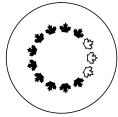


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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
 COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

<b>No.</b>	2025-P312
<b>To</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Date</b>	2025-01-23

<b>For</b>	DECISION
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**Subject/Title**

Federal Land Use Approval – The Indian Residential Schools National Monument (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) – Site Selection

**Summary**

The purpose of this submission is to obtain federal land use approval from the NCC Board of Directors for the preferred site for The Indian Residential Schools National Monument (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit).

**Risk Summary**

There may remain or arise some controversy around the selected site.

**Recommendation**

THAT the federal land use approval for the preferred site for The Indian Residential Schools National Monument (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) be granted, pursuant to section 12 of the *National Capital Act*.

THAT the signature of the Federal Land Use Approval document be delegated to the Vice-President, Capital Planning Branch.

**Submitted by:**

DocuSigned by:  
  
 8E8319D81759427  
 Alain Miguez, Vice-President, Capital Planning Branch

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## 1. Strategic Priorities

National Capital Commission (NCC) Corporate Plan 2024-2025 to 2028–2029 – Guiding Principal:

- Collaborate to add value as a partner with stakeholders, the public, and all levels of government to create lasting legacies.

National Capital Commission (NCC) Corporate Plan 2024–2025 to 2028–2029 – Strategic Direction #3:

- Contribute to a thriving, connected, and sustainable National Capital Region that inspires Canadians, through the planning, development, and improvement of the NCC’s assets.

## 2. Authority

*National Capital Act, section 12*

## 3. Context

### Project Background

The Indian Residential Schools National Monument (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) (hereinafter referred to as IRSNM) is intended as a significant commemorative project established to honour and remember the Indigenous children who were affected by Canada’s residential school system.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #81 states:

***We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors, and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.***

The Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) is responsible for Call to Action #81 given its responsibility as the lead department for national monuments in Canada’s Capital Region, as per the Policy on National Commemorative Monuments on Federal Lands in Canada’s Capital Region.

A survivor-led Steering Committee (the “Steering Committee”) was established by PCH to serve as the proponent group who will oversee the establishment and implementation of the guiding vision and ensure that the monument development process remains grounded in Indigenous values. The Steering Committee provides advice and makes decisions on such matters as site selection, design brief and design selection approach, educational and other content, and ongoing programming and maintenance needs.

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The Steering Committee announced in June 2023 that the monument is proposed to be installed on Parliament Hill, on a site adjacent to the West Block, known as West Terrace. The Steering Committee collaborated with and sought consensus from the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation and Survivors before selecting the monument site.

A sacred land blessing ceremony was held in June 2023, led by a Knowledge Keeper from Kitigan Zibi. Survivors from Kitigan Zibi and the Steering Committee both participated. The ceremony was followed by an official announcement event held at the site with the Prime Minister and Governor General present.

### **Commemoration Naming**

In November 2024, the Steering Committee amended the name of the proposed monument to “Indian Residential Schools National Monument (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit).”

The revised name includes the term “Indian” as per the *Indian Act* that was in place starting in 1876. The *Indian Act* placed government control over the lives of many Indigenous people across Canada, which led to the forced attendance of many children in Indian residential schools. It is also important to note the context of that era in which Indigenous Peoples in Canada were collectively referred to as “Indians” rather than the current distinctive terms “First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.”

While not all Indigenous Peoples may identify with the term Indian, the qualifier of “(First Nations, Métis, and Inuit)”, in addition to the term “Indian,” has been added to be reflective of these distinct groups.

### **Vision Statement**

Members of the Indian Residential Schools National Monument (IRSNM) Steering Committee (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) envision the IRSNM as a magnificent sacred space. The monument will be a contemplative space to remember, honour, educate, heal, and reconcile, and will speak to the country and the world for centuries to come. Its enduring impact will keep alive the courageous spirit of the Survivors of Canadian residential schools, their families, and descendants whose resilient voices raised awareness of the cruelties and injustices that were perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The monument will also ensure that the spirit of the children who never made it home from school will never be forgotten.

The vision and objectives for the monument continue to be refined per the Steering Committee’s mandate to oversee the establishment and implementation of the guiding vision for the monument. The Steering Committee met on October 31 and December 1, 2024, for a visioning session. A session summary will be presented to the committee for reflection and validation by the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada (RAIC). A report for approval by the Steering Committee will follow in January 2024.

