

5. **APPLICATION TO PERMIT THE DEMOLITION OF THE UGANDAN HIGH COMMISSION, 231 COBOURG STREET, A PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE WILBROD LAURIER HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND APPLICATION FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION ON THE SAME SITE**
- DEMANDE DE DÉMOLITION DU HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DE L'UGANDA, AU 231, RUE COBOURG, UNE PROPRIÉTÉ SITUÉE DANS LE DISTRICT DE CONSERVATION DU PATRIMOINE WILBROD LAURIER, ET DEMANDE DE NOUVELLE CONSTRUCTION SUR LE MÊME EMPLACEMENT**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED**

That Council:

1. approve the application to demolish the Ugandan High Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, submitted by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. received on December 8, 2017, including the revised Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (Document 15), dated November 22, 2017, prepared by Robertson Martin Architects;
2. approve the construction of a new building at 231 Cobourg Street according to plans by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. received on March 19, 2018;
3. delegate authority for minor design changes to the General Manager, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department;
4. issue the heritage permit with an expiry date of either:
  - (a) two years from the date of issuance; or
  - (b) two years from the date that decisions on applications under the *Planning Act* are final and binding;whichever is later.

(Note: The statutory 90-day timeline for consideration of this application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* has been extended to 15 May 2018.)

(Note: Approval to alter this property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* must not be construed to meet the requirements for the issuance of a building permit.)

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU COMITÉ, TELLES QUE MODIFIÉES**

Que le Conseil :

1. approuve la demande de démolition du haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, situé au 231, rue Cobourg, présentée par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. et reçue le 8 décembre 2017, y compris le version révisé de l'étude d'impact sur le patrimoine culturel (Document 15), daté le 22 novembre 2017, préparée par la firme Robertson Martin Architects;
2. approuve la construction d'un nouveau bâtiment au 231, rue Cobourg, conformément aux plans soumis par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. le 19 mars 2018;
3. délègue au directeur général de Planification, Infrastructure et Développement économique le pouvoir d'apporter des changements mineurs de conception;
4. délivre le permis en matière de patrimoine assorti de l'un ou l'autre des délais d'expiration suivants :
  - (a) deux ans à compter de la date de délivrance; ou
  - (b) deux ans à compter de la date à laquelle les décisions relatives aux demandes sont définitives et exécutoires aux termes de la *Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*;la date la plus tardive étant retenue.

(Nota : Le délai réglementaire de 90 jours d'examen de cette demande, exigé en vertu de *la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, a été prolongé jusqu'au 15 mai 2018.)

Nota : L'approbation de la demande de modification aux termes de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario* ne signifie pas pour autant qu'elle satisfait aux conditions de délivrance d'un permis de construire.

DOCUMENTATION/DOCUMENTATION

1. Manager's Report, Right of Way, Heritage and Urban Design Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department dated April 5, 2018 (ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0009)  
  
Rapport du Gestionnaire Services des emprises, du patrimoine et du design urbain, Direction générale de la planification, de l'Infrastructure et du développement économique daté le 5 avril 2018 (ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0009)
2. Extract of Minutes, Built Heritage Sub-Committee, 12 April 2018  
  
Extrait du procès-verbal, Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti, le 12 avril 2018
3. Extract of draft Minutes, Planning Committee, 24 April 2018  
  
Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal, Comité de l'urbanisme, le 24 avril 2018
4. Revised Document 15 (Cultural Heritage Impact Statement), dated November 22, 2017, prepared by Robertson Martin Architects (*distributed separately*)  
  
Document 15 révisé (l'étude d'impact sur le patrimoine culturel), daté le 22 novembre 2017, préparée par la firme Robertson Martin Architects (*distribué séparément*)

**Report to  
Rapport au:**

**Built Heritage Sub-Committee / Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti  
April 12, 2018 / 12 avril 2018**

**and / et**

**Planning Committee / Comité de l'urbanisme  
April 24, 2018 / 24 avril 2018**

**and Council / et au Conseil  
May 9, 2018 / 9 mai 2018**

**Submitted on April 5, 2018  
Soumis le 5 avril 2018**

**Submitted by  
Soumis par:  
Court Curry,**

**Manager / Gestionnaire,**

**Right of Way, Heritage and Urban Design Services / Services des emprises, du  
patrimoine et du design urbain**

**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department / Direction  
générale de la planification, de l'Infrastructure et du développement économique**

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**Ward: RIDEAU-VANIER (12)**

**File Number: ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0009**

**SUBJECT: Application to permit the demolition of the Ugandan High  
Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, a property located in the Wilbrod**

**Laurier Heritage Conservation District and application for new construction on the same site**

**OBJET: Demande de démolition du haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, au 231, rue Cobourg, une propriété située dans le district de conservation du patrimoine Wilbrod Laurier, et demande de nouvelle construction sur le même emplacement**

### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Built Heritage Sub-Committee recommend that Planning Committee recommend that Council:**

- 1. Approve the application to demolish the Ugandan High Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, submitted by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. received on December 8, 2017;**
- 2. Approve the construction of a new building at 231 Cobourg Street according to plans by Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. received on March 19, 2018;**
- 3. Delegate authority for minor design changes to the General Manager, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department;**
- 4. Issue the heritage permit with an expiry date of either:**
  - (a) two years from the date of issuance; or**
  - (b) two years from the date that decisions on applications under the *Planning Act* are final and binding;**

**whichever is later.**

**(Note: The statutory 90-day timeline for consideration of this application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* has been extended to 15 May 2018.)**

**(Note: Approval to alter this property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* must not be construed to meet the requirements for the issuance of a building permit.)**

## RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Comité de l'urbanisme de recommander à son tour au Conseil :

1. D'approuver la demande de démolition du haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, situé au 231, rue Cobourg, présentée par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. et reçue le 8 décembre 2017;
2. D'approuver la construction d'un nouveau bâtiment au 231, rue Cobourg, conformément aux plans soumis par Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. le 19 mars 2018;
3. De déléguer au directeur général de Planification, Infrastructure et Développement économique le pouvoir d'apporter des changements mineurs de conception;
4. De délivrer le permis en matière de patrimoine assorti de l'un ou l'autre des délais d'expiration suivants :
  - (a) deux ans à compter de la date de délivrance; ou
  - (b) deux ans à compter de la date à laquelle les décisions relatives aux demandes sont définitives et exécutoires aux termes de la *Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*;  
la date la plus tardive étant retenue.

(Nota : Le délai réglementaire de 90 jours d'examen de cette demande, exigé en vertu de *la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, a été prolongé jusqu'au 15 mai 2018.)

Nota : L'approbation de la demande de modification aux termes de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario* ne signifie pas pour autant qu'elle satisfait aux conditions de délivrance d'un permis de construire.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a revision to [ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0003](#), initially considered at the Built Heritage Sub-committee (BHSC) meeting of February 8, 2018. BHSC passed a Motion at that meeting referring the application back to staff for further review, and requesting

that a structural engineer with heritage experience be engaged to provide an independent engineering report, and that, based on the information in the review, the applicant be encouraged to prepare a revised application that either retains “a significant portion” of the existing building OR a new design that “reflects the recommendations contained in the applicant’s Cultural Heritage Impact Statement.” The independent engineering report has now been submitted and shares the conclusions of the three previous reports that the initial damage to the building was related to soil conditions and that the building “should be demolished.” The applicant has subsequently submitted new drawings, which are recommended for approval as they reflect the CHIS recommendations.

