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PREPARED FOR:
Two Sisters Resorts Corp.

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2024

PARLIAMENT OAK HOTEL

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

325 King Street
Niagara-on-the-Lake

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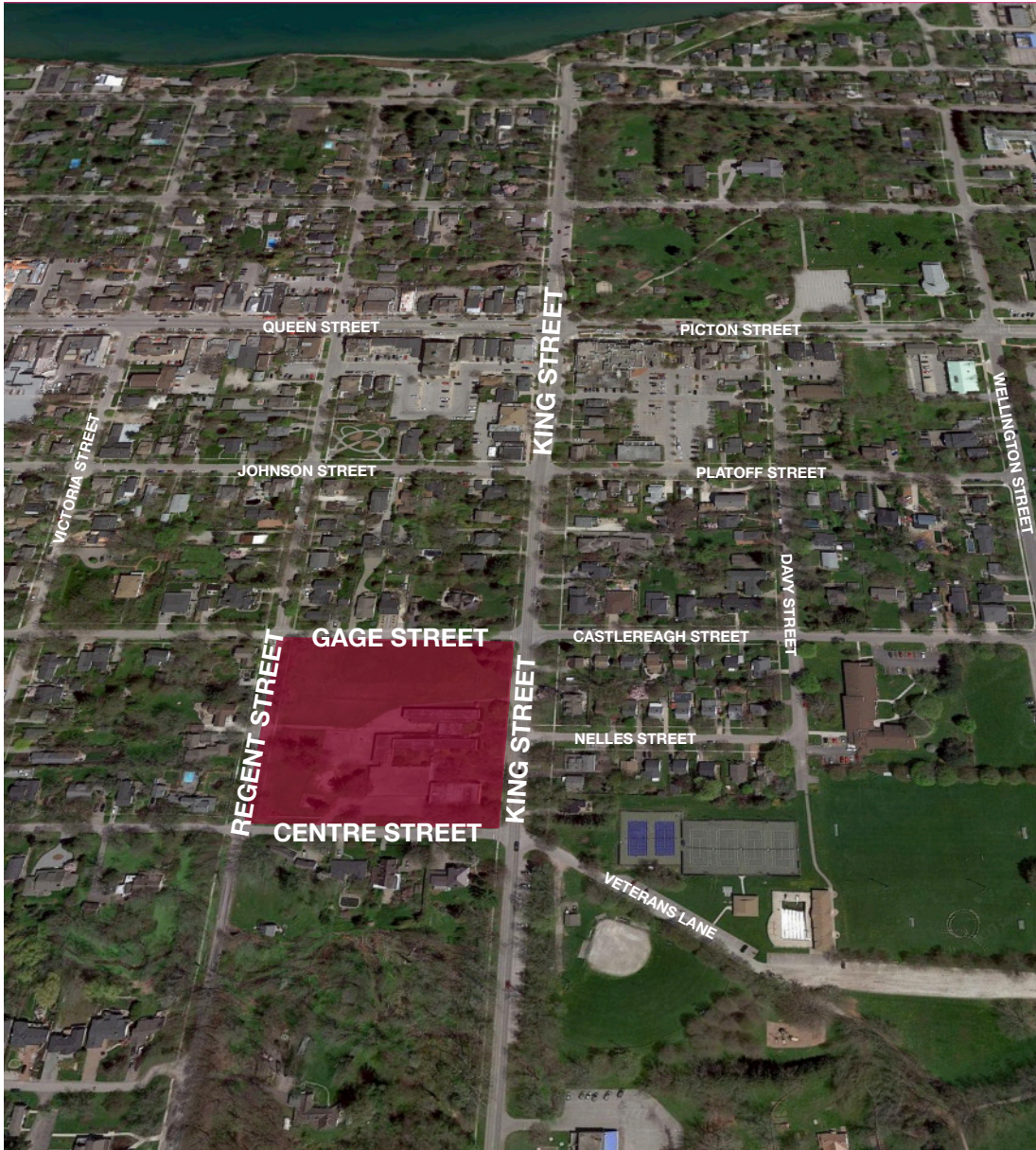
SECTION

1

INTRODUCTION

1.0

Introduction



1.1 Purpose of the Brief

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared by SGL Planning & Design Inc. (SGL) on behalf of Two Sisters Resorts Corp., in support of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the redevelopment of 325 King Street within the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The 1.6 hectare redevelopment site is located within the Old Town of Niagara, approximately 300 metres south of the Town's main Queen and King Street intersection. The site is occupied by the vacant Parliament Oak Public School

The Parliament Oak site offers the opportunity to enhance a vacant, underutilized site and strengthen tourism in Old Town through the introduction of a new hotel.

The purpose of this Brief is to illustrate how the Parliament Oak Hotel is proposed to achieve good urban design and compatibility with its surroundings through site design, built form, public realm, landscape, connectivity and heritage commemoration.

1.2 Proposed Development

The development proposes a 4-storey hotel building centred along the site's King Street frontage, surrounded by extensive landscaping, open lawn and park space. The building is proposed to be sited in the general vicinity of the footprint of the existing school building, which will be demolished. The prior school's cultural heritage value is proposed to be commemorated through landscape features that will reuse and reflect the historic resources on site.

The new hotel will introduce 129 guest rooms accompanied by an open lobby, a restaurant, breakfast room, bar, private lounge, future spa, exercise room, two small banquet rooms and a meeting room.

A large landscaped courtyard is located at the rear of the hotel, spanning out towards the wide open lawn. A second floor rooftop terrace is also located to the rear of the hotel, in addition to two smaller second floor terraces on either side of the building.

The building was designed to embody a unique architectural design that compliments and reinforces the historic and existing character of Old Town, resulting in the creation of a boutique hotel with old-world classic charm with extensive open space.