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## 4. Options Analysis / NCC Staff Analysis

### The Site

The Indian Residential Schools National Monument will be situated in a highly symbolic and historically significant location, within the heart of Canada's democratic core—Parliament Hill, Ottawa. Positioned west of the West Block building (temporarily home to the House of Commons Chamber), the monument will overlook the Ottawa River, offering a powerful setting that reflects its profound national importance.

For Canada's Indigenous Peoples, the placement of the IRSNM within this important location holds special significance. It serves as a public acknowledgment of the nation's history with residential schools and the lasting impact these institutions have had on Indigenous communities. By placing the monument in this prominent location, the government reaffirms its commitment to truth and reconciliation and ensures that the history and experiences of Indigenous Peoples are remembered and respected in the heart of the nation's capital.

This location highlights the importance of Canada's political institutions acknowledging and addressing historical injustices, making the monument not only a site of reflection and remembrance but also a symbol of the nation's ongoing journey toward healing and reconciliation.

The site is currently providing temporary parking for the House of Commons Chamber, replacing the parking lost due to the ongoing Centre Block Rehabilitation Project.

### Site Selection

On March 30, 2023, the Steering Committee arrived at a consensus decision, informed by the NCC Potential Sites Report (dated April 26, 2022, Site 7), that the West Terrace within the Parliamentary Precinct would be the location for the IRSNM on the traditional and unceded lands of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation.

This decision was made by the Steering Committee after multiple in-person site visits of the 16 sites and 11 months of discussion and reflection. Of these 16 sites, seven were not recommended because they had significant constraints for meeting the goals of the IRSNM. Site 7 was selected as being most appropriate due to its accessibility and visibility, while also providing a sacred space to honour Survivors and the children who never returned.

The characteristics of the site include:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada is the custodian of the site on behalf of the Government of Canada.
- The site is part of the National Interest Land Mass and is designated as "Parliamentary and Judicial Precincts" in Canada's Core Area Sector Plan (2005).

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- The site forms part of a federally “Classified” heritage landscape and a National Historic Site of Canada.
- Proximity and views from the site to key federal landmarks, namely West Block, Confederation Building, Block 2 (including Indigenous Peoples’ Space) and Block 3.
- High visibility from Wellington Street / Confederation Boulevard, offering an appropriate balance of public visibility from the surrounding area and distance for quiet contemplation.
- The proximity adjacent to the Parliamentary escarpment provides views of surrounding natural and built features and has aesthetic qualities that will enhance the visitor experience.
- The site encompasses approximately 2,100 m<sup>2</sup> for the monument and gathering space.
- It is centrally located and highly accessible by foot, bike and transit, being approximately 260 metres walking distance from the Parliament O-Train station. The potential for universal accessibility is good from the east and will require exploration for options from the west and south. Direct vehicular access to the site is significantly limited given that access to Parliament Hill is controlled by the Vehicle Screening Facility. Protocol for access by vehicle will need to be established with the Parliamentary administration.
- Located above the 100-year flood zone.
- Potential conflict with future tunnel construction is to be determined and mitigated. There are no other known construction complexities.
- The Sir Robert Laird Borden Monument is located on the south edge of the proposed site and will require relocation as a separate Federal Approval.

#### Federal Heritage Review Office Review

The Federal Heritage Review Office (FHRO) has provided a Review of the Intervention. The review is an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed intervention on the heritage character of the West Block, the Parliament Hill Complex, and the Parliament Hill Grounds as identified in the FHRO Heritage Character Statements (HCS).

The FHRO has made the following recommendations for the next design phase:

- That the naturalized wall of vegetation along the Escarpment be retained as it forms an important edge for the terrace without affecting views into the site from the southwest.
- To develop a detailed heritage conservation approach for the monument design process and the key character defining elements and heritage values to be protected.

## **5. Financial Details**

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The Government of Canada has committed \$20M for this national monument. The proposal does not involve a financial contribution from the NCC.