### **Assumptions and Analysis**

The staff report recommends the approval of the demolition of 231 Cobourg Street, while acknowledging that it was the home of Lester B. Pearson for approximately four years in the 1950s. The staff report also recommends the approval of the proposed new building for the Ugandan High Commission, as it respects the Guidelines contained in the Wilbrod Laurier HCD Plan, and has been altered since the initial report to further align with the recommendations of the Cultural Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Robertson Martin Architects.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications.

### **Public Consultation/ Impact**

Heritage Ottawa, Action Sandy Hill, the Ward Councillor and the Chair of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee were circulated the revised plans and asked for comment.

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Le présent rapport est une révision du document [ACS2018-PIE-RHU-0003](#), initialement examiné à la réunion du Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti du 8 février 2018. Le Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti a adopté lors de cette réunion une motion selon laquelle le personnel serait chargé de réexaminer la demande, les services d'un ingénieur en structures possédant de l'expérience en patrimoine seraient retenus pour soumettre un rapport technique indépendant et, sur la base des renseignements obtenus par suite de l'examen, le requérant serait invité à soumettre une demande révisée dans laquelle serait conservée « une partie importante » du bâtiment existant OU proposant une

nouvelle conception « tenant compte des recommandations énoncées dans l'étude d'impact sur le patrimoine culturel du requérant ». Le rapport de l'ingénieur indépendant a été soumis. Il partage les conclusions des trois rapports précédents, voulant que les dommages initiaux observés sur le bâtiment soient liés aux conditions du sol et que le bâtiment « devrait être démoli ». Le requérant a donc soumis de nouveaux plans, dont l'approbation est recommandée puisqu'ils tiennent compte des recommandations de l'étude d'impact sur le patrimoine culturel.

### **Hypothèses et analyse**

Le rapport du personnel recommande d'approuver la démolition du bâtiment situé au 231, rue Cobourg, tout en reconnaissant que Lester B. Pearson y a habité pendant environ quatre ans dans les années 1950. Le rapport du personnel recommande également d'approuver la construction du bâtiment qui serait occupé par le haut-commissariat de l'Ouganda, puisqu'elle respecte les lignes directrices du plan de DCP Wilbrod Laurier et que le projet a été modifié depuis le premier rapport de manière à tenir compte des recommandations de l'étude d'impact sur le patrimoine culturel préparée par la firme Robertson Martin Architects.

### **Répercussions financières**

Aucune répercussion financière pour le public.

### **Avis public et commentaires**

Patrimoine Ottawa, Action Côte-de-Sable, le conseiller du quartier et le président du Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti ont reçu les plans révisés et ont été invités à soumettre leurs commentaires.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Ugandan High Commission, 231 Cobourg Street, is located at the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Streets in the Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District (HCD) (for Location Map, see Document 1). It was constructed in 1945, replacing a large nineteenth-century house. After years as a residential dwelling, the building was purchased for use as the Ugandan High Commission in 1985. The two houses directly to the east of the structure were also constructed after the demolition of the earlier structure, making a group of three 1940s buildings on the north side of Wilbrod Street (please see Fire Insurance Maps, Document 2). The remaining two houses on the north side of Wilbrod Street between Cobourg and Charlotte Streets were built in the late-



nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and there is an early twentieth-century apartment building at the corner. The south side of the street between Cobourg and Charlotte Streets has four late nineteenth- / early twentieth-century houses, and an anomalous high-rise apartment building. Many of these structures are owned by foreign legations and used as embassies, official residences and auxiliary office space.

The current Ugandan High Commission is a flat-roofed, rectangular, two-storey, red brick structure with brick quoins and a modified cornice with simple brick detailing. The front door is symmetrically placed and features a door surround with a broken pediment. There is an octagonal window above the door (see current photographs, Document 3). The building has experienced cracking due to differential settlement in recent years. (For photographs showing damage, see Document 4)

The property was evaluated as part of the Sandy Hill HCD study and was given a score of 44 out of 100, making it a Category 3 building and placing it at the lower end of what is considered in the HCD to be a contributing building. Category 3 buildings in Sandy Hill are those that received a score between 40 and 55. Since the initial evaluation by the consulting team in 2010, further research has revealed that former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson lived in the building from 1955 to 1958 while he served as Minister of External Affairs. It is expected that had the consultants discovered this information, the score on the building would have risen from 44 to 49 out of 100 to account for Pearson's brief tenure (for Heritage Survey Form, see Document 5). It should be noted that, unlike Pearson's house at 243 Augusta Street, which was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage in 1982 because of its association with Pearson, this house was not widely known as one of his residences until recently perhaps because his tenure was brief and during that time he is more frequently associated with where he worked, rather than where he lived.

Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. has filed an application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to demolish the existing structure as it is in poor condition as a result of differential settlement (for 2017 Engineers report see Document 6) and to replace it with a purpose-built high commission. As a property located in a heritage conservation district, a heritage permit issued by City Council is required prior to demolition and new construction. A Zoning By-law amendment application and Site Plan Control approval are also being considered for this property.

### **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of February 8, 2018, the Built Heritage Sub-Committee had concerns with the staff recommendation to permit the demolition of 231 Cobourg Street, the contents of a structural report from 2015, included as part of the application and the design of the proposed replacement building. As a result of these concerns, the Built Heritage Sub-Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS the members of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee have requested additional review of engineering issues and the possibility of retention of at least portions of the building at 231 Cobourg Street, a building designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- that the application to demolish the building at 231 Cobourg Street, a Category 3 building in the Laurier Wilbrod Heritage Conservation District be referred to staff for further review; and
- that the City of Ottawa be directed to engage a structural engineer with heritage experience to provide an independent engineering report which speaks to the structure of the existing building; and
- based on the additional information in the independent review, that the applicant be encouraged to prepare a revised application that retains or incorporates a significant portion of the existing building or a new design that better reflects the recommendations contained in the applicant's Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Built Heritage Sub-Committee refer this matter to staff with a request that the revised report be brought back to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee in such time as to permit consideration by the Sub-Committee, Planning Committee and Council prior to 9 May 2018.

In accordance with the above motion, the City engaged John G. Cooke and Associates Limited (JCAL) to review previous consultant reports on the building, to complete a visual survey of it and to provide an opinion on the state of the building's structure. The technical reports reviewed by JCAL included:

- The Geotechnical Assessment prepared by Paterson Group Inc., dated February 15, 2013; (Document 7).
- Building Condition Assessment prepared by Paterson Group Inc., dated March 11, 2013; (Document 8).
- Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared by AATech Scientific Inc., dated January 17, 2017; (Document 9).
- Structural Assessment on the Chancery prepared by Stephenson Engineering Limited, dated January 24, 2017 (Attached as Document 6).

In accordance with direction above from the Built Heritage Sub-Committee, staff from JCAL also visited the site on February 26, 2018. The JCAL report is attached as Document 10.

The initial 2013 engineering report and assessment of the structure by the Paterson Group, was undertaken when the building was still occupied by the staff of the Ugandan High Commission. It noted structural damage including the cracking of the slab on grade, foundation walls, masonry walls, uneven floors and damaged interior walls. The accompanying 2013 Geotechnical Assessment by the Paterson Group attributed the structural damage to be “related primarily to settlement associated with moisture depletion of the underlying clay soils,” explaining that:

Factors in overall moisture depletion and ground water lowering are considered to be the effects of urbanization and the hotter and drier than normal weather experienced since the late 1990's, related to global climate change. There was a prolonged drought in the second half of 2011 and the first eight months of 2012. Localized moisture depletion is considered to be related significantly to factors such as the moisture demand of nearby trees, in conjunction with the drought.

