

Memo

To: Jennifer Murray, Windmill Development Corporation
From: Carl Bray, Bray Heritage
Date: Friday, September 8, 2017
RE: 15 Aylmer Avenue/Southminster United Church CHIS/Response to Agency Comments

Dear Jennifer,

This is in response to your request for a response to comments made by Parks Canada, National Capital Commission in the context of the potential impacts of the proposed development on heritage resources within properties under these agency's jurisdiction. 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. The following text includes relevant portions of my preliminary CHIS summary of June 5th, 2017 in order to provide background information and context for the subsequent responses to agency comments.

Development Context

The subject lands are located in Old Ottawa South, and 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.

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. 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.

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 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.

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.

Response to Agency Comments

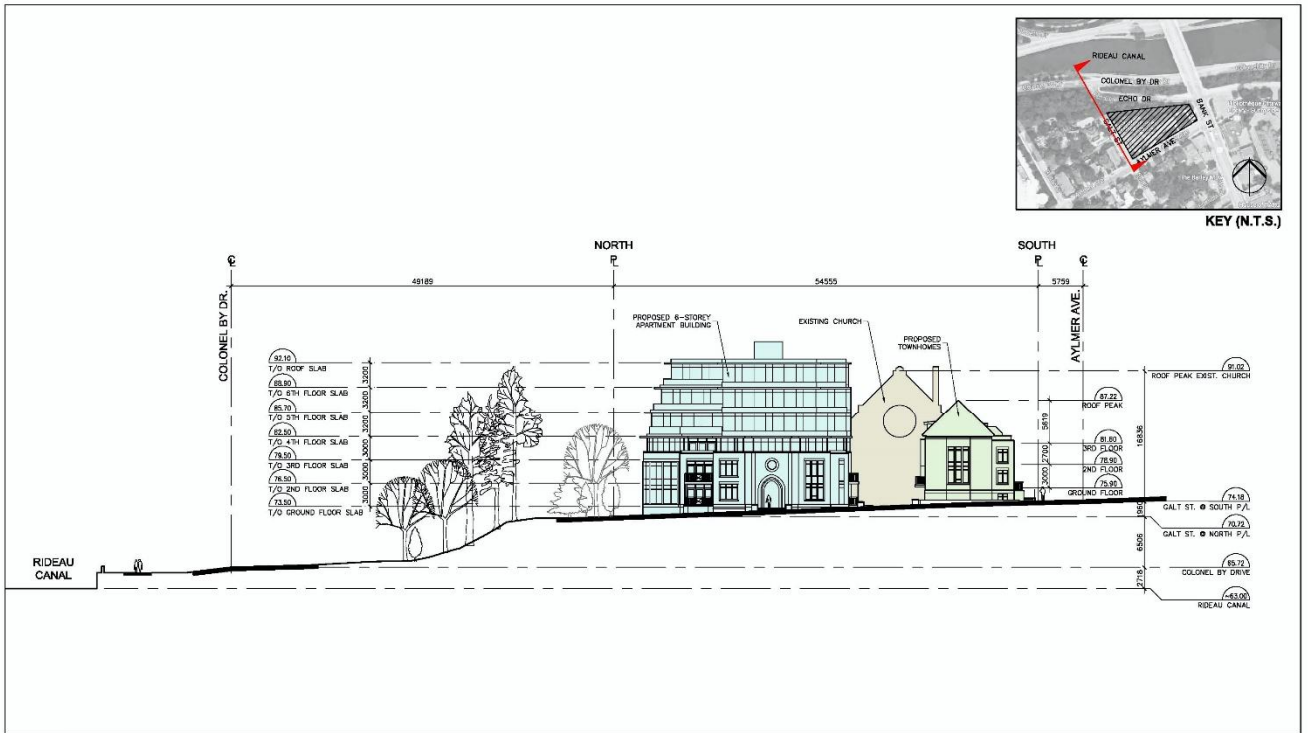
As summarized from the Zoning By-law Amendment Application report of 31 July, 2017 prepared by the City of Ottawa Planning Department, the comments from Parks Canada and the National Capital Commission are as follows:

- In the letter of 18 July, 2017, Parks Canada staff requested views of the proposed development from the Canal, specifically asking for renderings of the north façade of the proposed six storey building. Staff also had concerns about the amount of glazing proposed for the building, suggesting that masonry would be more compatible with the existing church.
- In an email of 6 July, 2017, National Capital Commission staff also requested renderings of the north façade and provided mapping showing suggested view locations. Staff also recommended material changes (masonry substituting for glazing, especially in terms of impact on night views of the building), and requested further information on measures for conserving mature trees on NCC lands abutting the development site.

