

# MAJOR'S HILL PARK

A STUDY IN ADAPTIVE REHABILITATION

by

John E. Zvonar

A Practicum submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree,  
Master of Landscape Architecture

Department of Landscape Architecture  
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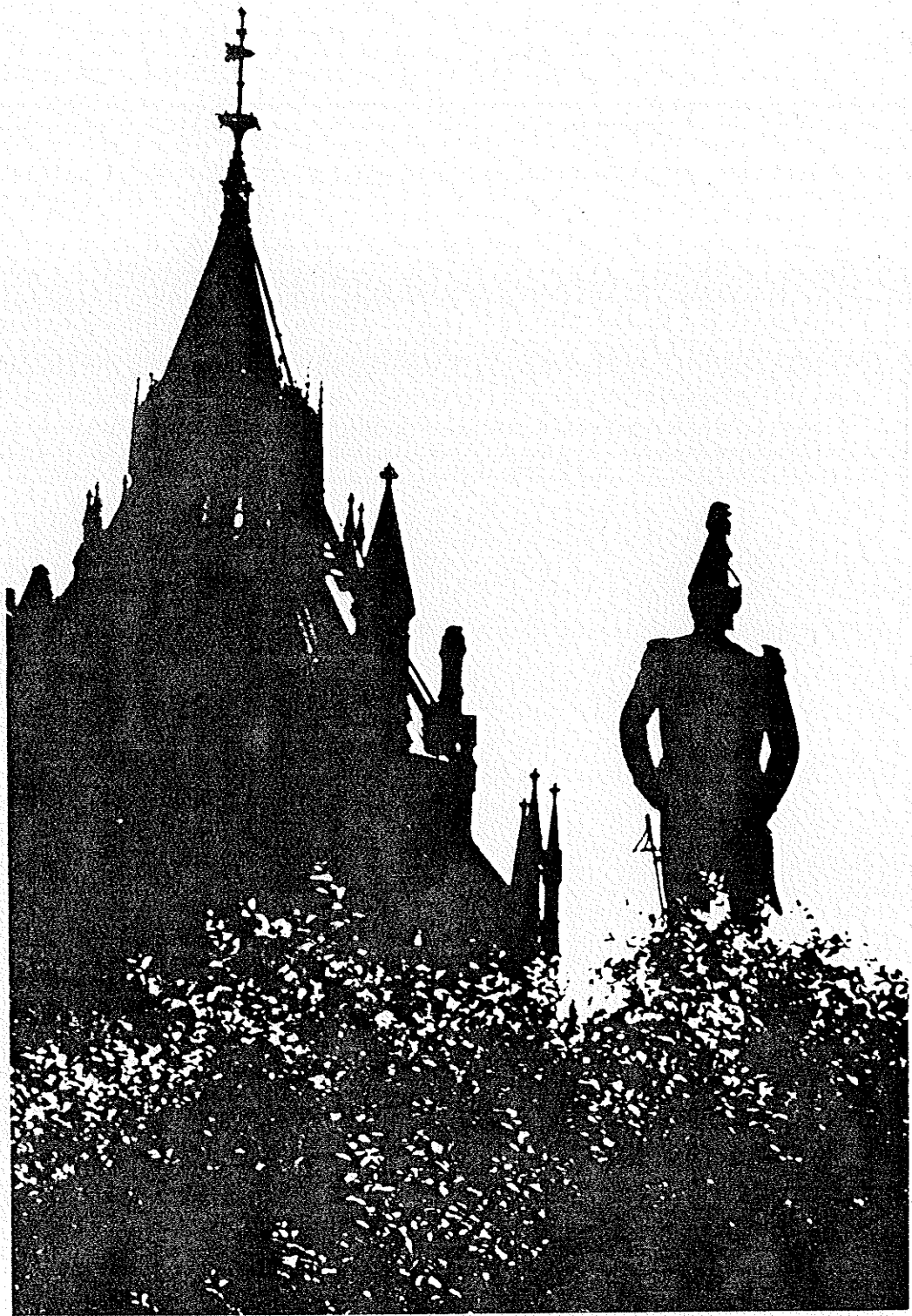
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JOHN E. ZVONAR

A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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## ABSTRACT

This practicum focuses on Major's Hill Park, a civic park in Ottawa, Canada. Romantically situated on the picturesque bluffs of the Ottawa River across the ravine from Parliament Hill (the Canadian seat of government), it affords pastoral respite within a busy urban context. Given its rich history, the park might be expected to proudly exhibit significant aspects of its past; lacking a coherent framework, sadly, it does not. This issue is addressed and answered here within the framework of a historic preservation study. There is a tremendous opportunity to develop a definitive adaptive rehabilitation plan for Major's Hill Park, which incorporates both an understanding of the park's heritage and today's practical, and pressing, concerns while looking ahead towards the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of this study I have been in contact with many helpful individuals, both in Ottawa and in Winnipeg. In general, I would like to thank all of them for their assistance in my endeavour, for it is only through their generosity and kindness that this practicum has reached fruition.