Main Hotel Entrance from King Street South Elevation



West Elevation



Hotel Rear North Elevation

SECTION



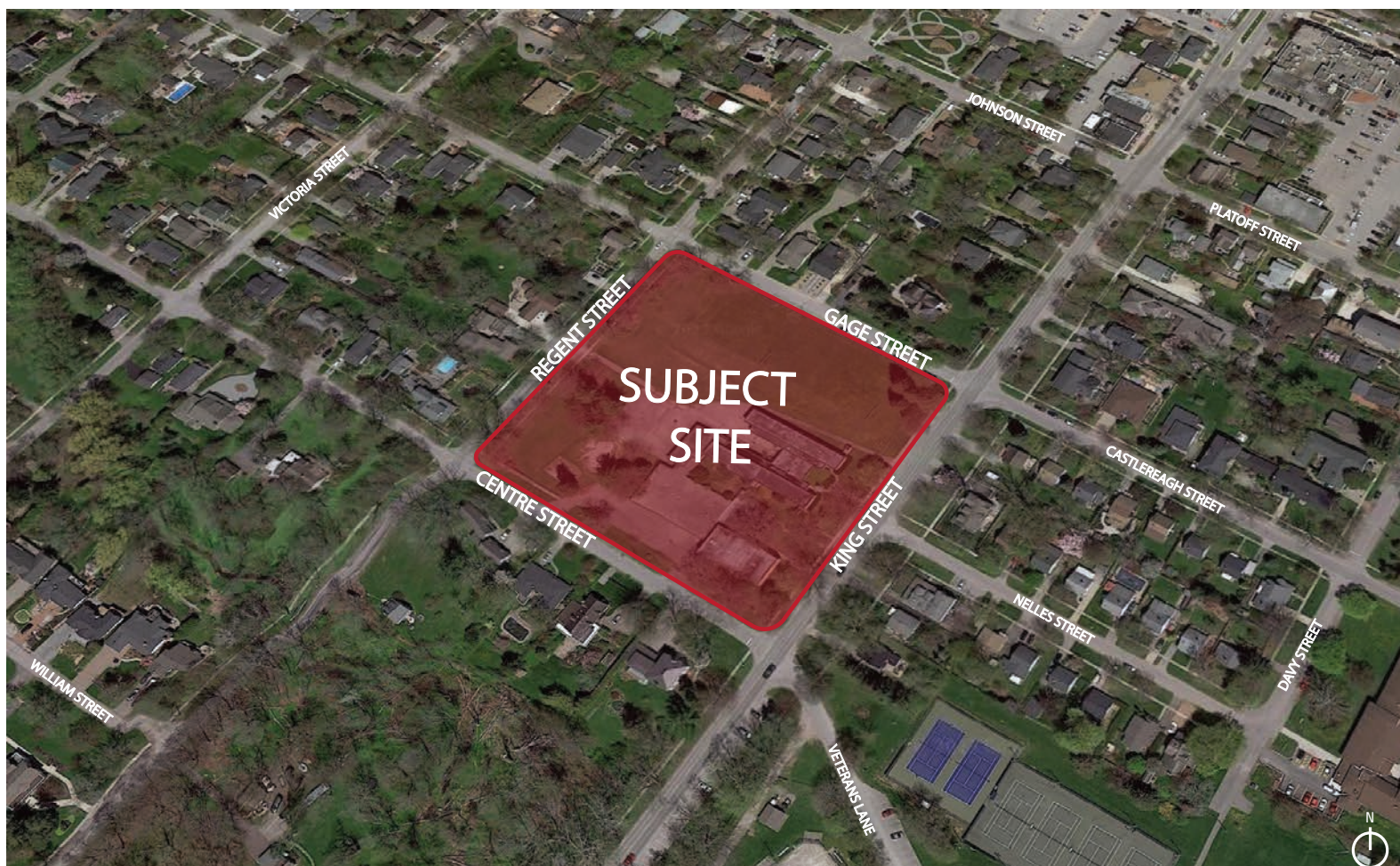
SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

2.0

Site and Neighbourhood Context

2.1 Subject Site

The redevelopment site is located at 325 King Street. Currently vacant, the site is approximately 1.64 hectares in size with an approximate frontage of 128 metres along King Street. The square-shaped site is bound by King Street, Gage Street, Regent Street, and Centre Street.



325 King Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

The site contains the former Parliament Oak Public School, a one-storey brick building with a paved parking lot along Centre Street and open space at the rear along Regent Street and the side along Gage Street. The site is historically significant for being the location of the first meeting of the Parliament of Upper Canada under an Oak Tree. Though the Oak Tree that the meeting took place under has since been removed, there is an Oak Tree, estimated to be more than 300 years old, along the King Street frontage that is being preserved. There are also other historical features scattered on the site including two plaques, two obelisks and surveying stones.



Historic Plaque



*Obelisk
Located on Site*



Existing School Building



Oak Tree Looking West from King Street



Surveying stone Located on Site

2.2 Surrounding Area Context

The surrounding area is characterized by a low-rise residential neighbourhood which also contains numerous Bed and Breakfast establishments. The surrounding low-rise residential neighbourhood is predominately made up of 2-storey single detached dwellings on large lots in various colours and architectural styles.

The immediately adjacent land uses and built form surrounding the subject site include:

North

Two single detached dwellings with frontages along Gage Street, one of which is a Bed and Breakfast. The other lots along this segment of Gage Street are corner lots with frontages on King Street and Regent Street, but with driveways along Gage Street (for example, the white carriage house/garage).



Adjacent Buildings Along Gage Street Looking North

East

Two corner lots with single detached dwellings fronting King Street.



Adjacent Buildings Along King Street Looking East

South

A mix of single detached dwellings ranging from 1 to 2 storeys in height, one of which faces internally as shown. The Lyons House Bed & Breakfast is also located at the corner of King Street and Centre Street.



Adjacent Dwellings Along Centre Street Looking South.

West

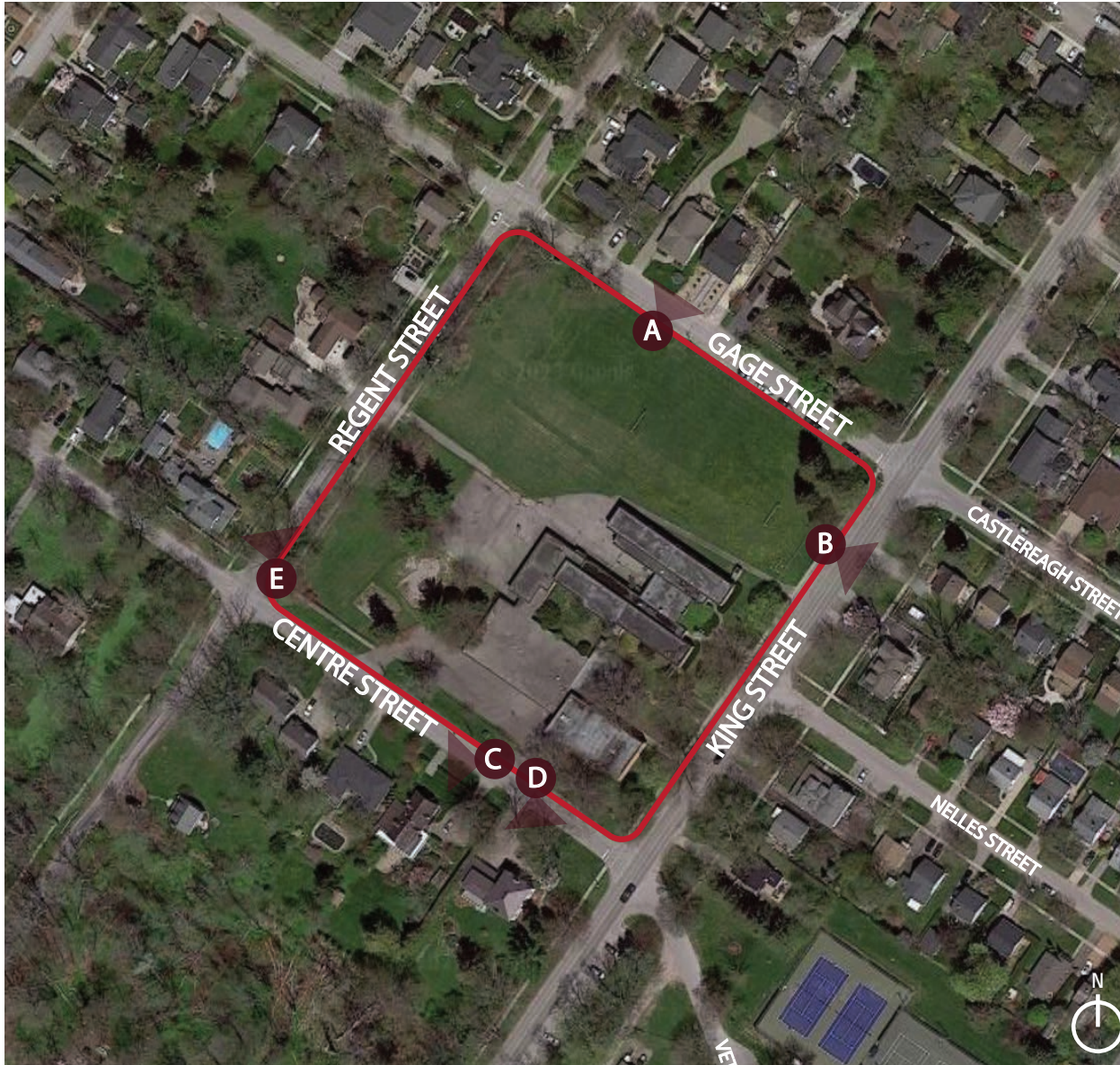
A mix of dwellings ranging from 1 to 2 storeys in height with small front yard frontages.