The Stephenson report (2017) refers to “a combination of severe damage from settlement and age” resulting in “differential settlement”.

The JCAL report (Document 10) states in its introduction that “... the observed, and previously reported, settlement issues and the damage it has caused to the building structure is significant,” concluding that “The Heritage Value of asset [sic] must be weighed with the costs of rehabilitation ...based on this and the significant effort to undertake stabilization, we support recommendations for demolition.”

As a result of the findings of the JCAL report, heritage staff, in compliance with the recommendation above to either preserve a portion of the existing building or work on a new design that better reflects the recommendations contained in the applicant's CHIS, contacted the architect, requesting that plans be revised according to the three recommendations in the CHIS:

1. Refinement of residential typology and scale at the south.
2. Consider further refinement of the third-floor and roof access materiality.
3. Consider material expression of Entry Stair and Ramp.

(See Document 11, Extract of CHIS, for further details of these recommendations.)

## **DISCUSSION**

### Recommendation 1

In 2014, the Ugandan High Commission was declared unsafe due to cracking caused by ongoing differential settling of its foundations and walls and, after about 20 years serving as the high commission, its occupants left the building. In the years leading up to the vacating of the building, efforts were made to repair the cracking and shifting of the structure. However, because of the presence of unstable soils and the nature of its foundations, none of the solutions to the structural damage to the building solved or halted its ongoing deterioration. Since it was abandoned, further cracking and damage to the interior has occurred. The cost to complete the repair of the structure is very high, and given that there are other issues related to the building such as universal accessibility and its ability to serve the needs of a high commission in the twenty-first century, the Government of Uganda decided to apply to demolish and replace the existing structure.

There has been interest in the structure on the part of some individuals and Action Sandy Hill because of its associations with former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson who lived there from 1955 to 1958 while he was Minister of External Affairs. It was during this time that he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in the resolution of the Suez Crisis through the development of a peacekeeping force to ease British and French troops out of Egypt. Although Pearson lived at 231 Cobourg Street, it is the house at 243 Augusta Avenue that most closely associates him as a Sandy Hill resident. The house bears his name and is where he lived from 1947 to 1954 when he launched his political career. After 1957, the last year that Pearson lived at 231 Cobourg

Street, he became the leader of the Liberal Party (1958) and then lost the general election to John Diefenbaker (1958). He rebuilt the party, eventually leading a minority government from 1963 to 1968, during which time the Canadian Flag was approved and the country celebrated the centennial of Confederation.

As one of Canada's best known twentieth-century Prime Ministers, Pearson has been commemorated across the country and schools, an airport and the federal headquarters of Global Affairs Canada have been named after him. In addition, his grave is a national historic site. He resided at 231 Cobourg Street for a relatively short time and the place is not explicitly and meaningfully associated or identified with his work as Minister of External Affairs.

#### Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan

Section 4.4.2, "Demolition and Relocation," of the Wilbrod Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan (the Plan), has the following guidelines related to demolition:

1. Demolition of contributing buildings will not normally be supported.
2. Any application to demolish a building in the HCD must be accompanied with plans for a replacement building.
3. Where a building is approved for demolition, the building must be recorded at the direction of Heritage staff and the information should be deposited at the City of Ottawa Archives. In addition, consideration should be given to salvaging historic materials as the building is demolished.

Heritage staff reviewed the reports from three different engineering firms, included here as Documents 6 to 10, and toured the structure and concur with the findings of the engineers that the building has undergone significant settlement and cracking, concluding that it was not practical to retain it.

Heritage and planning staff have worked very closely with the applicant to ensure that the replacement building respected the guidelines in the Wilbrod Laurier HCD Plan. The heritage consultant to the project has completed as-found drawings of the property and will be deposited at the City Archives. Finally, no heritage materials will be salvaged for reuse in the building, but the proposed front façade will feature an octagonal window above the front door as a reference to the building.

## Conclusion

Right-of-Way, Heritage and Urban Design (ROWHUD) has no objection to the demolition of 231 Cobourg Street because:

- Engineering reports, including the JCAL report commissioned by the City of Ottawa, concluded that the initial structural damage to the building was a result of unstable soil conditions that caused differential settling that rendered the building unsafe and was not the result of demolition by neglect.
- Its association with former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was short and there is no indication that the house was critical in the decision-making process that led to the development of the UN's peacekeeping force, his major foreign affairs accomplishment at the time.
- The existing structure at 231 Cobourg Street is a low-scoring contributing building within the Wilbrod Laurier HCD. The council-approved HCD plan defines the District as "an excellent example of a late 19th century upper-middle class residential neighbourhood. Identifying features include its historic street pattern, consistent house to lot ratios, generous front yard setbacks and tree lined streets." As a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century building, built with its two easterly neighbours to replace an 19<sup>th</sup> century house, the Ugandan High Commission does not reflect the identified heritage value of the District as a "late-19<sup>th</sup> century upper-middle class residential neighbourhood."

## Recommendation 2

The building proposed for the new Ugandan High Commission is a flat-roofed, three-storey, red brick structure with a central door facing Cobourg Street. It is located roughly on the footprint of the existing structure. The third storey will be offset from the rest of the building, will be clad in dark grey porcelain panels and will have a recessed rooftop terrace.

Heritage and planning staff worked closely with the project architect during the design process to address concerns with the design. Staff recommendations included: reducing the amount of surface paving, repositioning the location of the rooftop terrace to reduce its visual impact, having only one staircase to access the entrance facing Cobourg Street, lowering the ground floor to grade to allow the handicapped ramp to be reduced

in length, installing basement window wells on the north façade, substituting grey panels for white panels on the third floor, and setting back the third floor and rooftop terrace.

As a result of these discussions, the following changes to the design as submitted were undertaken: The height of the building was lowered to 10.44 metres from 10.89 metres; the handicapped ramp was shortened and relocated to the front (west) façade; the colour of the recessed third floor changed from white to grey; the third floor was stepped back one metre; the rooftop terrace was setback 1.5 metres from the roof edge; new landscaping, including a small front garden, and reduced signage that is residential in character was introduced on the Cobourg Street façade; and more windows were added onto the south façade.

#### **ADDITIONAL CHANGES**

After the passage of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee motion on February 8, 2018, that stated:

“based on the additional information in the independent review, that the applicant be encouraged to prepare a revised application that retains or incorporates a significant portion of the existing building or a new design that better reflects the recommendations contained in the applicant’s Cultural Heritage Impact Statement;”

City staff reviewed the retention or incorporation of a significant portion of the existing building into the new building, as directed in the BHSC motion, but did not encourage the applicant to do so as the building scored low in the Architecture and Context categories on the Heritage Survey Form (22/40 and 11/30, respectively) indicating that the building in its location does not make a significant contribution to the HCD. The end result of this approach would thus be the partial retention of a building of limited cultural heritage value, acknowledged to have limited architectural and contextual value.

Furthermore, this approach can result in a building in which it is impossible to distinguish between what is old and what is new. This is not consistent with the Parks Canada’s “Standards and Guidelines” as approved by City Council. For these reasons, heritage staff encouraged the development of a new design that better reflected the recommendations of the applicant’s CHIS, rather than partial retention.