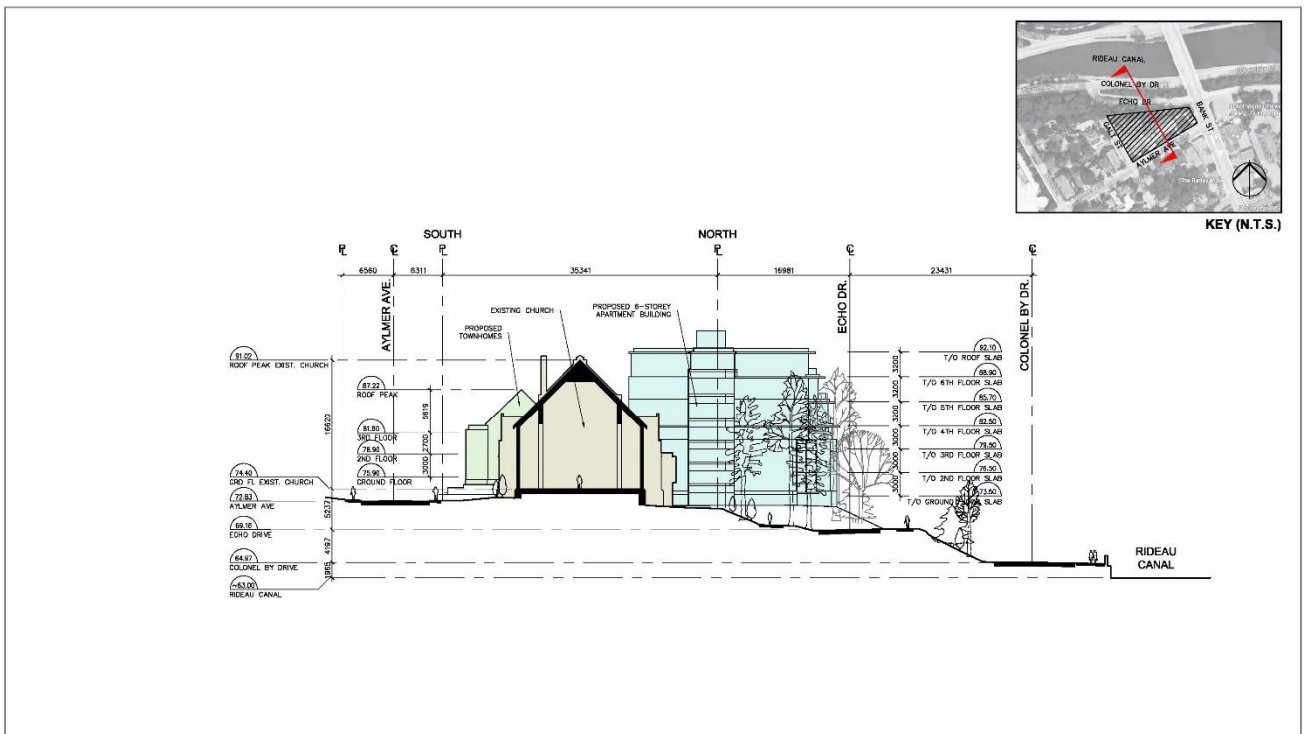
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BRAY Heritage





SOUTHMINSTER CHURCH
PROPOSED 6 STOREY CONDO
SITE SECTION ALONG GALT STREET
 1:400
 May 19, 2017



SOUTHMINSTER CHURCH
PROPOSED 6 STOREY CONDO
SITE SECTION THROUGH CHURCH
 1:400
 May 19, 2017

The renderings shown here have been prepared by the project architect, using photographs supplied by the NCC. Each provides an approximation of the view of the church from two key viewpoints along the Canal: from the east, looking towards the bridge and the church façade; and to the south, from the opposite bank of the Canal (this also approximates the view from the Canal navigation channel). In both renderings, the proposed six storey residential building is visible next to the church and slightly above the treetops. The scale relationship is also shown in the two sectional views provided above. The new building is slightly higher than the church but does not extend beyond the rear half of the church. As a result, the church façade and the majority of its massing are clearly evident, especially when viewed from Bank Street, from the bridge, and from the Canal looking west towards the bridge. Views directly south from the Canal have the new building overlapping the rear portion of the church.

In terms of visual impact, the character of views from the Canal of the subject property has not been specified in either Parks Canada or National Capital Commission policies and guidelines. At present, existing views of the church as seen from the Canal have it appearing behind and above a screen of mature trees. In order to reduce the visual impact of the proposed six storey building to be located on the north side of the church, between it and the Canal, both agencies have suggested further mitigation measures that involve height reduction and material changes. Lowering the height of the proposed residential building, while somewhat reducing its visibility from the Canal, would jeopardize the feasibility of the church rehabilitation project and thus has to be weighed against the potential cancellation of a development that has significant community benefits. More applicable mitigation measures here could involve material changes for the building exterior, currently shown as being extensively glazed. By increasing the amount of masonry cladding on the building such that the ratio of wall to window is greater, and the overall colour is darker, the new building will be able to blend more easily with the tree canopy and with the stone exterior of the church. Conserving the mature trees on NCC property will retain the existing tree screen.

In summary, the comments from review agencies centre on ensuring that the church remains a dominant feature in views from the Rideau Canal. The proposed development has been designed to keep visible the majority of the church building, especially the main façade and gabled roofline. Like the nearby Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada building, Southminster United Church will continue to be a landmark, within the neighbourhood and as seen from the Canal.

Recommendations

In accord with most of the comments made by Parks Canada and the National Capital Commission, mitigation of impact on views from the Canal can be accomplished by:

- Increasing the amount of masonry cladding on the exterior of the proposed six storey building
- As part of the final submission, providing revised renderings showing these changes
- Working with the NCC to conserve the mature trees that are adjacent to the development site

CB