## 6. Opportunities and Expected Results

- The monument will be a contemplative space to remember, honour, educate, heal, and reconcile, and will speak to the country and the world for centuries to come.
- Its enduring impact shall keep alive the courageous spirit of the Survivors of Canadian residential schools, their families, and descendants whose resilient voices raised awareness of the cruelties and injustices that were perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- The monument will also ensure that the spirit of the children who never made it home from school shall never be forgotten.
- It will serve as a focal point for large gatherings and events, an important destination for school and tour groups, and a spiritual space for private contemplation and sacred practice.
- The monument will engage visitors in a living experience towards spiritual healing by creating a safe, comfortable and welcoming space that reflects First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures.

## 7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies

The proposed site selection for the IRSNM is aligned with the following Government of Canada and NCC plans and policies:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #81, Government of Canada's commitment to reconciliation and the recognition of Indigenous rights, histories, and cultures within the nation's most significant political and symbolic space.
- NCC Plan for Canada's Capital (2017–2067): The NCC will collaborate with Canadian Heritage and other federal departments and agencies to celebrate and commemorate key anniversaries of Confederation, significant events in Canadian history and Canada's role on the world stage and as a land of democracy.
- NCC Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan (2005), containing the following goal for the Parliamentary and Judicial Precincts: "Ensure a Parliamentary and Judicial Precincts area that is planned, protected and interpreted as the symbolic and democratic heart of the nation, as the prime focus of the Nation's Capital and the core area, as a national and international landmark, and as the centre stage for national celebrations."
- Long-Term Vision Plan (2006) – Guiding Principles: The Parliamentary and Judicial Precinct provides the setting for the work of Parliamentarians and staff in a secure and efficient manner, but it is also the preeminent gathering place for public expression and celebration, as well as a place of quiet reflection.

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- GBA Plus: PSPC has in place an approved GBA Plus strategy.
- Universal accessibility (UA): The design will integrate universally accessible guidelines and best practices.
- NCC mandate to “Guide and control the use and development of federal lands in Canada’s Capital Region; and maintain heritage sites in Canada’s Capital Region, such as ... commemorative sites.”

## 8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measure
The site is subject to foreground views control under the Canada’s Capital Views Protection regulation to protect views to national symbols, specifically the West Block.	Low	Moderate	During the development of the monument’s design guidelines, important views will need to be identified to evaluate potential impacts on views to the national symbols.
Delay in receiving approval affects project schedule and related PSPC project agreements.	Low	Moderate	Federal Approvals staff continue to work closely with PSPC/PCH to ensure that the appropriate land use and design approvals are in place to allow the project to proceed according to schedule.
There may remain or arise some controversy around the selected site, since Parliament Hill has traditionally been reserved for commemorations of only monarchs and prime ministers.	Medium	Moderate	The methodology used by the Site Selection Steering Committee will document the detailed rationale underpinning the recommendation of this site.

## 9. Public Engagement and Communications

- A draft vision and objectives were discussed at the Indian Residential Schools National Monument (IRSNM) Consultation Workshop of October 2019, which included: former Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Commissioners Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild; two out of three of the original members of the TRC Survivors Advisory Committee and two additional Survivors to ensure full regional representation; intergenerational Survivors; TRC honorary witnesses; TRC collaborators including former staff, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), spiritual leaders, health experts, educators and previous commemorative project leads; and PCH staff.
- In November 2024, the Steering Committee met again to revisit the draft vision and objectives. A workshop summary report will be prepared by two Indigenous Professional Advisors, members of the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada's Indigenous Task Force.
- PCH, with the support of the NCTR, has also engaged the RAIC to develop a design competition process for the selection of an Indigenous-led design team to be awarded a contract to create a construction-ready, developed design package for the IRSNM.
- The NCTR will support and facilitate discussions between Steering Committee and the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, and will oversee outreach to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.
- A communication plan will be developed by PCH to guide additional engagement and public announcements.