The applicant further revised the plans for the proposed high commission. Changes implemented include:

- The introduction of a simple secondary cornice created by slightly recessing the brick on the west façade, north of the main entrance.
- The continuation of the recessed brick line perpendicular to the ground to echo the quoins of the original building.
- The extension of the parapet on the south elevation to form a gable end that will echo the gabled and hipped roofs of buildings in the area. This gabled end will also feature a brise-soleil (open brickwork) to allow light into the third floor windows behind.
- The extension of the parapet on the south elevation to form a gable end that will echo the gabled and hipped roofs of buildings in the area. This gabled end will also feature a brise-soleil (open brickwork) to allow light to penetrate to the roof top terrace behind light into the windows behind.

For before and after images please see Document 12, and for Landscape Plan, please see Document 13.

Heritage staff is satisfied that these changes further implement the recommendations of the CHIS for further refinements to reflect the “residential typology and scale at the south.” The CHIS also recommended the “refinement of the third floor and roof access materiality,” and heritage staff believes that the shielding of the south wall with a gabled parapet meets this requirement through the partial screening of the third storey. Finally, the third recommendation of the CHIS suggests improving the appearance of the entranceway and heritage staff is satisfied that the limestone cladding at the stair and ramp, and the landscaping are a suitable response to this suggestion that relates well to the street.

Heritage staff circulated the revised plans to Robertson Martin Architects, the authors of the CHIS, for comments to determine whether the proposed changes reflected their original recommendations. Robert Martin, the author, concurred that he is supportive of the revised approach as the gable-ended south elevation designed in red brick serves to evoke the character of the heritage conservation district and the red brick reflects the materiality of the surrounding properties.

Section 4.6, Guidelines for Infill, provides guidelines for new infill development in the Wilbrod Laurier HCD. (Please see Document 14 for the complete Guidelines.) These Guidelines stress that new construction must be of its own time, should not detract from



the heritage character of the HCD, must be sympathetic to the HCD in terms of massing, façade proportions, rooflines, cladding and the fenestration pattern, scale and setback.

The revised plans submitted to the City in March 2018 respect these guidelines. The new building, with its low profile, red brick construction with dark gray panels, contemporary expression, regular fenestration, simple landscaping that reflects the character of the area and subdued design is consistent with the mixed character of the buildings within the HCD and will be an appropriate contribution to it.

### **Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada**

Council adopted the “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada” in 2008 and these are used to evaluate applications under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Standards 1 and 11 are applicable to this application.

Standard 1: Conserve the heritage value of an historic place.

The proposed building will not have a negative impact on the heritage attributes and heritage value of the Wilbrod Laurier HCD. Its location on a corner lot and on the same footprint of the building that it replaces will conserve the character of the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Streets. There will be a visual impact to the neighbouring residential property to the east, as the building is higher than the existing; however, the applicant mitigated these impacts by reducing the overall height of the building and stepping the third floor and the rooftop terrace back from the façade. The landscape plan introduces a small garden and lawn that reflect the residential character of the area.

Standard 11: Conserve the heritage value and character-defining-elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

The use of brick and stone as well as regular window openings and cornices makes the proposed building compatible with the late nineteenth / early twentieth century character of the Wilbrod Laurier HCD.

### **Cultural Heritage Impact Statement**

A CHIS was prepared by Robertson Martin Architects and is Document 15 to this report. The CHIS analysed the context of the building, its design and function with regard to the Wilbrod Laurier HCD Plan and the existing character of the HCD. It made three recommendations about possible changes to the design.

Recommendation 1: Refinement of residential typology and scale at south.

ROWHUD believes that the inclusion of additional windows in the revised version provides a residential character to the south façade of the building.

Recommendation 2: Consider further refinement of the third-floor and roof access materiality.

ROWHUD will continue to address this issue and any changes undertaken will be approved through delegated authority.

Recommendation 3: Consider material expression of Entry Stair and Ramp.

The revised design of the front entranceway, with its relatively narrow stair and sidewalk access and small front garden between the edge of the barrier-free ramp and the sidewalk was specifically requested by PIED as a means to diminish the institutional character of the building.

The conclusion of the CHIS states:

“The program of a small-scale office building, maintaining the same use as the existing, following the provisions of the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan regarding Demolition, Guidelines for Infill and Guidelines for Streetscape and Public Realm is appropriate. We are of the opinion that the proposed development adheres extremely well to these provisions and the replacement building is assessed as being not detrimental to the cultural value of the larger conservation district heritage resource.”

For the complete conclusion, please see Document 16.

The department concurs with the findings of the CHIS.

### Recommendation 3

Occasionally, minor changes to a building emerge during the working drawing phase. This recommendation is included to allow the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development to approve these changes.

### Recommendation 4

The *Ontario Heritage Act* does not provide any timelines for the expiry of heritage permits. A two-year expiry date is recommended to ensure that projects are completed in a timely fashion and according to the approved heritage permit.

### **Provincial Policy Statement**

Staff have reviewed this proposal and have determined that it is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014.

### **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

### **CONSULTATION**

The Ward Councillor held a public meeting on January 25, 2018 at which the project team from Ten 2 Four Architecture Inc. presented the final plans for the proposed replacement building. There were six members of the public present and there was no support for the proposed demolition and construction at 231 Cobourg Street.

#### Notification

Heritage Ottawa was informed of the revisions to the December 2017 application and the findings of the JCAL study.

Property owners within 30 metres of the property were notified by letter and offered the opportunity to provide comments on the heritage application to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee or Planning Committee.

The Sandy Hill Community Association submitted comments in opposition to the December 2017 proposal in February 2018 (see Document 17). It was informed of the revisions to the December 2017 application and the findings of the JCAL study and will be submitting comments directly to the BHSC.

## **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR/ FEBRUARY 2018**

Councillor Fleury provided the following comments:

"The demolition of 231 Cobourg is a loss to the contributing heritage stock of the neighbourhood. There is an ongoing debate amongst professionals as to what the value of the building actually is given its current state. However, that is not something that the neighbourhood agrees with. The proper investments were not made over the years to address the structural changes that appeared on the foundation and building which brings us to the current state of disrepair. The efforts of the Sandy Hill community to build the Prime Minister's row initiative builds on connecting the lived experiences of the Prime Ministers who lived in our community."

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with implementing the recommendations of this report. Council may approve the application for demolition, or approve the application subject to conditions. Council may refuse to issue a permit for demolition. This application is governed by Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The owner has the right of appeal if the application is issued with conditions, or refused

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

### **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no asset management implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

The proposed Ugandan High Commission will be a fully accessible structure with an accessible ramp and entrance, wide entrances, accessible washrooms and an elevator.

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

This project addresses the following Term of Council Priority:

- Governance, Planning and Decision Making

## **APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE STATUS**

The application was processed within the extended 90-day statutory requirement under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which expires on May 15, 2018.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

- Document 1 Location Map
- Document 2 Fire insurance plans
- Document 3 Current photographs
- Document 4 Photographs showing structural damage
- Document 5 Heritage Survey Form (distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 6 Stephenson Engineering, Consultancy Services for Structural Assessment on the Chancery, 231 Cobourg (January 2017, distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 7 Paterson Group, Geotechnical Assessment (February 2013, distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 8 Paterson Group, Building Condition Assessment (March 2013, distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 9 ASI Geotechnical, Investigation Report (January 2017, distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 10 JCAL, Building Condition Report (March 2018, distributed separately and held on file)
- Document 11 CHIS recommendations
- Document 12 Before and after images of proposed high commission
- Document 13 Landscape Plan

Document 14 Infill Guidelines, Wilbrod Laurier HCD

Document 15 Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (distributed separately and held on file)

