

Appendix E: Community Walk – Summary

Community Walk Information:

Date: March 24, 2018

Time: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Attendance: 55

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

Summary of Community Walk Goals: Generate more ideas and to fill gaps in the Heritage Interpretation Strategy; define the experiences that participants would want when visiting the future site; and inform neighbourhood residents about the project and the site's histories.

On the afternoon of Saturday, March 24, 2018, 55 people met outside the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse for the First Parliament Community Walk. Over the course of an afternoon, the group was escorted throughout the Corktown neighbourhood to learn about the histories contained within the First Parliament site. Participants shared their opinions through conversations with note-takers, who accompanied the group, and through surveys distributed to the group.

The tour began with an acknowledgement of the local community members who had spurred on the First Parliament Project and with a land acknowledgement. A member of First Story Toronto (part of the Native Centre of Toronto) described the placemaking efforts by the Indigenous Placemaking Council and explained the three Indigenous confederacies that occurred in the area before Canadian confederation, and the Toronto Purchase of 1787. The participants were encouraged to listen to Indigenous voices and remember their experiences when considering the histories of the First Parliament site.

The group walked to the Budget Car Rental parking lot at Front and Parliament Streets. At this second site, staff from ASI Heritage explained what is known about the First and Second Parliament buildings through the two excavations on the site executed by ASI Heritage. The group learned of the location where the First Parliament buildings sat before they were burned down in 1813 as well as what other uses the site had during this era, and what was found when they excavated the area in both 2000 and 2011.

The group then moved to the northeast corner of Front and Parliament Streets to meet outside Toronto Police Service's 51 Division headquarters. The group learned about the conditions experienced when the Home District Gaol sat on the First Parliament site from 1840 to 1860. The group also learned what people were jailed for, and how wives and families would sometimes be jailed alongside their patriarch. The building in which 51 Division is housed, is a retort building from the Consumers' Gas era of the site.

The group continued to Front and Berkeley Streets and learned about the Consumers' Gas era. Consumers' Gas industrialized both the Corktown neighbourhood and more widely, the City of Toronto. The participants were interested in the living and working conditions for labourers

that worked at Consumers' Gas. Most labourers were brought in by the company from Britain, rather than hiring local workers. Participants were also interested in the environmental impacts of the gasworks on the area. The walk concluded back at the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, where participants had an opportunity to share their thoughts through surveys and conversations with the note-takers in attendance.

What We Heard

Most participants agreed that the site's heritage is very important for the surrounding neighbourhood, the City of Toronto, and the Province of Ontario. Whatever is done with the site, participants agreed that it should be integrated with other heritage sites in the area, namely the Distillery District and surrounding Consumers' Gas-era retort buildings that once existed on the site.

Participants were especially interested in the Consumers' Gas era of the site. They asked many questions about the worker experience and the industrialization of Toronto. Some participants were curious about the livability of the area during that time: what the quality of air was like, what the area smelled like, and where people lived.

Some participants wanted to know more about the geographical makeup of Toronto when it was settled by the British as the town of York. A few participants were unaware that Toronto's shoreline was at the base of the First Parliament site and were curious about what other geographic changes have been made to the area since. Some participants were also curious to know more about the Indigenous histories of Toronto and believed it should be incorporated in the First Parliament interpretation. Generally, participants were interested in the untold histories of the First Parliament site that are often overlooked when considering the site.

Some participants referenced other heritage sites they would like the First Parliament to emulate. One participant referenced the Heritage Wall at Upper Fort Garry in Winnipeg, MB and the accompanying Light and Sound Show as an interesting way to share history with site visitors. Another noted the Art Museum at the University of Toronto and the Freedom Trail in Boston as unique examples of heritage interpretation done in a successful manner.

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