Adjacent Dwellings on Regent Street Looking West.



The Lyons House Bed & Breakfast Looking South from Centre Street.



Adjacent Neighbourhood Context



2.3 Public Spaces, Parks and Facilities

The site is located within close proximity to several amenities and services which provide visitors with access to a variety of tourism related activities. Most nearby restaurants and shopping opportunities are located close to and along Queen Street, which is known as the Town's historic Old Town Main Street. Queen street is a direct 5-minute walk from the site. The site is also located within proximity to the world class Shaw Festival Theatre, as well as a number of historic sites including the Butler's Barracks National Historical site. There are five main parks within walking distance of the site providing active and passive recreational opportunities. The site is located close to recreation facilities such as the Niagara-on-the-lake Tennis Club and Bed and Breakfast establishments scattered throughout the neighbourhood. Additionally, there are other larger hotels throughout Old Town including Pillar and Post, Queen's Landing and Oban Inn.



Pillar and Post



Queen's Landing



Oban Inn



SECTION

DESIGN VISION & OBJECTIVES

3.0

Design Vision and Principles

3.1 Vision

The Parliament Oak site occupies an important place in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It presents a unique opportunity to enhance a vacant and underutilized school site with historic value, while **strengthening tourism in Old Town** through the introduction of a new hotel.

The Parliament Oak Hotel will create a prominent presence along King Street through its **old-world classic charm**, contributing to the unique historic character of Niagara-on-the-Lake and welcoming travellers to and from Old Town.

Development of the hotel will enhance the site and public realm, with an emphasis on **high quality open spaces and landscaping**, while respecting both the historic context of the lands, as well as the eclectic character of the neighbourhood.

3.2 Principles

Reflect a **unique architectural design** that compliments both the eclectic character of the neighbourhood and historic character of Old Town through a Second Empire architectural style that draws inspiration from the original residence of Senator Josiah Plumb that once existed on the site.

Respect the **established low-rise character** of the community by balancing the proposed built form with generous landscaped open spaces, large building setbacks from all surroundings streets, the use of stepbacks in the building's design and the preservation of existing mature trees and enhanced landscaping buffering the site.

Create new **passive recreation opportunities** for hotel guests, providing programming and interest to the currently vacant school yard for all user groups through the introduction of a rear landscaped open lawn with a network of walkways, seating areas, a featured sculpture area and a formal staging area.

Celebrate the **diverse historic value** of the site through tree protection and enhanced landscaping, as well as preservation of the heritage artefacts along King Street and commemoration of the existing school building signage and materials in the form of a landscaped wall feature at the site's Regent Street frontage.

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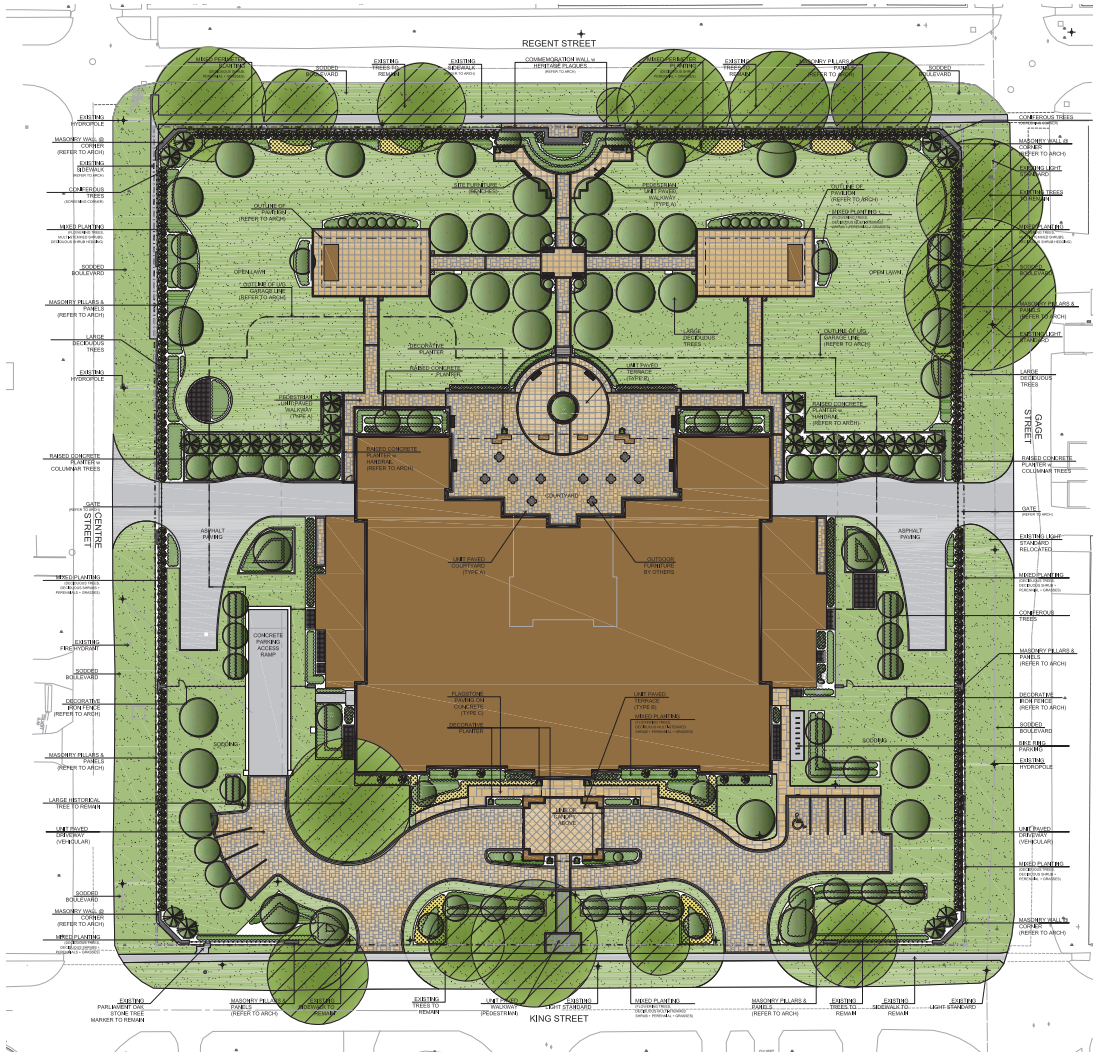


DETAILED DESIGN FRAMEWORK

4.0

Detailed Design Framework

4.1 Site Layout



Landscape Plan

The hotel building is positioned towards the front of the property along King Street, creating a presence along this frequented Regional Road that will welcome travellers to and from Old Town. The building is set back from the King Street property line, protecting numerous existing trees along the edges of the site including the 300 year old oak tree. Main pedestrian and vehicular access will be directed from King Street.

