Urban Design Brief

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144 & 176 John Street

Urban Design Brief

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About This Brief:
The consultant firm of Quartek Group has been retained by Two Sisters Corp. to provide an urban design brief in support of the zoning by-law amendment and site plan application for 144-176 John Street. The brief provides planning background specific to massing, unique character attributes of the site and rationale for the choice of new-built mass, and each building placement, in relationship to the boundaries and context of other buildings and site features to be preserved. This brief is to be reviewed in conjunction with reports prepared by others, particularly the planning justification report as related to provincial policy statements, Regional Official Plan and guiding policies of the current official plan for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Other reports may be referenced, as applicable, to the general information provided herein.

Executive Summary:
Randwood is the largest site among the Community's identified "Estate Lot" properties and as such is roughly twice the area of typical urban block patterns found elsewhere in Old Town and therefore truly unique.

The proposed new hotel and conference centre uses conform with Official Plan designations set out to guide and preserve the property attributes. The New approach is perhaps bold by comparison to the original hotel development application. The new building has massing that while taller than the 2011 By-law maximums offers a smaller footprint in a location that ultimately works better for the proposed uses and is arguably less intrusive on the existing site attributes and other features preserved.

By centralizing a hotel and conference operation, the proponent project reduces disturbance to neighbour lands by,

- keeping vehicle movement patterns, particularly underground parking access ramps, and servicing activity more contained to the centre of the site;
- moving the general setbacks of new buildings well away from the boundaries of the property with the only exception limited to a maintenance building that will serve to screen the perimeter;
- parking underground a higher percentage of guest vehicles and leaving only surface parking in remote locations further away from the private lands and for temporary or secondary use;
- eliminating long-period shading events in general thereby with no adverse impact to surrounding properties;
- re-using the perimeter privacy walls and expanding this character attribute to provide a south privacy wall system; and
- preserving more of the original stock of mature canopy trees in the north and around the perimeter while providing landscape surface space to intensify vegetation so as to ensure privacy by suitable visual and sound buffering.

There is historic reference to an era when the Town was one of the notable tourist and traveller ports of a growing nation. While the Old Town may have survived the life of two previous "grand hotel" buildings, which we reference in our brief, the council and residents should not see this development as a new threat to the character of the community.**Executive Summary cont'd…….**

With the resource of trees, watercourses and variety of terrain, exploring experiential opportunities is part of the magic about this site and a core reason why the new owners chose to purchase this property and to pursue this project.

Based on the lines of sight demonstrated in sectional studies, the proposed hotel height and plan expanse will not be seen in whole from beyond the limits of the property so that outside the estate's iconic brick and ivy privacy walls the Old Town remains unaffected, quaint and town-like in scale. If not for the world-class quality this facility expects to offer to guests and to special event organizers, the hotel will be deliberately introverted, private and exclusive by character.

Aside from being central, the placement of the hotel is set back further from John Street and is amply buffered by distance and landscape treatment to not overshadow the stately Randwood mansion. That iconic inward vista from the gates of John Street remains preserved for new generations to see.

By positioning the dominant "grand hotel" elevation on the south ridge of the One-Mile Creek ravine, the new building sets up a dynamic juxtaposition of terrain in a way not unlike the spatial "game playing" that visitor's arriving to Randwood estate in its past would have experienced by following the plan that the landscape architects, Dunnington & Grubb created. The proposed entrance route by vehicle or by pedestrian path of new hotel guests, will continue using this historic procession of carriageway or walkway, starting from the east gate on John Street. Once past the Randwood mansion the new extension to the route will utilize similar landscape screening techniques so that guests only truly "discover" the hotel in the forest clearing, with the north elevation forming the south wall of this outdoor space.

The choice of architectural expression proposed for the intervening buildings is inspired by a range of boutique-class, and international, hotels of similar scale or setting. The hotel could easily be a "modern" architecture expression conforming to a mainstream understanding of clean lines with form following function. For all intent and purposes of systems and performance, the Two-Sisters design team are creating a modern building from many levels of that meaning. They seek to add a stylistically timeless expression by working with two classical forms, a cornice and a colonnade, as romantic form features, which clearly depart from contemporary norms.

Recognizing that the new building's exterior and interior should relate to its environment, being in a natural, park-like setting, the architecture tastefully incorporates an organic ornamentation to soften the building surfaces and to add a tactile, human scale and character that is welcoming and artful. The new landscape features present a modern ordering system that, much like the hotel, are simple and harmonious yet correlate with traditions of ordered gardens, controlled vistas, etc. presented in ways that could just as easily be found in the context of a renaissance villa somewhere in Europe. Views into the new garden from the Grand Hall or dining facilities inside the hotel will be spectacular and the choice of planting will provide year-round colour and splendour for guests to enjoy.

It should not prove difficult to conclude how the proposed changes to the property will be a viable, and sustainable solution for this very unique estate property.

PART 1

1.1 Physical Context

Site Definition:
The legal description of the property is as follows:

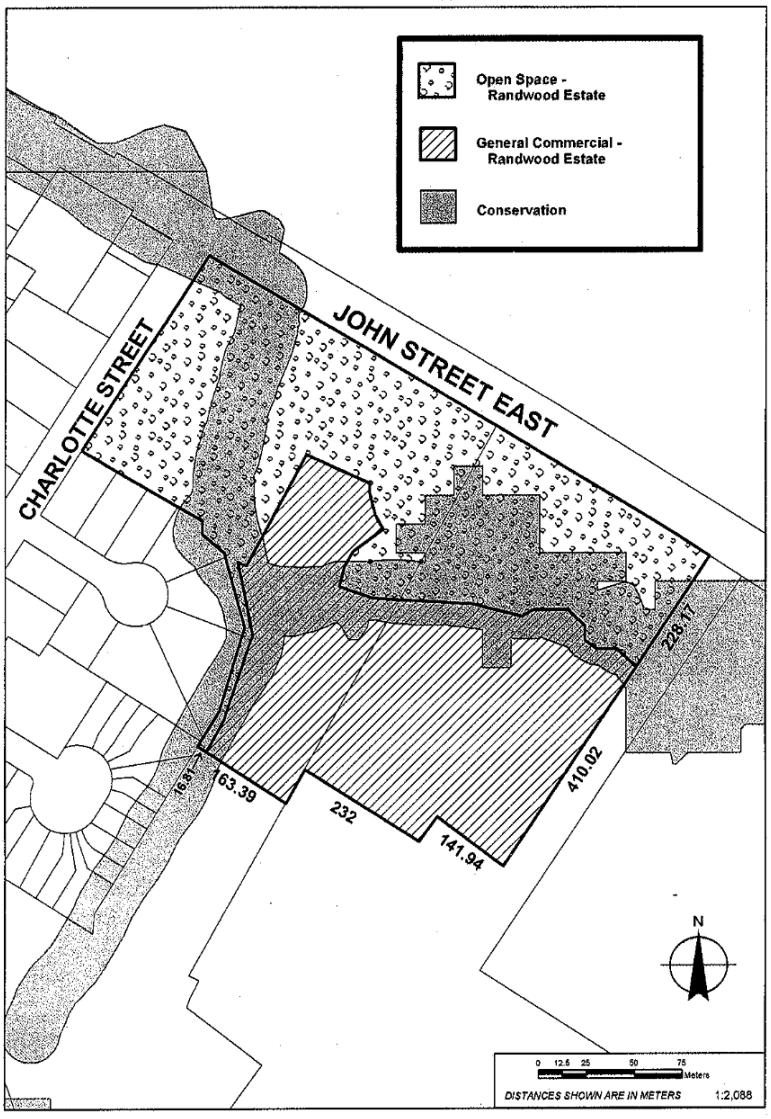
Lot 144 and 176 John Street
Plan 692 Part Lot 144
RP 30R – 1792 Part 6
AND
Plan 692 Part Lot 144
RP 30R – 1792 Parts 3 and 5
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Municipality of Niagara

This subject site is a relatively large parcel of land that measures 53,806 m^2 (13.29 acres) in area and located within the "Old Town" urban boundary of Niagara-on-the-Lake. This parcel was once part of an even larger estate property known locally as the "Randwood Estate". Other remaining estate lots fall within street ordering and therefore do not exceed 2.3 hectares (6 acres).

Site Definition cont'd……..

The site is situated within a predominately residential area of Town and is 20 minutes walking distance away from the business district, just metres away from the south-east urban boundary and neighbouring agricultural lands beyond. With an address on John Street (114 & 176), the site has frontage that extends 278 metres (912 feet) along this municipally-owned thoroughfare. The site also has frontage of 122 metres (400 feet) along municipally-owned Charlotte Street.

Existing Zoning Background: The Official plan was amended in 2011 to permit a general commercial-Randwood Estate description. The lot has two Official Plan Designations allowing "open space" and "Commercial" uses under the definitions of "Official Plan Amendment - Randwood Estate" By-law 4511-11 as shown on the reference map below. There is also a conservation overlay. The By-law included a hold provision requiring additional study in zoning By-Law 4216T-11.



SCHEDULE ATTACHED TO OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT #51

Figure 1- Existing OP zone mapping of OPA51 By-Law 4511-11

Site Definition cont'd……..

The use permitted in the "Open Space" portion of the site are very limited so as, we presume, for intent of preserving its existing character, and setting, as seen from the streets and as experienced by the visitor to this place when entering any of the two gated openings along existing privacy walls facing John Street. The established "General Commercial-Randwood" (GC-56) uses of the 2011 Holding Zone, permits a hotel, conference centre, art gallery and restaurant in addition to various outdoor structures or accessory buildings. A third overlay on the reference map identifies the extent of "conservation" lands established along a watercourse that passes through the property and is described later in this report.

