

Memo

To: Jennifer Murray, Windmill Development Corporation
From: Carl Bray, Bray Heritage
Date: Monday, June 5, 2017
RE: 15 Aylmer Avenue/Southminster United Church CHIS/Preliminary Summary

Dear Jennifer,

This is in response to your request for a summary of my preliminary research into, and assessment of, the cultural heritage resources that may exist on the subject lands and vicinity and an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on these resources. This memo is to be submitted as part of your application for a Zoning By-law Amendment and is in advance of the final CHIS, which would accompany the Site Plan Application.

Development Context

The subject lands are located in Old Ottawa South, an area of downtown Ottawa that is separated from the Glebe neighbourhood to the north by the Rideau Canal and the Driveway scenic roadway. The Canal and its adjacent 30-m. buffer zone are part of the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site and are managed by Parks Canada, while the Driveway and its associated lands are the responsibility of the National Capital Commission. Both of these are commenting agencies (to the City of Ottawa) for developments near or adjacent to their lands.

The property's history is tied to the development of the surrounding neighbourhood. Formerly agricultural land, Old Ottawa South was urbanized in the late 19th century once the area was linked to the rest of the city by streetcar and was annexed in the early 20th century. Churches were built to serve the newly constructed residential and commercial areas and two of those congregations – Methodist and Presbyterian – amalgamated in the 1920s to form Southminster United Church. The current church building, constructed in the early 1930s, replaces the original Methodist church on that site. Following World War II, the congregation was able to add a church hall (Christian Education Wing) providing meeting rooms, offices and an apartment.

Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Resources

The City of Ottawa has not assessed the 1932 church and 1955 church hall for potential cultural heritage significance. The Church property containing these buildings is not Listed on the City's Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. As part of this Cultural Heritage Impact Statement, my firm has completed an inventory of potential cultural heritage resources on, and in the vicinity of, the subject property, and prepared an evaluation of the subject property using the criteria in Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Design/Physical Value

The existing church is a representative example of the Gothic Revival style popular for institutional buildings up until the mid-20th century. It is not a rare or unique example. The church exterior and interior display a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit; however, the church hall is a competent but otherwise unremarkable addition. As a result, only the "original" church portion of the property meets this criterion, and not the Christian Education Wing (church hall).

Historical/Associative Value

Southminster United Church has direct associations with the development of Old Ottawa South, especially through its incorporation of two earlier local congregations (Methodist and Presbyterian). Its construction during the Depression was made possible in part by labour donated by members of the congregation. The church and hall are the work of a well-known Ottawa architect, J.A. Ewart. As a result, the property meets this criterion.

Contextual Value

The church is a local landmark as well as supporting the character of the area and being functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. The church hall is compatible with the church and with the streetscape character. As a result, the property meets this criterion.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Southminster United Church is a local landmark and cultural centre for the Old Ottawa South neighbourhood of downtown Ottawa. Located overlooking the Rideau Canal at Bank Street, the Gothic Revival church is linked historically to the development of the neighbourhood, to the amalgamation of local Protestant churches and to the work of Ottawa architect J.A.Ewart.

Heritage Attributes
(church)

- Gothic Revival architectural design
- Cladding in Nepean sandstone
- Original wooden doors
- Copper cresting and ashlar decorative trim
- Original stained-glass windows
- Interior wall and ceiling structure and materials
- Interior gallery, transepts and chancel

(church hall)

- Cladding in Nepean sandstone
- Memorial window
- Aylmer Street entrance door and ashlar surround

Policy Context

The heritage policies applicable to the subject property and its proposed development include those from the Province as well as from federal agencies and the municipality. The Provincial Policy Statement section 2.6 requires the conservation of cultural heritage resources, including built heritage and cultural heritage landscapes (2.6.1) and areas of archaeological potential (2.6.2). The latter will be addressed through a separate archaeological assessment. Section 2.6.3 also requires proposed development to be assessed in terms of its impact on adjacent cultural heritage resources. Federal policies include the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site Management Plan (2005). Section 10 of that Plan has general policies relating to development within or beyond the 30-m. buffer zone flanking the Canal to ensure that development there does not “degrade the heritage values of the nominated property” but there are no specific policies for the urban sections of the Canal. The National Capital Commission (NCC) does not have specific policies relating to development adjacent to their lands, and the Driveway is not designated as a cultural heritage resource. The City of Ottawa Official Plan Section 4.6.3 has specific policies for conservation of the Rideau Canal corridor’s visual quality and cultural features and requires consultation with Parks Canada and the National Capital Commission for development adjacent to their lands. The subject property is also subject to the urban design guidelines for Traditional Mainstreets (Section 2.5.1) because the site is within the Bank Street corridor.

