

Lowertown
Community
Association



Association
communautaire
de la Basse-Ville

Suite 1710, 179 George Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 1J8

18 April 2013

Re: Claridge proposal on Dalhousie and George

Dear Mayor Watson and Ottawa City Councillors,

As you know, Claridge is proposing to add five storeys to the existing 11-storey Union du Canada building located in a Heritage Conservation District to convert it into a hotel, and to construct a 23-storey residential condominium tower on George Street, near the corner of Dalhousie. Both of these buildings, located one block away from the heart of the ByWard Market, would exceed the current maximum zoning heights by approximately 40%. If built, these buildings would tower over buildings in the Market, and would set dangerous precedents for development in the Heritage Conservation District. Density was often stated as the overwhelming benefit of this project, but a project respecting the existing zoning heights would still exceed density targets for the year 2031 by over 1.5 times.

The Claridge proposal was recently approved at Planning Committee, despite issues that we and several delegations brought up. The project is counter to several objectives and policies of the Official Plan and the project would result in negative impacts on the Market. Some of the thinking behind approving the project is questionable – like approving five additional storeys on a building in a heritage district which is already deemed to be too high, or accepting that a 23-storey building is an appropriate transition from the Market's low scale (3-4 storeys) to the high node on Rideau/King Edward (24-25 storeys). Presenters raised these questions at Planning Committee where committee members did not even discuss them.

The ByWard Market area is the city's number one tourist destination and generates millions of dollars in annual sales to the city. Visitors are attracted to the unique heritage character of the Market. The Market is a fantastic resource that we should all be proud of and work hard to preserve and improve. The LCA requests that councilors implement city policies and by-laws so that both buildings are no higher than is currently permitted. We hope that Council will apply the official plan, which recognizes the unique importance of the Market and commits Council to protecting and enhancing its unique character.

Sincerely,

Marc Aubin
President,
Lowertown Community Association (LCA)

cc. Ottawa Gatineau media outlets