the proposed home.

Soft landscaping is used extensively to establish a welcoming and verdant approach from the street. Existing hedges and trees provide natural privacy for adjacent properties, while new plantings create soft landscape buffers around areas of hardscape. This approach maintains the district's characteristic dominance of greenery over built form. The driveway will maintain a circular layout, allowing cars that are entering and exiting the property to always be forward facing which is an important safety consideration for Lansdowne Road; however the redesigned driveway incorporates a substantially larger garden island, significantly reducing the existing asphalt coverage by over 400 square feet and enhancing the streetscape with layered planting. At the rear, patios, walkways, and a water feature are arranged to limit views of hardscape from the public realm and to integrate seamlessly with the site's natural slope.

Overall, the proposed design respects the heritage context while introducing a thoughtfully crafted, resilient, and architecturally engaging home that enhances both the property and its setting within the Rockcliffe Park community.