The building's location towards King Street enables a generous setback from the property line along Regent Street and the creation of a large open lawn featuring a mix of plantings, walkways and seating areas that will be privately owned.

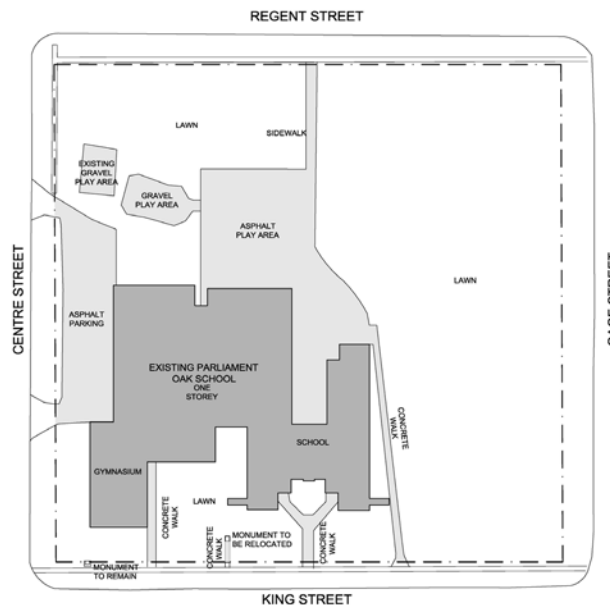
The central siting of the hotel building between Gage Street and Centre Street enables generous side yard setbacks from the property line. This provides ample room for transition from the existing residential dwellings, as well as the integration of open space, landscaping and tree preservation.

4.1.1 Site Coverage

The building itself will occupy a small site coverage of 22%, taking up a similar footprint as the existing school building which currently occupies 18% of the lot allowing a large portion of the lands to be maintained as open space and enhanced through landscaping - a key contributing factor to the low density character of the area. The paved area of the site has been reduced from 16% to 11%, while landscaped open space has increased from 65% to 66%.

According to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan, the Town's "low-rise character should be maintained". Situated on a large 4.5 acre site, the proposed development is very low density, with only 129 guest rooms. The site and area's open space character is able to be preserved due to the compact nature of the 4-storey building. Compared to the development of a 3-storey building which would require more land and reduce the open space on site, the proposed hotel accommodates a small building footprint, much larger setbacks, significantly more landscaping along Regent Street and less building mass exposure along Centre and Gage Streets.

Existing Building Footprint and Site Coverage

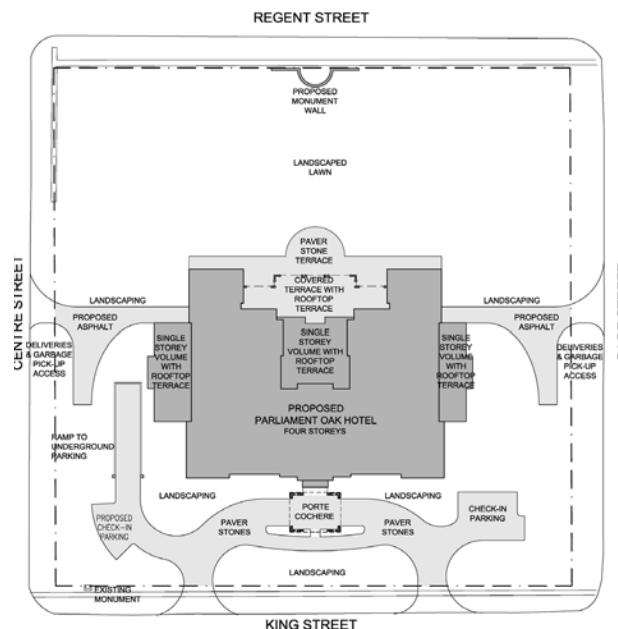


Building Coverage: 18%

Landscaped Area: 65%

Paved Area: 16%

Proposed Building Footprint and Site Coverage



Building Coverage: 22%

Landscaped Area: 66%

Paved Area: 11%

4.2 Massing, Scale and Height

The hotel building's compact floor plate provides for considerable setbacks from all property lines and the surrounding residential dwellings, far exceeding minimum requirements and significantly mitigating potential height impacts. The building was purposefully sited on a portion of the property with minimal mature vegetation, however it is still surrounded by mature vegetation and new landscaping that will serve as a visual buffer to neighbouring properties.

In addition to the already generous setbacks from Gage Street and Centre Street, the building was designed with 1-storey terraces on either side, which provide 6 metres of further separation and transition from the 4-storey portion of the building.



