**Presentation to Planning Committee**

**by the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association**

**October 27, 2015**

**On the Island Park/Wellington Street Mizrahi Development**

My name is Kathy Kennedy, Chair of Planning with the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association. The boundary of our association is adjacent to the boundaries of the West Wellington Community Association and the Island Park Community Association.

Our association has attended most, if not all, of the meetings at which this proposal was discussed. Therefore, we feel well positioned to put forward our opinion.

CHNA opposes the staff recommendation. We do not consider this structure a landmark building and we are providing our input to ensure that this and future proposals are rigorously assessed with respect to what constitutes a landmark building.

We also believe that the opinions of the people who live and shop and visit neighbourhoods should be used to help city officials, developers, and the OMB get their respective heads around this somewhat elusive vocabulary, and in determining whether a building is up to the subjective standards expected of buildings labeled as landmark.

We looked at this building proposal using criteria that we think signify a landmark building. We have chosen to look at the building from the point of view of what it communicates to residents of the neighbourhood and other residents of the City.

1) Sensitivity: A landmark building needs to make the most of its surroundings – but it is a balance between standing out (being distinctive) in a community yet being integrated within the community and reflecting the community’s history and traditions. As described in the CDP, “a bold or new interpretation of the old built form values {should be used} to provide a unique distinction regarding the neighbourhood that is being entered.” Despite being situated in a very congenial location in a warm and vibrant community, this building does not communicate congeniality. Indeed, to us, the top of the building brings extra height and a formality that seems out of touch with the neighbourhood. It seems designed to dominate and therefore seems unfriendly to its surroundings. While landmarks should be distinctive, they should not overwhelm.

2) Harmony: In attempting to imitate architectural details from the Parliamentary Precinct, the building’s main reference point for the upper storeys is outside of the neighbourhood. As Dave Allston recently noted in an article on the history of this corner in the Kitchissippi Times, its heritage is of boulevard of villas and grand homes in the countryside. We do not feel that a condominium referencing the Parliamentary Precinct is in harmony with the history of this corner of West Wellington.

3) Charm: When the copper roof was perched atop this building, it brought a discordant design element. The pre-cast materials with which the lower floors of this building are built do not fit with the notion of “ aged dignity” that are essential to the charm of the buildings in the Parliamentary Precinct.

4) Proportion: There is no subtlety in the attempt to reference the Parliamentary Precinct. The building looks top heavy and out of character in the adjacent neighbourhood. When we looked at the proportions of the architectural details of this building, we feel that its upper element (the copper “hat”) is too big for the rest of the outfit.

5) Balance: If we look at the buildings in the Parliamentary Precinct, those buildings are situated in landscapes with central walkways and spacious vistas. This balance between hard architecture and soft landscaping provides a sense of quiet dignity and place and contributes so much to giving the Parliament Buildings their grandeur. And the balance between homes and landscaping in the Wellington West neighbourhood also creates a pleasant setting. However, this building does not reflect this balance; it has too big a footprint for the size of the lot it occupies.

6) Hospitable: In keeping with its position as a Scenic Entry Route or gateway building (west and east / north and south), the characteristics of this building do not offer a sense of welcoming and openness that signifies a gateway. Instead, it represents a somewhat graceless, heavy barrier between the neighbourhoods it is supposed to connect.

We do not consider that the architectural design communicates a landmark building. We do not think this design provides sufficient grounds to override the OP height limit.

We do not think that this design brings the element of WOW to the community nor do we believe that this proposal should proceed.

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