## 10. Next Steps

Following site selection approval, a design team and concept will be selected through a two-phase design competition. The competition process will include the following milestones:

- Design Competition Planning and Guidelines are in progress with the Steering Committee and will provide design criteria and identify site considerations for the design concepts.
- Presentation of design guidelines to the ACPDR – Summer 2025
- Design Competition Phase 1 (Open Call) – Fall 2025
- Design Competition Phase 2 (Shortlist) – Spring 2026
- Presentation of design concepts to ACPDR and the jury – Summer 2026
- Design Development – Summer 2026 – Winter 2027
- Construction – Spring – Winter 2027
- Inauguration – Summer 2028

## 11. List of Appendices

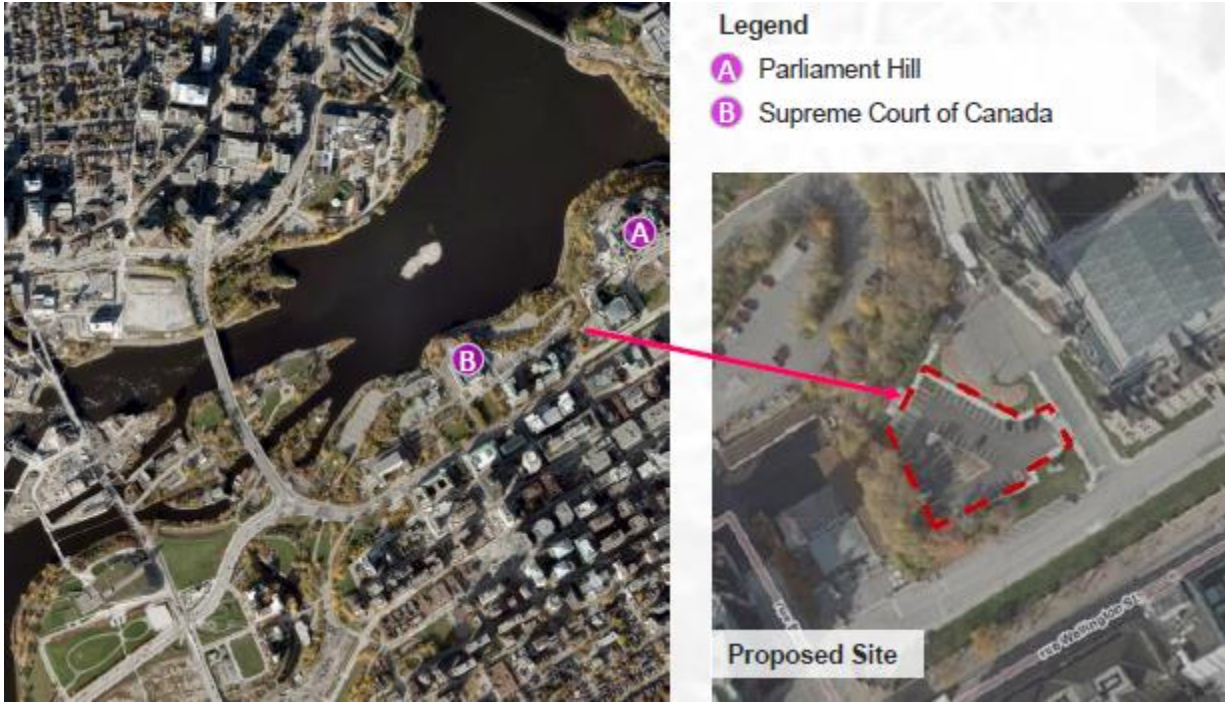
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Appendix A – Site Context  
Appendix B – Site Plan and Photos

## **12. Authors of the Submission**

- Alain Miguelez, Vice-President, Capital Planning Branch (CP)
- Isabel Barrios, Director, Director, Federal Approvals and Heritage, and Archaeology Programs (FAHA), CP
- Jason Hutchison, Chief, Federal Design Approvals, FAHA, CP
- Nicole Howard, Senior Architect, Federal Design Approvals, FAHA, CP

