



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Culture Sector
World Heritage Centre

H. E. Ms Elaine Ayotte
Ambassador
Permanent Delegate of Canada to
UNESCO
UNESCO House

Ref.: CLT/WHC/EUR/19/12234

4 November 2019

Subject: **State of conservation of the World Heritage property
'Rideau Canal'**

Dear Ambassador,

I wish to inform you that ICOMOS has reviewed the two proposed development projects of Chateau Laurier and the Rideau Marina in the direct vicinity of the World Heritage property 'Rideau Canal'.

Please note that ICOMOS concludes in its review that the proposed Chateau Laurier and Rideau Marina developments could have a significantly negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and should not proceed until their full impacts have been assessed. ICOMOS therefore advises the State Party to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment as well as a Visual Impact Assessment (HIA/VIA) for both the Chateau Laurier and Rideau Marina development projects individually. The State Party is invited to share these assessments with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before adopting its conclusions.

I would be grateful if you could share the enclosed ICOMOS Technical Review (see Annex I) with your relevant national authorities for their consideration and keep the World Heritage Centre informed of ways by which these comments are being taken into account. Please note that ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party to respond to any requests for clarification or further technical assistance.

Furthermore, I wish to inform you that the World Heritage Centre continues to receive third party concerns regarding the state of conservation of this World Heritage property, and in particular concerning the proposed development of Chateau Laurier. We are enclosing this information (see Annex II) in accordance with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* to enable us to verify, with your authorities concerned, the source and content of the information that we have received.

Thanking you for your support and cooperation in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Rössler', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mechtild Rössler
Director

Enc.

cc: Canadian Commission for UNESCO
National Focal Point for World Heritage
ICOMOS

ICOMOS Technical Review regarding the World Heritage property 'Rideau Canal'

ICOMOS TECHNICAL REVIEW

Property: Rideau Canal

State Party: Canada

Property Ref: 1221

Date of Inscription: 2007

Criteria: (i) (iv)

Projects:

Ottawa, Ontario: Fairmont Chateau Laurier (7 storey, 147 room addition adjacent to the Rideau Canal World Heritage property)

City of Kingston, Ontario: Rideau Marina (7 storey apartment building adjacent to the Rideau Canal World Heritage property).

1. Background

This Technical Review addresses two proposed developments, namely the 'Chateau Laurier proposed expansion' in Ottawa, and the 'Rideau Marina' development in the City of Kingston. Both are located adjacent the Rideau Canal World Heritage property and are in its immediate setting. These proposed developments are two of eight proposals identified in the State Party's 2018 State of Conservation Report, including:

1. Various Federal Infrastructure Investment Program projects along the length of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property;
2. Rideau Canal Crossing pedestrian bridge (Ottawa);
3. Chateau Laurier proposed expansion (Ottawa);
4. Highway 147 bridge rehabilitation (Ottawa);
5. Third Bridge Crossing (Kingston);
6. Rideau Marina (Kingston);
7. Former Davis Tannery Brownfield Site Redevelopment (Kingston);
8. New Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus (Ottawa).¹

2. The Rideau Canal World Heritage property and its setting

The Rideau Canal World Heritage property was inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv) in 2007.²

Criterion (i): *The Rideau Canal remains the best preserved example of a slackwater canal in North America demonstrating the use of European slackwater technology in North America on a large scale. It is the only canal dating from the great North American canal-building era of the early 19th century that remains operational along its original line with most of its original structures intact.*

Criterion (iv): *The Rideau Canal is an extensive, well preserved and significant example of a canal which was used for a military purpose linked to a significant stage in human history – that of the fight to control the north of the American continent.*

¹ May 2018, *State of Conservation Report, Rideau Canal*.

² [31COM 8B.35](#)

The property is protected by a buffer zone, defined at the time of inscription.

The Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan, which was last updated in May 2005, highlighted the property custodian, Park Canada's goal to "*preserve the cultural and natural values of the **Canal and its setting** while allowing for sustainable development on lands bordering the Canal itself.*"³ [own emphasis]

It further stated that:

***3.2** Development of the shore-lands and on lands adjoining Canal lands should respect the historic and scenic character of the Canal landscape, and be environmentally sustainable and not conflict with navigation.*⁴

And acknowledged that

***4.3** The cultural landscape of the Canal corridor is under threat from incompatible development.*⁵

Challenges were identified in **Section 6.2. Waterfront Land Use and Development Challenges:**

- *Given the number of planning and development applications and limited staff and resources, Parks Canada has a limited capability to participate in the review and comment on municipal plans and selected waterfront land development activities. As well, resource constraints do not allow for full follow-up or monitoring of development to ensure that comments and agreements have been addressed and applied.*
- *Some municipal official plans do not yet fully recognise and protect the Canal's heritage values as there are no common waterfront land management objectives among Canal corridor municipalities.*
- *Municipalities and landowners need to be made aware of Parks Canada's interests in waterfront development and its role in the review of municipal planning policies, official plan and zoning bylaw amendments and shore-land development proposals.*
- *There are insufficient resources to educate or consult with landowners, developers and municipalities on their role in protecting the heritage values of the Canal and the use of the design guidelines for waterfront development.*
- *While there is general acceptance of the need to protect natural values, there is **less understanding of the scenic and cultural values of the Canal and the need to protect them as well.***
- *There is a need to identify waterfront lands of historic, scenic and natural value and to protect them through municipal official plan designation and private land stewardship.*⁶ [own emphasis]

The Rideau Corridor Landscape Strategy (2012) identifies the following relevant landscape values or values, views and visual relationships for this relevant subsection of the Rideau Canal:

- *the excavated channel and Canal within an urban, historic context;*
- *the flight of Ottawa Locks and associated heritage buildings, **views to the Parliament Buildings and Chateau Laurier;***
- *the Rideau Canal Pathway, Colonel By Drive, and associated greenspace;*

³ Parks Canada, (2005). *Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, p. 2. [<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/info/plan>]

⁴ Ibid, p. 16

⁵ Ibid, p. 19

⁶ Ibid, p. 29

- *the bridges and views to the Canal from the Rideau Skateway and Winterlude.*⁷ [own emphasis]

The State Party has once reported on the State of Conservation of the property to the World Heritage Committee through the State Party Periodic Reporting (Second Cycle) in 2013, identified both housing and commercial development outside the property as factors that affected or had the potential to affect the OUV of the property in a negative way.⁸

The 2017 *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraph 110, indicate that: *Impact assessments for proposed interventions are essential for all World Heritage properties.*

The setting of the property relates to more than the visual setting thereof. Paragraph 112 of the *Operational Guidelines* provides guidance on the matter of setting:

Effective management involves a cycle of short, medium and long-term actions to protect, conserve and present the nominated property. An integrated approach to planning and management is essential to guide the evolution of properties over time and to ensure maintenance of all aspects of their Outstanding Universal Value. This approach goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s), as well as the broader setting. The broader setting, may relate to the property's topography, natural and built environment, and other elements such as infrastructure, land use patterns, spatial organization, and visual relationships. It may also include related social and cultural practices, economic processes and other intangible dimensions of heritage such as perceptions and associations. Management of the broader setting is related to its role in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value.

3. The Chateau Laurier proposed expansion (Ottawa)

Background

In May 2019 the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, contacted the State Party regarding information received on a proposed addition to the Chateau Laurier Hotel, a building which, together with the Canadian Parliament Building, frames the Ottawa Locks where the Rideau Canal meets the Ottawa River. Of concern was that the proposal included elements that could negatively impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.⁹ In June of 2019 the State Party provided comment.¹⁰

The Chateau Laurier hotel is a privately-owned building. The proposal is for the construction of a seven-storey, 147 room addition to the rear of the building, overlooking Major's Hill Park. The proposed addition partially overlooks the Rideau Canal at Ottawa Locks, and is planned in a contemporary style, connecting to limited areas on the Chateau Laurier's east and west wings. The development retains the Chateau Laurier in its entirety and will be built on the site of the former parking garage. The Chateau Laurier and the parking garage buildings existed at the time of the Rideau Canal's inscription on the World Heritage List on 2007.¹¹ The proposed seven-storey addition is located in an area immediately adjacent the Ottawa Locks, a highly significant and iconic component of the property. The Ottawa Parliament Buildings and Chateau Laurier contribute significantly to the setting for the Ottawa Locks and one of the most significant landscape views of

⁷ Parks Canada, "Rideau Canal Landscape Strategy," *Rideau Corridor Landscape Strategy*, Last updated 2012. [<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/info/sacr-rcls>.]

