

As We Heard It Report - Public Information Session #2 267 O'Connor

1

Meeting/Project Name: Public Open House

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Minutes by: Thomas Freeman

1.0 Project Overview

The applicant is proposing to redevelop the subject property with two (2) high-rise mixed-use buildings, a significant institutional use, and ample publicly accessible space at-grade interfacing with the public and private realm.

The planning applications required for this re-development proposal include an Official Plan Amendment (OPA), Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA), and Heritage Permit Application with a Site Plan Control Application submitted at a later date.

The purpose of this **As We Heard it Report** is to summarize and synthesize the feedback and comments received during the online Public Information Meeting held on June 19th, 2024 between 12:00pm and 1:00pm.

2.0 Public Consultation Strategy

2.1 Public Consultation Requirements

Due to the height (27-storeys) of the proposed towers the “Landmark Building” policy of the Centretown Secondary Plan is applicable. Policy 3.9.5.5 of the Centretown Secondary Plan describes specific criteria for the consideration of a “Landmark Building” and states that prior to considering a proposal for a Landmark Building in Centretown, a formal and rigorous application and review process that includes public consultation shall be developed for consideration by the appropriate standing committee of Council and shall be adopted by Council.

As such, the proposed Public Consultation Strategy was approved by Ottawa City Council on October 14th, 2020.

2.2 Public Consultation Strategy

The Formal Review and Public Consultation Plan is guided by the overarching principle of ongoing and consistent community engagement and conversation during the entirety of the application process, which is critical to the success of the project. Therefore, the proposed strategy is integrated into the overarching development applications process and will be refined through discussions with City Staff, the Ward Councillor, and the Centretown Citizen’s Community Association.

The most important element of a successful Formal Review and Public Consultation Plan is clarity. The applicant team aims to provide user-friendly, plain-language messages throughout the project.

Our public consultation plan includes the following components:

- / A comprehensive list of planned public engagement initiatives including on-line public open house as well as a planned site visit if appropriate and advisable;
- / An approach to ensure inclusivity regarding participants and other community stakeholders;
- / A strategy specifying our approach for engaging and informing citizens through various forms of social media platforms including a project website and online surveys to build project interaction and awareness;

- / A comprehensive management plan to acknowledge, incorporate, and address the submitted public consultation feedback received from all stakeholders,
- / A thorough and project-wide update meeting schedule for Staff and Council.

A series of regular postings will be prepared to keep the public updated on the progress of the project and upcoming opportunities for participation in the process. It is anticipated that all public engagement events and activities will be advertised using the full suite of tools, but that more targeted messaging may be used in certain cases for specific groups.

The approach to public consultation will be based on the following principles:

- / Draw on previous consultation records and make connections between the processes;
- / Produce clear and consistent messaging to effectively inform the public from the outset;
- / Ensure that stakeholders are being educated and informed to allow for meaningful participation in the process;
- / Identify ways of contacting hard-to-reach groups, and provide a variety of options to engage in the process;
- / Ensure public consultation events and methods of providing feedback are inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and abilities;
- / Allow for a balance of formal and informal engagement opportunities, and
- / Make engagement fun and rewarding.

2.3 Previous Public Information Meeting #1

The first public information session to present the proposed redevelopment was held via Zoom on November 26th, 2020 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in collaboration with Councillor McKenney's Office. The meeting was attended by the project team and began with an introduction by the applicant followed by a full presentation by the project team. A question and answer session, moderated by Councillor McKenney was held following the formal presentation. The meeting was attended by 25 interested member of the public.

3.0 Public Information Meeting #2

3.1 Meeting Objective

This meeting was to discuss the revised design for 267 O'Connor Street with the public and held on June 19th, 2024, between 12:00pm and 1:00pm. It was organized in coordination with the Councillor's Office. There were approximately 12 members of the public in attendance.

3.2 Meeting Summary

- Introduction from Taggart – Kyle Kazda
- Opening remarks from Councillor Troster
- Presentation led by Fotenn and UNStudio
 - Site Context
 - Policy Context
 - Landmark Building Policy
 - Key Design Narratives
 - Landscape Plan and Public Plaza
 - Public Realm
 - Street Animation
 - Pedestrian Experience

- Urban Fabric
 - Built Form
-
- Question and Answer period

3.3 Questions/ Comments from the public via both verbal and written questions:

3.3.1 As We Heard It Summary:

A number of key themes emerged throughout the evening as participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the proposal as presented. Broadly, the discussion covered the following key topics:

- **Unit Mix;**
 - General desire to see more 3+ bedroom units.
- **Affordable Housing;**
 - General desire to see more affordable units.
- **Building Height;**
 - Question regarding the tower separation distance and the rear interface of the development to the abutting neighbourhood.
- **Bicycle Parking**
 - General desire to see a 1:1 bicycle parking ration in secure indoor parking.
- **Public Space.**
 - Questions about the size of the POPS and the proposed "urban room." \
 - Design considerations to ensure the "urban room" is interpreted as and remains open to the public.

