

Public Consultation and Application Review Process

April 8, 2022

Claridge Homes is planning a mixed-use, high-rise development, including a new public open space or institutional use, on the west half of the block bounded by Gladstone Avenue, Metcalfe Street, McLeod Street and Elgin Street. The development will be subject to Policy 55 of the updated Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan, which applies to proposed “Landmark Buildings.”

As per the policy, Claridge will deliver a significant, publicly accessible and publicly owned park and/or a significant institutional use on the site. Complementing this use, Claridge will introduce a building that reflects design excellence and is compatible with the park or institutional use and surrounding context. The development will be subject to a design competition and jury process, as per Policy 55.

Principles:

The Claridge team intends to initiate a process of engagement with City staff, the City’s Urban Design Review Panel and Built Heritage Sub-Committee, key stakeholders and the broader community, as described below.

The following principles will guide the overall approach to consultation for the project:

Inclusive – The Claridge team will work with the Ward Councillor’s office, City staff and community leaders to ensure there is engagement with a complete demographic cross-section of the diverse Centretown community.

Adaptable – The Consultation strategy will be reviewed and adapted on an ongoing basis to capitalize on opportunities to reach broad and diverse audiences and fill in any gaps in terms of key individuals and groups.

Responsive – The team will encourage dialogue throughout the process, listening to all points of view, incorporating strong ideas into the design, and providing assurance that all input will be or has been carefully considered.

Engagement Approaches:

Engagement activities will span a spectrum of approaches, depending on the audience and level of interest.

Targeted Engagement – Reaching out to specific groups whose input is necessary for project success. Focused discussions will occur where all participants are given ample time and opportunity to share their feedback.

Public Meetings – Larger open house type events, where a broad range of individuals and groups are invited to meet, learn and share.

Passive Communication – Information that can be accessed according to individual interest and schedule. Providing feedback is optional.

Pre-Competition Engagement

Anticipated Timeline: 4 months

The intent of pre-application engagement activities is to raise awareness about the project and generate ideas to inform the design competition.

Targeted meetings with stakeholders:

- Meeting with Ward Councillor: The Claridge team will introduce the project to the Councillor for initial feedback and discussion, particularly related to the proposed park/institutional use and competition process. We will also discuss the community consultation process to ensure all key stakeholders and the broader public are meaningfully engaged at the appropriate stages of review.
- Meeting with Centretown Citizen Community Association (CCCA): The idea of a landmark development on the site will be presented to the CCCA, including the CCCA's heritage committee, for input on the park/institutional component and local issues to consider and their general thoughts on the approach to the project. The team will also seek guidance on how to effectively engage with the broader Centretown community.
- Meeting with Canadian Museum of Nature Representatives: Given that the site is across the street from the Museum of Nature, opportunities to complement the attractions of the museum and its grounds will be explored through the planning and design process. An initial meeting with Museum representatives will be used to discuss the opportunities and invite general input, particularly on the proposal for a new park/institutional use opposite the Museum grounds.
- Meeting with Heritage Ottawa: We will discuss and seek feedback on the approach to the project and design competition.

Engagement with the public:

- Public Online Forum and Workshop: The Claridge team will present the Landmark Building opportunity and its planning context at an online public forum (unless large public gatherings are once again allowed when the forum is scheduled). Break-out group discussions will follow the presentation for the workshop portion of the event. The break-out groups will allow for facilitated and structured discussions focusing on design principles. The forum and workshop will be advertised broadly through local publications, mailed postcards, email blasts and social media.
- Project Website: Claridge will create a website for the project that provides an overview of the planned design competition process, background information, updates on the planning process, and contact information for written comments.

Engagement with the City:

- Meetings with Community Planning, Parks, Urban Design and Heritage Staff: The intent of these meetings will be to invite initial feedback from staff, identify potential technical issues and discuss the draft Competition Brief. A meeting with Heritage and Planning staff will also be held to review a preliminary analysis of existing buildings on the site.
- Presentations to the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) and Built Heritage Sub-Committee: The draft Competition Brief will be presented at an informal meeting of the UDRP and the Built Heritage Sub-Committee for their comments on the design principles and guidelines.

