les amis de la ferme
friends of the farm

Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Summer 2021 Newsletter Volume 33 No. 3

The Farm and the Hospital— What We Need to Know

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) have always supported the building of a new hospital to cope with growing demands and the many problems associated with the old Civic campus. It was a shock when the site selected for the new hospital turned out to be part of the Farm. This space is a treasure, given its connection to the Arboretum and the woodlands across Prince of Wales. The pandemic has underlined how important such a large green space is to a population that needs fresh air, exercise, and a place to find relief from stress.

While the plan for the hospital implies that it will occupy just a small portion of the northeast corner of the Farm, it is evident that it will cover a much bigger area than indicated in early conceptual drawings. It will be much larger than the footprint of the former Sir John Carling Building, and include a portion of the Farm's historic core.

The Friends have had major concerns over the notion of building a new hospital on grounds of the CEF. We did not agree that it was appropriate to build it on the research fields nor to build it on the grounds of the national historic site. But we realize that it is going to happen, so now we are responding to the proposed plan for the new hospital.

The latest design details for the new 2.5 million square foot Civic campus of the Ottawa Hospital were unveiled in early May. The $2.8 billion development is planned to begin in 2024 and open in 2028 but work on the site is commencing immediately. The demolition of the old Sir John Carling Annex has begun and will continue to

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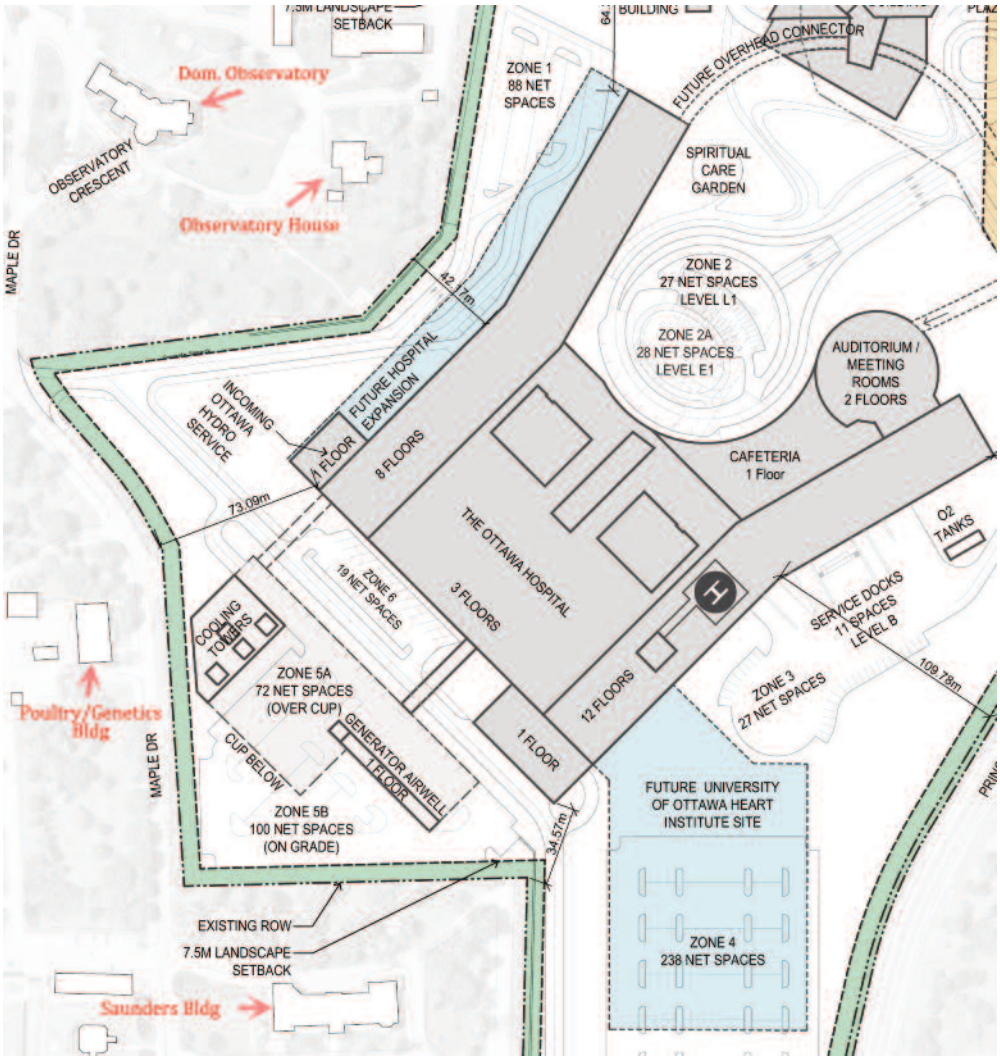