3.3.2 Question and Answers:

Question: What is the percentage of Greenspace compared to the lot size?

Response: 17% of the site area is POPS

Question: One of the big issues here is the loss of professional services (i.e. medical). Will the new building have these services?

Response: Not as it is currently proposed.

Question: When the power goes out do the new buildings have back up generators to assist people isolated in their units?

Response: Backup generators are required to be included and service elevators.

Question: Is the exhibition atrium accessible to the public?

Response: Yes, within normal business hours.

Question: Is there a specific number of bike parking spots that are indoor and secure?

Response: A 1:1 bike ratio is proposed

Question: What is the tower separation distance?

Response: 18 metres. This is common for an urban site within the downtown core. 23 metres is more typical for suburban development.

Question: How will the building be heated?

Response: TBD at a later date.

Question: How many units are proposed? How big is the proposed institutional space? The building seems to have a back side, can the rear façade be improved?

Response: The total unit count is 442 units. The institutional space is proposed to be 300 m2.

Question: concerned by the number of 3-bedroom units. 2% is very low. Would also like to see an affordable housing component.

Comment: Excited about the new development, good infill, and hope we can get some improvements made to make the building even better.

3.4 Councillor's Comments Following the Meeting

On Monday, June 24, 2024 the Officer of Ward Councillor Troster circulated the below meeting Summary Notes:

- Key feedback: as currently proposed, serious concerns about the actual public accessibility of the proposed urban room
- There would need to be more consideration of what's specifically unique in the urban room
 - What programming need could it serve? Currently, it looks more like an extended seating area
- Similarly, while the podium is well-designed and reflective of the HCD's dominant materiality, it doesn't convey public access
- Ultimately, while the intent for the urban room is clear and the rationale in terms of all season access is understood, just not convinced that there's a way that this can become truly usable public space as currently proposed.
- POPS design
 - Potential to add public water amenities (e.g. ground level fountain, public water bottle filling station)
 - Considering that the site will mostly be hardscaping, it would be interesting to see some stormwater mitigation added (e.g. bioswales or permeable pavers would both be good additions)
- In the public meeting, you mentioned not seeking to go over the 27-storey limit
- Reiterating that it would be desirable to see affordable housing, supported through CMHC funding or partnership with a local non-profit
 - Lauren Reeves is the key staff person (lauren.reeves@ottawa.ca)
- Also flagging the Hello Velo program to add public bike parking
 - The POPS might be a good spot for the addition of a public bike cage?

3.5 Email responses following the Meeting

Following the meeting an email was received from a resident of Centretown. Their feedback was as follows:

Building Facade and Podium

The podium is great for making the lower levels more human scale, while setting back the height from the street. The brick material and design is very welcome in this area, and helps the building complement the existing architecture.

Public Spaces

I was really happy to hear the response in regard to making the public spaces feel open to the public through the design and architecture itself. To me, this is a key design requirement to get right – given that this public access is one of the major components to the building achieving landmark status. Please ensure that this is not only made clearer in the design, but clearly communicated to the public – as we do not want a repeat of the horribly designed 150 Elgin Street “public” terrace.

Commercial spaces

While the atrium is large and includes access to this new public space, including only a single commercial space seems low. While O’Connor is not as busy of a commercial hub when compared to Bank street parallel to it, nearby streets like Gladstone and Metcalfe are being redesigned as corridors (as per the latest Zoning draft), and may invite additional pedestrian and cyclist traffic through this area. If not in the first revision, what considerations are being put in place to allow the building to adapt to these new trends? Can additional commercial or office space be included – if not on the first floor, but on the second floor?

Family oriented units

If there's one thing that is sorely needed in our new developments, it's not just 2, but 3+ bedroom units. Given the landmark desire for this building, leading by example here and including these family oriented building would be a very welcome addition to the building.

Medical offices

While this was originally a big concern of mine, the vacancy and relocation rationale was clear, and resolved this concern of mine.

Bike parking

Increasing the bike parking ratio beyond 1 is critical given the location to the most critical north/south cycle track in the city centre. Additionally, ensuring they are secure, proper locks that allow bicycles to be locked to the frame is extremely important. I've included an image below of what not to get (wall mounted racks are terrible, and very easy to steal bikes from).

Car parking

Given the building's proximity to a major bike corridor and good access to transit (5 min bike, 15 min walk to Parliament LRT station) and the city's plan to shift trips to active transportation and transit, the amount of parking proposed seems excessive. Easy access to parking encourages people to get a car or to drive, when they otherwise would have used another method. I think a percentage of the car parking spaces can be cut and the space repurposed for secure bike parking spaces, or removed from the construction entirely. Consider adding some car sharing spots for services like Communauto to support people who only need cars for occasional trips – a building of this size can definitely support 1-2 spots.