Design Competition

Anticipated Timeline: 4 months

After completing the pre-competition engagement, Claridge will refine and finalize the Competition Brief, including design principles, massing parameters, programmatic objectives, submission requirements, evaluation criteria and the competition schedule. The Brief will be sent to a short-list of selected Canadian architecture firms recognized nationally and internationally for design excellence. Each architect will be invited to assemble a design team that includes, at a minimum, highly qualified engineers and a landscape architect. Each team will be given 6-8 weeks to develop a concept design for the site that satisfies the principles, parameters and objectives set out in the Competition Brief.

Each team will present their concept design to a jury chaired by urban designer and landscape architect George Dark and including a City of Ottawa representative, another design professional and the owners of Claridge. The jury will rank the submissions against evaluation criteria included in the Competition Brief.

Once a team has been selected and contracted, the winning concept will be the subject of targeted meetings with stakeholders and a public meeting to hear feedback, which will inform schematic and detailed design of the project.

Targeted meetings with stakeholders:

The following meetings will consist of presentations and discussion on the winning concept design.

- Meeting with Ward Councillor
- Meeting with CCCA, including the heritage committee
- Meeting with Canadian Museum of Nature Representatives
- Meeting with Heritage Ottawa

Engagement with the public:

- Public Online Forum: An online public meeting will be held to present the winning concept. Participants will have the opportunity to ask the design team questions and provide feedback.
- Project Website: Claridge will post the winning concept on the project website for public review and feedback over a three-week period.

Engagement with the City:

- The City will have representation on the competition jury, with a representative to be selected through discussion with Claridge.
- Following the competition, the winning concept will be presented to the Urban Design Review Panel and Built Heritage Sub-Committee for informal review prior to submission of planning applications.
- Pre-Application Consultation Meeting with City Staff: The Claridge team will formally meet with City staff to review the winning concept and confirm the required technical studies and other application materials. The materials will include an engagement report that summarizes the consultation process to date, feedback themes and responses to the main comments.

Post-Application Engagement

Anticipated Timeline: 8 months

Claridge will work with the winning design team to finalize the application package for rezoning and site plan approval. Once the application has been submitted, consultation on the proposed development will continue with a third round of engagement aimed at the same spectrum of individuals and groups engaged in the previous rounds. The purpose of the following meetings and events will be to present the proposed schematic design for feedback and refinement.

Targeted meetings with stakeholders:

- Meeting with Ward Councillor
- Meeting with CCCA, including the heritage committee
- Meeting with Canadian Museum of Nature Representatives
- Meeting with Heritage Ottawa
- Other stakeholders as identified

Engagement with the public:

- Public Meeting (non-statutory): A public meeting will be held to share the schematic design with the community. The Claridge team will make a presentation on the proposed building and institutional use/open space design, including a summary of how the proposal responds to previous input received. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss aspects of the

proposal with the team, and provide verbal or written feedback.

- Website: Claridge will update the project website throughout the post-application stage with new material as it becomes available.

Engagement with the City:

- Meetings with City Staff: the Claridge team will meet with City staff as necessary to discuss design and technical comments and share feedback from the stakeholder and public engagement.
- Formal Presentation to the Urban Design Review Panel
- Formal Presentation to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee

If, as a result of the third round of engagement, substantial revisions are made to the proposed development, the Claridge team will proceed with an additional round of engagement with the above groups, with the intent of addressing any outstanding comments and confirming general support for the project's design.

Once City staff have prepared their recommendations report, the final step in the review process will be a statutory public meeting before Planning Committee and a report to City Council for its decision on the rezoning application.

Evaluation and Feedback

The Claridge team intends to ensure the feedback loop is completed for all interested consultation participants. All comments received by the applicant will be monitored, reviewed and tracked. At each meeting or session, the Claridge team will share feedback on how prior input and feedback has been integrated into the overall design approach. The application resubmission package will also include responses to all feedback on the proposal.

Feedback provided to the Claridge team will be addressed with the following steps:

1. Categorization: Comments and questions received, whether verbal or written, will be organized according to: topic, date, stakeholder type, and whether a specific report-back has been requested.