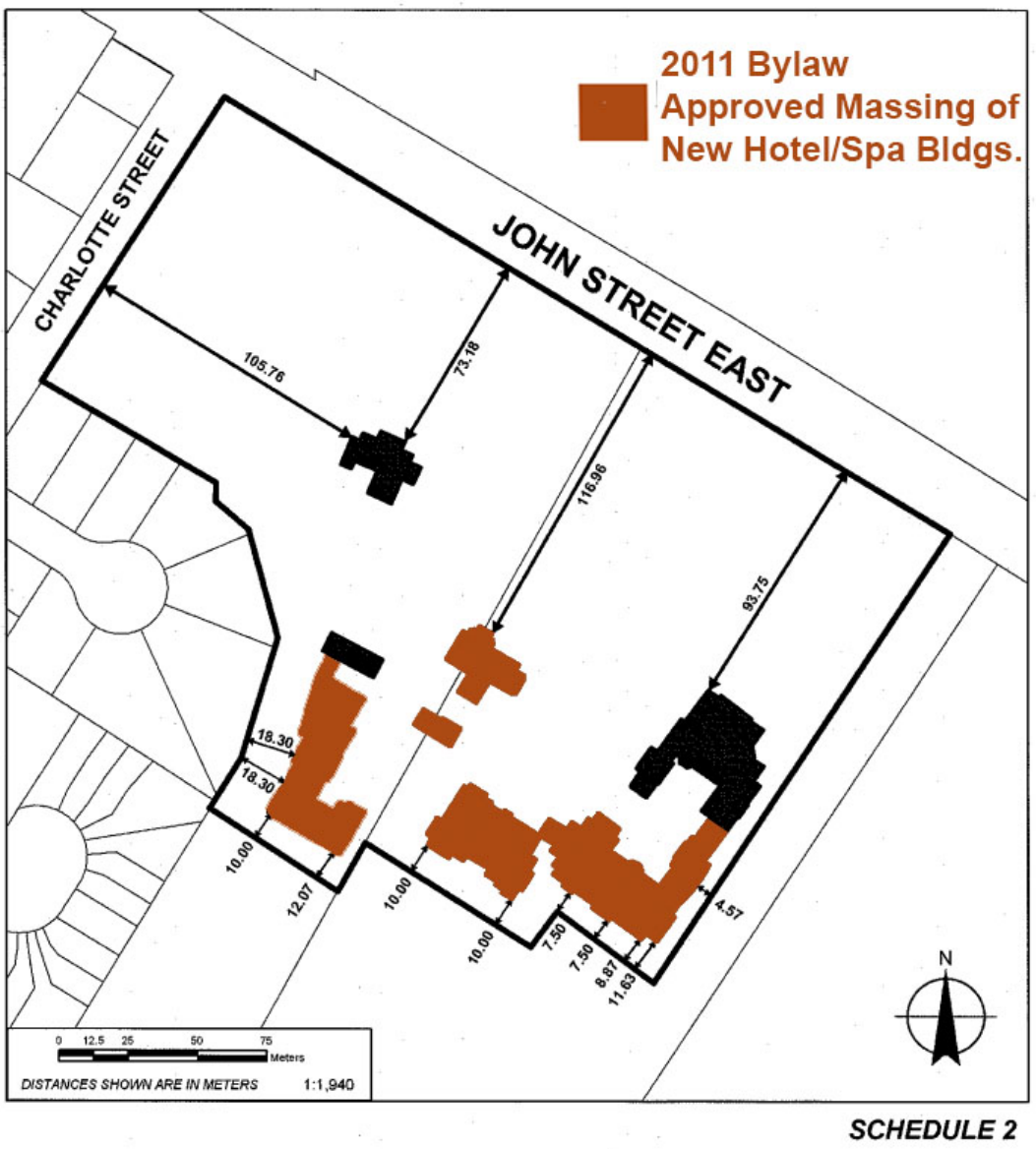


Figure 2- Previous Application Excerpt; massing of new building; From By-Law 4216T-11

Site Definition cont'd……..
The new building locations, as presented in the 2011 application and which formed the basis for site-specific zoning By-law 4316T-11 approval, anticipated a combination of two-storey and three-storey buildings to be placed on the site at locations along the east, south and west perimeter of the commercially zoned portion of the site, all collectively to achieve a combined 10.2% building coverage of the site. The new buildings of the 2011 design were shown to link to the existing Randwood mansion and existing Coach house. The above-grade buildings were physically connected to surface or underground parking. While we observe how the proposed 2011 hotel and conference development, although capable of being phased and although operationally smaller, opted to position the bulk of its three-storey new buildings with only setbacks ranging between 6 to 18 metres from the property boundaries. Consequently, a large area of existing trees and lawn was to be removed behind the Randwood mansion including lands containing an original gazebo. That will not be lost under the new application. This same building site plan also intended to punctuate the centre of the site between the mansion and the coach house with a new building.

On-Site Attributes:
Physically, the subject lot is irregular-shaped with a substantial area containing both natural and formally-designed landscape features. The site includes two former residences and a coach house of size noted below:

	Existing Building Name	Footprint Area		Maximum Bldg. Height		Average Height of Bldg. Mass	
		sq. metres	sq. feet	metres	feet	metres	feet
1	Randwood Mansion Building	1037.59	11168.56	13.00	42.65	10.00	32.81
2	Devonian House	404.31	4351.96	11.50	37.65	9.60	31.50
3	Coach House	162.80	1752.39	7.00	23.00	5.00	16.40

The property is highly valued for heritage attributes from the perspective of the architectural building elements, but more distinctly the strong heritage landscape merit and historic site significance. This brief will refer to a separately-authored assessment report on the heritage elements and corresponding impact of the proposed new boutique hotel and conference functions on this site. (See Appendix A).

In advance of a formal heritage designation, the recommendations from the heritage consultant identifies elements of the 2011 bylaw deemed important for preservation. These elements generally include the exteriors of the Randwood Mansion building, the Devonian House and the Coach House. A majority of the value is noted in the exterior building features. The mansion, having undergone numerous changes and additions is not a pure example of one period style of architecture. Its north elevation as seem from John Street is arguably the most iconic part of its design value.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……

Figures 3, 4 & 5 - (above) Devonian House- east elevation; (below) Coach House – north (Left) and west (right) elevations

On-Site Attributes cont'd……

Figures 6, 7 & 8 - Randwood Mansion - (above) south elevation; (below) north front (left) and east elevations (right)

On-Site Attributes cont'd……

Previous studies place greater importance on the heritage landscape, particularly related to the remaining Dunnington-Grubb components such as the axial stone walkway, the reflecting pond, as well as the extensive collection of century-old planting.

All heritage attributes are being given consideration in the current application's design. Under the new development proposal, and with only minor exception, existing buildings are being preserved and repurposed for associated guest spa and hospitality uses of the hotel and conference facility. To retain the character and desired pace of movement through the site, narrow carriageways are preserved in the original locations, with only exception being where emergency access vehicles and servicing access require modification to widen.

Figures 9,10 & 11 –(above) Dunnington-Grubb designed stone stepped walkway; (left) Devonian House layby area; (far Left) narrow carriageway lanes

In terms of suitable building re-use, the applicant has weighed the attribute value of a west wing annex addition of the Randwood mansion that was only built in the last 20 years. This annex does not serve any heritage interest and it is therefore proposed that this section of the mansion, consisting of approximately 107 square meters lot coverage and two levels of office, be carefully removed from the remaining mansion to create a walkway linkage and an outdoor pool and patio area.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

Figures 12 & 13 - 1997 southwest annex addition to Randwood; (left) west elevation, (right)- view of annex east flanking inside sunken rear courtyard

The site contains two attractive gazebos that would be also be retained within the hotel overlay as important attributes.

Figures 14 & 15- (left) heritage round gazebo in southiwest quadrant, (rRight) 20-year old square gazebo in front-central grounds.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

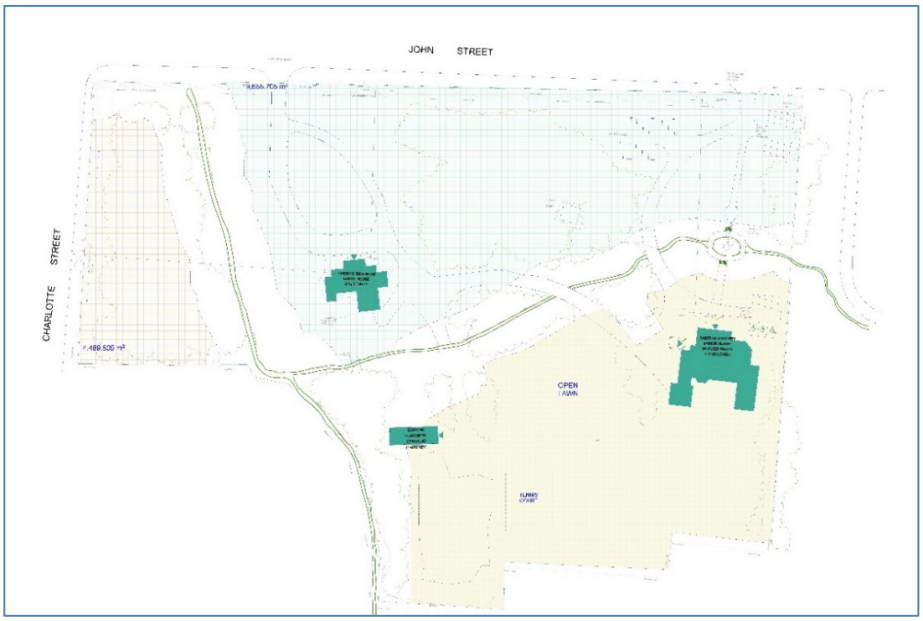


Figure 16- Three Regions; Charlotte Street Region tilts west to east to One Mile Creek, Central North tilts from mid depth of John Street into Creek Ravine; South Region has high ridge crowning centrally next to east-west Creek ravine, otherwise slopes to ravines

Topography: When observing terrain, the site is divided into three areas by ravines created by the natural watercourse arms of One-Mile Creek. The Creek arms join mid-way and continues to flow north passing under John Street towards the Butler's Barracks land. Each area of the site in slightly sloped toward the ravines from east to west. The commercial-use area of site in mainly south of the bisecting ravine. Although topographically flat, there is an elevated plateau situated in the open lawn area and extending from the Randwood mansion to within 20 metres of the coach house building. The mansion and surrounding land appear to be on a high ridge when viewed from either John Street gate approach, although this is somewhat of an optical exaggeration due to the gradual decent into the central ravine experienced by carriageways or on the stone walk. See also "*Procession*"on page _____

Figures 17 & 18- Natural Screening along east carriageway approach to Randwood

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

Areas of Least Adverse Impact from Potential New Development: There is a topographically lowered area within the south west quadrant of the site where a former parking lot was constructed. Adjacent to the lot is an old tennis court. Both these asphalt-surfaced areas were found to be in very poor condition, and are therefore recommended for removal of materials, fencing, etc. The south-central area of the property is generally an open grassy field with interspersed patches of trees, none of which appear to be part of the Dunnington-Grubb planting scope. Of all regions of the site, this central south area, along with the south-west quadrant described above, appear to possess the least trees and other elements of cultural significance and where new building or landscaping can be introduced. Previous development proposals agreed with this assessment. When referencing the 2011 site plan, both the south-west and south-east quadrants of the site were deemed suitable areas for new building placement even when some of the hotel functions would be located closer to existing residential rear yards that back onto the One Mile Creek and the Randwood west property line. The landscape attribute of the south-east quadrant contains several mature trees and open lawn that can be preserved under the new site plan central building placement.

