



July 02, 2025

Greg MacPherson, RPP, MCIP
Heritage Planner
Planning, Development and Building Services Department
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West, 4th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Re: Objection to Heritage Designation of 251 Northwestern Avenue (Ottawa Mosque)

Dear Mr. MacPherson,

On behalf of the Ottawa Muslim Association (“OMA”), we extend our sincere thanks to the City of Ottawa and its staff for their engagement and efforts regarding the proposed heritage designation of the Ottawa Mosque located at 251 Northwestern Avenue. While we appreciate the City’s recognition of the mosque’s historical and architectural contributions to the community, this letter serves as the OMA’s formal objection to the proposed designation at this time, pursuant to the 30-day response window provided.

The newly elected Board of Directors and Council of Trustees, having assumed office in early 2025, have not been afforded sufficient time to conduct the due diligence necessary to evaluate the legal, operational, and financial implications of this designation. Under our Constitution and Trust Deed, any decision with long-term implications for mosque property, such as heritage designation, requires formal approval from both the Council of Trustees and the General Body of Regular Members. No such approval process has occurred, nor has the matter been brought to the General Body for discussion or consent.

Moreover, the broader community that the OMA serves, whose participation is fundamental to our decision-making, has not been properly informed or consulted.

We are also concerned about the restrictive nature of the designation, which would apply to the following exterior features:

- 1) Two-storey irregular massing
- 2) Brown brick cladding
- 3) Large semi-circular and circular windows, including the west façade window with Arabic inscription
- 4) Copper-covered dome with semi-circular windows and finial
- 5) Octagonal minaret with projecting balcony and copper-covered cone



While we value these architectural elements, designating them under heritage protection may impose significant and permanent financial obligations. Specialized materials such as copper are increasingly costly to maintain or replace, and any work on these features could require formal municipal approvals. This presents a substantial burden for a non-profit, community-funded charitable organization such as ours.

Additionally, the Ottawa Mosque must remain responsive to the evolving religious, educational, and social needs of our growing congregation. Heritage designation could significantly restrict future renovation or expansion plans required to serve our members more effectively, including enhancing accessibility, increasing capacity, or modernizing infrastructure.

For all these reasons, the Ottawa Muslim Association's Board of Trustees and Board of Directors respectfully object to the proposed designation and request that the City not proceed with the heritage designation of 251 Northwestern Avenue at this time.

We wish to emphasize that our objection is procedurally necessary and substantively warranted. Should the community, through proper consultation and due process, determine in the future that such a designation aligns with our long-term vision, we remain open to revisiting the matter.

This letter is being submitted by both email and registered mail to ensure timely receipt and a formal record.

We thank you for your understanding and your ongoing engagement with our organization.

Sincerely,

Bassam Fouad

President
Ottawa Muslim Association

Ahmed Ibrahim

Ibrahim, Ahmed O
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Chairman of the Trust
Ottawa Muslim Association