Master Site Plan, May 7, 2021, p. 4 *(Detail. Building names added)*

The planned hospital dwarfs nearby heritage buildings in this detail from the Master Site Plan Drawing. Compare the footprint of the William Saunders Building (its outline is in the lower left centre) with that of the planned hospital. And, the Saunders building is two storeys high; the hospital's south tower is to be 12 levels. At the rear of the hospital, adjacent to Maple Drive and the rear of Saunders, is the Central Utility Plant and 172 parking spaces.

Project application documents are now available at Ottawa City website "https://devapps.ottawa.ca/en/applications/D07-12-21-0059/details"

the end of November 2021. Next year work will begin on the parking facilities.

What We Need to Know About the Proposal

1. **Greenspace vs hardscaping** – The proposed amount of greenspace around the new hospital site has significantly decreased and hardscaping has increased from earlier conceptual plans. The Environmental Impact Statement describes the site as being 20% hardscaped. In the proposed site development, over half of the site will be hardscaped. This means a mostly permeable treed area will be turned into a mostly impervious landscape, with its adverse effects on storm water, air quality and the heating/cooling of outdoor space. What we need to know is how the remaining greenspace (and the green roof) will be designed so that the public will still be able to receive the environmental and health benefits that the Farm bestows; and how continuity with the neighbouring green features of the Farm and its wildlife will be achieved.

2. **Use of roads and traffic patterns** – The use of Maple Drive by emergency vehicles will change the way the road is used to serve the CEF. Other roads, including the NCC Driveway, Winding Lane, and the remaining portion of Birch Drive, are likely to be affected as well. There is also concern that Prince of Wales Drive may have to be widened and could lose its appeal as a scenic driveway through the Farm. What we need to know is how traffic will be controlled to protect the integrity of the Farm.

3. **Boundaries with the CEF** – There is concern with the large proposed buildings and servicing equipment that are being placed close to the boundaries with the Farm. The heating/cooling plant will be underground, but how will it affect the surrounding area? Impacts on adjacent buildings include noise, light, and shadow effects, as well as a radically altered landscape. The new structures will not only change the appearance and views of the Farm, their positioning could lead to further encroachments in the future. What we need to know is how an effective buffer will be provided between the site and the Farm for protection, noise reduction, delineation of boundaries, and preservation of this National Historic Site.

4. **Car access and spillover** – The proposed parkade which will elevate Queen Juliana Park by over 10 metres will be supplemented by surface parking spaces all around the site. According to the Transportation Impact Statement, "The key finding from the parking demand analysis was that the 3,099 parking space supply would only be considered adequate if TOH was accepting of the 0.70 parking space to vehicle trip ratio currently exhibited at the Civic Campus. However, this outcome may not be desirable considering the parking shortfall being experienced at the existing campus, and concerns with long waitlists for staff and inadequate on-site parking for the public." The parking situation could be relieved if more people use transit, but this will depend on how well the LRT and bus stations are integrated into the campus design. What we need to know is how hospital users can be diverted from taking up parking spots all over the already-crowded CEF, as well as on neighbouring streets. Will there be shuttle service from other parking facilities as well, and if so, who will provide this service?