Figures 19 & 20 - former parking area and tennis court (south-west quadrant) at Randwood

Tree and Plant Preservation: A tree inventory and preservation plan is part of a separate study provided with the application for greater detail about species and location. The floor of the ravines is heavily wooded, and the north half of the site is populated with many varieties of tall, mature trees and plantings. In the new development these would be preserved. Year round this creates a very dense canopy that blocks off much of the high land and private areas of the site south of the central ravines top of bank.

Bridges: There are three existing vehicle bridges in place that cross the east-west arm of the Creek. These are in various states of disrepair. The bridges, those with existing architectural qualities, will be restored while one concrete vehicle bridge will be replaced with a larger, and more attractive, new bridge designed so it can support delivery truck movements and emergency vehicle access, in addition to light vehicle traffic of the hotel / conference guests.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

Figures 21 & 22 -Dunnington-Grubb designed pond feature: (Left) east creek entry bridge (right) west creek exit bridge

The Dunnington-Grubb design included a reflecting pond that incorporates two natural stone footbridges that are attractive and in a restorable condition. There is a smaller, existing footbridge near the west fork of the Creek and another two wooden footbridges along the north portion of the Creek in place to connect trails within the site. All bridge locations are being retained in some capacity and with least disturbance to surrounding landscape.

Figure 23 & 24 - Concrete Bridges: (left) central carriageway bridge; (right) west service bridge, to be replaced

Privacy Walls: The frontage along John Street is defined by a 1.5-metre high privacy wall constructed of stucco masonry with brick posts and stone caps. This brick posted wall is punctuated by grand primary and secondary gate features that date from the original estate. The Charlotte Street frontage is delineated by an attractive mortared field stone wall of varying height. Both walls are described as valued in defining the character of the site for the public.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

Figures 25 ,26, 27 & 28- Estate Privacy Walls: (top left) west gate on John St.; (top right) east gate on John St.;(lower left) central wall; (lower right) Charlotte St. field stone wall

Procession: The formal stone walkway to the mansion, and the carriage ways placement in the landscape design, both very effectively use axial alignment and redirection to heighten the experience of arrival for the visitor. The selection of trees and shrubbery, though now mature, were placed with purpose to screen parts of the site as one moves through the park-like setting so that man-made features of the site are revealed along the path to the delight and awe of guests. This processional movement is an attribute that the new applicant shall continue to utilize for its intended objectives; Hotel guests to first to pass from the public realm into a sheltered park land where, if on foot, to move through a beautiful rationalized stone axial path that is terminated by the mansion spa building perched on the horizon or, if in a vehicle to move off the axial alignment into the forest path that screens all other parts except the mansion and fore-garden elements until practically arriving at the crest of the ravine ridge.

On-Site Attributes cont'd……..

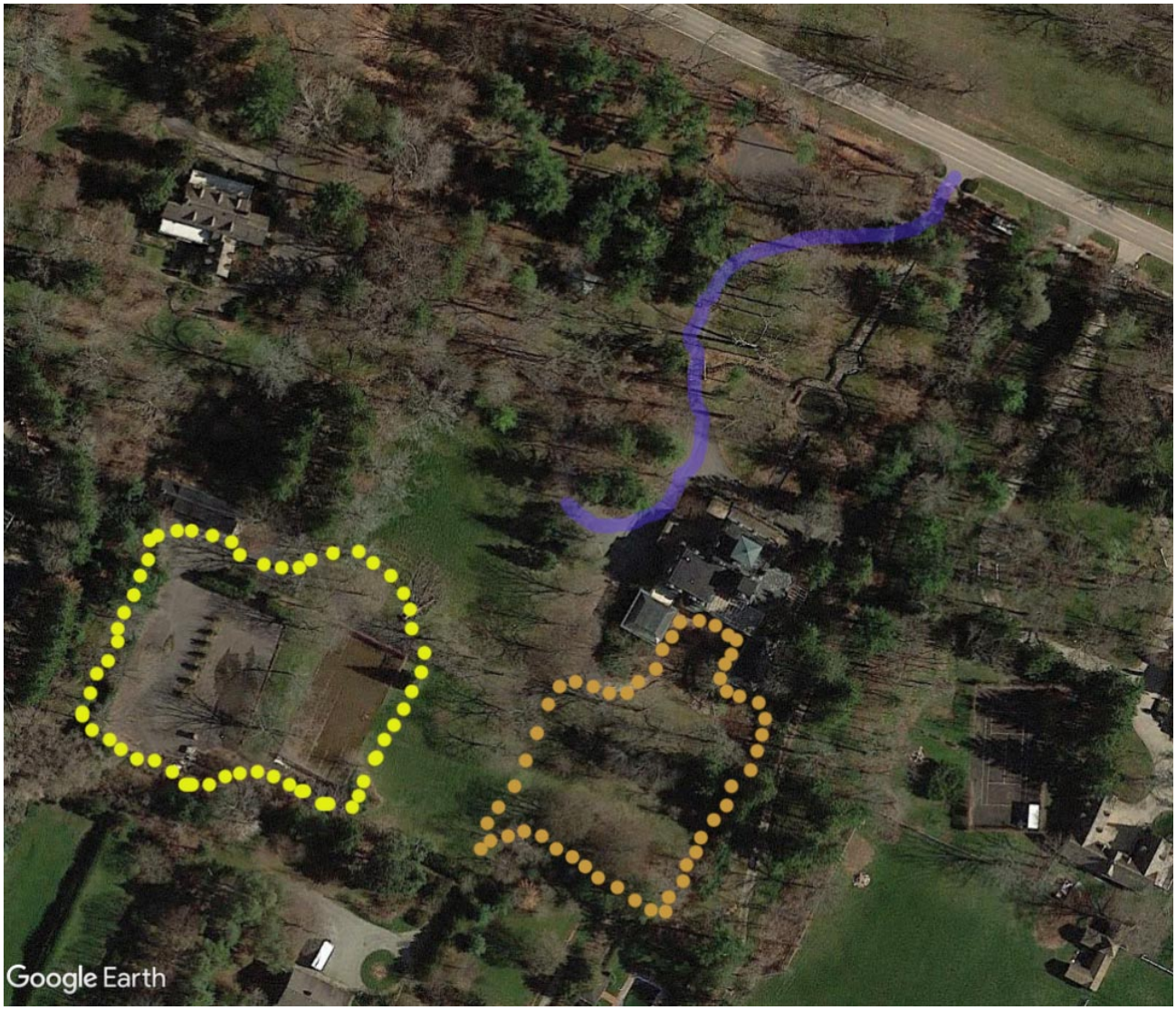


Figure 29 - Site Utilization and Procession: (yellow dot)- area of old parking and tennis court to be removed in 2011 application and new application; (orange dot)- area being preserved in new application; (Mauve line) -processional path (carriageway) preserved in new entrance for hotel/ conference guests and spa visitors

1.2 Response to Policy Context

Official Plan:
A complete planning justification report is supplied with the application. The development is guided by established Urban Design Policies that pertain to commercial development of the same or similar scale. The proposed uses will not differ from the use and scale of operations found in three other hotels constructed in the Old Town as identified at time of application and will be larger in operation to four other hotels and inns. The other examples are built, or were approved to the height and massing pattern, similar of other surrounding commercial and residential massing according to their close placement. None of the other hotel sites have the buffer conditions of distance, and density of vegetation, as available on the subject Randwood property. Although not specifically located in the Old Town zoning area, there are examples of hotels projects constructed in the Town that are between 5 and 7 storeys in height and there are approved locations for higher storey-count hospitality projects; all of which have lesser setbacks from property boundaries.

1.3 Urban Design Goals and Objectives for the Site

Design goals can be summarized as follows:

- Create a world-class resort experience for visitors to Niagara that offers a level of service and privacy not otherwise achievable without the generous space afforded by a 13-acre parcel of land
- Through choice of a mid-rise block massing on a larger ground level plinth, create a “Grand Hotel” of scale that is unique to the Old Town yet suitable and architecturally appropriate in context of the park-like grounds that only Randwood’s site, size, and character offer. No other site in Town would contextually warrant such a grand gesture.
- Selecting a central new building location that will permit guests to enjoy the several unique garden settings, that radiate from the sites natural features.
- Target suitable mass transition distances and buffering techniques to preserve the existing setting of the Randwood Mansion and other legacy buildings, while still responding to obvious site placement harmony.
- Defining in the new hotel’s building elements an “ornamental” modern architecture style, one draws from classical and other transitional periods with careful measure to achieve a timeless fit.
- Not only adhering to preservation of open space zoning on the site, but more conscientiously reinstating the original function and feel predicated by the original Dunnington-Grubb landscape by further utilizing again the romantic processional movement along the estates’ pedestrian walkways and carriageways, thereby engaging with the heritage landscape in a way that is was intended.
- Present no adverse impact on the surrounding neighbourhood

The Site in Context:

The site is one of several former "estate" lots located within Old Town that were established early in the 20th century by wealthy influential families who came to settle here or make this their Summer residence. Randwood is the largest of these remaining properties and is one of two that possess prominent frontage on John Street to form one of the Town's more attractive entrance ways from the Niagara Parkway. The site is largely under a high-canopy of mature trees that adjoining other heavily wooded surroundings along the Street past the other sizable estate lot east of Randwood and bound the Parks Canada "Commons".

Figure 30- Site Proximity: (yellow dot) pedestrian trail network connections

PART 2

The purpose of Part 2 is to describe the proposed development concept and design solutions that respond to the goals established in Part 1.