# Appendix A – Site Context



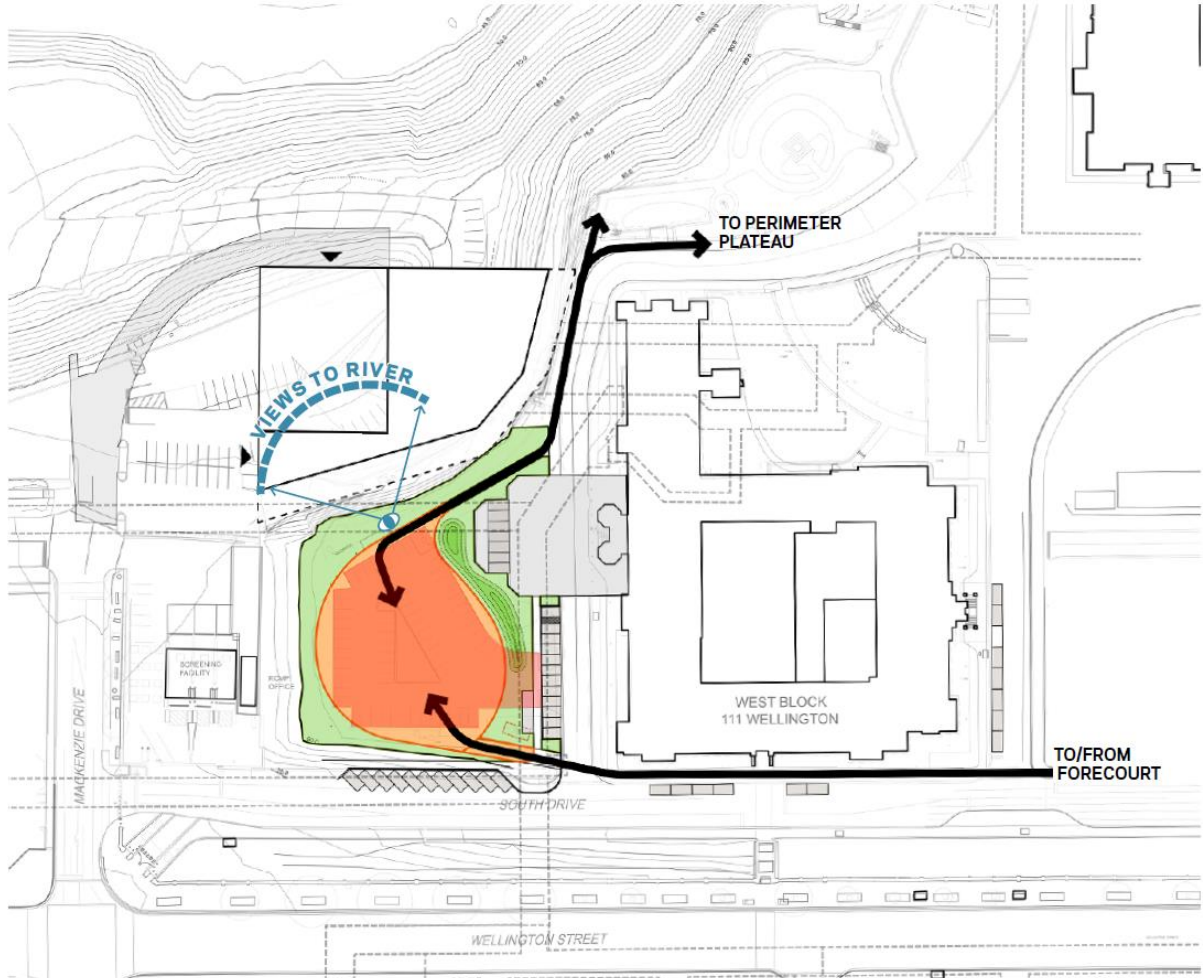


Aerial View of Site Location

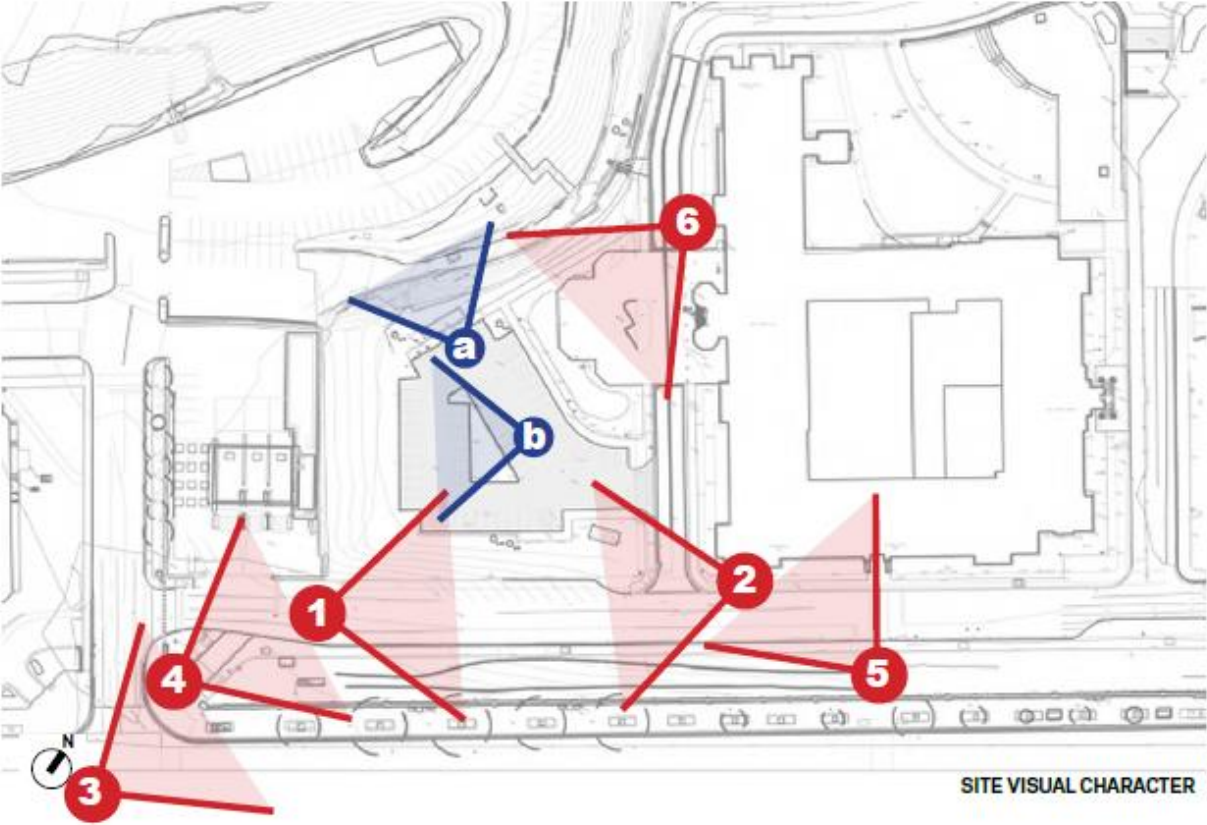


Site is highly visible from Wellington Street

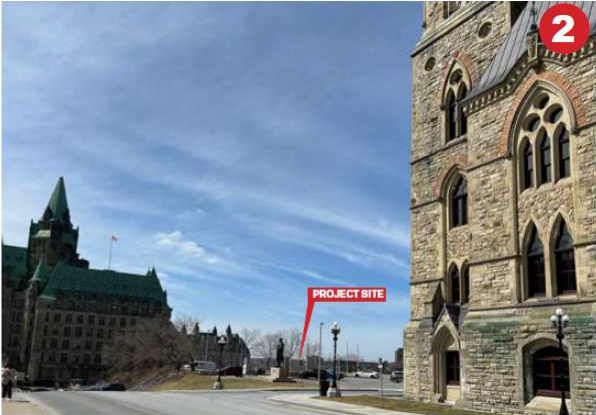
## Appendix B – Site Plan and Photos



The visual character of the western terrace site varies throughout the