

Appendix A: Public Lecture – Summary

Public Lecture Information:

Date: February 6, 2018

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Attendance: 220

Promotion approach: outreach kit; email and phone to community, heritage, and other groups that may have interest in the site and process.

Summary of Lecture Goals: publicly launch the project; outline the process and points of public engagement; collect questions to be answered on the project website; provide a brief history of the site; define heritage interpretation and its relation to this phase of the project.

On February 6, 2018, the Real Estate Services Division of the City of Toronto held a public lecture to introduce the First Parliament Project to the public. Approximately 220 residents gathered to hear and learn about the history of the site, the heritage interpretation, and the engagement process. The residents who attended self-identified as heritage enthusiasts, architects, archaeologists, educators, and curious Torontonians who were eager to learn more about the development of the historical site. The lecture was held at the St. Lawrence Market Tent.

The lecture was hosted by MASS LBP with presentations from DTAH, EVOQ Architecture, and Lord Cultural Services. The lecture was also video recorded. Lecture support was provided by MASS LBP.

Before the start of the lecture, participants were encouraged to view various information display boards in the reception area of the tent. These display boards summarized the purpose of this phase of the project (the development of a Heritage Interpretation Strategy), the archaeology of the site, the eras of the site leading up to its present state, connections to other heritage sites, environmental considerations, and next steps of the project. People with questions were encouraged to write them down on cards collected for review by project team members and City staff.

MASS began the lecture with a land acknowledgement, a description of the question collection process, and an outline of the agenda for the lecture. DTAH provided a brief overview of the site, the process, and goals of the project, introduced the project team, and thanked the community members who had helped make this project possible.

The first presentation by EVOQ Architecture provided a historical review of the site and its uses based on the project team's research. This spanned the following periods or eras: pre-colonization, early York, First and Second Parliament Buildings, Home District Gaol, Consumers' Gas, and the remaking of the neighbourhood after the decline of Consumers' Gas through to the usages linked to automobiles. The presentation noted the site's archaeology, focusing on the

fragility of the artefacts of the Parliament eras as well as artefacts related to other eras of the site. The site is a part of a network of other heritage sites in the city.

The second presentation by Lord Cultural Services provided an explanation of heritage interpretation and what a Heritage Interpretation Strategy is, what it does, and why it is important. The presentation detailed general heritage components or factors of interpretation. These can be: the state of original objects, first-hand experiences, recreated experiences, and illustrative media. It also detailed approaches to organizing heritage components or factors: linear (organized oldest through to youngest), geographic (organized by links to other location and people), and thematic (organized by general or universally uncovered themes). Upper Fort Garry Heritage Park and Visitor Centre was described as an example of how a Heritage Interpretation Strategy is used, with emphasis on discussing how the site was interpreted through the use of conceptual and technical art, namely the wall and through traditional mobile applications, programming, and events.

A panel discussion followed the lectures to discuss the importance of the site, the role of heritage interpretation, interesting facts about the site's history, and the opportunities for the interpretation of the site. Non-project team member Adam Bunch (creator of the Toronto Dreams Project, he has written about the history of the city for Spacing Magazine, Torontoist, and the Huffington Post) was invited to participate because of his experience in writing popular heritage stories describing events big and small in Toronto.

What We Heard:

Key Points from the Presentations:

- The site is important because of its use by Indigenous peoples, the First and Second Parliament buildings, the Gaol, and Consumers' Gas. All of these uses have been historically relevant to the development of the city, region, and country.
- Any artefacts present from the First and Second Parliament buildings are very fragile, and contamination from the Consumers' Gas era of the site makes the preservation of artefacts difficult.
- The First Parliament Project planning process will address issues of ground contamination that are directly related to the industrial heritage of the site.
- The Heritage Interpretation Strategy uncovers and develops the stories that are part of the site, identifies the audiences who will interact with the site, and describes the visitor experience. It also provides early direction on how the stories could be told.
- Developing a Heritage Interpretation Strategy for this site will create opportunities for people to understand the fragile archaeology that is difficult to uncover.
- The Master Plan builds on the heritage values laid out in the Heritage Interpretation Strategy, creates a vision and guiding principles, and develops a plan for the site.

A closed caption video of the presentations can be found at the project website:
firstparliament.ca

Key Points from the Panel Discussion:

- All panelists agreed that the importance of the site related to its use for the Parliament buildings and also emphasized their interest and opportunities related to the Gaol and Consumers' Gas eras.
- All panelists generally agreed that the fragility of the artefacts related to the site provided an opportunity for a more conceptual approach to interpretation.
- All panelists emphasized that the telling of stories —big and small— was an important aspect and opportunity, and that personal or individual stories did and should have a place in the interpretation of the site.
- In answering a question from the audience, the team advised that Indigenous consultation be part of this project, as the histories of the Huron Wyandot, the Six Nations, the Mississaugas, and the Métis are linked to the heritage of the site.
- In answering a question from the audience, the team stated that while the fragility of the artefacts and the contamination of the site pose a significant challenge to interpretation, these artefacts are intrinsically linked to its history and heritage story. The process of revealing any archaeology provides challenges related to contamination, and remediation creates a risk of damage to any artefacts. The team viewed this issue as an opportunity to focus on the rich and layered stories of the site, rather than the physical attributes.