⁸ Periodic Reporting Second Cycle. Section II-Rideau Canal, p. 3. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1221/documents/>

⁹ Correspondence UNESCO to State Party 15 May 2019.

¹⁰ Correspondence State Party to UNESCO, 28 June 2019.

¹¹ Ibid.

the World Heritage property.

Parks Canada has, in the role of adjacent landowner, provided comments and input since 2015 on the proposal and applications. As the Chateau Laurier hotel is within the view-shed of the Ottawa Locks, feedback has focused on compatibility of the proposed hotel addition within the historic setting of, and the visual impact to, the Ottawa Locks.¹²

Evolutions to the proposed design reduced the height and increased the setback of the addition from the historic Chateau Laurier to support the prominence of the heritage building in the landscape; to minimise the visual impact on the approach up the locks from the Ottawa River; and to open up views into the hotel's original rear courtyard and out to the Ottawa Locks and Parliament Hill.

On 27 June 2018, on recommendation from the City's Planning Committee, the City Council conditionally approved the application to alter the Chateau Laurier building, advising that more work was required to make the addition more visually compatible with the existing hotel. On 13 June 2019, the City's Planning Committee approved the Site Plan control application. On 10 and 11 July 2019, the City Council upheld the heritage permit approval.¹³

Discussion

The construction of a proposed addition to the north side of Chateau Laurier building adjacent to the Rideau Canal World Heritage property holds the potential to negatively affect the OUV of the property. It is therefore essential that utmost care be taken in assessing potential impacts before any irrevocable decisions are made.

The viewscape framed by the Canadian Parliament Buildings and the Chateau Laurier Hotel, overlooks the Ottawa Locks, which is the largest single set of locks within the entire Rideau Canal World Heritage property. This viewscape has been recognised for its importance by the Canadian government in its *Landscape Character Assessment and Planning and Management Recommendations* (2013). The recommendations list the Ottawa Locks and associated heritage buildings, and views to the Parliament Buildings and Chateau Laurier, as quintessential to the Rideau Canal experience.¹⁴

At the time of nomination, the City of Ottawa 20/20 official plan called for Cultural Heritage Impact Studies to ensure that the *'...visual quality of the waterway and view from the waterway, as well as natural and cultural features, are evaluated.'*¹⁵

A Cultural Heritage Impact Study (CHIS) was carried out for the Chateau Laurier proposed addition in January 2017, prior to the recent adjustments made to the design.

This document addresses the impact of the proposed addition on the UNESCO World Heritage property criteria in **Section 7.4 Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site** and finds there to be no impact:

'Criterion i proposed addition impact: The proposed development does not physically impact the Rideau Canal. As such there is no impact on the slackwater technology employed in the operation of the Rideau Canal.'

'Criterion iv proposed addition impact: The proposed development does not physically impact the Rideau Canal. As such there is no impact on the military origins

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/public-engagement/projects/chateau-laurier-addition> [Accessed 20 September 2019]

¹⁴ Correspondence UNESCO to State Party 15 May 2019.

¹⁵ Parks Canada, (2006). *Nomination of the Rideau Canal by the Government of Canada, 2006 for Inscription on the World Heritage List*, p. 109.

of the Rideau Canal.¹⁶

This Technical Review does not include a detail review of the CHIS document. However, the CHIS notably did not identify the attributes of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property and did not systematically assess the change in the setting of the property. Similarly, it must be noted that there are statements in both the management plan and the nomination proposal that the setting is considered in the management of the property. The CHIS has not addressed this aspect of the property.

ICOMOS concludes that the assessment of the potential impacts of the development is incomplete, it does not address magnitude of impact, and, because the attributes of the property have not been identified, the CHIS does not provide a solid verifiable base for assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the OUV of the property and its setting.