2.1 Development Concept

a. Site Design

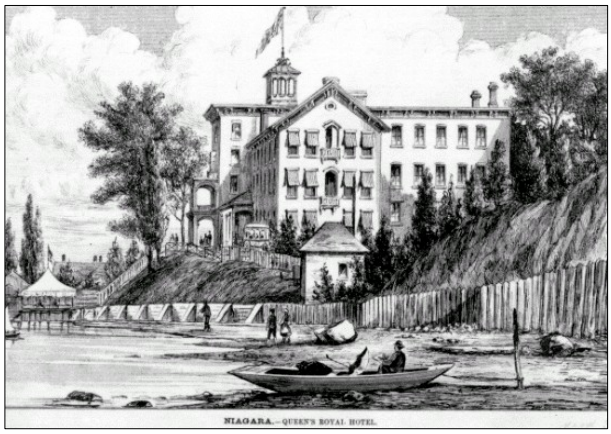
Figure 31- The largest hotel, Queens Royal Hotel; located at the mouth of the Niagara River on the site now named Queens Royal Park

The Two Sisters Resort is a singular new statement building in the form of a Grand Hotel. Historically Niagara-on-the-Lake has been home to several large hotels built in the late 19th century of similar scale and height. These where bold statements in their time. This proposal responds to market demand for a premium-level destination that many other world-class tourist and business destinations like Niagara-on-the-Lake already offer. The project strives for grandeur reminiscent of the early resort era of the Town shaped many of the larger parks and character features of the community. Citing the Queen's Royal Park Hotel (figures 31 & 33) and the Chautauqua Hotel (figure 32), both had a large breath of landscape around the buildings and commanded presence on the townscape.

***From Town's History of Niagara-on-the-Lake**;*

> *"Wealthy American visitors came to stay for long summer vacations resulting in the enlargement of some of the older homes to accommodate children, relations, friends and servants. Large new summer residences were also constructed with balconies, verandas, widows' walks and large airy rooms. A religious camp grew up in the Chautauqua area resulting in the construction of a hotel, an amphitheatre seating several thousand people and several summer cottages of a distinctly Victorian design. When the Chautauqua Institute ceased to exist, the ensuing development took on a unique design resembling the spokes of a wheel. The Queen's Royal Niagara Hotel was constructed in what is now Queen's Royal Park to accommodate distinguished visitors such as the Duke and Duchess of York, the future King George V and Queen Mary. Tennis courts, a lawn bowling green and a pavilion for parties and dances attested to the popularity of Niagara as a summer resort."*

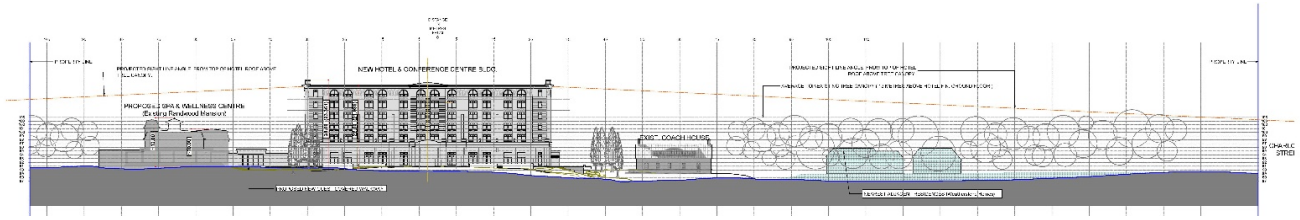
Site Design cont'd……

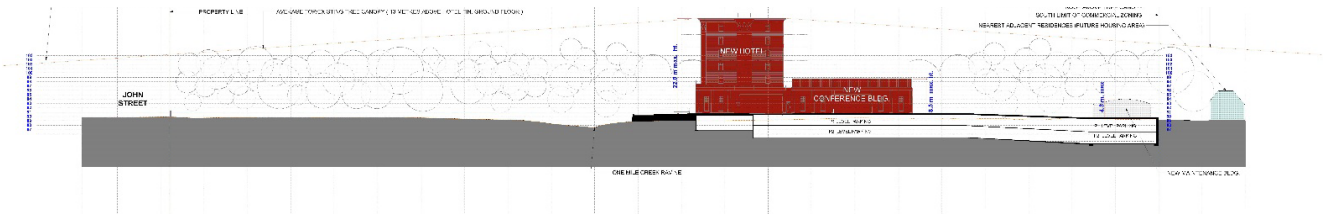


Figures 32 & 33- (left) photo of the Chautauqua Hotel (right) historic rendering of the Queens Royal Park seen towering from the shore

No other site has the potential to fulfill the privacy requirements that some clientele may seek, offering an exclusive range of service while they move freely within secured boundaries of the grounds. On other target markets, this hotel would cater to the multi-day stay visitor who seeks great on-site recreation and dining or top drawer special event facilities that set a new standard for quality and features. This would be a single phase of development to be built and fully integrated in a way that will deliver services with least disturbance and disruption to the neighbourhood.

The hotel will be constructed on a plinth level utilizing the roof of an underground parking garage structure. The new building will not have any adverse noticeable presence on John Street or Charlotte Street due to its distance (120 metres). It is further obscured from any eye-level viewpoints along this thoroughfare and because of the sheer density of vegetation in the foreground even in late Fall and Winter. See setback distances.





Figures 34 & 35- Example Cross-sections Through the Site: (upper) the east/west elevation of the new hotel in context with the existing buildings and the property boundaries; (Lower) north-south section showing the new hotel relative to the ravine and John Street.

Site Design cont'd……

A new maintenance building is proposed at the south west corner of the property that would also be constructed on top of the underground parking structure. This building shall house grounds keeping equipment and a workshop. The building would assume the same attractive architectural vocabulary as the hotel, and will be tied into the new landscape features of the south grounds.

Figure 36- Retained Privacy Wall and introduction of similar wall system on south boundary of hotel property.

The existing privacy walls along the Streets would be preserved and continue to screen the foreground as they once screen the private spaces of the estate.

There is a natural clearing the low elevation at points near the intersection at John and Charlotte streets, this obscures new building placement to only the top two floors. Impact on public vistas is non-existent as the cross-sections of the site reveal due to minimum angle of sight lines as should on site cross-section drawings (Refer to larger scale drawings attached with the application).

Figure 37 - View from Parks Canada Commons along John Street showing existing tree canopy and natural screening of new buildings

The "Commons" area, which is part of Parks Canada jurisdiction and known to most residents of Old Town as a passive recreation area, is located on the opposite side of John Street. The features of the Commons site are open grassy areas interspersed with former roads, now public trails punctuated by mature treelines. No views of the new hotel building are calculated to be visible from this public area for the region of this parkland south of the Queens Parade entry into Town.

Site Design cont'd……

The building entrance will adopt a formal "porte-cochere" feature at the front (North facing) elevation of the hotel. New Roads will connect to existing carriage ways. The visitors who may only be spa guests, or attendees at meetings, can access the Randwood mansion using the existing canopy and the new layby area at the east link between buildings.

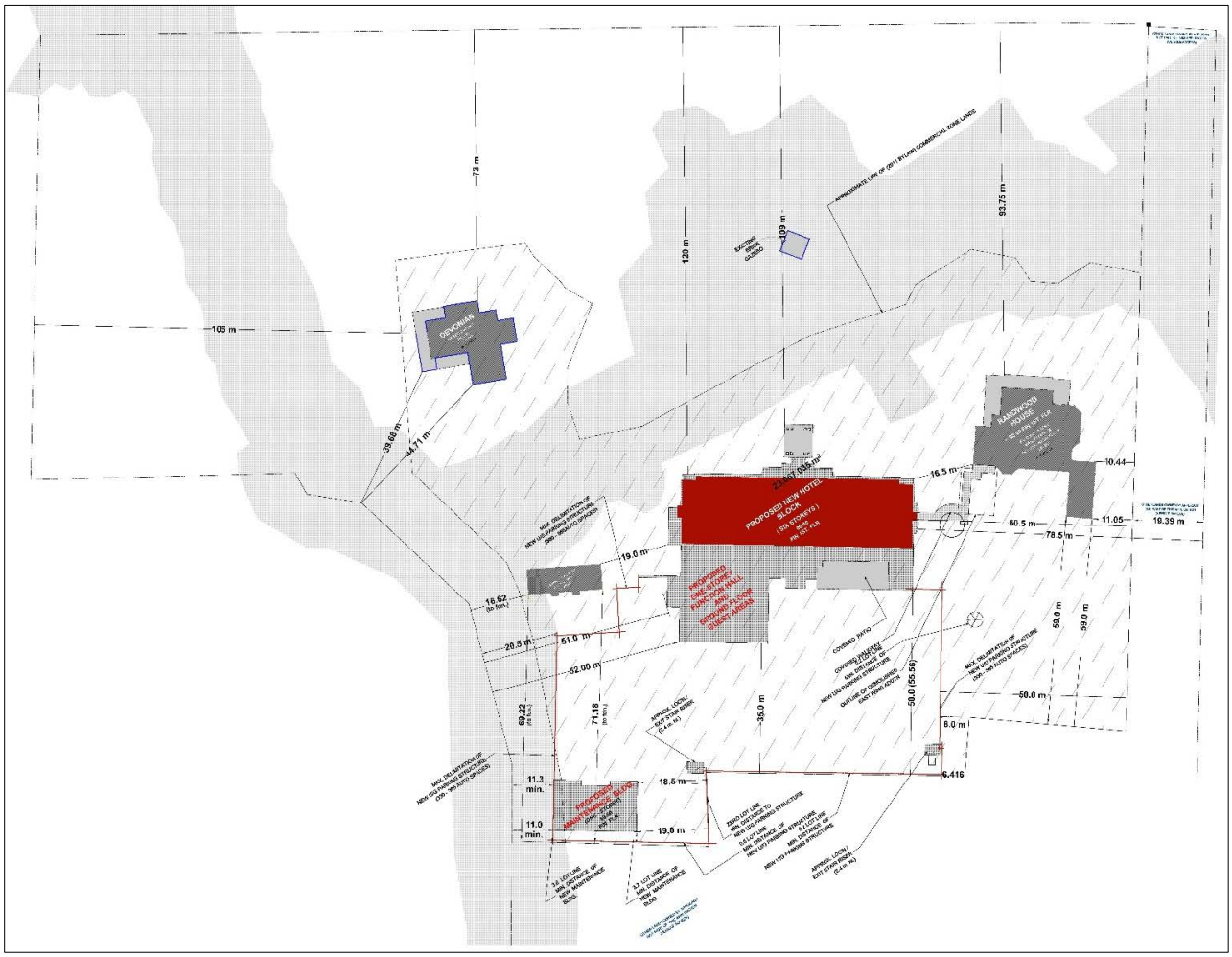


Figure 38- reduced image of submitted setback plan showing ample distances of new hotel block (red) and ground floor plinth (grey) from the existing property lines and distances internally away from the Randwood mansion and other buildings

b. Transitions

In terms of addressing transition from the context of the adjacent urban fabric and the proposed new hotel, much of the applicant's strategy is based on the ample buffer afforded the newly introduced elements by the dense vegetation and distances away from the neighbouring residential properties.

