

**Ottawa East
Community
Association**



Old Town Hall

To Erin O'Connell
Planner III
Development Review (Urban Services)
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Ave west, 4th Floor
Ottawa, ON
K1P 1J1

Re File No. D01-01-19-0006 – Official Plan Amendment

Dear Erin.

The Old Ottawa East Community Association has reviewed this proposed Official Plan amendment, and wishes to register our strong opposition to this proposal. The possibility of a nine storey building at Block 2B, within a Mixed-Use Medium-Rise designation was contained in a motion for a zoning by-law amendment scheduled to go before Planning Committee on March 28th, 2019. The Old Ottawa East Community Association objected to that proposal on the grounds that the request for a 9 storey building in a Mixed-Use Medium-Rise designation was based on a technicality. We requested that the Official Plan be amended to correct the uncertainty that led to this lack of clarity. We were pleased to note that the Developer decided to withdraw the request for a 9 storey building in the Mixed-Use Medium-Rise designation, and would seek a change in the Official Plan. However, instead of adding clarity, the proposed Official Plan Amendment will justify the proposed 9-storey building, and will enable the construction of additional buildings with a maximum of 9 storeys throughout a zone that was intended for a maximum of six storeys.

We recommend that you not approve this proposed amendment for the following reasons.

1.

The proposed change is not what the community wants, nor does it reflect what the community has envisioned throughout the preparation of these plans. The Community of Old Ottawa East, the City, the institutional landowners, i.e., the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (the Oblate Fathers) and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (the Sisters), collaborated prior to 2011 to produce a vision for the Community, with a particular emphasis on the precinct currently known as Greystone Village. The resulting Community Design Plan, which was approved in

2011, envisioned the buildings between Main St and the Deschatelet Building as being not higher than the Deschatelet Building, so as to not detract from the view of that historic building, nor from the natural grandeur of the Grande Allée. The desire of the Community and the institutional owners at the time was to preserve the views of the Deschatelets Building and the Grande Allée. If the proposal for nine storey buildings between Main St and the Deschatelets Building is approved, it will devastate those views.

2.

The developer is suddenly changing position on the proposed height of buildings on these particular lands. The initial zoning was established in 2011. The current owner of these lands, Regional Group, requested zoning changes in 2015, but left the zoning designation for these lands unchanged. Promotional material prepared by the developer, and often reproduced by the press, has consistently illustrated six storey buildings on these lands, as did the original 3-D concept display in their presentation centre. More than 300 individuals and families have recently purchased new houses in this precinct based, in part, on existing zoning and promotional material prepared by Regional Group.

Now, after four years of leaving this zoning unchanged, the developer wants to change the Official Plan to allow the construction of nine storey buildings in front of the iconic, historical Deschatelets Building.

3.

A major objective of planning is to create certainty. In 2011, the chair of the Planning Committee sought, and received assurances from City Staff that this particular development would not be subject to requests for planning changes, and that buildings of up to nine storeys would be permitted only where they were indicated on the demonstration plan i.e., behind the Deschatelets Building. On April 26th, 2012, Mayor Watson said “we need greater predictability and certainty when it comes to development in our City. There are just too many surprises that upset local neighbourhoods when zoning changes”. If this type of spot zoning change is permitted, it destroys any assurance of certainty. Many communities throughout the City are requesting or undertaking Community Design Plans (CDPs) and associated secondary plans (SPs) because these become part of the City’s Official Plan, and are, in principle, much more difficult to change. If the Planning Committee agrees to this change to a relatively new component of the Official Plan, they will destroy any hopes of the planning process ever providing certainty.

4.

The unease with nine storey buildings between Main St and the Deschatelets Building is not only felt by the community, but is shared as well by the planning experts of the Urban Design Review Panel, which reviewed the proposal for a six storey building close to Main St with a nine story building closer to the Deschatelets building, at site 2B, on July 4th of 2018, and concluded, “The Panel suggests that a symmetry of height would likely better frame the Grande Allée, and the Panel has some concerns, in terms of relatability with the heritage context, with the proposed height of nine stories for Building 2B.” A further expression of the Panels concern about the proposed nine storey build is found in their comment “The Panel suggests reducing the architectural contrast between Buildings 2A and 2B, and instead establish a stronger dialogue between the two buildings”. It is not only the members of the Community, but planning experts as well, that have concerns with a 9 storey building at block 2B

As stated in our letters of May 2nd 2018 and January 16th, 2019, the Community believes that the justification for permitting buildings of up to nine storeys in a Mixed Use Medium Rise designation is based on a technicality arising from the fact that the text did not specify that there are two zoning designations contained within the medium rise category of zoning designations, only one of which permitted a maximum of nine storeys. One of the reasons we requested an Official Plan change was to fix that anomaly. We suggest that the wording of Sec 10.2.1.4 of the Old Ottawa East Secondary Plan be changed to read “Building heights within the low-rise area will not exceed four storeys, ~~and in the medium rise area will not exceed nine storeys~~ (those in the Mixed-Use Medium-Rise ~~area~~ ((designation)) will not exceed six storeys,)and those in the (Residential) Medium-Rise ~~area~~ (designation) will not exceed 9 storeys.” This change will clarify that all lands currently designated as Mixed-Use Medium-Rise are zoned for a maximum of six storeys only, thus better expressing the views of the Community and the institutional land owners.

In conclusion, we urge you to consider the expressed wishes of the Community and the institutional landowners, the previously expressed interpretation of the developer, the need for certainty in planning decisions, and the concerns of the planning experts on the Urban Design Review Panel, and reject this proposed change to the Official Plan. We further urge you to consider the Community’s proposed revised wording for the Official Plan.

Regards

Ron Rose, Chair
Planning and Development Committee
Old Ottawa East Community Association