King Street Streetscape

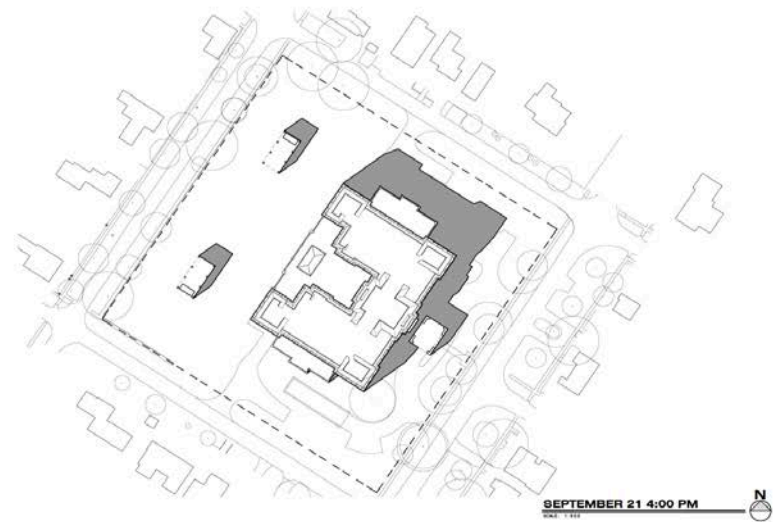
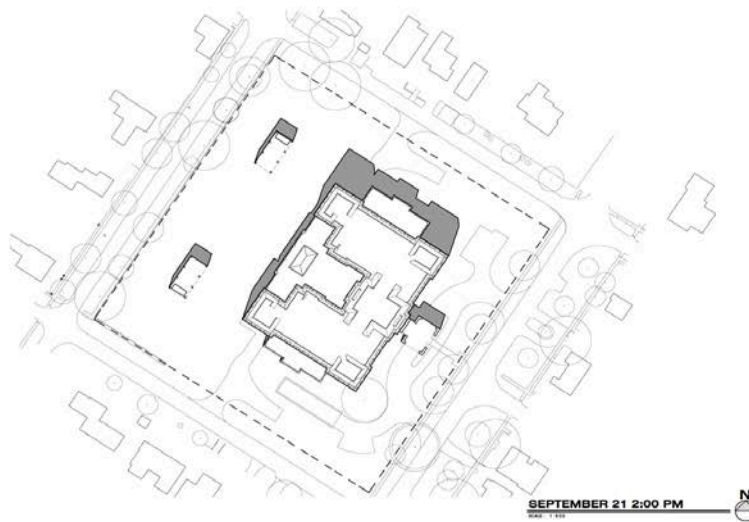
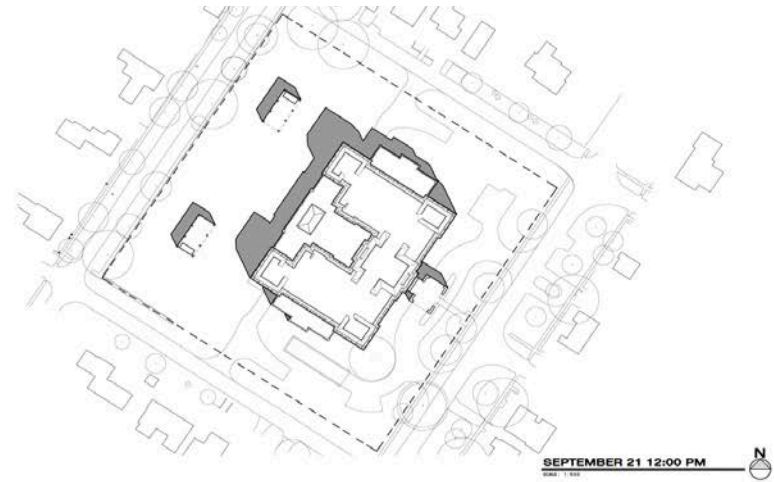
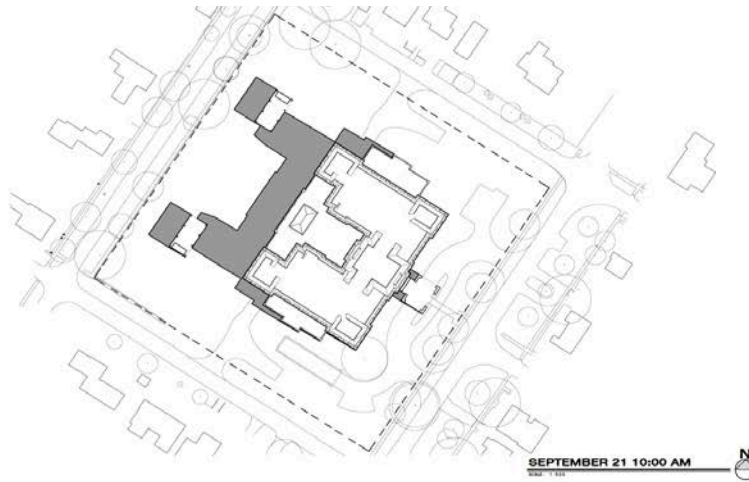


Gage Street Streetscape

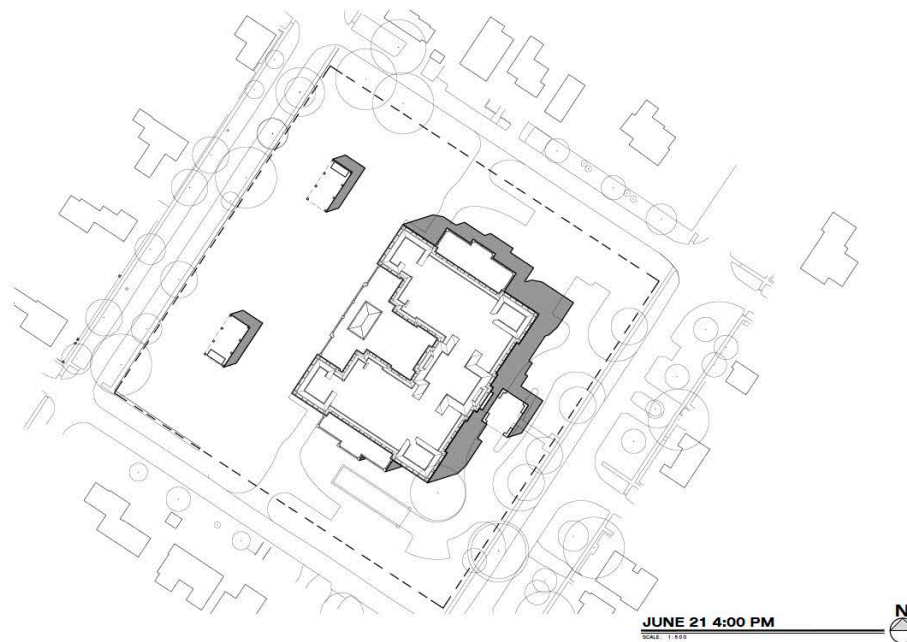
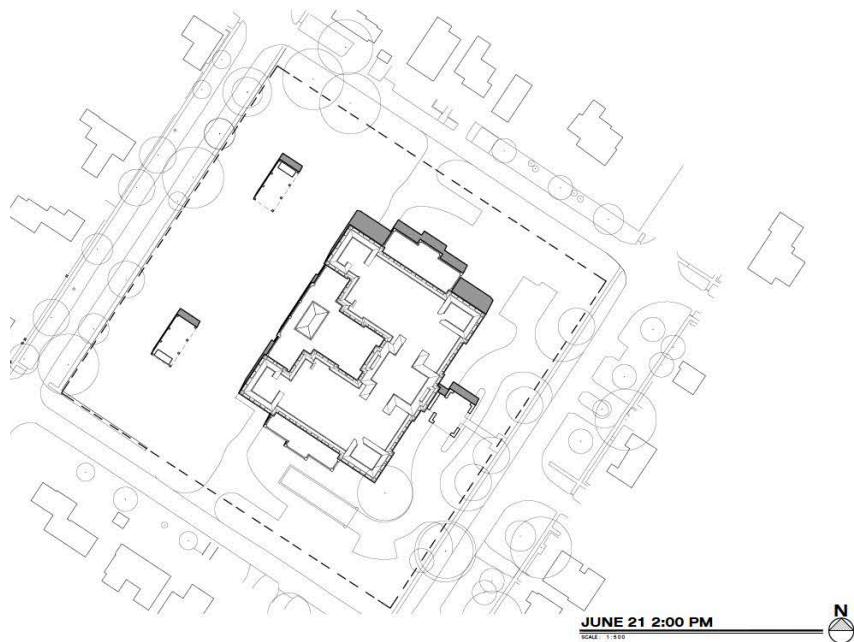
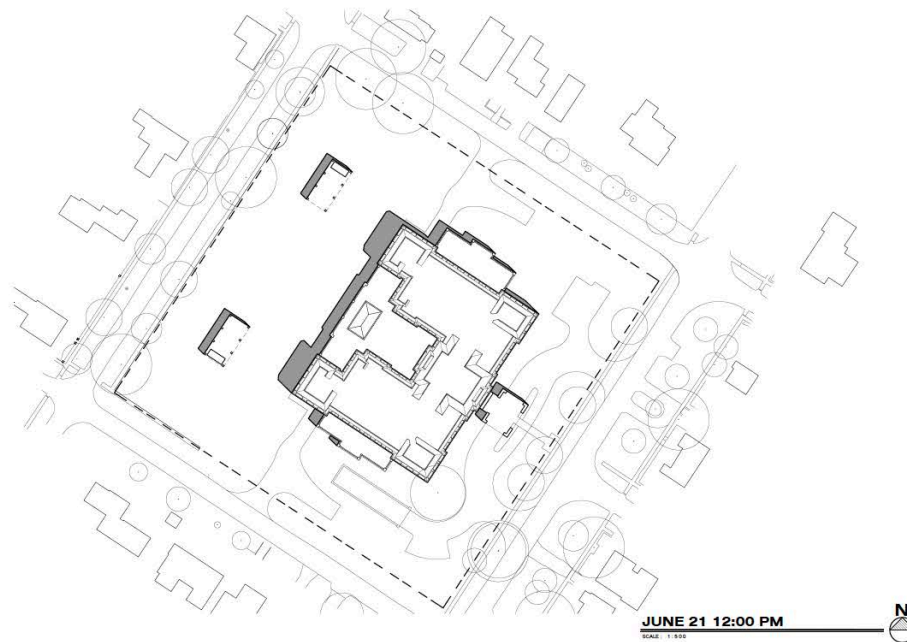
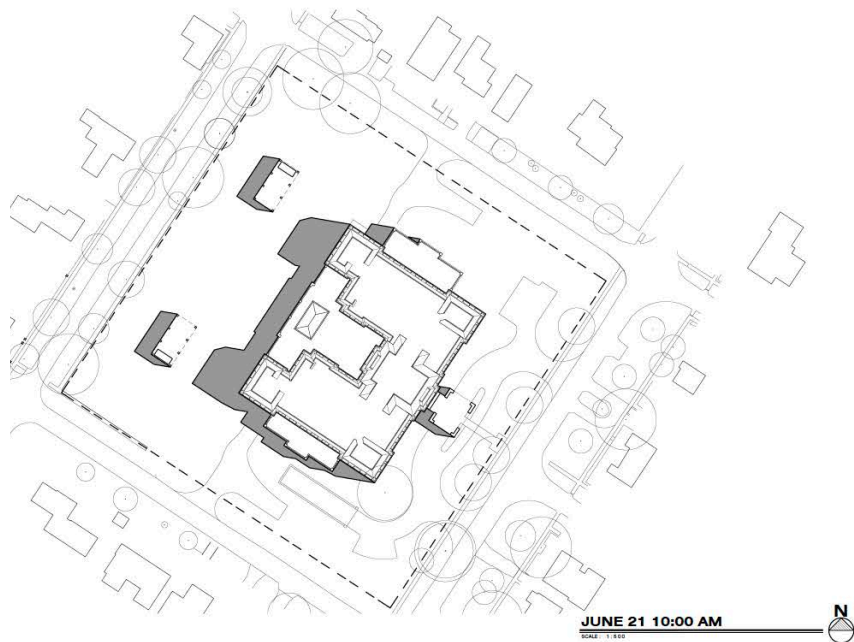
4.2.1 Sun/Shadow Exposure