Transitions cont'd……

A central hotel building will contain a high degree of any potential noise and light disturbance to well within the boundaries of the property. While the hotel may be six storeys in height it is far away from neighbouring backyards and house windows and is further screened by the existing, and new, trees planted on the subject property in the line of sight. A shadow study (supplied separately) has demonstrated no harmful impact from the new hotel because of its location or height.

Figure 39 - The New Hotel Block; accurate massing model image of building relative all on-site existing buildings and the nearest neighbouring houses with all natural vegetation removed for illustration purposes only.

The applicant equally cognizant of the relationship in massing between the original mansion house (Randwood) and the new hotel. Though of less significance in hierarchy of space, the Coach house has also been buffered by a setback and by retainment of large established trees planted on the east side.

The orientation of the new hotel block has its narrowest elevation nearest the mansion and establishes a continuation of massing along the south ridge of the ravine.

The hotel maintains a 16.5 metre (54 feet) distance from the mansion's west building nearest corner and a 25 metre (82 feet) shift back from the front façade of the mansion (John Street) to the more southerly facade setback of the main hotel block. This transition is further softened by way of new, large-calliper, tree planting (conifers) around the base of the hotel at its north-east corner and in the areas near to the one-storey link between the two buildings. Aside from buffering the 10-metre variation in building height, these trees will serve to partially conceal the visitor's approach from the east carriageway. This direction will be a one-way entrance point to the resort and forms one of the screening strategies with intent that guests arriving for the first time do not take in the full grandeur of the hotel until they are aligned with the new porte-cochere. This entrance procession extends the nodal points along what is believed the routing taken by visitors approaching the original Randwood mansion.

Landscape Plan: Landscaping strategies stem from two styles. For all new planting and new hard landscaping features that face into, or fringe onto, the original Dunnington-Grubb landscaping plan, the new design endeavours to use similar complimentary plant materials and add tasteful classically-styled character elements in the form of any new planters, low stone walls, etc. and in treatment of new or restored bridges.

Transitions cont'd……

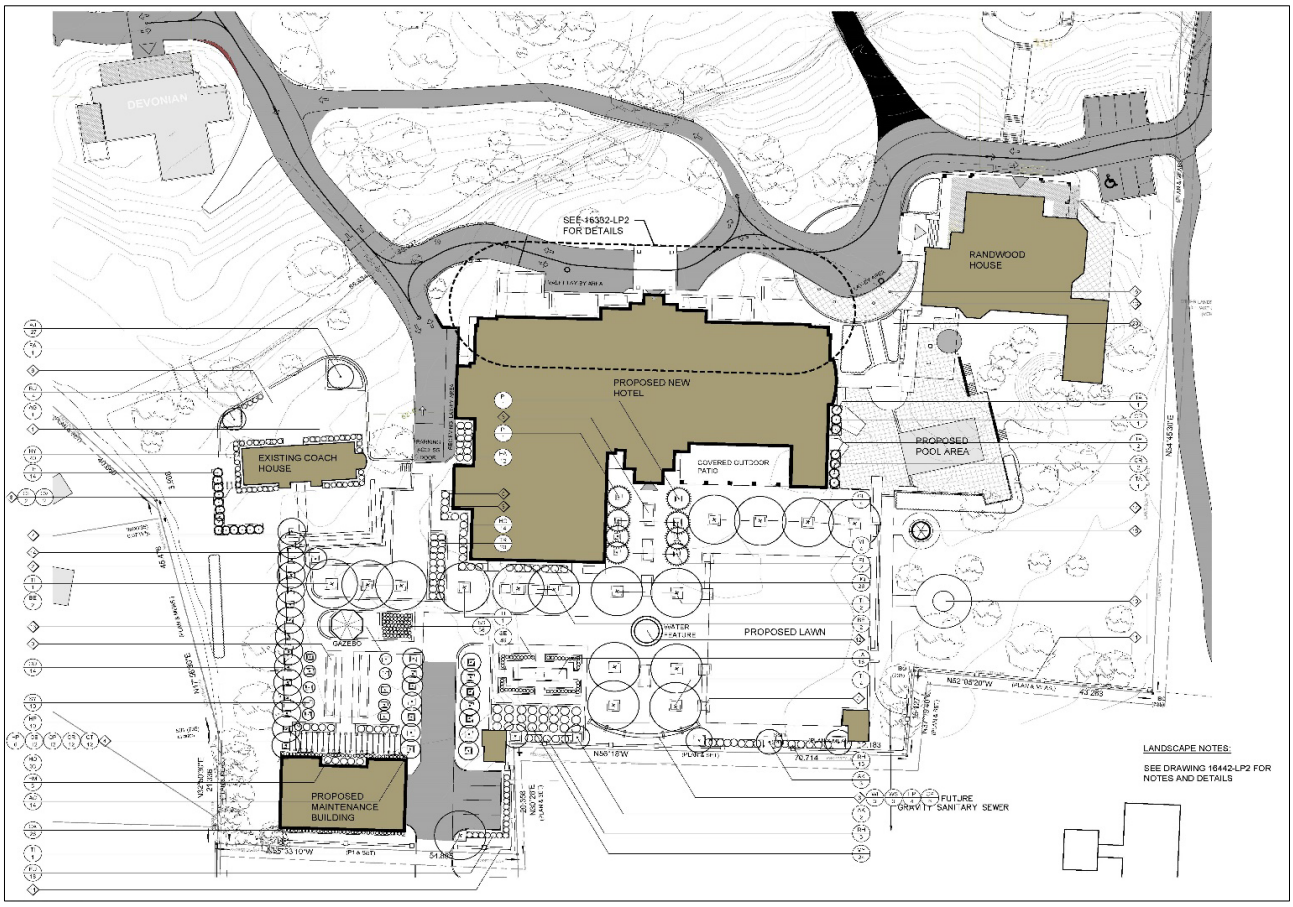


Figure 40- General Arrangement Landscape Plan: New planting and incorporation of preserved plants around the hotel.

The lands that will be south of the hotel will be distinctively rationalized as an extension of the hotel's grand hall axial ordering style and styled around a clean, modern interpretation of renaissance garden landscaping. The planting material, although selected from plant varieties that thrive in the Niagara climate, will be more ornamental, many will be planted in rows of raised bedding areas and interspersed with areas of pavers, hedgerows and groomed lawns. Rather than reveal the new hotel from the Street, the new building will be substantially concealed.

Figures 41 & 42 - Sampled Landscape: Example of character feature sought in the completed design; (left) rationale garden south of hotel (right) pool privacy

Transitions cont'd……

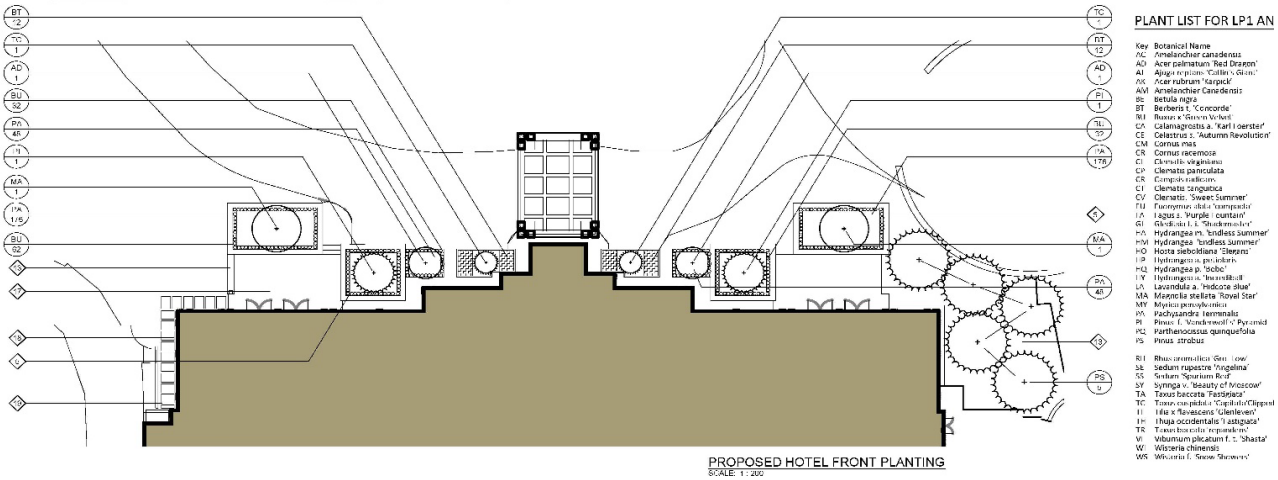


Figure 43- Use of similar romantically ordered planting areas at north elevation of hotel. Note large stand of new evergreen trees at east layby area to screen hotel from visitor approach until vehicle in position at top of ridge line.

c. Public views and/or public vistas

There are no established public views or public vistas within the property that the new development will impede. The beautiful, ivory-covered privacy wall with its soldier-like brick pillars along John Street is the only public view of the site and this will be maintained under the new use.

d. Parking

Of the calculated parking requirements, the proposal will exceed required number of spaces for guests of the hotel, the restaurants, conferencing facilities and spa appointments envisioned for the operation of the resort complex to address most overlapping events. As many as 365 parking spaces are accommodated underground in a double-level parking facility. Only in areas on the site, where existing parking already is found, will there be continued surface parking opportunities and in number of spaces not to exceed 50 in number and less than 12 percent of facilities provided. These locations are already screened by privacy walls or by landscaping. The surface spaces will serve functions of occasional use, better barrier-free accessibility for the spa building (Randwood mansion) and for short-term parking in general. The program and scale of the proposed development does not foresee need for additional parking requirements beyond those shown.

e. Access, Accessibility circulation, Loading, Storage

The application satisfies vehicle and other access under four categories noted in this section

Emergency and Shipping/Receiving Access Strategy: To achieve this effectively, the plan only widens, and reinforces, select routing along the existing carriage lane (6 metres) that pass through the front yard of the property with least disturbance of this sensitive area.