2. Analysis: The feedback will be reviewed to identify key themes, opportunities or gaps. In particular, the analysis will suggest the most salient issues for different stakeholder types and how the team can best address them.

3. Project Team Dissemination: The comments will be distributed to the Claridge team, with questions and comments most pertinent to specific consultants highlighted for review and response.

4. Actions: Together, the Claridge team will develop a list of actions that should be taken in response to the feedback. In some cases, the response may be a design change, while in other cases, the response may be a written explanation of why the feedback cannot be incorporated as requested.

5. Completing the feedback loop: The results of the previous four steps will be consolidated into a comment matrix, including: theme, issue, number of mentions, key explanatory points, design development action (if any), and responsibility. This matrix will be provided to City staff, the local Councillor, and all participants who have shared their email address and requested to be updated.

Claridge Landmark Project

Proposed Design Competition Process

Claridge proposes to initiate an invited competition to select the design team and the conceptual design for its planned “Landmark Project” on the site it has assembled in Centretown bounded by Gladstone Avenue, Metcalfe Street and McLeod Street. The intent of the competition is to satisfy the City of Ottawa’s Landmark Buildings policy in the updated Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan, and to ensure that the project meets the highest standard of design excellence. Below is a description of the competition process, which will respect the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada’s guidelines for non-endorsed design competitions (<https://raic.org/raic/architectural-competitions-introduction>). Modifications that maintain the spirit and intent of a design competition may be made to the process, where agreed to by Claridge and Planning staff.

Claridge is envisioning a landmark building on the northern part of the site, with an institutional use or public park on the southern part of the site, consistent with Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan Policy 55.

As a complementary document, Urban Strategies has prepared a public consultation strategy for the project for approval by City staff and Council, which provides further detail on the planned consultation approach at each stage of the competition process.

Pre-Competition Planning

Claridge has retained Urban Strategies Inc. to initiate planning for the site and serve as the Professional Advisor for the design competition. Urban Strategies has conducted preliminary analysis of the urban design opportunities for the site, based on the updated Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan, the new Official Plan for the City of Ottawa, the City’s Urban Design Guidelines for High-Rise Buildings, and the site’s physical and land use context. This work will be an input to the draft Competition Brief, which will identify planning and design principles, built form parameters and programming objectives to guide competition bidders.

Claridge and Urban Strategies will hold meetings during the pre-competition stage with stakeholders, including Councillor McKenney, representatives of the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA), the Canadian Museum of Nature and Heritage Ottawa, as well as with the public through an online forum and project website. The purpose of the meetings will be to introduce the idea of a landmark project on the site and gather input to the draft Competition Brief. The draft Brief will also be reviewed with City staff, and the terms of reference, specifically the proposed design principles and guidelines, will be presented to the Urban Design Review Panel and Built Heritage Sub-Committee for feedback.

The input received through the above engagement will inform refinements to the Competition Brief, which will also include information such as submission requirements, evaluation criteria and the competition schedule.

Competition Process

Once the Competition Brief has been finalized, it will be issued by Claridge to a minimum of 3 architectural firms recognized nationally and internationally for design excellence. Each architect will be invited to assemble a design team that includes, at a minimum, highly qualified engineers and a landscape architect. Depending on the intended nature and programming of the public component of the project, Claridge may also require teams to include an Indigenous designer or artist. Each team will be given 6-8 weeks to develop a concept design for the site that satisfies the principles, parameters and objectives set out in the Competition Brief. All teams that make a submission will receive an honourarium.

Each team will present their concept design to a jury chaired by urban designer and landscape architect George Dark and including a City of Ottawa representative, another design professional and the owners of Claridge. The jury will rank the submissions against evaluation criteria included in the Competition Brief. Prior to the jury's deliberations, a heritage expert selected by Claridge will review the submissions and advise on whether or not they conform to the City's applicable heritage policies and respect the heritage-related design guidelines in the Competition Brief.

Post-Competition

Following the design competition, the winning concept will be informally presented to the Urban Design Review Panel and Built Heritage Sub-Committee for comments prior to schematic design and the submission of planning applications. Formal presentations to UDRP and the Built Heritage Sub-Committee will be made following submission. See the Public Consultation and Application Review Process document for more information on post-competition engagement.