4.0

Online Public Survey

As described in the approved Public Consultation & Engagement Strategy for this project, a publicly available survey was available to the public from June 10th to July 2nd 2024. The survey questions in their entirety can be found at Appendix ## of this report.

No responses were received during the period of June 10th to July 2nd 2024.

The following questions were included in the survey.

1. What are some key design priorities you would look for in this development moving forward?
2. What locations do you consider as Landmark in the City of Ottawa?
3. How do you think the architectural treatment of the bottom two storeys interacts with the surrounding buildings?

4. In the context of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District, how do you think the proposed development meets or doesn't meet the three key components of the Landmark Building policy: iconic architecture, extraordinary site design, and unique civic function?
5. The current concept has a reduced outdoor Privately Owned Public Space but introduces a +/- 3,200 square feet indoor area for a public institutional use, such as a cultural or community use. We are considering uses such as an artist studio, an educational facility, or a medical services centre. What are some community uses you would like to see brought to the site?
6. The proposed ground level plan features a large public-access atrium titled the Urban Room. This Urban Room connects the +/- 6,000 square feet Privately Owned Public Space with the space for a public institutional use, and a service retail shop. Do you find the concept of the Urban Room contributes to a successful urban public space? How can it be improved?
7. What ground level features would attract pedestrians to use the site and its public spaces? Examples could be accessible bicycle parking or outdoor seating options.
8. What are some important considerations for designing for a diversity of ages and stages of life on the site?
9. Rank the following project considerations in order of importance for you (rank as 'Very Important', 'Somewhat Important', or 'Not Important'):
 - Affordability
 - Energy efficiency / environmental sustainability
 - Architectural design
 - Public space and interface with the public realm
 - Pedestrian / cycling connectivity
 - Other (please specify)

5.0

Conclusion & Next Steps

This report is an important opportunity for the project team to report back and share what we heard during our public engagement events. As a next step, the project team will review, consider, discuss, and where possible incorporate the feedback we received into the project design. As detailed below, future engagement events will be held to continue to inform and engage interested stakeholders and present the evolving design of the project.

- 1) **Receive and Respond to the technical Review Comments from the City** – After formal re-submission of required plans and studies, the technical review process conducted by City of Ottawa Staff represents a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of the submitted plans and reports. The outcome of this review is a series of comments and feedback on the various aspects of the project to ensure compliance with all relevant and required municipal, provincial, and federal regulations and requirements.
 - a. The project team will assess the technical review comments received from Staff and provide written response and revise all materials accordingly.
- 2) **Special Urban Design Review Panel** – A special Urban Design Review Panel consisting of local, national, and international panel members will be held in May 2024 to facilitate an in-depth discussion on the design and architectural merits of the proposal. Feedback will be reviewed and incorporated where possible the proposed redevelopment of the lands.

- 3) **Centretown Citizens Community Association Check-in (x3).** - Throughout the formal review process, the project team will host regular meetings/discussions with the CCCA to provide updates and receive feedback as the design and layout of this projects evolves.
- 4) **Public Website/ Public survey** - A webpage was created to provide information and feedback opportunities to the public. The website is the hub of all the most current public information related to the project. It will also provide a contact email address for residents and business owners to provide input.
 - a. The pubic survey was to be hosted on the website to provide an engagement opportunity for those not able to participate in formal engagement activities.
- 5) **Public Site Walk-Through.** - The project team will work with the Ward Councillor's Office to explore the opportunity to conduct a site-visit and discuss design and landscaping approach for the public realm.
 - a. The Public Site Walk-Through would involve visual materials strategically placed throughout the site to provide for a contextual understanding of the proposed plans for the public realm.
 - b. The public site walk-through will be advertised using multiple modes of outreach to ensure the public is adequately notified on the event and their opportunities to participate (online, email, fliers, etc.).
- 6) **Ward Councillor Check-in** - Prior to finalizing the plans, it is proposed that the applicant team will host a meeting with the Ward Councillor to provide an update on any revisions or alterations and to gain their feedback.
- 7) **Planning & Housing Committee Meeting & Heritage Committee Meeting – Statutory Public Hearing** - When ready, the application will be presented and considered at Planning Committee. This process will involve the opportunity for public delegations to present their position on the application. The project team will also attend to present the proposal and answer any questions posed by City Councillors on Planning Committee.
 - a. The City of Ottawa Planning Committee will then make a recommendation to City Council.
- 8) **City Council Meeting** - Ottawa City Council with ultimately consider and decide on the proposal.

6.0

Contacts

To receive more information on this proposal or to make a comment please visit the City of Ottawa Development Applications website:

Development Applications Website: devapps.ottawa.ca

City File Lead:

Name : Ann O'Connor

Phone : 613-580-2424 x 12658

Email: ann.oconnor@ottawa.ca

Taggart Realty Management:

Website: <https://www.267oconnor.com/>

Email: 267-OConnor@taggart.ca or
communication@267oconnor.com