The situation raises concerns around the effectiveness of the management system and coordination of various authorities in managing impacts outside the nominated property, in the setting. It also raises questions in the role afforded to the custodian of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property in decision-making processes that may affect the property.

4. The Rideau Marina Residential Development

Background

In October 2017 the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines*, requested the State Party to provide information regarding the planning application for the building of a high-rise apartment complex on the shore of the Rideau Canal in Kingston, Ontario. The concern was that the proposal could negatively impact on the OUV of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property.¹⁷ In February of 2018 the State Party provided comment.¹⁸

Again, in May 2019 the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* contacted the State Party regarding further information received concerning developments with potential impact on the OUV of the property. In June of 2019 the State Party provided comment.¹⁹

The proposal is for the construction of a seven-storey, 90-unit apartment building on a 1.85-hectare site land adjacent to the property. The site of the proposed development is presently used as a marina, and includes office buildings, boat storage sheds located within the 30m buffer zone, and docks in the water. These facilities existed at the time of inscription on the World Heritage List in 2007.

The planning application was submitted to the City of Kingston indicating the removal of the office buildings and the boat storage sheds from the 30m buffer zone boundary and the construction of an apartment building and surface parking area outside the buffer zone. The proposed apartment building provides seven storeys on its west side facing the canal, and four storeys on its east side facing the adjacent residential area. This represents a revised proposal in response to prior public feedback and considering technical comments given by the municipality and external agencies. The revisions included reducing the building height, increasing the setback from the water, refining the landscaping plan, and improving public access to the water.²⁰

¹⁶ Capital Holdings Ltd, 2017. *Chateau Laurier Proposed Addition Cultural Heritage Impact Statement*. p. 84. Available: http://webcast.ottawa.ca/plan/All_Image Referencing_Site Plan Application_Image Reference_D07-12-16-0193 - Cultural Heritage Impact Statement on Original 2016 Proposal.PDF

¹⁷ Correspondence UNESCO to State Party, 27 Oct 2017.

¹⁸ Correspondence State Party to UNESCO, 5 Feb 2018.

¹⁹ Correspondence State Party to UNESCO, 28 June 2019.

²⁰ Ibid.

The site is currently zoned for uses such as a marina, hotel and restaurant, limited to a height of 12 meters. The revised application would reach 26 meters in height.

As per regulations under the Ontario Planning Act, Parks Canada was consulted by the local municipal authority to provide comments on all planning applications on land adjacent to the Rideau Canal. In its comments to the City of Kingston, Parks Canada expressed concern about the scale of the building and its effect on the setting. However, Parks Canada did note that the planning application contained development beyond the 30m setback from the water, which corresponds with the 30m buffer zone surrounding the World Heritage property.²¹

In its most recent submission to the World Heritage Centre, the State Party noted that a tribunal was to assess the proposal during 15-25 April 2019. The outcomes of the tribunal's assessment are not known to ICOMOS at the time of writing.

Discussion

ICOMOS considers that the construction of a 26m high building adjacent the boundary and buffer zone of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property holds the potential to negatively affect the OUV of the property and its setting. ICOMOS also notes that the development will affect a protected view defined in the Rideau Corridor Landscape Strategy.

It is therefore essential that utmost care be taken in assessing potential impacts before any irrevocable decisions are made. ICOMOS advises that no further development or demolitions should take place on the Rideau Marina project until the possible impacts to the setting have been fully assessed and mitigation measures developed to avoid negative impacts to the OUV of the property. To do this, it is suggested that a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), including a visual impact assessment – following the 2011 ICOMOS Guidance on Impact Assessment for Cultural World Heritage Properties – be undertaken by a suitable qualified professional. The HIA should focus on addressing the negative impact of the development on the OUV and its setting, and avoidance thereof.

5. ICOMOS Conclusions

ICOMOS advises that the potential impacts of the two proposed developments on the property and especially its setting have not been adequately assessed.