The building's compact floor plate and position on the site reduces its impact with respect to shadows not being cast on the adjacent residential properties. A Shadow Impact Study was prepared to analyze sun and shadow exposure on June 21 and September 21. Emphasis was placed on the equinox shadow condition as this represents average conditions.

Shadows cast by the proposed building between 10 am and 4 pm never go beyond the site limits. The outdoor open lawn and landscaped spaces on site will receive a reasonable balance of sun and shade throughout the year.



September 21 Shadow Study



June 21 Shadow Study

4.3 Architectural Design

The building embodies a unique architectural design that compliments and reinforces the historic character of Old Town. Old Town has evolved over time to accommodate an assortment of residential, commercial and public buildings with a wide range of architecturally contrasting and eclectic styles. A combination of different building styles, massing and materials make up the architectural character of King Street.

In order to reflect this eclectic character, the architectural approach taken was to design a distinct building that draws inspiration from other prominent historic and celebrated buildings in the Town, instead of trying to directly mimic the architecture and scale of the residential dwellings in the neighbourhood. This has resulted in the creation of a boutique hotel with old-world classic charm, which will contribute to the unique historic character of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The proposed hotel building has been designed in a Second Empire architectural style, inspired by the original residence of Senator Josiah Plumb that once existed on the site prior to the existing school, as well as the Prince of Wales Hotel and Old Court House located a short walk away along Queen Street. The mansard roof design of the Josiah Plumb residence and Prince of Wales Hotel was particularly emulated in the design of the new hotel in order to minimize the fourth floor, reduce the overall building scale and create a more compact floor plate.



Queen Street Streetscape



King Street Streetscape



Josiah Plumb Residence



Proposed Hotel Rendering

4.3.1 Architectural Inspiration



Josiah Plumb Residence



Prince of Wales Hotel



Old Court House

Drawing inspiration from the Josiah Plumb House, Prince of Wales Hotel and the Oak Court House, the Parliament Oak Hotel contains a number of notable similarities.

Senator Josiah Plumb Residence

Constructed in the mid 1800's and standing until 1913 when it caught fire, the Josiah Plumb House would have been integral to the character of the neighbourhood. The residence would have been built at approximately the same time as many of the dwellings that remain around the site, signifying there has been a mix of architectural styles since the area's inception. Similarities between the new hotel and former house include a mansard roof, ornate dormers, an articulated cornice below the mansard roof, vertical windows with regular placement on the façades, masonry quoining at outside corners, as well as accent details at windows

Prince of Wales Hotel

The Prince of Wales Hotel is located only a block away and visible from the Parliament Oak Site, which incorporates several similar architectural elements in the Second Empire Style including a mansard roof, ornate dormers, articulated cornice below the mansards with detail mouldings and narrow vertical window proportions with regular interval placement in the facade. Both buildings are brick construction with contrasting masonry details around windows, masonry accent horizontal bands and quoining accents at its outside corners.

Old Court House

The Old Court House is a prominent pre-1850's building, representative of a style of the British Classical tradition with significant architectural merit. The Parliament Oak Hotel has similar classical architectural detailing including smooth stone finishes; stone entrance portico with classic stone columns; narrow proportioned windows, and in some cases, semi-circular arched stone opening; detailed stone around windows; stone quoining at outside corners stone banding around the building identifying floor levels; and large cornices with dental details.

4.3.2 Architectural Compatibility

The building was designed to ensure all façades are proportioned and detailed as if they were the front of the building, in order address their respective streets. Sensitive to the smaller residential dwellings in the surrounding neighbourhood, the large mass of the hotel building has been visually reduced by undulating surfaces in its façades and articulating smaller block forms at its corners and centre.

Large facade surfaces have been divided with smaller scale elements such as:

- Stone used across the ground floor;
- Brick and stone detailing on the second and third floors;
- Incorporating a mansard roof at the fourth floor; and
- Extensive architectural detailing.



