

# Public Meeting Presentation

Thank you Lord Mayor and Council for the opportunity to speak.

The proponent's planner, in the Open House, stated that the Parliament Oak School site, surrounded by single family dwellings, is appropriate for a hotel as it is near the downtown and similar in context to other hotels. The hotels cited being the Oban Inn, the Pillar and Post and Queen's Landing. For clarity in this presentation I will refer to the lake as north.

This is a small town. Yes, you can walk two or three blocks north or south from the Parliament Oak site and stumble upon a hotel. But each of the three hotels cited are very different in context and built form and bear no resemblance to this proposed hotel.

## \*Parliament Oak Site

This is the parliament oak school site which is designated Open space and Community Facilities under the Official Plans; Institutional under the Zoning By-Law. It is surrounded by Established Residential to the north, west and south and Residential to the east. (Having been there only 60 to 70 years, I am not sure why it is not considered 'Established' as well.) The site was once the location of a single elegant estate comprising the entire block. A single family home, beautiful gardens and fruit trees graced it along with many prominent guests visiting the home of Senator Josiah Plumb. A subsequent owner fell on hard times during the depression and the property was acquired by the municipality for unpaid taxes. When a new school was needed, the site surrounded by residential properties was the perfect location and the town essentially gave the property to the school board.

## \*THE OBAN INN

North of the Oban Inn is the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course. There are single family residences to the west, south and north. The Oban Inn was built as a private home in 1824 by Captain Duncan Milloy of Oban, Scotland. Upon his death, the property went to his son who converted it into a hotel in **1895**. (presumably, all current homeowners were aware of the hotel's existence prior to purchasing their property.) A fire on Christmas Day in 1992 destroyed the inn. An exact replica was built and the inn reopened in November of 1993. Because it was built as a private home, it is compatible and similar in scale, massing and detail to the surrounding homes. *So no, inserting a massively out of scale commercial hotel into the middle of an Established Residential neighbourhood is nothing like the Oban Inn.* \*The Parliament Oak Hotel might be similar to the Oban if it was built as a replica of the house of Josiah Plumb which was the original home on the property. (Down in the left hand corner you can see an elevation of the Plumb House alongside the elevation of the proposed hotel.)

## \*THE PILLAR AND POST

Strolling south from the Parliament Oak site two or three blocks (depending whether you walk past the homes on King Street or Regent) is the Pillar and Post Hotel. This building was originally built as a canning factory in the 1890's. It was on the periphery of town in an industrial area. The cannery ceased operation in 1957 and was purchased and converted to the Pillar and Post Inn in 1972. Many elements of the original building remain including this chimney and the post and beam construction on the interior. The massing, scale and architectural detail are compatible with the existing single family residences across Mary Street to the north and across Regent Street to the west. To the east is Open Space Parks Canada land. \*To the south, prior to the gardens being built was a ship building industry, remnants of the warehousing and manufacturing buildings can be seen in these views from 2015. *So no, inserting a massively out of scale commercial hotel into the middle of an Established Residential neighbourhood where its school used to be is nothing like the Pillar and Post.*

## \*QUEENS LANDING

The closest thing to residential surrounding Queen's Landing is the three storey long term care facility to the west. This was never a residential neighbourhood, but very much a working harbour and transportation hub with fishing, ferry service and the old train terminus. The marina is to the north; the charming boutique hotel 'Harbour House' to the northwest; to the east, when Queen's Landing was built was the Anchorage Hotel and Restaurant; to the south Parks Canada Open Space; to the southwest the institutionally zoned land that was the former home of the hospital and is now occupied by the Royal Oak Community School. No single family homes. *So no, inserting a massively out of scale commercial hotel into the middle of an Established Residential neighbourhood is nothing like Queen's Landing.*

## \*PRINCE OF WALES

The Prince of Wales was not cited as being similar contextually but as a stylistic influence. I am here to argue about the inappropriate commercial hotel use in the middle of an established residential neighbourhood, but feel compelled to address the absolutely ridiculous proposed height and massing of this proposed hotel. You can see the corner of the Prince of Wales Hotel superimposed on the rendering. The Prince of Wales is a fairly large hotel, but it is built on a human scale. Interestingly, the additions of late twentieth century are quite charming, have a very residential feel and add a picturesque aspect to the streetscape. In this photograph you can see the original 1882 hotel in the background in perfect harmony with the addition.

## \*SETBACKS AND HEIGHT

The proponent suggests that the large setbacks to the building mitigate the height. The setbacks change nothing. The height is the height. Our little 2 storey house could easily fit in the lobby. The chimneys might protrude up into the second floor - that might be a little annoying, but the third and fourth floors would be free of them! To attempt to justify

a sixty foot height for this massive building because the point of this little turret is forty feet high is absurd.

The architect has noted that the existing trees in these elevations have been drawn to scale. If you have not visited the site, I urge you to do so. Imagining a building equal to the height of the existing trees is more than a little alarming and will convince you that this proposed building is in no way compatible or complementary to the existing neighbourhood. It is completely out of character with the area and is not compatible nor consistent with the existing built form, density, height and massing of the neighbourhood.

### \*AMENDMENT

And finally, why is the town and planning staff forced to consider a proposal where the amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are diametrically opposed to the existing? The definition of amendment is 'a minor change or addition designed to improve a text or piece of legislation'. It is based on the verb to amend, which means to change for the better. These proposed changes are enormous, not minor and certainly not changes for the betterment of the town, its residents, nor ultimately for the tourists who visit to enjoy our small town atmosphere. This is an attempt to disguise a wholesale rewriting of both the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law by asking for amendments to these documents. The requests do not qualify in any way as amendments.

\*one last image. . . It doesn't matter how far out in the canal this cruise ship is, the city of Venice decided they just do not belong in the city. Luckily, for Venice, the ships are transitory. This hotel building will not be.