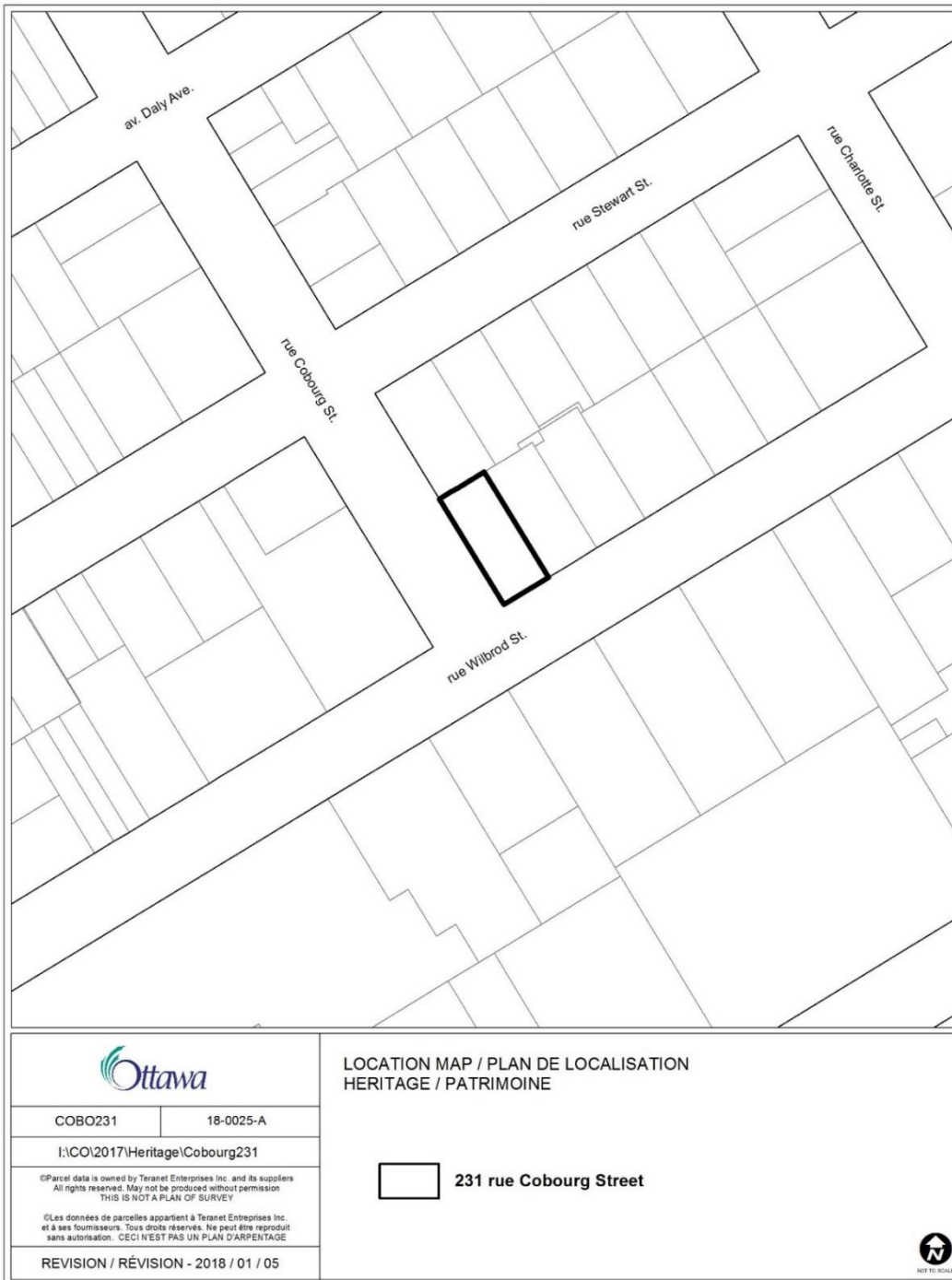
Document 16 Conclusion, Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

Document 17 February Comments from Action Sandy Hill

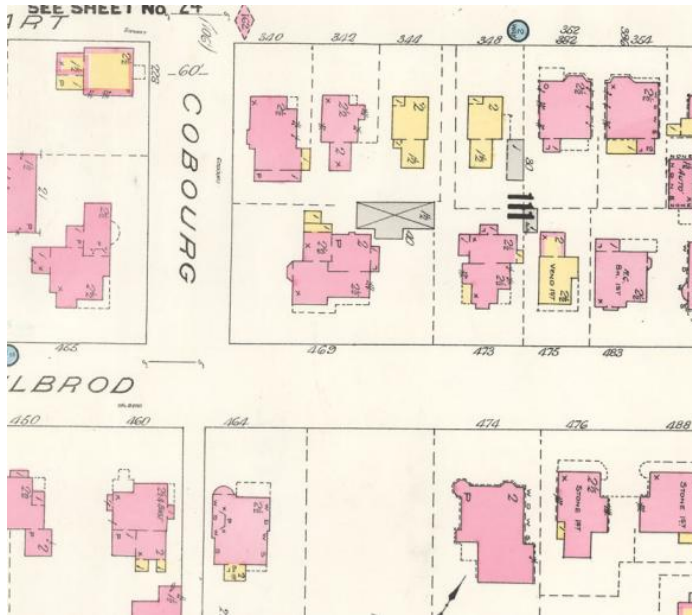
**DISPOSITION**

City Clerk and Solicitor Department, Legislative Services, to notify the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision.