In the Ottawa area, I would like to thank those persons at the National Capital Commission who were ever-willing to provide assistance, especially Art Capling and Edward Holubowich, who always found time in their busy schedules to discuss the issues. As well, other people in the Landscape Architecture Division were always helpful, especially D.W. (Don) Graham, and Bob McGinley. Michael Newton, the NCC's resident historian, saved me much time and helped solve many of my problems with his wide-ranging knowledge.

I would also like to acknowledge those citizens' groups who had an interest in the park and the many festival people in the city who offered advice and guidance, especially Gregory Larsen of the Festival of Spring, whose enthusiasm in his own work, and in my own, proved inspirational. Finally, to those persons whom I met in the park itself, and who were kind enough to answer my questions, many thanks.

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NOTES: In researching Major's Hill Park, proper names were often found to be spelled different ways, eg. Lowertown, LowerTown and Lower Town, Bytown, ByTown, and By Town, Byward Market, ByWard Market, and By Ward Market. In each case, the latter name has been used throughout the text.

Also, unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by the author.

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**Chapter One:  
INTRODUCTION**

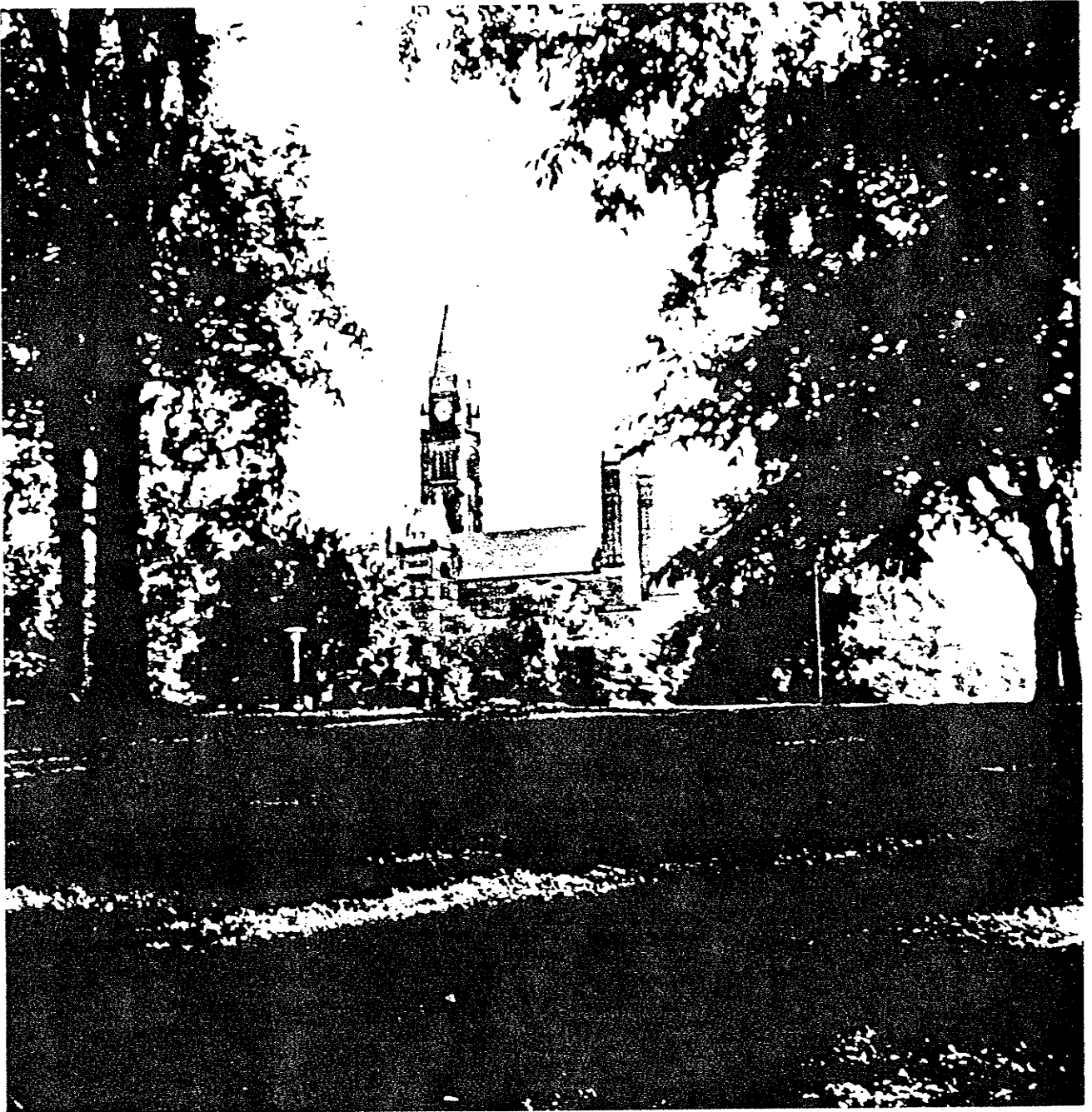


Figure 1.1: Major's Hill Park



## 1.1 Purpose

One of the challenges associated with undertaking a practicum study is making it relevant to today's world and having it respond to topical issues. This study of Major's Hill Park offers the opportunity to use an existing body of knowledge and explore new opportunities for the park; as an academic exercise it is protected from the aspects of its political context, eg. City of Ottawa, National Capital Commission (NCC), citizens' groups, etc. Currently, as neighbouring projects near completion, Major's Hill Park is experiencing pressure for redevelopment; its prominence on Confederation Boulevard and its relationship to the National Museum of Fine Arts and the railroad terrace confirm this. The NCC has recently overseen the completion of a preliminary plan for the park which addresses issues such as pedestrian access, circulation and festival use.

This practicum has aimed to develop Major's Hill Park as a more symbolic entity within the National Capital, while addressing it also as a functional and useful part of the region's open space system. Ottawa is a city with a rich history, and within the context of this tradition, Major's Hill Park is a multi-faceted property which offers exciting challenges. Of crucial importance is the integration of existing issues and concerns; especially significant is the need to alleviate many of the public misconceptions related to the park. With a view to maximum enhancement of the site's magnificent views, its rich historic legacy, its dramatic topography, and its central location in downtown Ottawa, this practicum will seek to strike a delicate balance between the traditionally passive nature of Major's Hill Park and a pressing desire to develop this pastoral landscape of trees and small meadows as a vital component of the National Capital Region.

## 1.2 Methodology

Research for this study began in the summer of 1986 with background readings in the realm of historic preservation. Journeys to Ottawa in both August and October of that year identified Major's Hill Park as one of a few viable study sites in the National Capital Region. Subsequent consultation with officials in the capital and with practicum committee members identified it as being the best possible choice for detailed exploration.