ICOMOS would advise that:

- Based on an assessment of the information available to ICOMOS, the proposed Chateau Laurier and Rideau Marina developments could have a significantly negative impact on the OUV of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property and should not proceed until their full impacts have been assessed and feasible implementable measures have been developed to avoid negative impacts on the OUV of the property.
- ICOMOS advises that a full Heritage Impact Assessment – following the 2011 ICOMOS Guidance on Impact Assessment for Cultural World Heritage Properties – and Visual Impact Assessment (HIA/VIA) needs to be undertaken by a suitable qualified professional for both the Chateau Laurier and Rideau Marina projects individually. These assessments should be completed before any further decisions can be made and the projects be further pursued. These full HIA/VIAs should include definition of attributes of the OUV to assess the impact of such a proposed development on the OUV of the World Heritage property. This assessment of attributes should include the setting of the property and its attributes and should also

²¹ Correspondence State Party to UNESCO, 28 June 2019.

address cumulative impacts and their magnitude on the setting of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property. The HIA/VIA should include recommendations for impact avoidance.

- ICOMOS recommends that the State Party submit the Terms of Reference for such HIA/VIAs to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies for both the Chateau Laurier and Rideau Marina.
- ICOMOS further request that the Heritage Impact Assessments, including Visual Impact Assessments be sent to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, before adopting its conclusions.

The Nomination Dossier for the property includes the efficacy of the buffer zone for the property in relation to its effect in '*reducing the impact of external developments adjacent to the property*'.²² As both the development projects fall outside the buffer zone, but in the estimation of ICOMOS, may very well have a negative impact on the OUV of the property and its setting, ICOMOS concludes that the management system for the property does not currently provide adequate protection to the OUV or the setting thereof. Seeing the large number of projects being planned, as reported to in the 2018 State Party State of Conservation Report, the use of the Heritage Impact Assessment as tool become all the more important to protect the OUV of the property.

This conclusion raises questions regarding the property custodian's limited advisory role authority in protecting the OUV of the property in both the Chateau Laurier hotel and Rideau Marina projects. These questions contribute to the overarching concern from the perspective of the management of the World Heritage property. This may be compounded by the fact that the Management Plan for the Rideau Canal World Heritage property has not been reviewed since 2005.

ICOMOS therefore advises that the State Party:

- Institute a process of review of the management system, including management plan, and address the legislative position of the property custodian in the decision-making processes regarding spatial planning in the setting of the property.
- The State Party proactively create a dynamic database of tangible and intangible attributes that contribute to the OUV of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property and ensure that the protection of these attributes are embedded in federal and municipal policies.
- Embed procedures in legislative, spatial planning and management systems that mandate full Heritage Impact Assessment following the best intercalation practice for World Heritage properties for all projects that may negatively affect the OUV of the Rideau Canal World Heritage property, considering that attributes may be located both within the property and its buffer zone and in its setting.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party for further clarification on the above or assistance as required.

ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont
October 2019

²² Parks Canada, (2006). *Nomination of the Rideau Canal by the Government of Canada, 2006 for Inscription on the World Heritage List*, p. 118.

Annex II

**Information concerning the state of conservation of the World Heritage property
'Rideau Canal'**

An Open Letter from Supporters of the Friends of the Château Laurier

Sent the week of September 7, 2019

A heritage site is a natural or human-made area or structure recognized as being of outstanding importance and therefore as deserving special protection. The Château Laurier hotel in Ottawa, Ontario, is such a place.

The Château Laurier was constructed between 1907 and 1912 at the nexus of the Ottawa River, the Rideau canal, opposite the then railway station (now the Senate) and beside Parliament Hill. The Château is therefore the “linchpin of a historic capital city,” in the well-chosen words of journalist Stephen Maher. According to Heritage Ottawa, it “is the second most important building in Ottawa after the Parliament Buildings.”

In 1907, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier brokered a deal between the Grand Trunk Railway (now Canadian National Railway) and the City of Ottawa to use a piece of Major's Hills Park to construct an elegant hotel. The playful, romantic style of the Château's turrets and gables beautifully complemented the Gothic Revival style of the Parliament Buildings next door. The success of the Château's original architects in maintaining and enhancing the architectural motif of Parliament Hill led in turn to the equally impressive design of the Supreme Court building by Ernest Cormier so that the Parliamentary district as a whole makes for a sweeping and impressive vista. For over a hundred years, through a variety of renovations and additions to the Château and the nearby public buildings, successive governments have protected the architectural integrity of this built environment. Until now.

