



August 11, 2015

Tobi Nussbaum
Chair, Built Heritage Sub-Committee
City of Ottawa

RE: Recommendation to designate 70 Richmond Road under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value.

Dear Mr. Nussbaum:

The Island Park Community Association (IPCA) is pleased to support the recommendation to designate 70 Richmond Road as a site of significant “cultural heritage value.”

The IPCA represents approximately 200 households, several embassies and embassy staff residences along Island Park Drive. Its board comprises nine members, elected at its most recent annual general meeting on May 28, 2015.

The site is located at the intersection of Richmond Road and Island Park Drive. While Richmond Road has seen extensive development in recent years, Island Park Drive has retained its historic character as a tree-lined residential street. Running from the Champlain Bridge in the north to Carling Avenue in the South, the street was created in 1910 as a scenic route to take residents to Bates Island (from which the street derives its name). The IPCA believes that preserving the Champlain Oil Company Service Station on this site will strongly reinforce the historical character of Island Park Drive, while still providing opportunities for commercial development on Richmond Road.

The building on the site is of significant architectural interest as an example of the “Tudor Revival” style created by the American architect Carl-August Petersen.¹ Tudor Revival was thought to have conservative and romantic connotations. It incorporated historic and domestic elements along with a rural aesthetic and was selectively applied to commercial buildings as an effective rebuttal to the “ugliness” of the commercial architecture typical of the time.² Peterson’s architectural drawings are archived in the U.S. Library of Congress³ and gas stations he designed have received comparable historical designations in other places—e.g. in Geneva, IL (listed in the US national register of historic places) and Fairport, NY.⁴ The building at 70 Richmond Road retains its original footprint, construction materials, and significant decorative details—including its gabled roof, prominent chimneys, arched doorway and side windows. It is thus an excellent example of Peterson’s work.

¹ <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/king-future-looks-bleak-for-ottawas-historic-cottage-gas-station>.

² <http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/13000186.pdf>.

³ <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/related/?q=Automobile%20service%20stations.&fi=subjects&co=ade>.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure_Oil_Station and <http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org/index.php/history/preservation/pure-oil-gas-station.html>.

The site is also of considerable historical interest. It is one of very few surviving gas stations of its generation in North America. Moreover, as Andrew King reports, Champlain Oil Products—which operated the gas station from 1937 to the late 1960s as part of a chain in Montreal and Ottawa—was owned by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s father, Charles Emile Trudeau.⁵

Finally, the site is geographically significant. It was developed before many, perhaps all, of the houses on Island Park Drive were built and at a time when retail gas stations were first being constructed. As others have noted, the building is symbolic of the cultural changes which occurred in the early 20th Century with the growth of the automobile and documents the history of the development of the city of Ottawa.

Section 2.6.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) states that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.” The IPCA firmly believes 70 Richmond Road is architecturally, historically and culturally important and clearly meets all the relevant criteria for designation as a site of significant “cultural heritage value.”

As always when construction and change is undertaken in our community, it is our expectation that the designation and subsequent development of the site will be sensitive to the residents who live near the building. We look forward to working with the City and developer to ensure the process is beneficial to all.

Sincerely,

Heather Mitchell
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⁵ <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/king-future-looks-bleak-for-ottawas-historic-cottage-gas-station>. For more on the history of the company see:
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1946&dat=19341130&id=9n8uAAAAIBAJ&sjid=PZkFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6565,3952960&hl=en>.