Access, Accessibility circulation, Loading, Storage cont'd……..

This widening extends from the west (adjusted) gate entrance on John Street to direct emergency vehicles on a re-built service bridge where the route will cross the east-west direction of the creek on approach to the existing coach house. From this new bridge, the fire lane joins a new approach road, of required width, up the ravine bank to permit emergency vehicle access to the new hotel's primary entrance. By tracking south instead, vehicles can move to the ramp entrance of the new underground parking lot. The east leg of this new fire lane continues past the hotel's porte-cochere and joins the existing layby area at the west side of the existing Randwood mansion.

Proposed routes would generally meet building code clearances for fire truck manoeuvring and fire hydrant distances, etc. Instead of widening the narrow carriage lanes in the north-east quadrant of the site to create a direct loop from John Street for alternative emergency vehicle access, this access will be accomplished through proposed access from the adjoining lands located immediately east of the property. This solution thereby preserves the heritage entrance gate and the axial vista of Randwood as seen from John Street.

Figure 44- Emergency and Visitor Access: Solution for minimizing impact on the Dunnington-Grubb features; Retained small opening size in East Gate, no change to axial vista and size of carriage lane to Randwood Mansion.

Access, Accessibility circulation, Loading, Storage cont'd……..

To address access from the south through adjoining lands, an additional emergency access lane will connect from a secure gate nearby the new maintenance building. This will serve also as a catering and grounds-keeping access route. This third route will extend onto the landscaped roof of the parking garage on approved hard surface pavers where the lane will terminate near doors from the back of the main conference hall. Both these south and east adjoining lands are owned, or are under the control of the hotel development group to duly coordinate facilitation of these proposed routes. Service vehicles will follow the same route that will be reinforced for weight and clearance requirements of emergency vehicles.

The scale of receiving vehicle or waste pick-up vehicle will be limited to single axle trucks. Deliveries will be scheduled to avoid noise and disturbance. The hotel's proposed receiving and garbage pick-up area is located on the west side as part of the underground parking access point. This are will be a partially screened area that includes a lay-by area to allow safe unimpeded underground parking access to coincide with periodic truck loading activity. Perishable waste will be handled by small-format trucks contracted for frequent pick-up from internal refrigerated garbage room located inside the hotel. Access to the Randwood mansion building for receiving will be achieved from the existing east basement entrance on the northeast corner, coincidentally where existing surface parking and loading areas now are located. Bus traffic is generally not desired but can be accommodated strictly for the occasional drop-off function only with no provision for on-site parking due to the associated noise and odour generated.

Guest Vehicle Site Movement and Parking Strategy: The guest experience is predicated around an extended stay that removes need for frequent arrival and departure events by car, where instead, shuttle services and other preferred modes of movement like pedestrian or bicycle paths will be encouraged. The vehicle entrance for guests will set a standard for every aspect of their stay. You will enter through the celebrated east gate from John Street to align with the iconic vista of Randwood mansion's north elevation, the axial stone walkway and lily pond only to then follow the original narrow carriageway south through the park-like setting of the front grounds. As described under processional design attributes, this proposed entrance route still gives prominence to the original mansion that is always in one's left viewpoint passing through the original heritage landscape.

Figure 45 – Collage: Concept of guest drop off under a porte-cochere at hotel with a valet service available

Access, Accessibility circulation, Loading, Storage cont'd……..

With the existing and new planting in place, the route gives only glimpses of the new hotel to create interest upon approach. Only after negotiating the last turn does one see the towering grandeur of the whole elevation of the hotel and the new planting features at its base. After arriving at the hotel's front entrance porte-cochere feature, a valet service will be available for guests or after drop-off they can continue to drive west down the embankment where they turn left to enter a gently sloping ramp into the underground parking area. Then exiting the underground parking, the movement sequence for guest pick-up at the hotel entrance is handled by crossing the new west bridge to travel another part of the original carriageway back east where one then loops up across the creek and back in line with the porte-cochere on the south ridge of the ravine. Guests leave the property by driving past the Devonian house to exit from the west gate onto John Street.

Figure 46 - Architect's sketch of Porte-Cochere at Hotel main entrance

The Randwood estate contains some existing footpaths and trails that can be developed for pedestrian movement, bicycle use and possibly for recreational vehicle (golf-cart) shuttle system uses where practical to ferry guests between points on the site or to connect visitors to the nearby Two Sisters winery or to downtown attractions and other points of interest. The intent of the application will be to develop new complimentary sidewalks and other links to the existing trails, walkways, etc. of the estate so that guests have a variety of options for the enjoyment and appreciation the Niagara culture. The Developer group treat each of these trails is an opportunity to create a lush and beautiful atmosphere that reflects to level of quality expected in all areas from a world-class hotel destination.

Access for People with Disabilities: The development will meet all Code requirements for accessibility and will accommodate for accessible enjoyment of the grounds.

Connection to Community Transportation and other networks: The site is not directly on a bus route. There is an existing sidewalk system on the south side of John Street that connects to other street sidewalks in Town. There are numerous walking trails in the nearby "Commons" and the site is very close to the network of parks and trails along the Niagara Parkway.

f. Materials

Although still in preliminary stages and subject to change, the new building materials are generally to be from the range of concrete architectural products available from custom pre-cast applications. The Hotel would be a significant upscale selection range of finish as compared to other pre-cast building panel systems used locally before this project. The custom work will extend to an ornate building cornice feature as well as a delicate, and well detailed, ground floor-level column pattern as described in “Architectural Treatment” under this section.

Figure 47 – Sampling image collage of pre-cast building applications not specific to this project but demonstrating the latitude of design potential in the material and technology.

Materials cont'd…….

Figure 48 -(left) Pre-cast structure sample and (right) small sampling of colours and textures that are available

Secondary material choices being proposed include use of custom wrought-iron designs for wall panels, railings and balustrades as well as potentially some ornamental cast ironwork elements, all to compliment the natural stone finishes and colours being emulated.

Figure 49- Collage: character/style examples of wrought iron and decorative metal grates/ wall panels over equipment vents, etc.

The visible roofing materials will be constructed with a raised-seam pre-finished metal exterior.

Figure 50 – Collage: Example curved standing-seam metal roof systems

g. Lighting and signage

Site lighting shall be confined to low height lamp standards providing solely a downlighting component for all carriageway areas, re-instating fixtures where existing with similar reproduction products likely with LED technology. Other site lighting would include bollard and step walkway lighting systems and selective landscape feature flood lighting and up-lighting. Security lighting on secondary buildings and in non-public areas of the hotel exterior will be wall pack type. In high profile areas of the Hotel, Randwood Mansion, Devonian and Coach house buildings, architecturally-appropriate wall and pendant light fixtures will be selected. As highlighting technique, the architectural cornice of the hotels will be illuminated with a uniform-level speciality flood light array. With the exception of the cornice lighting that will be a twilight and early evening accent, a majority of the lighting will meet Dark-Sky standards and the photometrics will be reviewed for excessive conditions of overlap or glare, while achieving industry levels for safety of guest while on site. All lighting shall be prevented from casting light into neighbouring properties

Signage will not be backlit, instead generally illuminated by low-intensity floods or gooseneck fixtures.

h. Architectural Treatment

Choosing an appropriate architecture for intervening new buildings is never a simple task particularly when there are existing architectural styles established by other buildings being preserved, some even in very close proximity.

There can be situations where the best choice is to follow the style of the inherent context. The architect team for previous hotel and artist retreat proposal in 2011 opted for a contextual approach to architectural treatment and states in the planning report "*The new construction will be designed to be respectful of the heritage buildings by utilizing compatible materials and methods of construction without actually mimicking the original construction appearance*". We contend that if the site were, for example, part of the fabric within surrounding urban blocks with open views around, then height and scale would warrant consideration in the choice of new building. If there was a pattern of buildings built of similar, or identical, style and type of exterior material choice, and within context of the immediate urban block, then naturally we agree that new buildings should probably use similar stylistic gestures, scale and materials. We observe how, the case of the Randwood property, the architecture of each existing building on the site, differs and that each building is separated by considerable distance so that they are never seen in direct comparison with one another. A contextual method for architectural treatment alone may not necessarily be the only or right choice therefore.

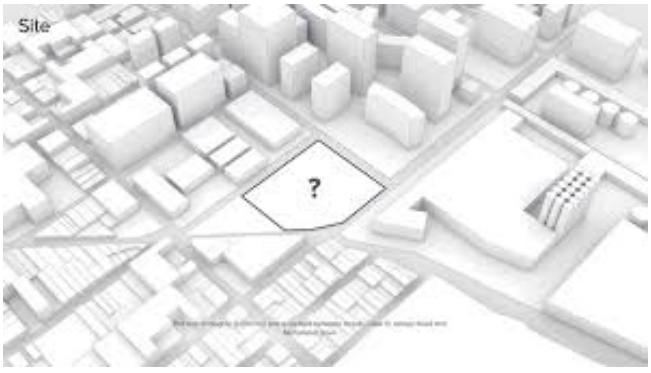


Figure 51- Conventional Block Massing: evaluating appropriate height and pattern in context in urban setting.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

In a scenario where a heritage building, or group of historically buildings of heritage significance exist with reverence, and where the intervening new building on the site may link or be added into the group, such an action may warrant a contrast or other form of differentiation. There is a school of thought that supports making a contemporary statement with any new architecture or site landscape change.

This approach acknowledges temporal changes on a site and can be seen in some cases as a very honest reaction which can be deemed equally respectful of heritage assets remaining on a site. The contrasting architecture must be thoughtful in its execution and follow transitional techniques that adequately frame the context of the heritage assets. Past practises often use simple yet bold contrasts in form, scale or choice of materials to achieve this contemporary expression, so the visitor can clearly understand the organizational principles that define what is heritage and what is not.

