

## Updating the ByWard Market Heritage Conservation District

### As We Heard It Report

Pop-up Session: August 17, 2022

Online Survey: November 10- Dec 18, 2022

Over the last several months, a number of consultation events have been held, both in person and digitally. In August, staff hosted a “pop-up” booth in the George Street Plaza, to provide an opportunity to speak with residents, visitors, and business owners about the role of the HCD in the city, and to comment on a section of the updated HCD Plan. Heritage Planning staff explained the project to those who stopped by and received feedback and answered questions.

An Online Survey was also developed to support the project. Area residents including all property owners, were mailed a post card in early November inviting them to visit the project website at [Ottawa.ca/lowertownbywardhcd](http://Ottawa.ca/lowertownbywardhcd) and to complete the survey, open from November 10 to December 18, 2022.

58 responses to the online survey were received. A selection of responses to the questions are provided below (some responses have been summarized or edited for length and/or clarity):

#### 1. Why do you believe the ByWard Market is a central part of Ottawa’s identity?

[95% of respondents strongly agreed that the ByWard Market is a central part of Ottawa’s identity. One respondent believed it was not.]

The respondents that strongly agreed generally said that the ByWard Market was a central part of Ottawa’s identity for two major reasons. First, the ByWard Market is the oldest part of the city and is associated with the city’s beginnings. Second, the Market has strong connections to Major’s Hill Park, the Rideau Canal, and Parliament Hill. The following are a few responses we received to this question:

- *It’s the oldest neighbourhood and the kernel from which present-day Ottawa grew, and the location of many important historic struggles and events.*
- *Along with Parliament Hill, the ByWard Market is considered the historical centre of the city and as such, is a main draw for tourism. The state of the ByWard Market has a direct impact on the city’s draw as a tourism destination which has an economic impact on the city and region.*

#### 2. Are there any buildings, features, places, spaces or views in the HCD area which you believe are important or special? Any landmarks? If yes, please tell us which ones and why?

For this question, respondents generally identified important street sections instead of specific buildings, places, or spaces. Buildings along Sussex, York, Clarence, Dalhousie, Rideau, and George Street were identified as important streets. Clarendon lanes (the NCC Court Yards) were also identified for their role in contributing to the character's area.

Individual buildings identified as important were the ByWard Market building and the buildings facing it, Waller Mall, Pharmacy Brisson, and the Lafayette Hotel. The following is a response we received for this question:

- *The low-rise profile of buildings in and around the ByWard Market are essential to its experience. The remaining older buildings are all key landmarks that contribute to the sense of a mixed-use historical commercial district, especially the ByWard Market building. The wider streets of George and York, as well as the two market squares (ByWard Market building and parking garage) are also key spaces with key views.*
3. [Are there notable or significant events, stories or histories relating to certain people or groups that are associated with the ByWard Market that you feel are important? If yes, tell us about them and why they are important.](#)

In this section, most respondents spoke about the early Franco-Ontarian, Irish and Jewish communities and organizations who lived and contributed to area's development ,such as Jeanne D'Arc Institute. As well, responses also mentioned stories of the merchants, farmers, early families, and settlers who had stalls at the market. The First Nations were also recognized as significant in the area's history. Below are a few responses we received.

- *The story of the merchants and entrepreneurs especially francophone and women. Elisabeth Bruyere was not only a nun and nurse starting the hospital but also started an early incubator for female francophone entrepreneurs.*
- *It is the stories of the merchants and early families and settlers, and the stories of early Ottawa that are significant. The ByWard Market brought together various factions of the city's diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Among them, French-Canadians, Irish, and Jewish seemed to have had the most prominent relation to this area.*

#### [Other Comments Related to this Question Include:](#)

- *My view of the value of HCDs is not about the people that lived here, but how they lived. We are seeing, worldwide, a return to mixed use residential neighborhoods where people can walk to do their shopping and get all the services necessary for life, while still feeling like they know most of the people that live nearby. Lowertown has always set this example because its way of life was preserved. There need to be places that grow slowly, or not at all, to show us the costs of progress.*

4. How would you describe the type of buildings in ByWard Market? For example, do they have a consistent size or height? What materials are they made out of? Are there other consistent characteristics or patterns that you see?

The responses to this question were generally unanimous. The majority noted that buildings in ByWard Market are uniform in height, at most 3-5 storeys high and generally brick or stone. Participants also commented on buildings' mix of uses, noting that commercial operations are typically on the ground floor and office to residential space on the second. Below are a few responses we received.

- *Most buildings fall into a Neoclassical or Georgian style design while fluctuating in height from 2 storeys to 4 storeys. With stone and brick being an even mix.*
- *The market is largely comprised of two storey buildings with commercial operations on the ground floor and office or residential space on the second. Most are frame construction, and they are usually a consistent setback from the street. They are modest with little ornamentation -solid and unpretentious.*
- *The prominent stone architecture lends an impression of age, gravity and solidity that is very attractive.*
- *No consistent size, materials, patterns. It is a hodgepodge. It adds character, and gives future developers space to be very creative - adding new architecture beside existing would continue to make the area dynamic.*

We also received several comments related to the range of sizes, materials, and patterns within ByWard Market. These respondents feel that the variety of buildings is part of the market's character.

