

June 7, 2017

To: Ottawa Citizen

Dear Editor,

Re "Mayor welcomes plan for indigenous cultural centre" (June 6), is the reported intent of the federal government to turn the former US Embassy into a indigenous cultural centre a way of running away from what would truly be a meaningful act of reconciliation? I refer to the opportunity to largely return the Chaudière Islands to their natural state (while accommodating a commemoration of their industrial role over the past 100 years).

Doing so would be fully consistent with Jacques Gréber's vision of the Falls and surrounding area as well as with the vision expressed by the late Grandfather William Commanda.

Returning the Chaudière and Albert Islands to their natural state, in recognition of indigenous claims, would be a powerful act of reconciliation.

All of the land in question still belongs to the Crown. No land transfer in favour of Zibi has taken place. There is still time for the federal government to do the right thing.

The former US Embassy, in a prime spot facing Parliament, should reference all Canadians by way of, for example, a national portrait gallery, rather than be dedicated to one group.

Erwin Dreessen