Figure 52 -Building 'up' to preserve the natural environment. Vancouver example shown.

There are successful examples where contemporary architecture has been introduced in a defined cultural landscape or heritage landscape. The design proposal draws from this alternative approach by observing a new, commercial-hospitality use for the property moving forward. This intervention is expressed by using scale and a modern building backdrop to differentiate the new elements on the site in an honest clear manner. Introductive landscaping follows the same approach as the architecture by creating a bold departure from the heritage landscape elements, still preserved in the "Open Space" designation/zoning and now defined by boundary rather than by blending. The new building separately frames both landscape styles from south or north view, thereby diluting neither type's expressive impact. While the new may replace parts of the site character the value of the remaining, and best examples of cultural landscape are kept and given new purpose.

Figure 53 - German Hotel: Shape size as proposed hotel and similarly built around the forest setting.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

There are many examples of six-storey boutique hotels that would fit into the backdrop of a spacious, meticulously-kept private grounds. We have supplied a collage of character examples that serve as inspiration...

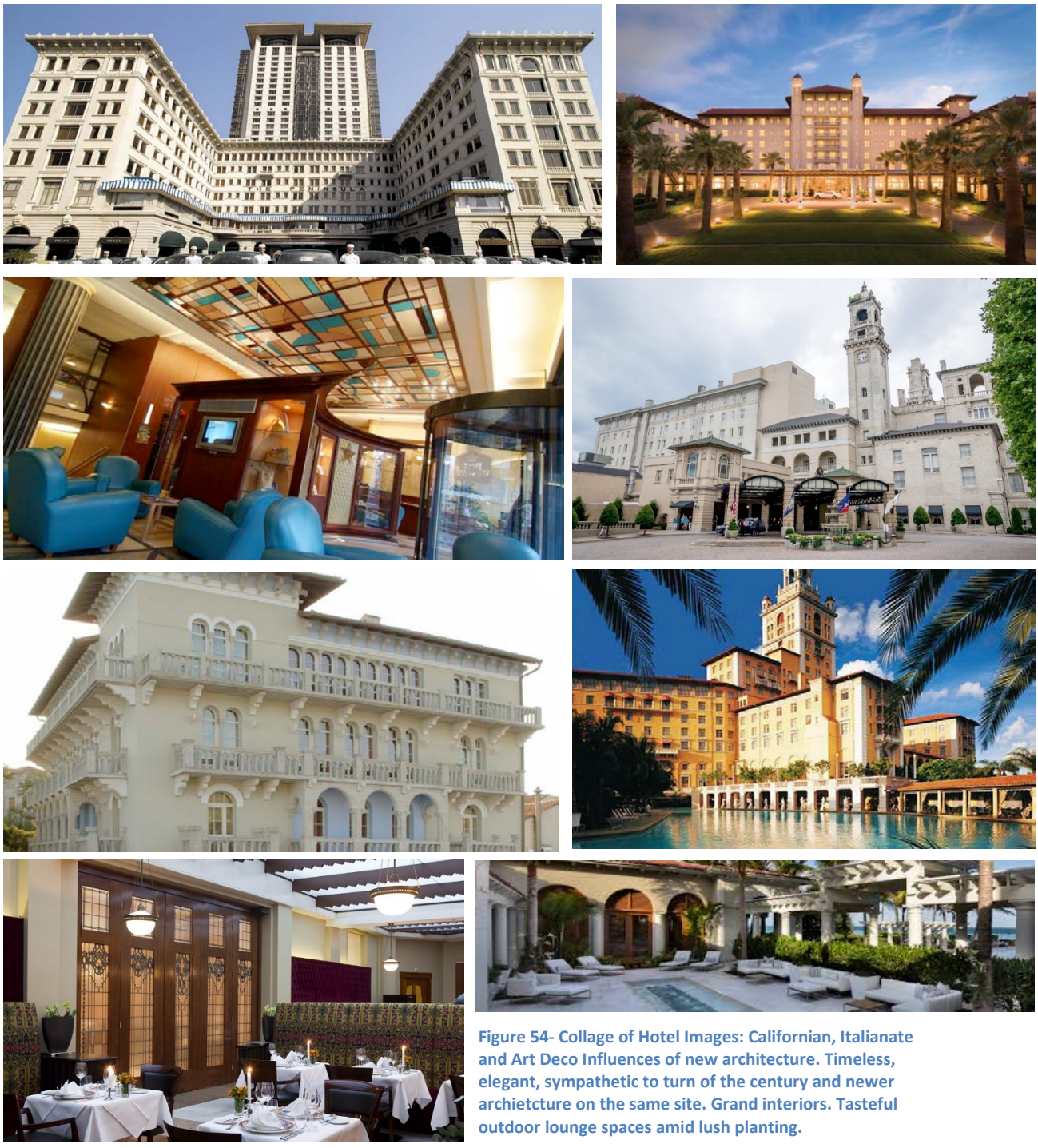


Figure 54- Collage of Hotel Images: Californian, Italianate and Art Deco Influences of new architecture. Timeless, elegant, sympathetic to turn of the century and newer archietcture on the same site. Grand interiors. Tasteful outdoor lounge spaces amid lush planting.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

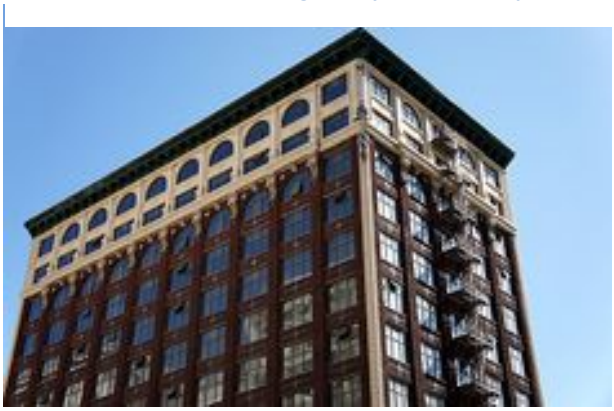
There are other building examples that may not necessarily be hotels but serve as sources of architectural expression. While we emphasize the objective of creating a modern hotel the development team seek a stylistically timeless expression and have inclinations toward classical forms. We are working with this mandate but have opened the exterior character to limit the classical elements to a simplified colonnade feature what wraps around the public conference functions of the main floor. This is a level that celebrates a 6 metre (20 foot) floor to floor volume and houses conference rooms, bar/restaurant and the central reception desk/concierge operations of the hotel, the latter located within the grand hall that links the main entrance to all areas and is, in essence, the very heart of the hotel.

Figure 55- Collage of Buildings and Spatial Experiences: Example images of vistas/landscape transitions, scale of interior volume in grand hall and mall areas of hotel, example photos of classic and gothic revival architectural experimentation in early mid-size office buildings constructed in the early 19th century.

Primary Classical Gestures: The age of the modern office building high-rise emerged after the introduction of steel framing and other construction techniques. Turn-of-the-century Chicago architect, Louis Sullivan applied ornamentation to terra cotta façade elements on city office towers ranging from ten to twenty storeys in height in a way that made the building appear organic in nature. The Prudential Building in Buffalo, NY was built in 1895 and is elaborately rendered in terracotta panels and has an exaggerated cornice as this example photo shows in figure 56.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

Figure 56- Sullivan mid-rise office Buildings in Buffalo, NY (left) and St. Louis, MO (right): departing from the classical forms in the use of ornamentation, use of an organic stylization and a possible adaptation for use with the subject hotel building.



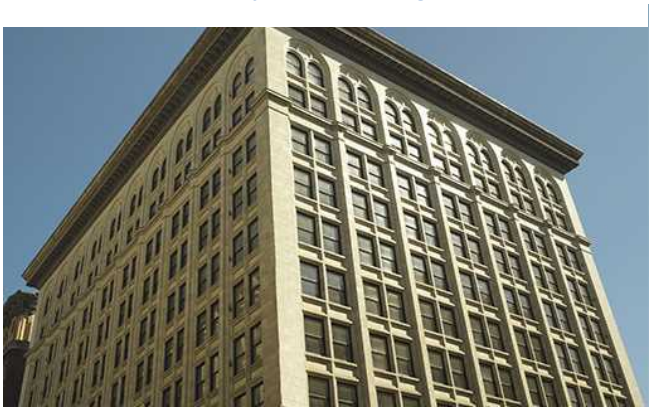


Figure 57 - Other examples of more classical cornice and fenestration interpretations of the same early "Flat Iron" buildings in North America.

The proposed hotel would develop a cornice feature that incorporates an organic pattern in architectural pre-cast panels along lines of an organic character. The base would step out from the mass of the upper floor of the hotel to create a plinth element for the building. The use of an entablature band and series of paired and single columns stand out, in base relief, from the rusticated banding of the perimeter wall on the ground level. The upper second to fifth floor exterior walls would be generally smoother and lighter in finish appearance but the fluting of vertically aligned window openings would be carefully detailed conceal joint lines and to create attractive shadowing and depth in the panels.

All the proposed light-coloured building parts would be constructed from a high quality architectural pre-cast concrete system to resemble various textures of natural limestone.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

Figure 58- Proposed Hotel Building Elements: Treatment of the sixth floor to spray outwards gracefully, pylon-like, in certain wall sections to be accented. These panels will be patterned in forms to produce an organic base-relief that flows with the arched windows and corners.

Ornamentation: While the building can be very much a contemporary expression in shape, there are movements at play within the design industry, to revisit the validity of decorative elements.
The ornamentation can be derived from period styles of architecture. The ornament can be extractions from base-relief sculpture or mural work brought over from other mediums in art. There are many historic examples where architecture has become transformative and it bridges from rigid classical traditions to find new forms of expression.