A methodology was then formulated to provide direction for research and for study. It was comprised of the following components:

- A. Introduction/Study Development
- B. Inventory
- C. Analysis
- D. Synthesis/Design Development
- E. Recommendations
- F. Conclusions

## A. Introduction/Study Development

This section provides background information for the study, including identification of the purpose of the study, the site chosen, and the preliminary issues and concerns relative to the existing situation. Scope, timing, presentation technique and computer applications are also outlined. A brief introduction to the field of historic landscape preservation, followed by a discussion of adaptive rehabilitation, complete with precedents, sets the stage for such a treatment of Major's Hill Park.

## B. Inventory

Research and data collection in the National Capital Region during the summer of 1987 were intensive and thorough. The purposes of this period were twofold:

1. to gain a better understanding of the project and a sense of the potential contribution that could be made;
2. to collect a comprehensive package of information related to the site.

Major's Hill Park was explored under the following categories:

- i) Historical Context: the evolution of the park over time;
- ii) Built Context: the structures and sites which coexist as neighbours;
- iii) Natural Conditions: the biomorphological makeup of the park and its setting;
- iv) Site Elements: those objects which are found *in situ*;
- v) Current Use Patterns and Programs: a study of how the park is used, through discussions with interested parties and users as well as through observational analysis; and,
- vi) Miscellaneous: a compilation of information about various other aspects of the park, including current maintenance procedures and requirements.

To understand Major's Hill Park in a more complete fashion, a brief history of Ottawa is presented in the appendix, including a look at those agencies that have had the mandate to beautify the capital. Information repositories which were searched included:

1. National Archives of Canada (NAC)
2. Public Works of Canada (PWC)
3. National Capital Commission (NCC)
4. Municipal Archives of Ottawa
5. National Map Collection (NMC)
6. National Air Photograph Library
7. Ottawa Public Library: "Ottawa Room"
8. Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC)
9. Energy, Mines and Resources Canada

The following objectives were set out in researching Major's Hill Park:

1. To establish the nature of the site before development.
2. To identify the character of the original development.
3. To identify, to date and to document the character of subsequent changes.
4. To establish periods and aspects of particular historical significance (associations, aesthetics, technology, etc.).
5. To resolve questions posed by site analysis. (after Buggey, 1985-1986)

#### C. Analysis

This section analyses the information which was gathered over the course of the study. It was then enhanced through a treatment of adaptive rehabilitation. The methodology recognizes and accommodates issues and concerns which arise in light of information, potentials and constraints. An analysis and chronological structuring of historical evidence are seen to be of paramount importance. Having determined the overriding concept for the design to follow, this research is then applied to design development.