R. Hinchcliff

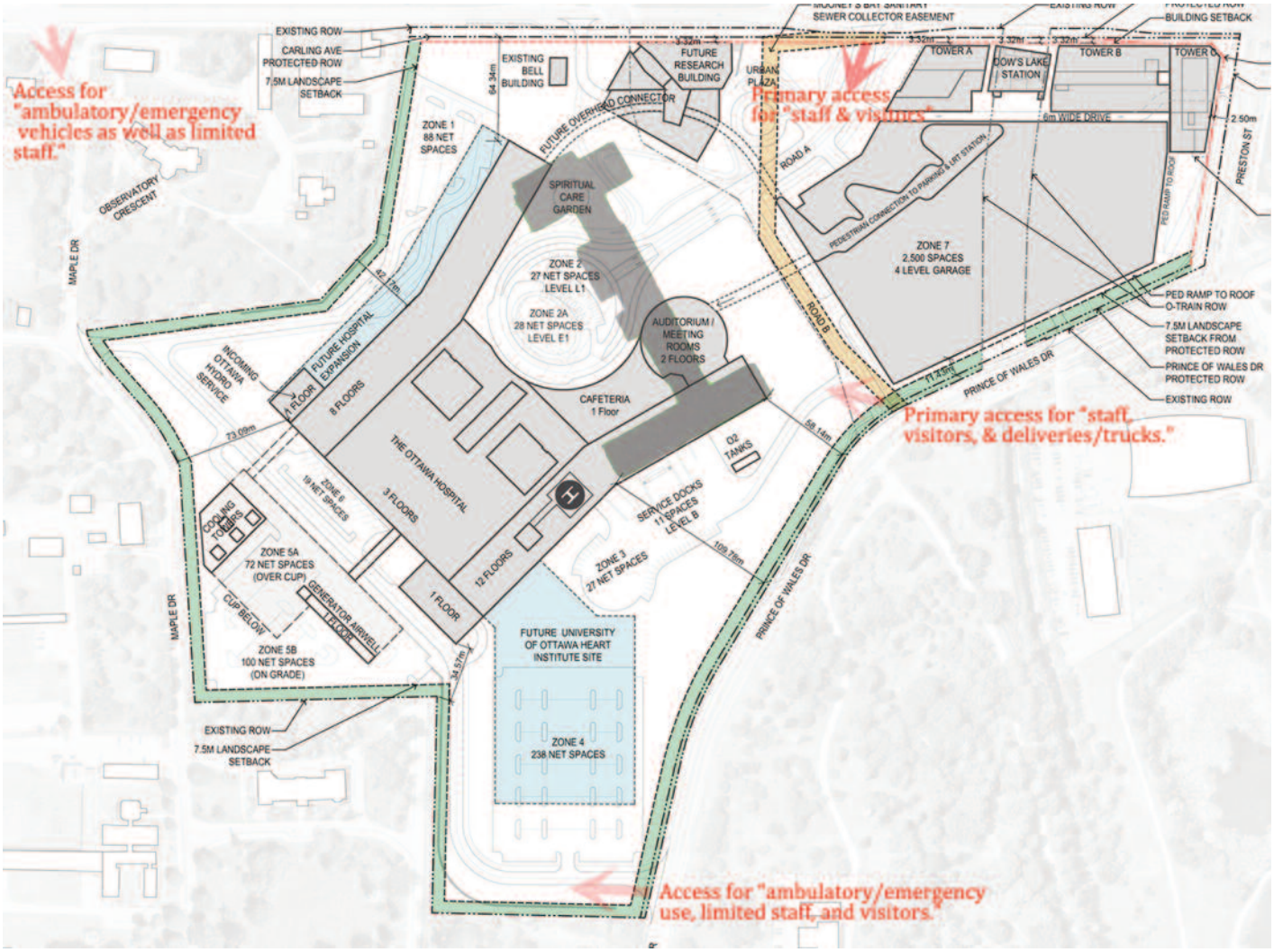
Looking east from Maple Drive to Birch Drive and the historic hedge collection, 2021.

