

## Appendix C: Public Workshop – Summary

### Public Workshop Information:

**Date:** March 8, 2018

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

**Attendance:** 80 to 100

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

**Summary of Public Workshop 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 March 8, 2018, the Real Estate Services Division of the City of Toronto held a public workshop. Eighty residents met to learn about the history of the site, understand heritage interpretation, help identify further thematic and narrative heritage information related to the site, review and identify gaps in the heritage research and outline the ideal site experiences that will help refine the Heritage Interpretation Strategy. The workshop was held at the St. Lawrence Market Tent.

The workshop consisted of presentations from EVOQ Architecture and Lord Cultural Services, followed by two facilitated group activities. The activities were conducted in small facilitated groups and in plenary discussion. The facilitation design and management staff were provided by MASS LBP.

Before the start of the workshop, participants were encouraged to consider information display boards similar to those presented at the public lecture on February 6. 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. Handouts of the information contained on the boards were located on each of the tables for participants to refer to.

Mass began the workshop by welcoming the participants, gave a land acknowledgement, introduced the First Parliament project, discussed the goals of the session, and outlined the agenda and activities. Building on material presented at the public lecture, EVOQ Architecture presented further information about the heritage and historical narratives that have been identified through the team's research. This work 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 current car usages. The presentation noted the site's archaeology, focusing on the fragility of the artefacts of the Parliament eras as well as other artefacts related to other usages or eras of the

site. The presentation also emphasized that the site should be considered as part of a network of other heritage sites in the city.

EVOQ Architecture then presented the project team's work to date, namely the identification of several draft narrative categories for interpretation: Natural Landscape; Early Settlement; First and Second Parliaments; Home District Gaol; Consumers' Gas; Railways; and, Automobiles.

Lord Cultural Services provided an overview of the general types of heritage interpretation strategies and multiple examples of their use. Examples included: chronological, geographic, thematic interpretations of sites. The presentation then provided a few key examples of sites that used different interpretation strategies: Upper Fort Garry Heritage Park (Winnipeg); Fort George (Niagara-on-the-Lake); Saint-Louis Forts and Chateaux (Québec City); and MTL Urban Museum (Montréal). Specifically, these examples illustrated how a heritage interpretation strategy can manage sites or heritage narratives that are supported by varying levels of the artefacts, historical buildings, and physical objects. Both presentations were used to help support the facilitated activities.

### **Group Activity #1 - Identifying Ideas and Gaps:**

The goal of this activity was to identify gaps in the project team's study to date, recognize areas of emphasis, and help refine the work to date. Participants were asked: What do you think the site should teach?

#### ***Procedure:***

1. Working as a group, participants discussed the draft narrative categories and identified what heritage ideas the site should teach.
2. Participants individually wrote their heritage idea down on a card, along with a reason for its importance.
  - a. For example, "Idea: The laws that were enacted in the First and Second parliament buildings and how they shaped Canada. Reason: Some legal foundations of our country were potentially laid here."
3. Each table discussed their heritage ideas together.
4. Participants then shared highlights from their table discussion with the entire group.

### **What We Heard:**

This activity generated over 170 discussion points (new narratives, people, ideas, historical information, etc.) to help the project team understand what narratives and stories would interest the public. Below are some highlights generated by the participants, grouped by narrative category.

#### ***Natural Landscape***

- Many participants were surprised to learn where the original shoreline sat when the First and Second Parliaments were constructed. They expressed interest in learning about the

movement of the Toronto shoreline and connections to Toronto waterways (specifically the Don River and Taddle Creek).

- Participants were curious about what the land was like before European settlement, and before Indigenous groups were present in the area.

### ***Early Settlement***

- Indigenous histories was one of the most popular narratives discussed by participants at the meeting. Many participants stressed it should be included in the Heritage Interpretation Strategy. Participants were interested in understanding treaties and agreements that Indigenous peoples have with the Canadian government that impact the area.
- Histories and settlement stories of lesser-known Toronto populations, such as Macedonian, Jewish, and Irish communities, were also touched upon, with participants wishing to understand the racial tensions between groups that populated Toronto when it was founded. Participants were hopeful that the interpretation strategy would avoid stereotypes sometimes applied to demographic groups in the Toronto area.

