



Parliament Oak hotel height would set **dangerous precedent**

Dear editor:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the new hotel development proposed for the former Parliament Oak Public School property at 325 King St.

We understand that development is inevitable in the Old Town and we support good design and appropriate projects that will respect our heritage and build upon and strengthen the existing fabric of our community.

We appreciate the time and effort of our town council in serving our town and hope that our attached comments might assist them in their review of the development proposal for the Parliament Oak School property.

The proposed hotel will have significant impacts on the existing Old Town, a quiet residential community which surrounds the site on all four sides.

The proposed design drawings define the potential of over 700 guests on the ground floor including



Letter writers don't think the proposed height of the Parliament Oak hotel is suitable for Old Town. They say it could set a dangerous precedent for Old Town. FILE

approximately 129 hotel rooms (258 persons double occupancy) plus approximately 100 staff for a total potential of over 1,058 people onsite.

The drawings submitted show underground parking for only 189 vehicles. The potential for severe disruptive street parking and traffic on the adjacent residences seems inevitable without even considering

larger delivery vehicles and associated traffic throughout the day.

The current zoning bylaw for the area has a maximum building height limitation of 10 metres (32.8 feet). The proposed hotel asks to be permitted to be 18.2 metres (59.8 feet) in height which would make it the tallest building in the town including the Queen Street commercial area.

In fact, at 59.8 feet it is the equivalent of a six-storey building with three-metres (10 feet) floor-to-floor dimensions. The design indicates only four storeys but the ground floor is 6 metres (20 feet) high.

Previous councils have worked hard to preserve the existing scale and fabric of the town and have demonstrated stewardship in this regard having

worked constructively with new developments to respect the existing height restrictions.

The recently completed new infill 124 on Queen Hotel, has been built with a maximum height of 9.6m/31.5ft. This development is surrounded by the existing commercial buildings along Queen St.

The proposed hotel for the Parliament Oak property is 8.6 metres (28.2 feet) higher and set in the midst of existing one and two-storey homes. In comparison, the Prince of Wales hotel is three storeys and 10.6 metres (34.9 feet) high – 7.5 metres (25 feet) shorter than the new proposed hotel.

In fact, the apartment building previously proposed for this same property was contested because it was proposed to be 12.4 metres (40.6 feet) in height, a full 5.8 metres (19.1 feet) shorter than the new proposed hotel.

If this proposal, a six-storey equivalent, is ap-

proved, it will set a dangerous precedent for all future developments.

We applaud former councils for their diligence and stewardship in preventing the height of new buildings from gradually creeping higher than the existing historic building fabric, thus preserving the scale and feel of the town.

Even if they do not fully understand it, this is what makes the town so attractive to the millions of visitors each year. People come to escape the canyons of our large cities and enjoy the human scale of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We urge council to continue to support the respect and stewardship demonstrated by former council's and their efforts to preserve what makes our town unique and the place everyone loves to visit.

Sincerely,
Gordon Stratford, architect
John Gartner, retired planner
David Parker, architect
David Anthony, P. Eng.