- *Very heteroclitic [varied] which gives it charm. Mix of new and old. All shapes and sizes and materials.*

Participants also provided suggestions for how they would like to see ByWard Market preserved. Comments included preserving the original materials and maintaining building heights. There were also comments on how new buildings should be designed. Some suggested that new buildings be designed in a minimalist style to honour the existing structures. A few of these comments are provided below:

- *The materials in the new high-rise condos do not fit into the Byward Market area at all*
- *I think the size and height of the buildings should be preserved as close to their original construction and materials used.*
- *Consistency in height is important. However, new buildings in limited grand space should be designed in minimalist style and use transparent materials such as glasses to minimize the clash with the existing building and to also be more inviting to the public.*
- *Everything in this space should honour the period in which it was built. Look up and see the windows in the eaves, the stone structures or the porches on the*

*fronts of houses. This is not a place for another tall glass building to loom as happened in the replacement of one of these historic buildings. Preservation should be mandatory*

#### Other Comments Related to this Question Include:

- *All the new high rises are completely out of character in a zone with a four-storey limit, such as was in the past, when brick, limestone etc. neogothic architecture prevailed. Ornate decorations set them above and apart from the concrete and glass.*
5. Do you have any historic information about any specific building in the area that you would like to share? Please include the street name and number, if known. (i.e architect/builder, early owners/tenants, events that may have occurred there?)

For this question we received a list of building names or long-standing businesses in the Market area. They are as follows:

- *Aubrey's Meat Market, Albert's Meat Market, AJ Frieman, Caplan's, Ogilvy's. The streetcar used to run from Britannia Bay to the Byward Market.*
  - *The Laff, Ottawa's oldest tavern at 42 York Street*
6. It is most important that a new building be designed to be clearly and obviously “new”—it’s confusing when a new building looks like a replica of an old one.
- *4% of respondents strongly agreed, 9% of respondents somewhat agreed, 37% somewhat disagreed, 43% strongly disagreed and 7% have no opinion.*
7. It is most important that a new building be designed to look very similar to a historic building—that’s the best way to ensure it fits in with the rest of the street.
- *35% of respondents strongly agreed, 31% somewhat agreed, 20% somewhat disagreed, 9% strongly disagreed, and 4% had no opinion.*
8. It is most important for the existing historic buildings to be the focal point in the streetscape. New buildings should not detract from the historic buildings, but that could be achieved using a range of design techniques (e.g materials, window styles, entrance levels, how far the building is set back from the street etc).
- *52% strongly agreed, 30% somewhat agreed, 7% somewhat disagreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 4% had no opinion.*
9. Buildings in the Market should have a consistent treatment for signage, lighting, patios and other exterior features.
- *39% strongly agreed, 31% somewhat agreed, 15% somewhat disagreed, 13% strongly disagreed, and 2% had no opinion.*
10. Is there anything else you’d like us to know or that you’d like to share?

We received a variety of answers to this question. The responses include but were not limited to suggestions for the conservation and new development in the market. Some suggestions are as follows:

- *New buildings should be both obviously new but also reflecting the character of the area*
- *I think that the idea of reconstruction of lost buildings should be an option welcomed from developers. Too many buildings have been lost through demolition, fire, etc. I also think the streetscape design is essential to protecting the historic ambience of the HCD (e.g.using cobblestone, period lighting and street furniture, etc).*
- *Generally, new builds should fit with the style of the old architecture but with some exemptions. Also, consistency is good for outdoor features (patios, signage, lightings etc). However, the Shoppers sign on Dalhousie which fits with the character of the neighbourhood is ideal and much better than the standard sign would be which would take away from the street appeal.*
- *Important to maintain and improve public spaces, trees, shade, benches, water fountains*
- *It is essential that distinct regulations be developed for the design of patios, lighting and signage to create a truly special district that respect its heritage character.*
- *I think some flexibility on development that retains the low rise historical architectural style can be of benefit to the area.*

Other comments we received for this question pertained to procedures. For example, there were suggestions that the development review and permit process be more rigorous to ensure the protection of the character of the area, to improve or enhance funding opportunities for building owners to renovate their buildings and for less stringent guidelines for restoration work. Another comment focused on the abundance of surface parking lots, and how to eliminate them within the district.

Many comments for this question also raised concerns about issues that typically are outside of the scope of a Heritage Conservation District Plan, including for example comments related to, health and safety, and homelessness. An HCD is used to protect and enhance areas of special cultural heritage value that have a cohesive sense of time and place by ensuring that change occurs sensitively; an HCD Plan provides the direction and guidance for how that can be achieved. An HCD Plan cannot regulate how spaces or buildings are used by people.

Staff acknowledge the importance of these issues and will be working closely with the appropriate departments and stakeholders to determine how they may be addressed through other policy work.