### ***First and Second Parliaments***

- Some participants were curious about the daily governance of Upper Canada and the well-known people who influenced the formation of Toronto and Upper Canada.
- Participants were curious about what motivated British settlers to choose this area to build their legislature, and thought the differences between Britain's government and Upper Canadian government should be highlighted.

### ***Home District Gaol***

- Participants noted that visitors to the site would be interested in learning about how people ended up in the Home District Gaol, especially since the justice system has changed extensively since then.
- Participants also wanted to understand the prison conditions.

### ***Consumers' Gas***

- Participants were interested in understanding the environmental impacts of the era on the site.
- They also stressed on worker experience and the industrialization of Toronto as relevant narratives.

### ***Railways***

- Participants were eager to learn about Toronto's connection to other cities in Canada and beyond.
- They also wished to shed more light on the labour history associated with the Railways.

### ***Rise of the Automobile***

- The main narrative under this category was the role of cars in modern Toronto.

- Some participants were of the view that the rise of automobiles has resulted in the overall neglect of the area.

***Other themes were noted (Wildcards):***

- Health and disease;
- Archaeological excavation of the site; and
- Connections to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.

**Group Activity #2 - Creating Ideal experiences:**

Participants were introduced to the concept that heritage sites may not be able to share all the possible heritage narratives that they have to offer — curators often have to choose what to emphasize. These choices are defined by strategies and, more broadly, by a framework of values and principles.

***Procedure:***

1. Participants worked together in small groups to develop a list of ideal site experiences. Each experience was recorded on cards.
2. They then worked together to pick up to five experiences that they thought were the most important to help guide the project team in developing the Heritage Interpretation Strategy.
3. For each of the five experiences, participants prepared short definitions for each principle/value.
4. Each group shared their work during a plenary discussion.

**What We Heard:**

This activity generated approximately 140 experiences that were intended to guide the project team's work on the Heritage Interpretation Strategy. Below are some highlights from the discussion. Participants stated that the site should be:

***Accessible***

Participants noted that the site should be physically accessible and comfortable to use for people of all ages, and should employ language that is easily understood by a diverse set of people.

***Community-oriented***

Participants recognized that the site should be a place for people to interact with heritage and with each other. It should offer space for the neighbouring communities to use and encourage visitors to Toronto and residents to interact with one another. It should link to other historic sites in the surrounding neighbourhoods, city, and throughout Ontario, enabling Torontonians and neighbours to understand and impact the growth of their surrounding neighbourhood.

***Educational***

Participants noted that the site should contain traditional education tools, such as reenactments

and workshops, as well as less traditional education tools. One example was to use photos and stories of individuals who would have interacted with the site in the past (whose stories may not have been previously told) and who live near the site now to connect people on an individual level to the site.

***Engaging / Exploratory / Immersive / Interactive***

Participants agreed that the site should appeal to young people, newcomers, and visitors, by providing them a sensory experience of what the site looked like, smelled like, and felt like. This can help visitors understand what each era of the site was actually like.

Participants emphasized that surprise and fascination should go hand-in-hand with learning. They suggested that interactive components be used to entertain visitors of all ages.

### ***Fun / Inspirational***

Participants favoured the inclusion of public art that is forward-thinking and innovative in the design of the site. They agreed that the site must help visitors understand how Toronto has come to exist as a multicultural city today, and how they can contribute to further improving their city.

### ***Layered***

Participants emphasized that the site should contain information on all eras, including the Indigenous histories and both Parliament buildings. This information should be accessible not only through buildings on the physical site, but also online and through interactive apps that visitors can download on their phones.

### ***Personal / Relatable***

Participants wanted the heritage interpretation to focus on stories of regular individuals who lived near and interacted with the site in its various eras. They recognized that this would require primary research, but that sharing relatable stories of people who shaped the site would result in a more engaging historical experience. They emphasized that the story should not end when the person leaves the site or start when they arrive. Instead, it should provide context around their daily lives within the region, the city, or the society of the time.