Proposed Development

The proposed development entails retention of the existing church, which has been assessed in this CHIS as having cultural heritage significance, and demolition of the existing church hall (Christian Education Wing) which has been assessed as having no cultural heritage significance except for a few components suitable for salvage and reuse. This development is proposed in order to permit construction of a three-storey residential building and a six-storey residential building with a central open space linked to Galt Street and the rear wall of the church. The three-storey building consists of four townhouses and is to be located facing Aylmer Avenue between the west side entrance to the church and the corner of Galt Street. The six-storey building is to be located facing Galt Street and running alongside the north property line. The building mass is stepped back from Galt Street at the upper three storeys: it also overlaps approximately one third of the north side of the church, along the north property line, with landscaped open space in the intervening area. Parking is provided within each of the townhouses and in an underground parking structure beneath the mid-rise residential building, with access from Galt Street. There will also be on-street parking on both municipal streets. There is an internal courtyard between the two residential buildings, centred on the west gable end of the church (with the rose window above).

The proposed development conserves the most significant cultural heritage resource of the property -the church – and is designed to fit within the development pattern, urban scale and architectural styles of the neighbourhood. This approach responds to the policies and guidelines of the Official Plan. The design of the development ensures that the church building remains prominent as a landmark and as a key feature of views from the Rideau Canal and the Bank Street bridge while screening the majority of new construction behind the existing trees on the NCC property and behind the existing church.

Impacts on Cultural Heritage Resources and Mitigation Measures

As the property does not currently have any heritage designation, the primary impact issue that the City has identified relates to the effects of the proposed development on views from the nearby Rideau Canal World Heritage Site and, to a lesser extent, on views from the adjacent lands of the National Capital Commission. That said, in the context of this CHIS, there have been cultural heritage resources identified on the subject property and the impact of the proposed development on these resources has also been addressed. Conservation and mitigation measures follow the policies and guidelines of the City-adopted Parks Canada *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2010)*.

The church is proposed to be *preserved* with some minor *rehabilitation* of its basement interior spaces. If, in accord with this evaluation, the City determines that the church portion of the property meets the requirements for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the municipality may wish to proceed with designation.

The church hall is proposed to be demolished. Mitigation measures proposed as part of the development are as follows:

- Photographic recording of the existing church hall building exterior and interior prior to and during demolition, identifying elements for potential salvage and re-use;
- Assessment of the existing trees on the church property and abutting the property line for current condition and for potential impact from construction and preparation of a tree preservation plan; and
- Where feasible, salvage and re-use elsewhere in the new development of the existing hall building materials and components.

In addition, the proposed design of the new building mitigates the impact of new development on the local context (through compliance with the design guidelines found in the Official Plan Section 2.5.1 and in the urban design guidelines for Traditional Mainstreets), and on the existing church, in the following ways:

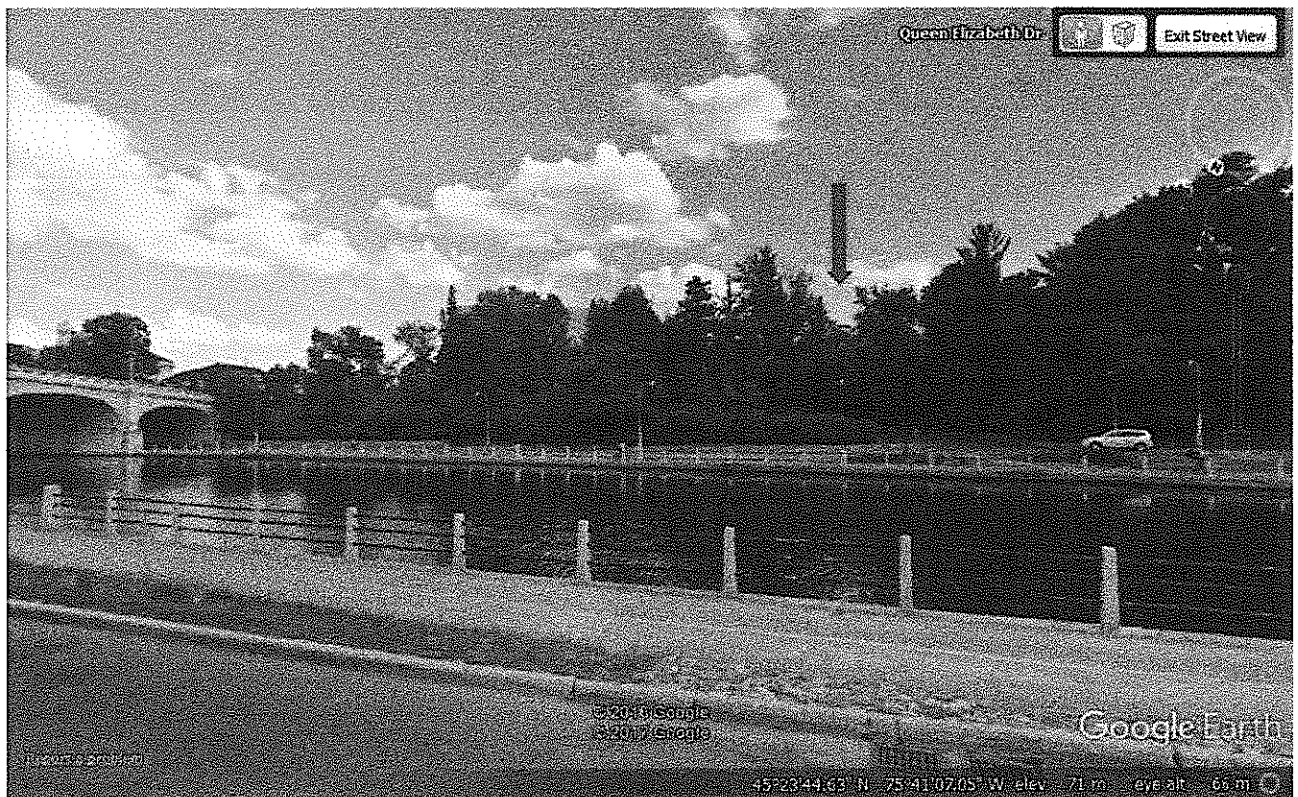
- The architectural design of the new building is consistent with the overall architectural character of the neighbourhood and is compatible with and respectful of the design of the existing church building and of the branch library across Bank Street.
- Views to the existing church from the abutting streets and from the Canal are retained and a new axial view of the west wall and rose window is being created in the space between the two new buildings.
- The new mid-rise building is configured to retain views of the north transept of the existing church.
- The new building massing is compatible with that of the church: the townhouses reflect the height of the main block of the church (and the existing church hall) while the top of the stepped back sixth storey of the mid-rise building approximates the crestline of the church roof.
- The architectural style and cladding materials of the new buildings are influenced by the design of the existing church (e.g. colour palette, townhouse rooflines, stone on the first three storeys).
- Where possible, some of the existing materials and elements of the church hall may be re-used in the new buildings or in the existing church (e.g. the Memorial Window, stone cladding, entrance doors and surround).
- Existing mature trees and ornamental plantings on the Aylmer Avenue and Bank Street frontages are to be retained, where feasible.
- The church and its associated landscape remain highlighted as community landmarks, with the new development located behind and away from the gateway at Bank Street.

There are no properties adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, the subject lands that are Listed on the City's Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The proposed development's potential impact on views from the Canal and NCC lands is minimal. The church hall is currently screened from view of the Canal and Driveway by mature trees located on the south side of the NCC's Driveway right-of-way. The dense distribution of these trees, including a stand of coniferous trees, also provides a partial screen in winter. Mitigation of the proposed development's impact on views from the Canal navigation channel (which, in this narrow section of the Canal, includes the full width of the waterway), from the Driveway and from the Bank Street bridge will be accomplished by:

- Retaining existing mature trees on the slopes of the Driveway exit route, on NCC lands adjacent to the subject property; and
- Designing the mid-rise building and townhouses so that they approximate the height of the church and are compatible with the church architectural design and materials.

When viewed from Bank Street and the bridge, the new development will be located behind the church except for a portion of the mid-rise building that extends along the north side of the church. This part of the building will be partially (or, in full summer, almost entirely) hidden by the existing trees on the NCC property and church grounds; otherwise, its glazed cladding will contrast with the stone cladding of the church and, as an element in the foreground, direct visual attention to the church.



BRAY Heritage