Hotel Rear

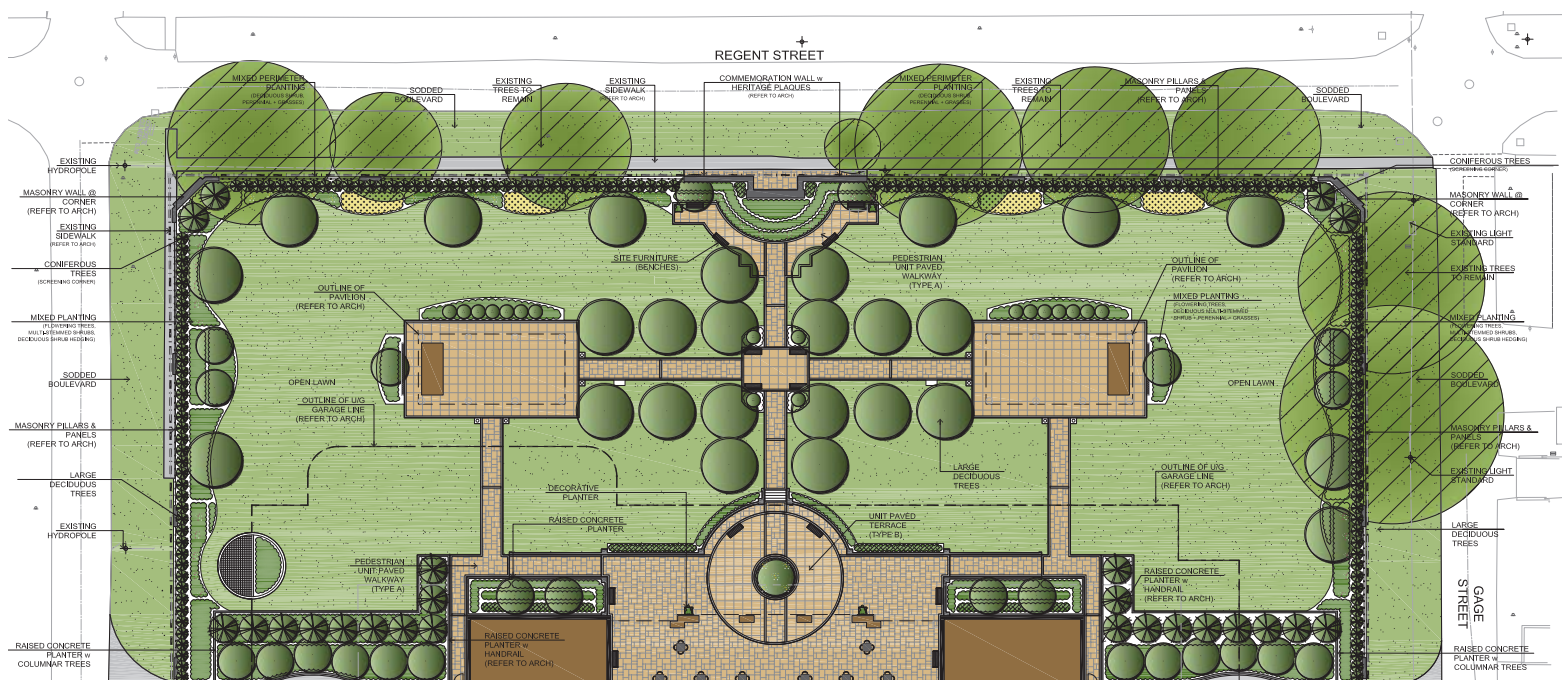
4.4 Public Realm, Landscaping and Park Space

4.4.1 Open Lawn and Landscaped Area

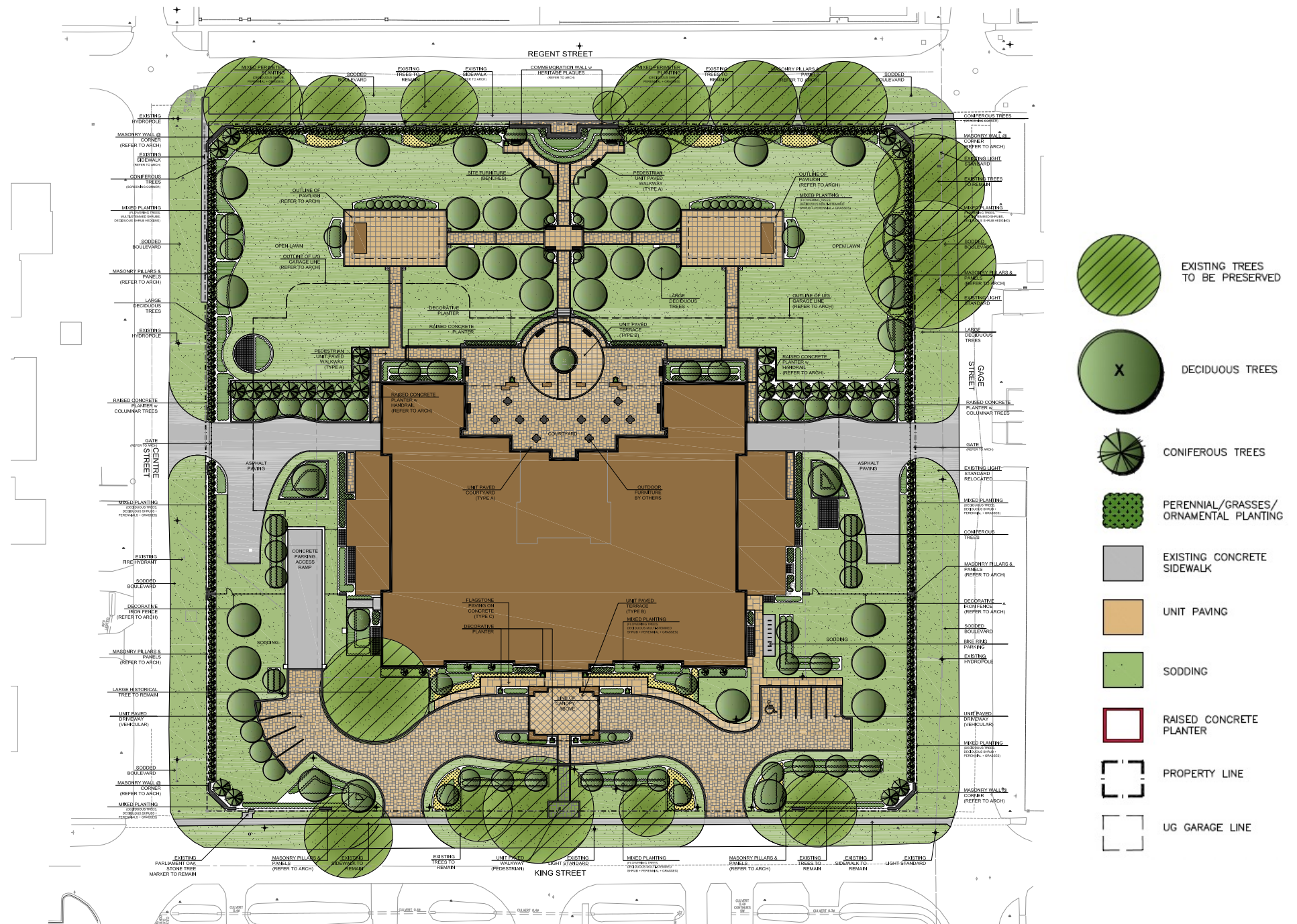
The proposed large open lawn and landscaped area to the rear of the hotel will be privately owned. In a similar manner to The Gardens at The Pillar and Post, a low stone fence with piers will surround the majority of the site and open lawn area. Preservation of the existing trees along the site's perimeter, in addition to several new trees; perennial, grasses and ornamental planting; and the low stone fence, will help buffer the hotel building and associated open space from the surrounding streets. Access to the lawn and open space will be provided from the hotel

The large open lawn features a network of landscaped walkways leading from the hotel's courtyard to various seating areas, a featured sculpture area and a formal staging area. The open lawn will provide passive recreation opportunities for hotel guests, providing programming and interest to the currently vacant school yard for all users.

