



*Patron: His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada*

*Président d'honneur : Son Excellence le très honorable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Gouverneur général du Canada*

November 18, 2014

The Hon. John Baird, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister Responsible for the NCC
Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Baird,

As the national voice for the conservation of built heritage in Canada, the National Trust is following with concern the federal government's decision to transfer 60 acres of the Central Experimental Farm, National Historic Site of Canada to The Ottawa Hospital for the development of a future hospital campus.

A rare example of a farm within a city, the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) was established in 1886 as an agricultural and scientific research centre on land selected for its rich variety of soil types. In recognition of its historical, cultural and scientific significance—and the need to protect it from encroachment and inappropriate development—the Farm was designated a National Historic Site in 1998. The Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site Management Plan, created at the same time, recognizes that the national heritage value of the Farm resides in its history and contributions to Canadian science and farming, its overall design, its rural qualities in an urban setting, its heritage buildings, its experimental fields, and its historic landscape elements. As a demonstration of support for the heritage resources at the CEF, the National Trust (then known as the Heritage Canada Foundation) leased a portion of the Dominion Observatory as its headquarters from 1998 to 2001.

The decision to sever CEF land for development by The Ottawa Hospital represents a significant departure from this important Management Plan, and one made without consulting the Central Experimental Farm Advisory Council (CEFAC), a body created in 1998 to advise the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) on the implementation of the Management Plan and to engage the public more fully in the future evolution of the Farm. The Council is made up of representatives from AAFC as well as community and heritage organizations—including the National Trust. CEFAC serves as an important means of obtaining public input and providing advice and recommendations to assist AAFC in its stewardship role.

I would like to draw your attention to key materials in the Management Plan which foreground the need for discussion before any transfer of CEF land is finalized. In the Management Plan

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Guidelines (V.3), the CEF's Landscape Resources and particularly the Research Fields are discussed at length:

“Analysis: The intricate quilt of research fields within its structure of major and minor access roads and scattered support buildings is the largest and most coherent landscape resource within the Central Experimental Farm. The historic form of the Support Zone is resilient and allows for constant change of research species while retaining its overall landscape character.

Guidelines: The research direction established by the Management Plan should ensure the ongoing utilization of the fields in the Support Zone for scientific purposes. The Central Experimental Farm is uniquely positioned as a place to research field crops in proximity to urban development, a research topic of considerable importance itself as Canadian cities expand into their agricultural hinterlands. The major threat to the historic cultural landscape of the Support Zone is urban growth leading to pressure to widen roads and to modify their streetscapes to increasingly more urban treatments through and adjacent to the Farm. Generally, any proposed changes to roads affecting the cultural landscape of the Farm should be designed to enhance rather than damage landscape integrity.”

The impact the proposed transfer of lands to The Ottawa Hospital Corporation would have on the landscape integrity of the CEF has not yet been discussed.

Moreover, the Commemorative Integrity Statement (Appendix 1) in the CEF Management Plan clearly outlines the Objectives for the Designated Place:

“The designated place will be unimpaired and not under threat when: the present boundaries and spatial balance of the Farm, which enhance understanding of the historic and on-going agricultural research function, are safeguarded and maintained; the surviving 19th century landscape plan, including the core administration, scientific and farm buildings, plus the arboretum, lawns, ornamental gardens and display beds, experimental fields, plots and shelterbelts, and circulation patterns set in a Picturesque composition, is safeguarded and maintained in accordance with recognized heritage conservation principles; a sufficiently large area to carry out and support the scientific research function is maintained; the character of a "farm" as defined by fields, utilitarian buildings and circulation patterns is recognized; and the "farm within a city" remains sufficiently large to provide a contrast to the scale of urban development. The historic values of the designated place are communicated to the public” (4.3)

The proposed land transfer to The Ottawa Hospital Corporation will have a many negative impacts on these Objectives, including:

- Disturbing the current spatial balance of the Farm, including the disruption of the clearly defined primary zones – (1) the central core of science and administration buildings, (2) the experimental fields and plots with their bordering shelter belts, and (3) the arboretum, and ornamental gardens;

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- Substantially erode the land available to support and maintain the CEF's scientific research function. This is particularly important because, as the result of the Management Plan development process, the AAFC identified the scientific research identity of the CEF site as the central heritage identity of the site.
- Eliminating character-defining views of the experimental fields, including "the view southwest from Carling Avenue across the fields"(CIS, 5.2b)

As the steward of this nationally important site on behalf of the people of Canada, it is incumbent upon the federal government to protect the future integrity of this heritage treasure.

Would you be willing to revisit and potentially withdraw the decision to transfer 60 acres of CEF land to the NCC for the use of the Ottawa Hospital?

Would you be willing to delay the final transfer of the proposed lands to the NCC until thorough public discussion of this decision has occurred and consultation with CEFAC has taken place?

Will you ensure that any development of the proposed 60 acres respects the Commemorative Integrity Statement and ensures that the heritage values of the CEF are protected?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Bull
Executive Director

cc. The Hon. Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Dr. Jack Kitts, President and CEO, Ottawa Hospital
Dr. Mark Kristmanson, CEO, National Capital Commission
Russell Mills, Chair, National Capital Commission
The Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Environment
Paul Dewar, Ottawa Centre and Foreign Affairs and NCC Critic, NDP
Marc Garneau, Foreign Affairs and NCC Critic, Liberal
The Hon. Stéphane Dion, Heritage Critic, Liberal
The Hon. Pierre Nantel, Heritage Critic, NDP
Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada Agency
Chris Wiebe, Chair, Central Experimental Farm Advisory Committee
Leslie Maitland, President, Heritage Ottawa

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