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SUBJECT: Centretown Heritage Study

OBJET : Étude sur le patrimoine du Centre-ville

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding the Centretown Heritage Study.

BACKGROUND

Centretown is a primarily residential neighbourhood developed between 1890 and 1914 to provide housing for the expanding civil service within walking distance of Parliament Hill and nearby government offices. It is one of Ottawa's oldest residential neighbourhoods that has strong historical associations with Ottawa's role as the national capital. As the Centretown Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study states,

“Over the past century, this areas has functioned as soft support for the administrative and commercial activity linked to Parliament Hill. In addition to residences, it has accommodated club facilities, organizational headquarters, institutions, professional offices and transportation services, all associated with Ottawa's role as national capital.”

Today, Centretown's built form continues to be mainly low-density residential but uses are varied. There is a rich fabric of historic buildings throughout the neighbourhood both within the existing Heritage Conservation Districts and beyond. Over the past 20 years, there has been significant redevelopment in Centretown as the neighbourhood is desirable for its central location, amenities and character.

The Centretown Heritage Study was initiated in response to direction from Council through the Centretown Community Design Plan and Secondary Plan, which were approved in 2013, and a departmental priority to update existing HCDs.

In 2005, the *Ontario Heritage Act* was revised to require the adoption of a Heritage Conservation District Plan for all new HCDs. In addition, municipalities may adopt HCD Plans by by-law for districts designated prior to 2005. The City of Ottawa has been working to adopt HCD Plans for all districts designated before 2005. This project will fulfill this priority for two pre-2005 HCDs.

The initial project scope included a review and update of the existing Centretown Heritage Conservation District, including a revised building inventory and a new heritage conservation district plan in accordance with the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Early analysis revealed that the scope should be expanded. Given the high concentration of potential heritage resources in Centretown and the identification of areas with potential to be designated as new heritage conservation districts, the project was repositioned as a Centretown Heritage Study and the boundary of the study area was expanded.

The study area includes the core of the historic residential neighbourhood of Centretown, including the area bounded by Gloucester Street to the north, Catherine Street to the south, the Rideau Canal to the east and Bronson Avenue to the west (see Document 1 for a map). This boundary includes the existing Centretown and Minto Park HCDs. The ongoing Heritage Inventory Project has also identified several clusters of potential heritage resources. The Centretown Heritage Study will further assess these clusters to determine if they merit designation.

Two such areas are the Golden Triangle east of Elgin Street and the residential neighbourhood around Dundonald Park. The study area includes approximately 2200 buildings, including 530 in the Centretown HCD, 14 in the Minto Park HCD and 35 buildings designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The Minto Park Heritage Conservation District was designated in 1988 through By-law No. 142-88. The designation included a brief building inventory but no heritage district study or plan. While this area is not under significant development pressure, this project will include an HCD Plan for Minto Park.

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District was designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1997 by the City of Ottawa through By-law No. 97-10. At that time, City Council approved the Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study, which included a Statement of Heritage Character and guidelines related to buildings and new development in the HCD. The study also included a building-by-building inventory and evaluation and extensive research on the history of Centretown. In the intervening 20 years, the context of Centretown has changed dramatically. The level of development pressure in and adjacent to the HCD was not contemplated when the original inventory and study was completed.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Centretown Heritage Study is to undertake a comprehensive review of heritage resources in Centretown. The objectives of the project are:

1. Identify and evaluate all heritage resources in the study area
2. Develop and implement a plan to ensure the conservation of significant heritage resources and to manage change as redevelopment and intensification occur.

The key deliverables for the project include:

- Heritage inventory for study area

- Heritage Conservation District Plan for existing Centretown HCD
- Heritage Conservation District Plan for existing Minto Park HCD
- Potential new HCD designations with HCD Plans
- Potential new Part IV designations

The project will be divided into five phases as follows:

- Phase I: Project launch, background research and preliminary analysis
- Phase II: Heritage building inventory and evaluation
- Phase III: Centretown HCD Plan
- Phase IV: New Designations and Minto Park HCD Plan
- Phase V: Project wrap up

Some of the phases will run concurrently, with some of the work assigned to staff and some work assigned to a consultant. At this point, it is anticipated that a consultant will complete the bulk of the work for Phase II and possibly some of the work for Phase IV. The procurement process is currently underway for the inventory work included in Phase II. The project is anticipated to be completed by Q1 2020.

A public engagement strategy has been developed to guide the public consultation component of this project. There will be a combination of information sessions, website information-sharing and legislated public meetings for this project. Staff also intend to invite members of the community to provide guidance on the project through a Heritage Working Group.

Several of the deliverables from this project will be brought to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee for approval, including the new HCD plans for Minto Park and Centretown and any new proposed Part IV or V designations.

Original signed by

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Study Area Map