Master Site Plan, May 7, 2021, p. 12

This Master Plan conceptual drawing shows the rear of the hospital, looking northeast from Maple Drive, across the current site of the tennis courts and historic hedges. Not shown in the foreground will be 172 parking spaces, and adjacent to Maple Drive will be the central utility plant, "depressed into the landscape."

5. **Preservation of Heritage Trees and other Plantings** – There is concern about the number of heritage trees and other plantings that will be removed as a result of the hospital construction. The Tree Conservation Report contained in the plans states: "Based on the results of the tree inventory, a total of 680 trees will be removed with 312 of them being distinctive trees." A review of Appendices C and D of this report show that there are additional numbers of multi-stemmed trees, shrubs and hedges that will be removed.

While a number of trees in the southern part of the Tree Conservation Report survey are shown as being retained, many of these are not actually on the hospital site and therefore their status is not the choice of the hospital. Mitigation measures are necessary not just to replace the trees being taken, but



Master Site Plan, May 7, 2021, p. 4 *(Entrance markers and Carling Building added)*

The area covered by the hospital will be much larger than the footprint of the former Sir John Carling Building (in dark grey) and will include a portion of the Farm's historic core. The light grey area to the right is the proposed parkade. Entrances are noted, as specified in the *Transportation Impact Assessment and Mobility Study*, pp. 58-60.

The City of Ottawa is gathering public input from its posted documents. Information on the Master Plan is available at https://engage.ottawa.ca/the-ottawa-hospital-master-plan There is also ongoing review by NCC and Parks Canada. So there is an opportunity for you to be heard.

also to help buffer the CEF from the hospital buildings and parking lots.

It should also be noted that a tree's value is not just its species but also its cultivar type, which may not have been known or considered in the report. It's good that the historic crabapples along Prince of Wales are being retained, but of equal importance is what other trees are going to be planted in those areas. What we need to know is what and how newly-planted trees will be integrated into the plan, whether they'll be properly planted and cared for, and how all of the different trees will relate to each other.

6. **Monitoring and Mitigation** – There is concern about the effects of the construction on the Farm and what mitigation measures will be taken. Ongoing monitoring of effects on the health of trees and plantings, air quality—as befits an historical site—is required, from the very beginning of construction until well past the final stages of completion. The Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (p. 78 of the report) addresses a number of adverse impacts that need to be monitored and have potential mitigation, as do other planning assessment reports. What we need to know is how monitoring will be used to protect existing trees and to protect heritage buildings close to the site, and what mitigation measures will be taken to compensate for anticipated adverse effects.

7. **Integration** – There is an opportunity here to integrate the hospital experience of patients, visitors and staff with the CEF. Design features could include items such as pathways that are accessible for the disabled, and shuttles to the Ornamental Gardens and other areas. What we need to know is how and where this integration is going to happen.