#### D. Synthesis/Design Development

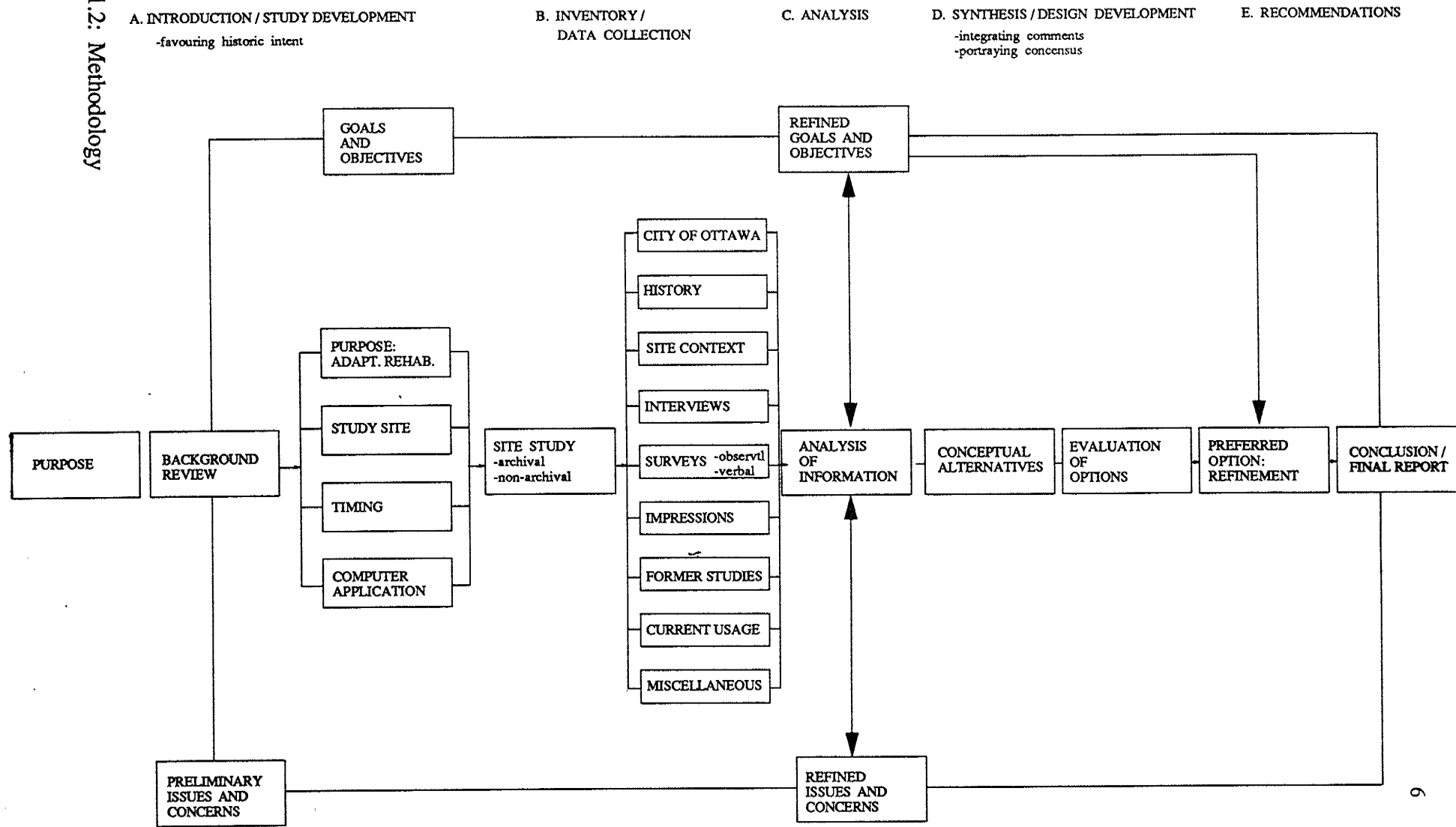
Precedent design studies were reviewed to provide impetus and inspiration for future design decisions. Following this, the statement of objectives was revised. Some of the aspects of this section include:

1. the identification and amelioration of conflicts;
2. the preparation of schematic studies to explore plan alternatives;
3. the evaluation of conceptual alternatives;
4. the assessment of heritage elements, particularly regarding their retention;
5. the formulation of a comprehensive development program which responds to the stated intent and is modified in the light of survey information and data collected.

E. Recommendations: Based upon the issues and concerns and revised objectives set for the study, a final preferred solution is identified and detailed to completion.

F. Conclusions: The final section serves as a summation and postscript for the study. It indicates the appropriateness of historic preservation in today's context, as well as an assessment of the practicality and appropriateness of including the historical element in a redevelopment proposal in today's context. The section also looks at Major's Hill Park while pondering the relative importance of historic landscape preservation to it specifically.