year, both **Views to the site**, and **Views from the site**.



SOUTHWEST: BANK STREET PEDESTRIAN APPROACH



SOUTHEAST: WELLINGTON APPROACH



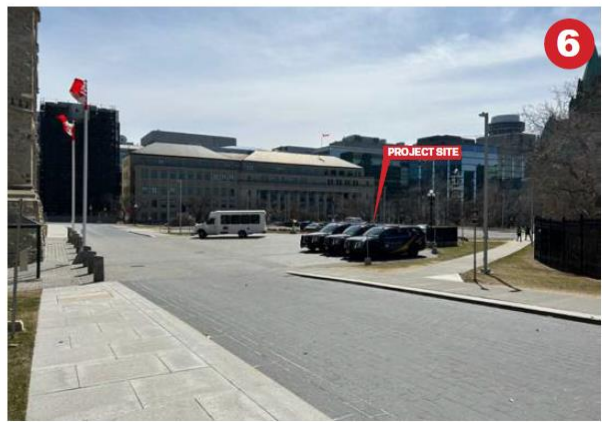
BANK STREET APPROACH



BANK STREET PEDESTRIAN APPROACH



WELLINGTON APPROACH



NORTH PEDESTRIAN PATH APPROACH



VIEW TO OTTAWA RIVER



VIEW TO CONFEDERATION BUILDING