Board of Directors
Friends of the Farm
June 18, 2021

What We Need to Know …

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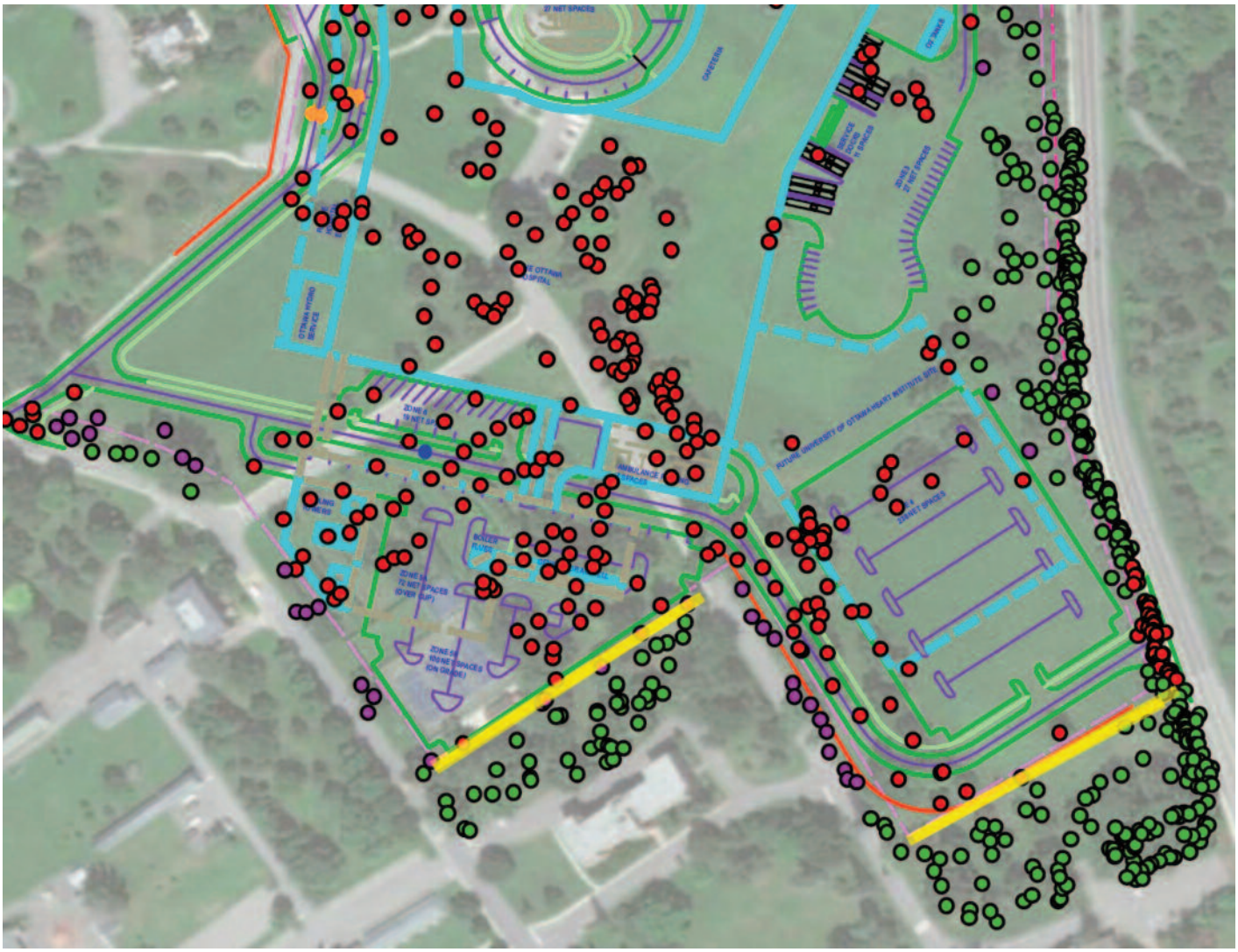

Environment Impact Statement and Tree Conservation Report, Master Site Plan, Appendix C, Figure 1 (detail).

Tree Location Map (Detail) - Red removed, Green retained, Purple to be determined.

"Based on the results of the tree inventory, a total of 680 trees will be removed with 312 of them being distinctive trees." *(Environment Impact Statement and Tree Conservation Report*, p. 14) A "distinctive tree" is one with a stem over 30 cm in diameter at breast height.

The yellow lines mark the southern boundaries of the hospital land. The trees marked green below them, at the bottom right and bottom centre, are not on hospital property and, thus, not subject to the hospital's choice. The historic Rosybloom crabapples along Prince of Wales Drive are to be retained, except for those at an entrance to the hospital at the bottom right.

Consider joining the Friends of the Farm!

Find our membership form on the website and pay by PayPal or send in a cheque:
www.friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member/

Benefits include discounts on Master Gardener lectures hosted by the Friends, one free adult admission per visit to the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, quarterly printed newsletters by post, and monthly Farm Notes e-newsletters.

We also accept donations to support our activities and events, which also support the garden teams that maintain the cherished Ornamental Gardens. A variety of donations can be made through our webpage:
www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/.

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