The hotel's floor plan turns in on itself at the rear, resulting in a U-shape and partially open courtyard which many suites will front onto. The courtyard has been designed to provide views and flow into the landscaped open lawn, which will encourage interaction between the hotel uses and open space.



Rear Open Lawn and Landscaped Area



Landscape Plan

4.4.2 Heritage Commemoration

The Parliament Oak site is listed on the Town's Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Resources and is considered to have potential cultural heritage value and interest. The site is associated with many periods of the Town's history, including the post-war growth associated with the Parliament Oak School, the Limitation of Slavery and the Underground Railroad, as well as the First Session of Parliament under John Graves Simcoe. A Commemoration Plan has been submitted as part of the development application, which expands on the information presented in the previously submitted Heritage Impact Assessment and considers options to commemorate the site's history in a sensitive manner to the surrounding historical context.

A blended commemoration approach is proposed, reflecting on the site's various historic themes and involving the salvage of appropriate materials before demolition and their incorporation into the proposed development.

The site's proposed Commemoration Plan provides a direct tangible link to the history of the property and will provide interest to both the public and private realm of the proposed hotel development.

Commemoration Wall

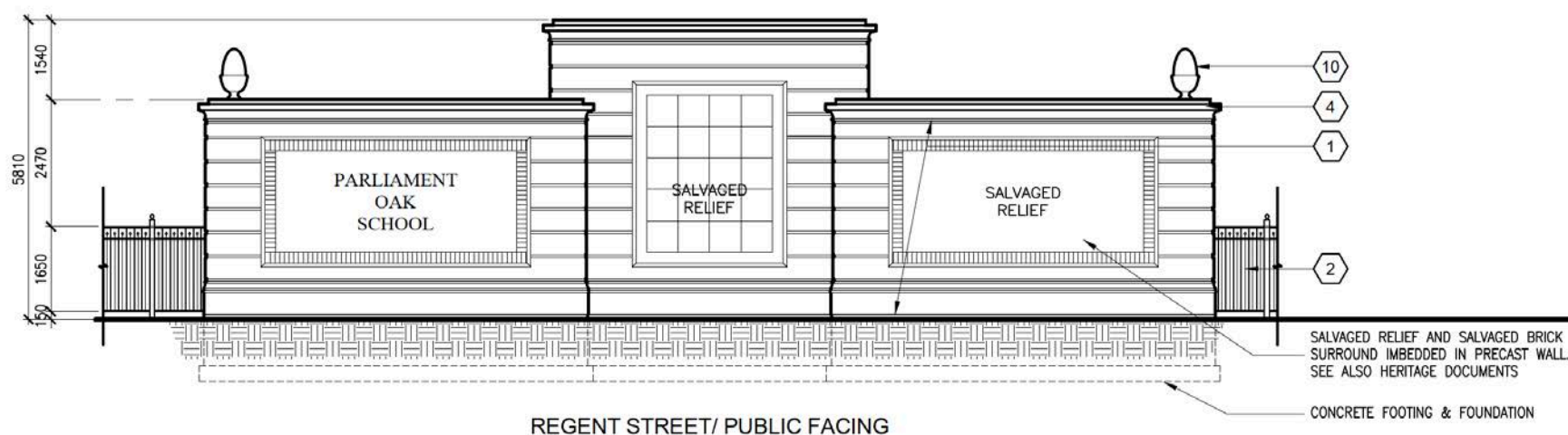
The salvaged bas-relief panel, large format stone oak tree panel and Parliament Oak school name from the existing school building panel will be installed as a commemoration wall at the site's Regent Street frontage, as detailed in the updated Commemoration Plan.



Graphic Bas-Relief Panel



Oak Tree Panel



Regent Street Commemoration Wall

Parliament Oak Stone Tree Marker and Town Survey Stone

The siting of the hotel building enables the preservation and re-integration of the existing survey stones and 1915 Parliament Oak stone tree-marker. The stone tree-marker defines the site's association with the first Parliament of Upper Canada, which will be supplemented with an interpretive panel to narrative the historic value of the site.

Underground Railroad Art Installation

The Castellani art installation commemorating the Underground Railroad will be temporarily removed during construction and reinstated in an appropriate location. The reinstatement of the art installation will be supplemented using an interpretive panel to create a fuller narrative of this piece of the site's and area's history.

1948 School Time Capsule

The 1948 Parliament Oak School time capsule has been identified for salvage. To commemorate the previous school, it is recommended the retrieval process be completed by qualified persons with a background in artefact management or museum studies, fully documented and made available to the public. An interpretive display of the time capsule will be located in the lobby of the Parliament Oak Hotel, accompanied by an interpretive panel.

Trees and Landscaping

The site and building have been intentionally designed to retain the five existing trees along King Street, as well as the matured Oak Tree adjacent to the existing school building. While this is not the Oak Tree that the meeting of Parliament took place under, it will be preserved to retain historic significance of the site. The Arborist Report and Tree Inventory submitted on behalf of this development application noted the tree is likely over 300 years old and is in a state of decline due to its age and environmental factors. However, it will live slightly longer with some care. Numerous trees around the site's perimeter, specifically King and Regent Streets, will be preserved and supplemented, maintaining the character of the surrounding streets.



Stone Tree-Marker



Town Survey Stone



Underground Railroad Art Installation

4.4.3 King Street Frontage

The site's combination of building orientation, setbacks, architectural detail, landscaping, open space and preservation of heritage features, intends to create a vibrant and attractive public realm along King Street. A front yard is created through a generous building setback to the main building, which preserves the existing landscaping and allows for the introduction of additional soft landscaping. This creates a comfortable pedestrian realm while minimizing any impacts of the 4-storey height.

The building has been oriented towards King Street with the porte-cochere located approximately in line with the front walls of dwellings on adjacent neighbouring properties, which creates a consistent front yard setback along King Street.



King Street Elevation

4.5 Circulation and Parking

Main vehicular and pedestrian access is provided off of King Street. The vehicular entrance to the site leads to a two-way looped internal driveway where a valet service will assist visitors in parking underground.

The underground parking garage located at the south end of the property is accessible from the internal driveway and is screened with landscaping. Underground parking reduces the amount of paved areas on the site and allows for additional landscaping.

There are two small surface parking lots for temporary parking. This parking is screened through landscaping and contains eight parking spaces for valet and registration purposes.

Located along Centre Street and Gage Street, there are two driveways used for occasional service and delivery vehicles. To reduce the impact on neighbouring properties, deliveries will be intermittent. There will also be landscaping and a gate at the driveway entrances to provide visual screening for the public.

SECTION



CONCLUSION

5.0

Conclusion



The Parliament Oak Hotel is envisioned to become a new landmark destination in Niagara-on-the-Lake and an attractive addition to Old Town.

The hotel building and site have been designed to reflect the historic character of Old Town, as well as the site's diverse history. The building has generous setbacks on all sides, in addition to stepbacks in its built form, which paired with extensive landscaping and open spaces, provide appropriate separation from the 4-storey building.

The preservation and commemoration of the site's historic features, as well as the introduction of new landscaping and passive recreation opportunities, enhances the public realm and will create a unique sense of place for both hotel guests and the surrounding public.

The Parliament Oak Hotel will create a prominent presence along King Street through its old-world classic charm, enhancing a vacant underutilized school site with historic value that will now be celebrated.



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