

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.