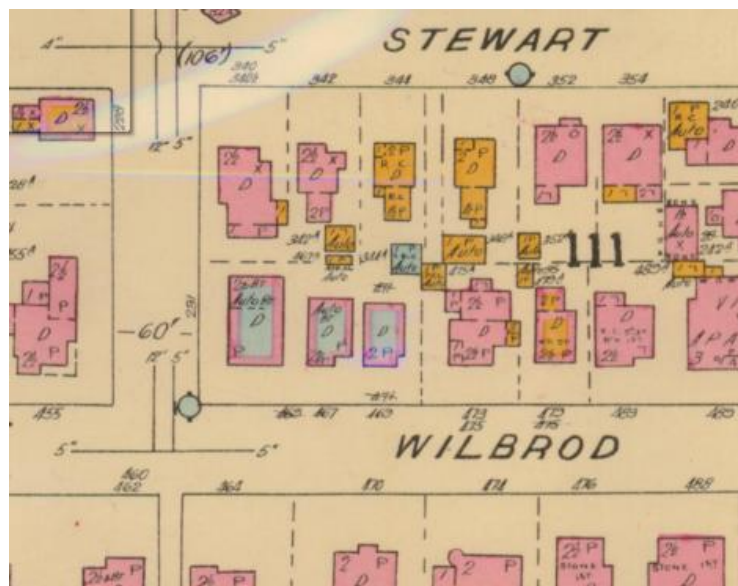
Document 1 – Location Map



Document 2 – Fire Insurance Plans



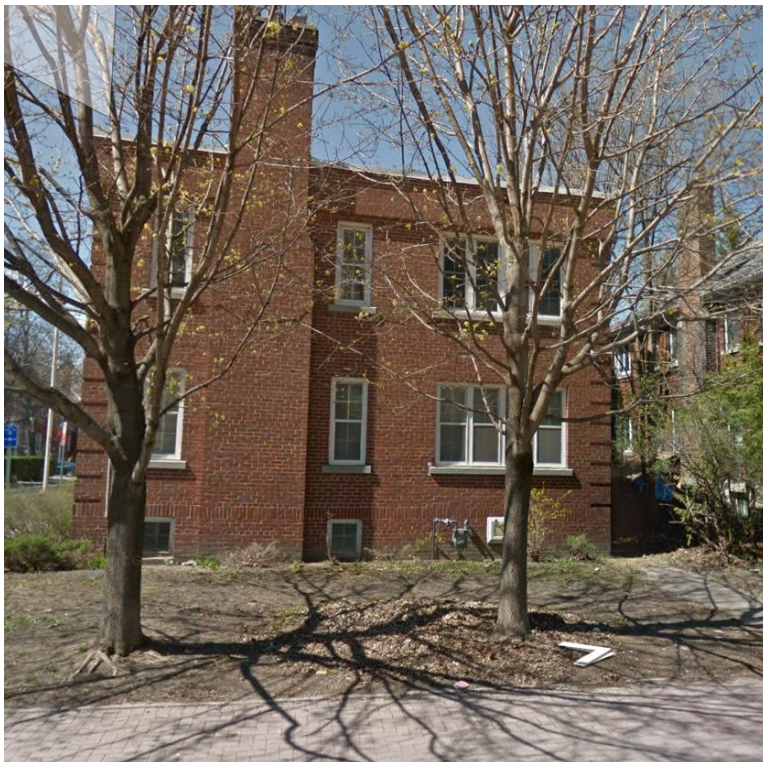
Plan showing original building, 469 Wilbrod Street, at the corner of Cobourg and Wilbrod Street.



Plan showing three replacement buildings constructed after the demolition of 469 Wilbrod Street.



Document 3 – Current photographs





Document 4 – Photographs showing structural damage



Cracks in floor slab



Cracking in foundation wall



Exterior cracking

### **Document 11 – CHIS recommendations**

Recommendation 1: Refinement of residential typology and scale at south.

The institutional look of the design proposal on the south façade contrasts with the residential character on the block. Advancing the design to express a more distinctly residential typology, with some articulation to read at a residential scale, may help to preserve the residential character and improve the dialogue with the surrounding primarily residential context.

Recommendation 2: Consider further refinement of the third-floor and roof access materiality.

While the use of red brick for the lower floors is seen as appropriate and beneficial, the reinterpretation of dark grey materials for the third floor will need careful consideration to ensure the façade integrates well with the gray roofing materials of existing buildings in the surrounding neighbourhood. Additionally, the use of wood cladding for the roof access enclosure could use further refinement to ensure its visual compatibility with both the rest of the building and the surrounding neighbourhood. Further consideration and refinement of the material treatments in both of these areas is encouraged.

Recommendation 3: Consider material expression of Entry Stair and Ramp.

The current design evolution suggests a fairly thin exposed concrete retaining wall at the entry stair and barrier free ramp. The horizontal screen wall of the barrier free ramp appears to be an elegant way to hide the sloped ramp behind; however, some further consideration of the foundation wall, stair and ramp wall is encouraged to improve the appearance and/ or make material connections to the stone foundations of adjacent houses.

Document 12 – Before and after images of proposed high commission



Front and south façades as originally presented.



Front and south façades after revisions undertaken in consultation with heritage and planning staff.



Front (west) façade, before revisions.



Front façade after revisions undertaken as a result of consultation with heritage, planning and urban design staff.