In 2013, Larco Investments, owned by the Lalji family of Vancouver, bought the Château and proposed in 2016 a multi-story boxy addition to replace the parking garage. This design is totally at variance with the iconic style of the Château and its surroundings. Peter Coffman, the past president of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, writes, “the planned addition is essentially a box: all straight lines, right angles and mathematical precision. It does not echo the older building's forms, nor does it join in its romantic spirit.” An inappropriate and jarring addition to an iconic building is bad enough but the views from Major's Hills Park, the Rideau Canal, and the Ottawa River will be impaired as well. Coffman concludes, “the addition will draw a curtain across an integral part of one of the country's most spectacular and revered architectural tableaux.”

This design, suitable at best for a big box store in a strip mall, has been overwhelming rejected by the public in thousands of submissions to the Ottawa City Council. Yet despite this, by a narrow vote (with Ottawa city councillors unanimously opposed but outvoted by suburban representatives), in July 2019, the Council supported the Larco addition. A spokesperson for Larco dismissed the opposition as a “noisy minority.” Let us add our voices to the noise.

Most of us have had the pleasure of working in Ottawa, some on Parliament Hill and others as prominent members of the heritage community. We come from all parts of Canada and have supported different parties and served in different administrations. All of us who have worked near Parliament Hill at some point in our careers have enjoyed the history attached to the Château and been inspired by the views that it commands. Whether it is walking from Gatineau to Ottawa over the Alexandria bridge, clearing your head by strolling in Major's Hill Park after a hard day of decision-making, or taking visitors through the Rideau Canal locks, all of us have looked at the magnificent vistas anchored by the Château Laurier and been awed

by the vision of our predecessors. The proposed addition to the Château is not a local planning decision, it is a heritage issue of national importance. As David Collenette, a former Member of Parliament writes, “the Parliamentary precinct may be in the City of Ottawa, but it belongs to all Canadians.”

Below is a list of potential actions to prevent this potential heritage tragedy. Any one of them could do the job and Heritage Ottawa is leading the charge on the agenda. As national supporters of the Friends of the Château Laurier, we will do what ever we can to support this effort.

- To the owners of Larco: No one disputes your right to demolish a parking garage and improve your property, but you must do so with a design that is compatible with the iconic building you have purchased. You know that opposition to your design is massive and growing. Listen to this outpouring of feeling, meet with your critics, and produce a design that achieves the goal of heritage comparability rather than ignoring it.
- To the Ottawa City Committee of Adjustment: Larco requires a “minor” variance to lift the heritage overlay that applies to the Château Laurier site. The application of Larco is far from “minor” as it destroys the French Revival style of the hotel and the heritage character of the setting. You know that rarely, if ever, has there been such opposition to a developer’s proposal. Listen to the people and turn down Larco’s application.
- To the Government of Ontario: Since the Château Laurier fulfills all the requirements, designate the property as a Provincial Heritage site and issue a stop work order to Larco.
- To the Chair and Board of the National Capital Commission: In 2008, the NCC prepared the Château Laurier Urban Design Guidance which has obviously been ignored in Larco’s design. The NCC owns Major’s Hill Park, and, as the Château abuts the park, any addition must consider night time illumination, landscaping and public access. Use your authority in these areas to demand that Larco take into account the Château’s historic setting and work with the company to achieve a design that does this.
- To Parks Canada: You have the responsibility of managing the Rideau Canal National Historic site and maintaining its visual integrity. The proposed addition to the north side of the Château will forever compromise the panoramic views from the Canal. You should immediately enter into negotiations with Larco to ensure that any addition maintains a vibrant visual perspective.
- To the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO: The Rideau Canal has been designated by you as a World Heritage site. Write the governments of Canada, Ontario and Ottawa expressing concern about the impact of the proposed addition on the setting of the Canal, and, if not changed, raise the possibility of a review of the International Heritage Designation of the site.
- To the Federal Minister responsible for Canada’s National Historic Sites: In 1980, the Château Laurier was designated as a National Historic site. But unless Parks Canada actually owns the site this means little, as the designation brings with it no legislative protection. Canada is the only G8 member that does not provide a legislative framework and sufficient resources to protect our heritage. This must change so the Château Laurier debacle can never occur again. Legislation should be prepared to go to Parliament in the first session following the upcoming election.