Figure 1.2: Methodology



### 1.3 The Urban Park

Urban parks are vital to the well-being of any city. Traditionally viewed as the city's 'lungs', they accord the interaction of nature with the nobility of art and inspire the public's aesthetic sensibilities, while providing places for passive and active recreation.

The primary purpose of the Park is to provide the best practicable means of healthful recreation for the inhabitants of the city of all classes. It should present an aspect of spaciousness and tranquility with variety and intricacy of arrangement, thereby affording the most agreeable contrast to the confinement, bustle, and monotonous street-division of the city.  
(cited in O'Donnell, 1987, 57)

The author of these words, Frederick Law Olmsted, is credited with initiating the parks and recreation movement in North America in the mid-nineteenth century. Its emergence on the developing continent found roots in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, a country whose extremely rapid industrialization begat pollution, overcrowding and squalor. The resultant park movement arose in counterpoint to the degeneration and to the oppressiveness associated with this situation.

The romantic landscape was initially popularized in the paintings of Nicholas Poussin, Salvatore Rosa and Claude Lorrain: pastoral settings characterized by sinuous water courses and dappled with naturalistic groupings of vegetation — often highlighted by romantically-crumbling Greek and Roman ruins — became the inspiration for English landscape designers, most notably Charles Bridgeman, Humphrey Repton, William Kent, and Lancelot "Capability" Brown. In the early nineteenth century, Romanticism, as a form of expression, grew in contrast to the unrelenting geometry of the industrial city and in opposition to rigid eighteenth century French formalism.

Olmsted's best known North American response was New York City's Central Park, the continent's first planned park, which he designed with his architect partner Calvert Vaux in the 1850s. Olmsted's inspiration was taken from the English response to the need for urban open space, and most notably, from Birkenhead Park in Liverpool. With great foresight, Olmsted envisioned a place which would provide the pastoral respite needed by the modern urban dweller. Central Park, like many urban parks to follow in its wake, provided a place in which one could experience the comforting confines of natural processes in the midst of trees and bluffs, water and wildlife. This "democratic pleasure ground" (O'Donnell, 1987, 58) offered visual refreshment and mental solace.

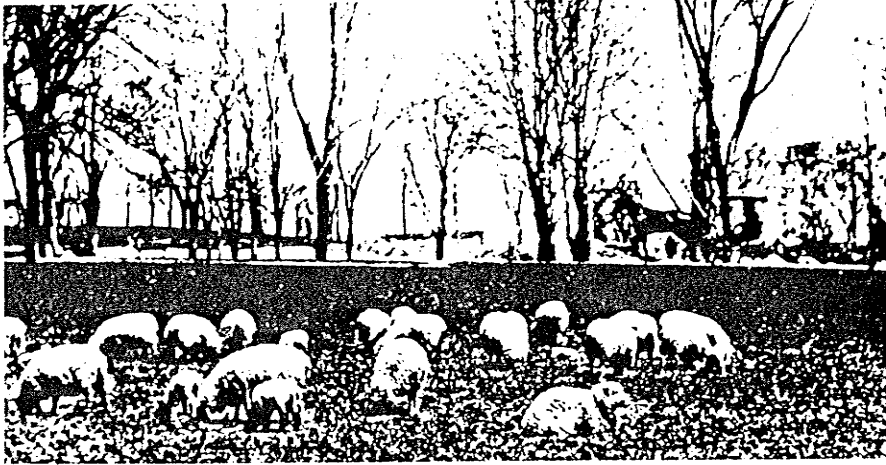


Figure 1.3: Central Park, New York City: Sheep Meadow (Barlow Rogers, 1987, 133)