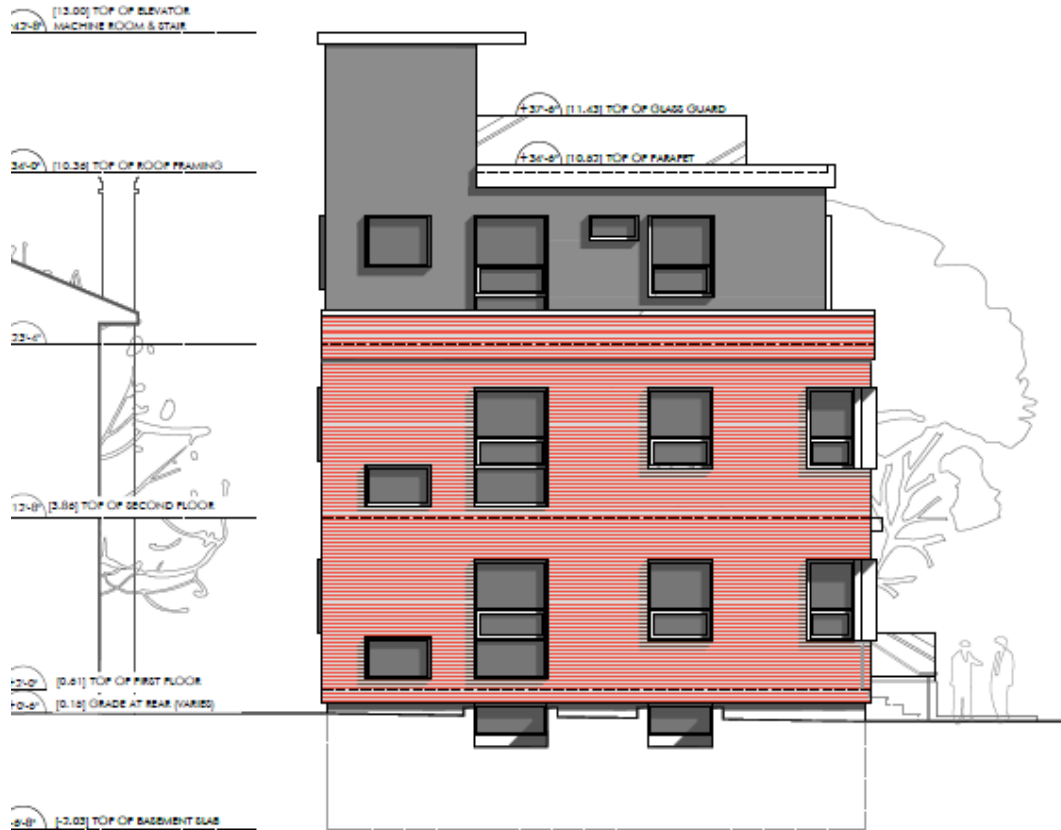


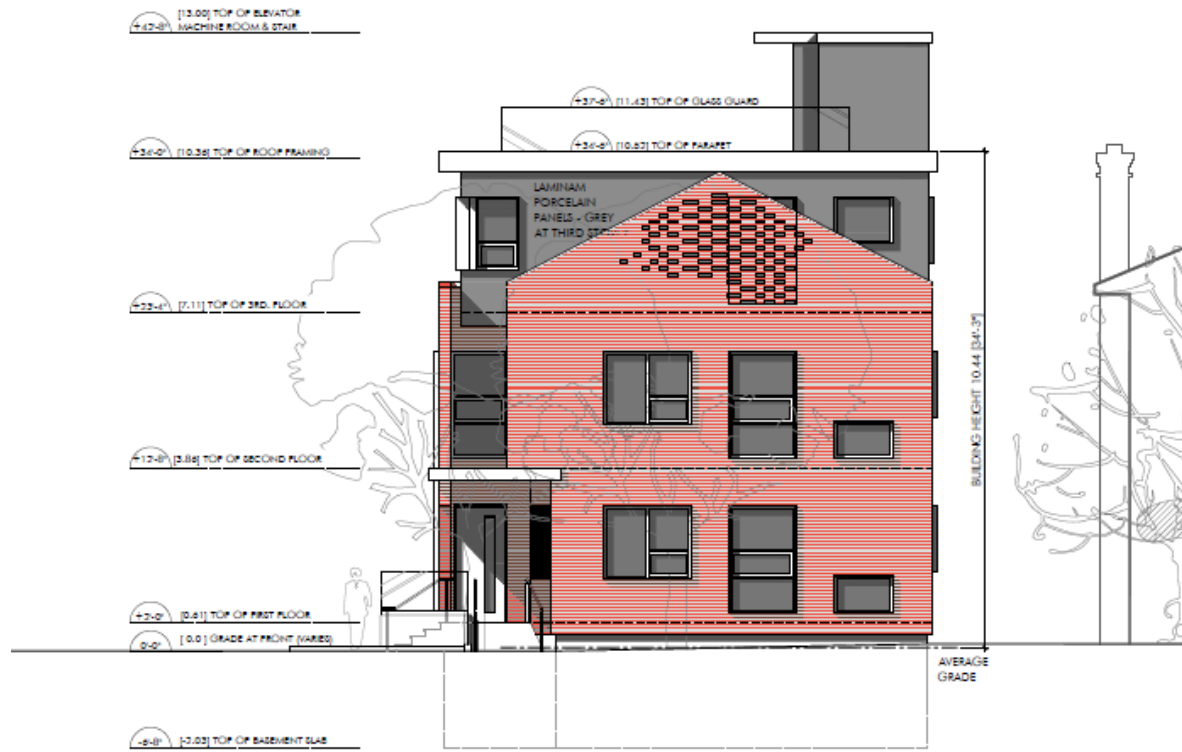


Front façade after revisions undertaken as a result of the February 8 Built Heritage Sub-Committee motion. Changes include the separation of the two front windows into two separate units, the introduction of a stylized cornice and quoins and the removal of bricks in the screening wall to create a brise-soleil.



North and south façade after initial revisions. Differences include more windows on south façade to reflect residential fenestration patterns along Wilbrod Street, increased inset of third floor, further inset of rooftop terrace.





North and south façades after revisions undertaken as a result of the February 8 BHSC motion. Changes include the extension of the new stylized cornice line to the north façade, the extension of the south wall upwards to create a gabled parapet, with bricks removed to form a brise-soleil that will allow light to penetrate to the third floor windows behind.





## **Document 14 – Infill Guidelines**

### **4.6 Guidelines for Infill**

Presently, there are no vacant lots in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD but vacant lots could be created through demolition of non-contributing buildings, fire or natural disaster. The guidelines in this section are intended to ensure that new buildings in the HCD contribute to its character and are consistent with the goals of the HCD.

1. New buildings will contribute to and not detract from the heritage character of the district.
2. New building should be of their own time and not attempt to replicate a historic style, but must be sympathetic to the character of the HCD in terms of massing, façade proportions, rooflines, cladding materials and the fenestration pattern.
3. Any new residential development in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD should be in keeping with the traditional scale of residential buildings in the district. New construction should match the immediate neighbours in terms of setback, footprint, and massing.
4. Windows in new buildings should be vertically aligned from floor to floor in keeping with the historic character of the HCD.
5. White vinyl windows and horizontal sliding windows are not appropriate to the character of the HCD and should not be used.
6. Cladding materials should reflect the character of the HCD. Appropriate materials include stucco, brick, natural stone, wood siding or fibre cement board.

## Document 16 – Conclusion, Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

The proposed demolition of this former residential apartment structure, converted for office use over three decades ago, is regrettable but understandable given the structural, geotechnical and environmental issues, supported by thorough professional assessment.

The program of a small-scale office building, maintaining the same use as the existing, following the provisions of the *Wilbrod/Laurier Heritage Conservation District Plan* regarding *Demolition, Guidelines for Infill* and *Guidelines for Streetscape and Public Realm* is appropriate. We are of the opinion that the proposed development adheres extremely well to these provisions and the replacement building is assessed as being not detrimental to the cultural value of the larger conservation district heritage resource.

The overall massing of the development on a corner lot will maintain connections to the residential neighborhoods in the same manner as the existing building.

The increased westerly side yard setback, and maintaining northerly and southerly setbacks in alignment with the adjacent properties is appropriate and represent an improvement. The redesign of the entry stair landing forecourt contributes to landscaping and public realm space on this corner lot. All existing mature trees will be retained and additional landscaping added to what is a fairly bare flat site.

The material expression is contemporary in nature but makes references to prevailing material typologies in the district. The use of a red brick second floor datum line references the existing/original building, while demarcating the upper floor setback and material changes.

Taken in balance and in its context, the development proposal is assessed as not being detrimental to District Character and overall, may be seen as a compatible approach for the heritage resource's identified Design (architectural), Cultural and Historical and Contextual Values.”



## Document 17 – February Comments from Action Sandy Hill



5 February 2018

Councillor Tobi Nussbaum, Chair  
Built Heritage Sub-Committee  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave W, Ottawa, ON

### Re: Ugandan High Commission Chancery – 231 Cobourg Street

Dear Councillor,

Action Sandy Hill (ASH) is writing to oppose the demolition and replacement of 231 Cobourg Street. We first met with representatives of the Ugandan High Commission regarding the redevelopment of their Chancery building on 18 April 2017, when their representatives gave us a tour of the existing building. A week later, on 25 April 2017, we wrote to you and Mayor Watson, and separately to Uganda's representatives, to make it clear that we oppose the demolition of this building. We also pointed out that the City's *Heritage Survey Form* and the *Cultural Heritage Impact Statement* prepared for the proponent were incomplete as they did not reflect the fact that this property had been home to former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson.

#### Demolition of Existing Building

The building at 231 Cobourg is located in the Wilbrod/Laurier Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and is identified as a Category 3 building. The *Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan* states that, "Category 1, 2, and 3 buildings are considered to be contributing buildings in the heritage conservation district and are important to maintaining the overall character of the HCD." The HCD Plan further states that, "Demolition of contributing buildings will not normally be supported." In other words, this building contributes to the heritage and character of the District and should be preserved.

The staff report incorrectly states that, "As a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century building, built with its two easterly neighbours to replace an 19<sup>th</sup> century house, the Ugandan High Commission does not reflect the identified heritage value of the District as a 'late-19<sup>th</sup> century upper-middle class residential neighbourhood.'" In fact, the HCD Plan states that, "The cultural heritage value of the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD lies in its association with the development of Sandy Hill in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries." and that, "The Wilbrod/Laurier HCD is significant for its association with the development of Sandy Hill as an upper-middle class neighbourhood that was home to many

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politicians and senior civil servants. In particular, the HCD was the home of several Prime Ministers including Sir John A. MacDonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, William Lyon MacKenzie King and Lester B. Pearson."

While the City's *Heritage Survey Form* for this property did not indicate such, it is clear that Lester B. Pearson resided at 231 Cobourg. As John English's biography of Pearson, *The Life of Lester Pearson, Vol 2 (Knopf, 1992)* notes, Pearson's wife purchased the duplex at 231 Cobourg Street in 1954. According to the *Ottawa Directory*, 1-231 Cobourg is listed as the home address of Lester B Pearson, MP for the years 1955-1958 inclusive. In 1958, he is listed as "leader of the Liberal Party", as well as an MP. In 1954, he lived at 243 Augusta and in 1959 he lived at 541 Acacia, better known as Stornoway. It is also worth noting that Pearson won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1957 while he was living at 231 Cobourg. It remains the only Nobel Peace Prize won by a Canadian.

The photo at right of Lester B. Pearson and his wife, Maryon, in their living room at 231 Cobourg Street was taken by the famous photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt in 1957 for *Life* magazine, presumably for an article about Pearson who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that year.