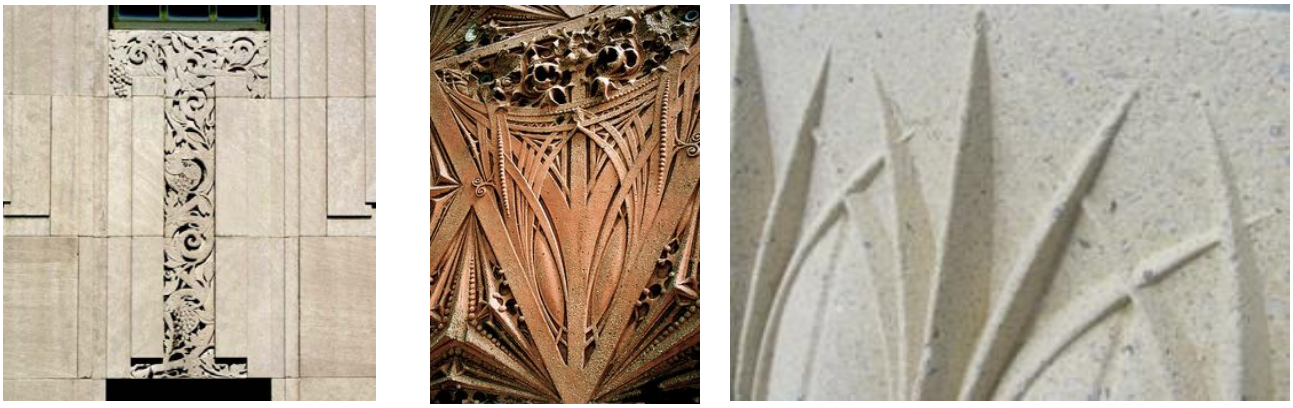


Figure 59- Organic Stylization: Examples of base-relief stone and casting techniques for exterior building panels.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

At grade, the building would incorporate an elegant, colonnade wrapping the larger stepped plinth and creating a well-proportioned human scale for pedestrians viewing the building. The simplicity of the exterior concrete surfaces receive accent from the choice of framing openings and the complimentary elements of the building. These include wrought-iron or cast ornamental railings and balustrades around the plinth feature of the ground floor. The railings are punctuated by stone posts and larger corner pedestals, possibly with artful planters or urns.

Figure 60- Preliminary Elevation Study: Enlargement of the plinth pre-cast elements and the use of custom perforated grating that infill the vertical openings and conceal unit vents and other mechanical grills.

The use of ornamentation would extend to the upper elevations and will be used for other secondary architectural hardware. We have shown a preliminary example in figure 60 of a possible grating design that would be anchored flush to the curtain-wall glazing system of hotel suite windows and exterior doors. The grating will conceal incremental HVAC units for suites and for other possible exhaust/ intake openings in other locations. We have supplied some photo images of character influences that we hope to incorporate into the final design; See figure 61.

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

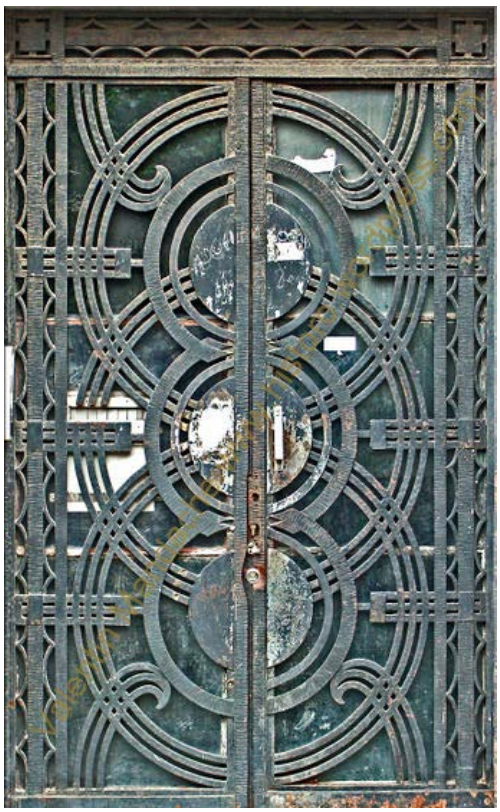


Figure 61 - Example gratings/grill collage: ideas from various exterior and interior photos

Architectural Treatment cont'd……..

Railings proposed for the exterior would draw from an art nouveaux and organic style that will be in harmony with the grating and base-relief ornamentation used elsewhere to create a unified building identity on the exterior. To some extent wall and pendant exterior light fixtures will be themed in a similar manner. Some of these elements may find placement inside the public spaces for continuity.

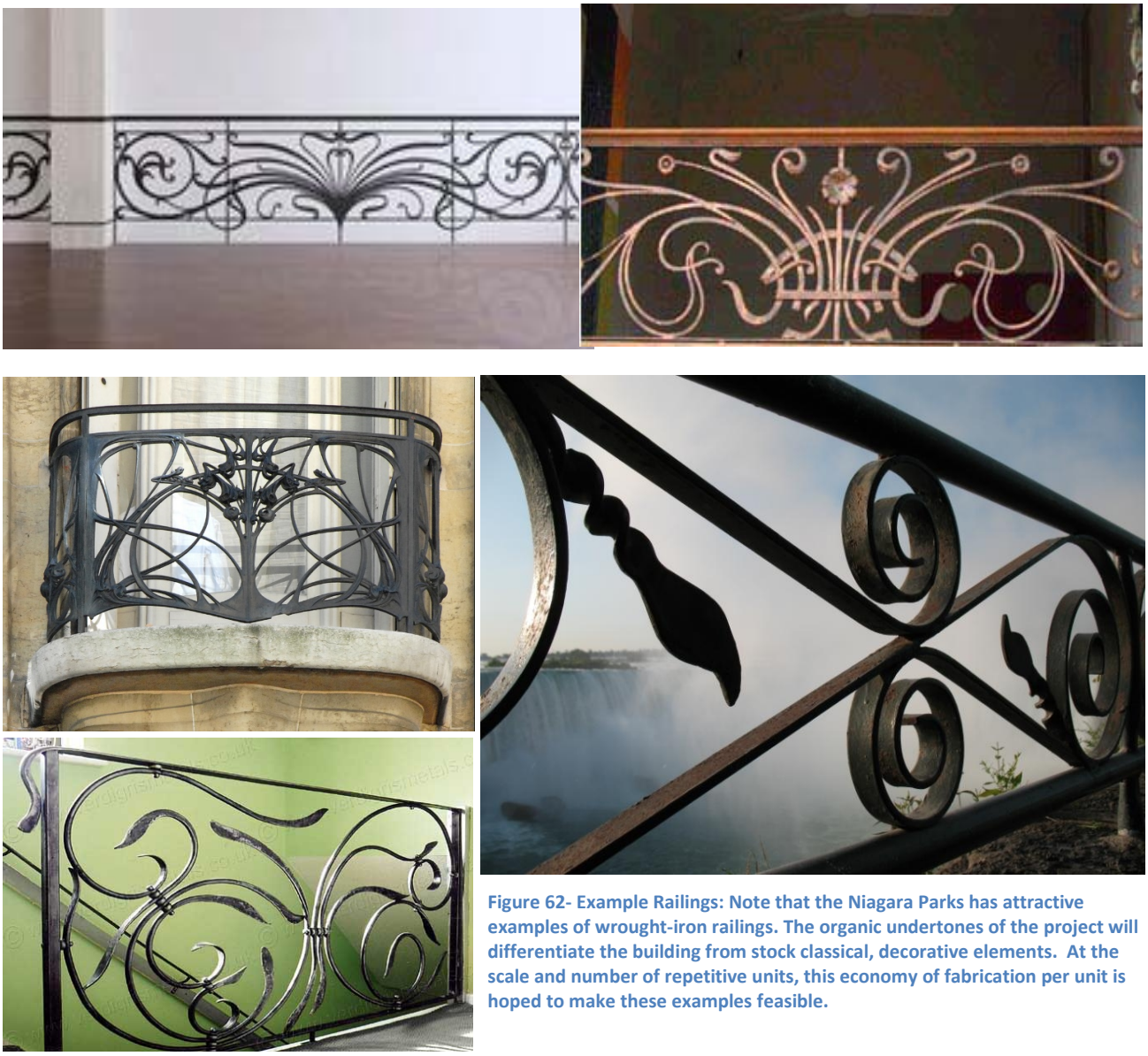


Figure 62- Example Railings: Note that the Niagara Parks has attractive examples of wrought-iron railings. The organic undertones of the project will differentiate the building from stock classical, decorative elements. At the scale and number of repetitive units, this economy of fabrication per unit is hoped to make these examples feasible.

PART 3

1.1 Summation

Summation:

The property known as Randwood is one of the last remaining estate properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake and inherently the largest of this loosely defined typology. Randwood is most unique even then considering it does not fit into the standard grid pattern of streets nor is massing confined to thescale of urban fabric that is typical of "Old Town" 19th century expansion. The site has remained largely intact despite years of development pressures to intensify it into multi-residential or conventional commercial uses. One may conject that its survival has been due to its untouchable perfection, that unique symbiotic correlation between its park-like landscape and the placement of it architecture that makes it so memorable to the visitor while making removal of any part at risk of diminishing its wholeness. The development team at Two Sisters have recognized this inherent character and has found a way forward to preserve most of the estate and to embrace the unique character elements of its past while building upon this storyline of its history. They want to create a viable future that will help to preserve the things we all find endearing about Randwood.

By centrally locating a grand hotel, of stately size and in the place of this site's predominately empty core, we compositionally ignite many natural synergies that we believe are worthy of tinkering with perfection and improving the whole. The many preserved attributes of the site and new synergies are described under each topic of this brief. This project appropriate that in scale, it is bold but sympathetic to the existing grouping of architectural styles found on the property with sufficient breathing room. More important still, this project is deemed to be a suitable fit for the landscape dynamics that the Dunnington-Grub plan originally accommodated. It achieves this fit by preserving the private stateliness of Randwood's address on John Street, one the most prominent thoroughfares in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It dovetails with and incorporates with same rigor in the new landscape, an understanding the processional experience of entry and delight in discovery that occurs while moving through the landscape and seeing what is slowly revealed to visitors to the site.

This design is not without considerable understanding of necessary scale for successful hospitality operation. This has meant considerable investment in underground parking to remove this from the compatibility equation almost entirely. By tucking away parking out of sight and out of mind, the development creates better more sustainable recreation and hospitality space for guests in the south half of the property. It takes a heritage legacy and restores its function in the front half of the site and in all the existing buildings. Lastly it preserves and enhances the unique and dense vegetation that buffers the neighbouring properties from the hotel and shelters the hotel guests from all the din of the outside world. This sets unique precedent specific to a unique site for which there is no comparison. No other site in Niagara could provide the backdrop for a hotel of this classification and as such it is incumbent that Developer and Community understand the mutually beneficial objectives laid out for its approval.