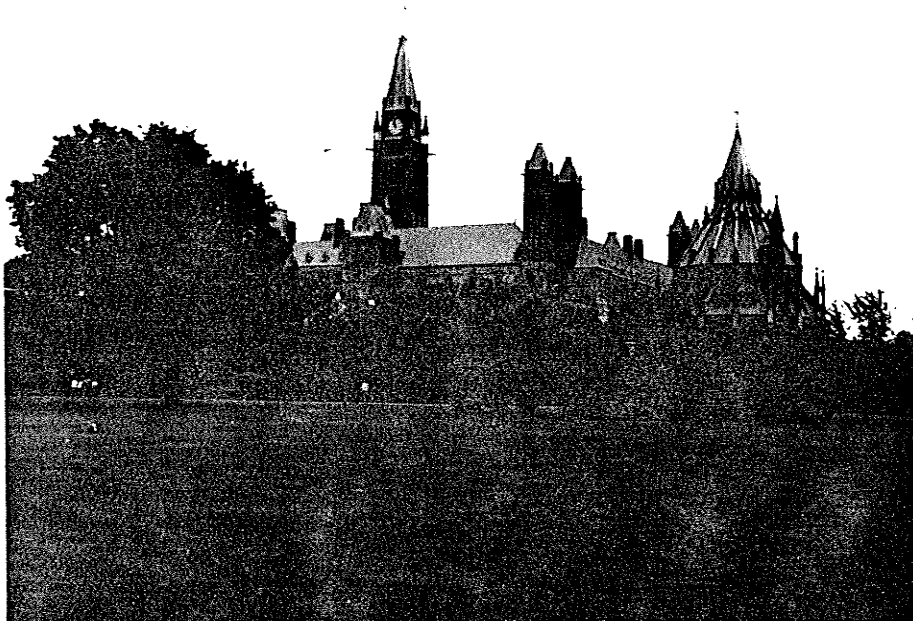


Figure 1.4: Major's Hill Park: peaceful greensward

The passive urban park was to remain prominent and popular for many decades. But, as time progressed and attitudes regarding leisure time and recreation changed, there became a need for more active use open spaces within the urban fabric.

In examining the evolution of an urban park, one confronts the question of how a particular piece of land was preserved as open space within the context of urban growth and development, and how it was adapted, formally and functionally, to the changing conditions of urban life. (Bartels, 1982, 143)

### Major's Hill Park

In its varying configurations, the area known today as Major's Hill Park has provided pastoral respite in Ottawa for over 150 years. In 1832, the Surveyor General of Lower Canada, Joseph Bouchette, described the view from the site as "the most splendid view that the magnificent scenery of the Canadas affords" (Bouchette, 1832, 81); today, the Major's Hill offers some of the finest views of Parliament Hill (the Canadian seat of government), of Canada's two founding cultures (English and French) as represented in the national capital, and of the urban/pastoral landscape associated with the National Capital Region, including Gatineau Park. Historically, it was the site of one of the first residences in ByTown and Ottawa's first park.

Today, at four hectares (13.2 acres) Major's Hill Park occupies an important place in the nation's capital. It is situated within the picturesque confines of Crown property, as opposed to the orthogonal geometry of the Town side. The site presents an interesting paradox as it is affected by all levels of government: it belongs to and is maintained by the NCC (a federal agency), it is part of the City of Ottawa's planning process, and vehicular arteries of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton pass by; therefore, a certain level of cooperation is required to effect change in or about the park.

Major's Hill Park interfaces with the Ottawa River, Nepean Point and the National Museum of Fine Arts to the north and northeast (the latter two separated from the park by St. Patrick Street), Mackenzie Avenue to the east, and the Chateau Laurier Hotel to the south; by implication, the NCC's parking lot currently situated between Sussex and Mackenzie immediately north of the Connaught Building is included in the redevelopment of the park, supporting an architectural treatment, to complement the park. The Rideau Canal and the abandoned railway terrace adjoining the park, and Parliament Hill with its Peace Tower and Parliamentary Library, constitute the elements to the west (see Figure 1.3).