*Alfred Eisenstaedt. October 01, 1957.  
Life Photo Collection. Getty Images.*

The above noted information about Pearson's ownership and residency in this building, and his award of the Nobel Peace Prize during this time, has been downplayed by City staff in their report and by the proponents' consultant in the *Cultural Heritage Impact Statement*.

Other noteworthy residents of 231 Cobourg missing from the City's *Heritage Survey Form* include Mary Eastlake and Denis Coolican. The famous Canadian artist Mary Alexandra Bell Eastlake, whose work is included in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, lived there until her death in 1951. Denis Coolican, who was President of the Canadian Banknote Company, Reeve of the village of Rockcliffe Park from 1956 until 1966, and the first Chair of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton from 1968 until retiring in 1978, also lived here for several years.

The Wilbrod/Laurier HCD contains just 43 buildings, 38 of which, including 231 Cobourg, are identified in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan as contributing to the overall heritage character of the District, and 5 of which are considered non-contributing. The Plan states in both Sections 4.3 and 4.6 that, "Presently, there are no vacant lots in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD but vacant lots could be created through demolition of non-contributing buildings, fire or natural disaster". This seems to suggest quite clearly that the intent is to not permit the demolition of contributing buildings.

As you know, demolition by neglect has been a major problem in Ottawa and Mayor Watson established a task force to help protect Ottawa's architectural heritage. The current plight of

231 Cobourg is a classic example of demolition by neglect. It is regrettable to think that this building has been allowed to deteriorate to its current state. According to the Ugandan High Commission's own representatives, when they vacated the building four years ago it was in a better state of repair. Sadly, leaving it vacant, barely heated, and unmaintained for four years has compounded the problems. In particular, much of the damage we noted on our tour was the result of water infiltration. Indeed there were barrels full of water in the basement collecting water running down from the roof. Likewise, the City should have taken action over the last four years while this building sat vacant to ensure that the owners carried-out required maintenance and repairs. This demonstrates once again the need for the City to take more pro-active measures to ensure the preservation of our built heritage.

The expert reports prepared for the proponents do not state outright that demolition is the only option; rather they outline how the building could be restored and provide high-level estimates for the cost of doing this. Yet one of the primary arguments in the Staff report supporting demolition is that, "The initial structural damage to the building was a result of unstable soil conditions that caused differential settling that rendered the building unsafe and was not the result of demolition by neglect."

Every building in Sandy Hill is built on unstable soil, so every foundation is at risk. Countless property owners in Sandy Hill have spent vast sums of money repairing their foundations when problems have occurred. During the 30 years the Ugandan High Commission has owned the building they have "patched" but never repaired the foundation. Despite the assertion that the building is unsafe, Uganda's representatives have taken several groups, including one from ASH, on tours of the building. We were not required to wear hard hats, masks, or any other personal protective equipment, so how unsafe can the building really be? The reason for demolition then is really that the proponents consider the estimated cost of restoration following decades of neglect too high.

#### **Design of Proposed Replacement Building**

As we are strongly opposed to the demolition of the existing building at 231 Cobourg we are reticent to comment on the proposed replacement. However, as you are considering the proposed replacement building at the same hearing, we reluctantly offer the following comments.

Section 4.4.2 of the Wilbrod/ Laurier HCD Plan, states that, "Where a building is approved for demolition, the building must be recorded at the direction of Heritage staff and the information should be deposited at the City of Ottawa Archives. In addition, consideration should be given to salvaging historic materials as the building is demolished." It is disappointing that no effort has been proposed to salvage and incorporate historic materials into the new build.

With regard to the proposed replacement building, we feel strongly that the proposed new structure neither references stylistic elements of the existing Classical Federal building – a style that is atypical of the District and which contributes to its architecturally-varied character – nor fits the character of the surrounding District. Moreover, it fails to conform with the requirements for infill in the District as outlined in the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan. As the *Cultural Heritage Impact Statement* prepared for the Ugandan High Commission states, the proposed new building appears to be more institutional than residential in nature. The District Plan makes it

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clear that the character of the HCD is residential and that new buildings in the District should respect that residential character.

In particular, we are concerned that only complete demolition is being considered. If the City permits demolition of the existing structure, we would prefer to see efforts made to reuse original materials, and integrate stylistic elements that reference the existing structure. Other elements of the existing structure like symmetry, decorative brickwork, string courses or stone sills could easily be referenced. Other than its use of red brick and being of a scale more or less comparable to the existing structure, the new design is not sympathetic to or compatible with the District. It is especially important to reference the existing building given its atypical design within the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD. There is no doubt that the existing building at 231 Cobourg does indeed contribute to the District and that its demolition in favour of a structure that erases rather than references its heritage would have an appreciable negative impact on the District.

The fenestration pattern and treatment of the proposed replacement building, particularly the lack of symmetry, the windows that wrap the northwest corner, the two-storey window on the west wall, and the modern-style extended window frames, fail to reference the existing building and are inconsistent with the HCD. We would like to see an overall fenestration pattern and treatment that references the existing building and is more consistent with the area.

While the proposed replacement building is of brick, the brick is shown in a stacked bond pattern rather than the more traditional running bond pattern. Stacked bond pattern for brick is rarely seen in residential use and is more consistent with commercial buildings. The lack of detailing in the brickwork, such quoins, lintels and a datum line at the parapet, are also inconsistent with the heritage context of the building.

We also feel that the alternating angles of each floor on the south half of the west façade of the building contributes to its institutional feel and detracts from the character of the HCD. We feel that this feature should be eliminated in favour of a more conventional uniform, symmetrical façade that references the existing building. As mentioned earlier, we would also like to see original materials from the existing building, such as the brick, salvaged and incorporated in any replacement building.

Finally, we have concerns about the proposed increase from two to four surface parking spots. Section 4.4.12 of the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD Plan, states that, "New driveways or widened driveways are discouraged." Parking spots adjacent to the building and parallel to the roadway are already inconsistent with the District.

### **Conclusion**

That 231 Cobourg Street is a contributing building in a designated heritage conservation district is clear. This fact is not contested by the City of Ottawa. Further, the engineering assessment asserts that restoration and rehabilitation is possible. Despite this, City staff have recommended that Council approve its demolition and replacement. Including 231 Cobourg, the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD includes 8 properties identified as Category 3. If 231 Cobourg is of marginal importance to the district, are we to assume that the other 7 Category 3 properties will also be treated as disposable? If yes, then what of all the Category 3 buildings in all the HCDs in Ottawa?

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This poses a serious threat to all of our heritage conservation districts. This makes it clear that even when a heritage property is supposed to be protected, the City will not do so. If nothing else, we should be able to rely on the City to defend heritage buildings that have already been individually designated, or designated as part of a district. This building is of significant cultural and historical value, and of contributing architectural value. It is a protected heritage building that should not be demolished. To allow its demolition is to contravene every measure the City has put in place to protect Ottawa's built heritage and to reward the proponents for their neglect of this building.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments regarding the redevelopment of the Ugandan High Commission's Chancery, located at 231 Cobourg Street.

Best regards,



Chad Rollins  
President, ASH

Cc: The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister – Canadian Heritage  
Mona Fortier, Member of Parliament – Ottawa-Vanier  
Nathalie Des Rosiers, MPP – Ottawa-Vanier  
Mathieu Fleury, Councillor – Ward 12  
Dr. Mark Kristmanson, CEO – National Capital Commission  
David Jeanes, President – Heritage Ottawa  
Suneeta Millington, Founder – Prime Ministers' Row