- To the Leaders of Canada's Federal Political Parties: With a federal election in the offing, the Château Laurier dispute has revealed great gaps in Canada's protection of its heritage sites. We urge you to make a commitment to help solve the Château dispute by using the federal institutions and regulations at your disposal and to commit further to supporting heritage legislation to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future.
- To the People of Canada: Heritage Ottawa needs your help in continuing the fight to protect the heritage of the Château Laurier and its surroundings. Please donate so it can continue its vital work.
- To the Government of Canada: If all else fails, use the Expropriation Act to purchase the garage structure adjacent to the Château Laurier, build underground parking and deed the land to the National Capital Commission as an extension of Major's Hill Park. For most of the twentieth century, the Château Laurier was owned by CN Hotels and thus the Government of Canada. It was sold to private interests in 1988 without proper protection to preserve its heritage standing, except the designation as a National Historic site in 1980. As we have learned, this designation is for show only, as it is not backed up by legislation. If there is any upside to the Château Laurier dispute it is that it has revealed a major gap in our heritage protection. This must be fixed and, as the process for doing so moves forward, the power of expropriation should be held in reserve to use if necessary.

Since the Parliament buildings were constructed in 1866, Canadians have been blessed with beautiful vistas and iconic buildings woven together in a coherent whole in the Parliamentary district of the national capital. This is an irreplaceable heritage, and it must be passed down intact to future generations. We call on all those in a position to influence or decide the issue of how best to improve the Château Laurier hotel, to respect that patrimony by making heritage preservation the precondition of any plan or design. Our predecessors did so; and we must be the stewards of that precious gift.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Axworthy, Toronto, Ontario

Also signed by:

Russell Anthony, Vancouver, British Columbia

The Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, former Member of Parliament, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Constance Backhouse, Ottawa, Ontario

Bill Blaikie, former Member of Parliament, Winnipeg, Manitoba

John English, former Member of Parliament, Toronto, Ontario

Winter Fedyk, Regina, Saskatchewan

Marie-Hélène Fox, Montreal, Quebec

Norman Hillmer, Ottawa, Ontario
Hoberly Hove, Kamloops, British Columbia
George Haynal, Toronto, Ontario
Patricia Lavoie, Montreal, Quebec
Owen Lippert, Toronto, Ontario
Richard Logan, Ottawa, Ontario
Paul Manning, Vancouver, British Columbia
Charles McMillian, Toronto, Ontario
Brian Milton, Fairfax, California
Rod Murphy, former Member of Parliament, Thompson, Manitoba
Curtis Nordman, Winnipeg Manitoba
Denise Ommanney, Winnipeg Manitoba
Tony Penikett, former Premier of Yukon, Vancouver, British Columbia

Dr Mechtild Rossler

Unesco World Heritage Center

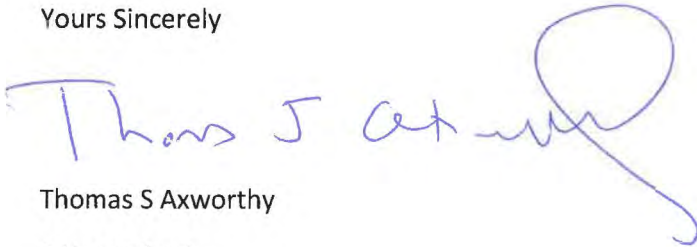
7 Place de Fontenoy

Paris France

Dear Dr Rossler

We believe the proposed addition to the Chateau Laurier hotel impacts the views of the Unesco designated site of the Rideau Canal World Heritage site. The enclosed Open Letter signed by historians, heritage activists, and former Members of Parliament calls on the Government of Canada to become more active in preserving this site. We urge you to make your views known to the Government of Canada,

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas S Axworthy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Thomas S Axworthy

4 Harcourt rd

Toronto, Ontario

Canada

M6S2v9