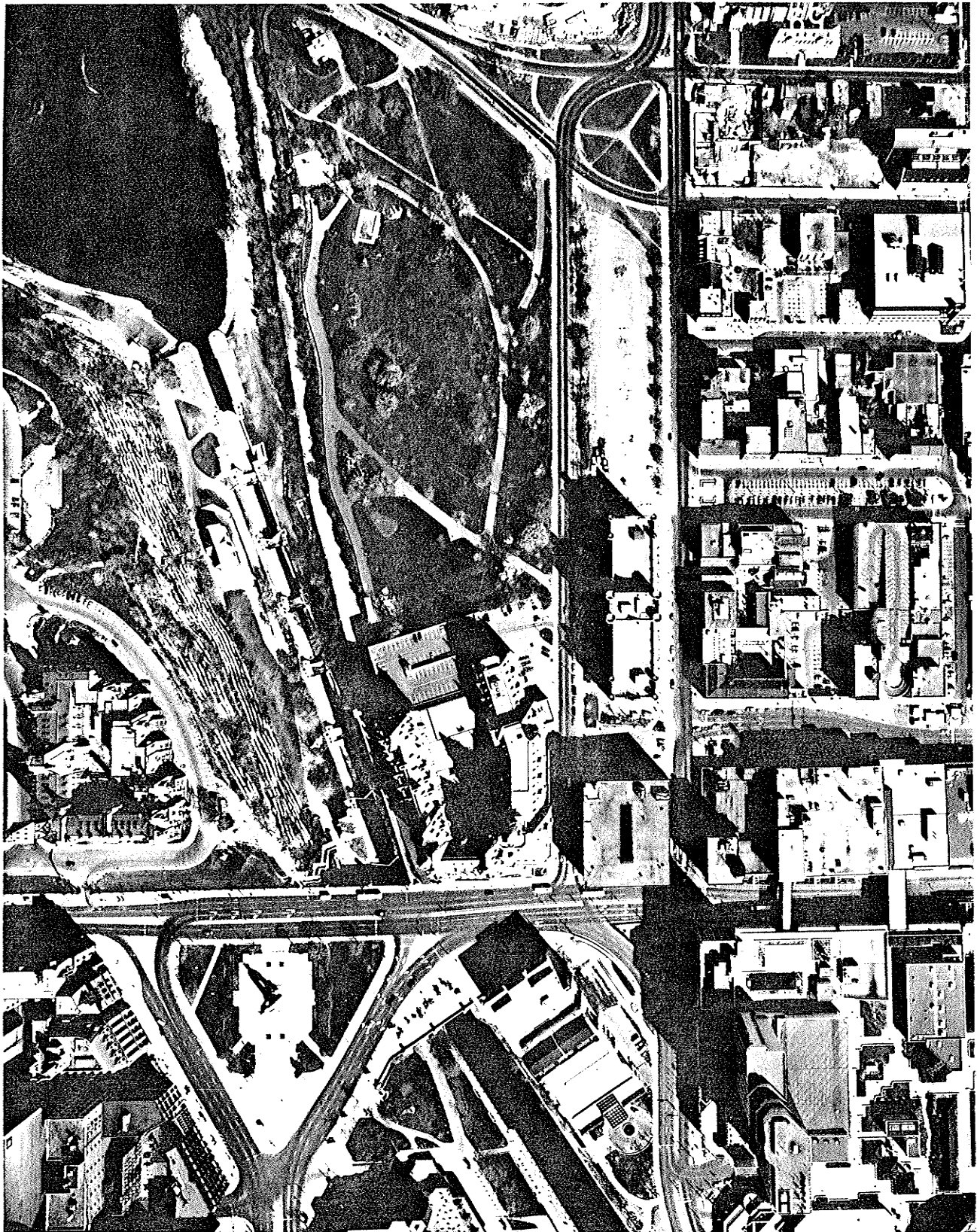


Figure 1.5: Aerial View (National Air Photograph Library)



The park is also an important component along the National Capital Commission's Confederation Boulevard; Major's Hill Park occupies a prominent location on the route and thus must address it with style and dignity especially in light of the NCC's desire to harbour symbolic places along this route. In the National Capital Commission's desire to create an inspiring setting for Canada's capital, Major's Hill Park has the potential for playing a principal role.

Presently, there are a number of issues and concerns which must be addressed and resolved. The following section attempts to elucidate these points.

#### 1.4 Preliminary Issues and Concerns

Major's Hill Park emerged as a good candidate for detailed exploration. As well as occupying a splendid piece of property near Parliament Hill in the downtown core, the park afforded good opportunity to examine some topical issues and concerns.

Over time the rich heritage of Major's Hill Park appears to have received little consideration. Colonel John By, founder of ByTown (subsequently Ottawa) and supervisor of the Rideau Canal's construction, erected his house here in 1826; sketches made on this site in 1857 by Lady Head, wife of the Governor-General, were said to have been partially responsible for Queen Victoria's choice of Ottawa as the new capital of the Province of Canada. The forerunner to Major's Hill Park, Dominion Park, was created in this atmosphere; nevertheless, changing social attitudes towards leisure, safety and heritage have contributed to a steady evolution from its original form. The current predilection to simplify parks for security and for ease of maintenance (i.e. asphaltic paths, standardized site furniture, grand mowing allowances, etc.) has reduced this property to a mere shadow of its former importance.

Historical events and persons are unceremoniously commemorated by an eclectic collection of ill-sited and often inappropriate memorials; these elements in turn are complemented by a rag-tag assortment of modern art pieces. A comprehensive redevelopment plan based on careful historical research, site environment and contemporary planning analysis is needed immediately. The challenge is to address the use of historic elements in a contemporary context and to resurrect the historical dynamism of Major's Hill Park for all to appreciate once again. In order to develop a philosophy that will guide this process, it is imperative to investigate the field of historic landscape preservation to determine its appropriateness; alternative approaches are also considered, especially in light of the explorations of individuals such as Peter Eisenman and Ian Hamilton Finlay.

When programmed, Major's Hill Park is a lively and vigorous place. Throughout the year, events such as the Festival of Spring and Canada Day, draw tens of thousands of

spectators and participants from the region and beyond into the park. Unfortunately, Major's Hill Park remains underappreciated throughout much of the year, as these events occur but sporadically; a better developed activity programme might aid in alleviating this problem, but there are other reasons for its declining popularity.

In 1912, the first stage of Ottawa's finest hostelry, the Chateau Laurier Hotel, was completed on the southern flank of Major's Hill Park. It provided elegant accommodations both for federal politicians working nearby on Parliament Hill and for visitors to the capital. Until the hotel's second stage was completed in 1928, Major's Hill Park still had partial frontage on Wellington Street. After 1928, however, the park was effectively isolated from the busy thoroughfare; it has remained a passive enclave within the urban core ever since. Although enjoyed by Ottawans, it often remains a somewhat hidden entity awaiting discovery.

Another concern facing Major's Hill Park is pedestrian circulation. Currently, the constricted main point of access on the southeast corner channels pedestrians and cyclists alike to and from the site; the boardwalk egress from the Alexandra Bridge to the north proffers similar circulation difficulties, but allows somewhat easier movement. Pedestrian travel from the ByWard Market (located to the east) is unsatisfactory, with awkward, poorly-defined, though desired, lines of movement. Access from Nepean Point is undeniably dangerous as interprovincial vehicular traffic divides the two sites; this situation will only be compounded on the completion of the National Museum of Fine Arts and the National Museum of Civilization. The circulation problem is a pragmatic issue that must be addressed, to allow people to move safely to and from Major's Hill Park.

Perhaps an even more pressing concern today is the popular view held by the citizens of Ottawa towards Major's Hill Park. Many individuals refer to the gay presence on site as sufficient reason not to visit the park 'after hours' or when not specifically programmed. Until societal attitudes concerning this issue change to acceptance and tolerance, or until the issue is addressed forthrightly regarding this park specifically, this bias will continue to influence potential park visitors negatively. Furthermore, discomfort regarding stories of beatings and other forms of violent activity has certainly influenced local visitation patterns within the park during the evenings.

In summary, the following have been identified as the major issues and concerns pertinent to Major's Hill Park:

1. Disregard of history
2. Hidden entity.
3. Pedestrian circulation.
4. Negative social environment and physical insecurity.

These, then, are the troubling aspects currently affecting Major's Hill Park. They require both practical and philosophical consideration to help reverse the apparent decline

in use of the site. But perhaps, as this practicum study contends, the most disappointing aspect about Major's Hill Park is the apparent flagrant disregard of its history. From this position, preliminary goals and objectives have been posited.

### 1.5 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been developed as a response to the preliminary issues and concerns identified.

A. Goal: DESIGN: A definitive design solution will be prepared for Major's Hill Park, based upon historical, social and contemporary evidence.

Objectives:

1. To study Major's Hill Park through on-site investigation and archival research, to provide the appropriate background for addressing both the procedural and the physical form aspects of environmental and historic preservation issues *in situ*.
2. To explore those studies which have addressed Major's Hill Park in the past.
3. To interview parties interested in Major's Hill Park (professionals, local residents, maintenance personnel) in order to achieve the most comprehensive overview possible, and, subsequently, to facilitate the best design solution possible.

B. Goal: SYMBOLISM: The design of Major's Hill Park will be guided by a symbolic concept which suitably addresses and reflects its past and its present and which envisions the future.

Objectives:

1. To understand the essence of the park and to express it completely (both overtly and covertly).
2. To realize all subsequent design decisions as subordinate to and cognizant of this symbolic concept.
3. To incorporate literary allusions and references which will complement the overall symbolism.

C. Goal: HERITAGE: Major's Hill Park will express its rich heritage through the process of adaptive rehabilitation.

Objectives:

1. To study and understand the concept and philosophy of adaptive rehabilitation and to research precedents in this realm to assist the design process.
2. To elicit response and sentiment from users, through interviews, to better understand the modern place of this urban, historically-important park.
3. To consider the potentials and constraints of the park's heritage elements and the

possibility of using each in a revised development plan.

4. To positively express and display its heritage to park users, through both practical and innovative modes of presentation.
5. To facilitate a more appropriate planning and design decision-making process for this historic urban landscape.
6. To incorporate references to local historical events and personalities through literary allusions, i.e. the use of quotations.
7. To properly commemorate the far-reaching works of Colonel John By whose deeds to date have not been properly represented in the region.

D. Goal: **PASSIVE USE/ATTRACTIVENESS:** The passive nature and overall attractiveness of Major's Hill Park will be maintained and enhanced.

Objectives:

1. To confirm through conversation and observation the importance of maintaining the park as a passive, attractive place.
2. To upgrade the attractive qualities of the park while unifying its many, disparate elements.
3. To emphasize its visual character through intelligent design, i.e. siting of paths, elements, etc.
4. To structure places within the park so to capture and fully take advantage of the melodic sounds from its environs.
5. To emphasize the beauty surrounding the park with appropriately situated plant massing.
6. To increase the number and the impact of floral displays.
7. To introduce additional sculpture, art and elements to the park where warranted.
8. To enhance year-round activity.

E. Goal: **GEOMORPHOLOGY:** The geomorphological foundation of Major's Hill Park will be emphasized.

Objectives:

1. To understand the geological base upon which the park is situated and to expose and reassert its meaning to users.
2. To develop elements in the park (architecture, balustrades) which reflect the limestone base on which it is situated.
3. To emphasize the major elevational change (ridge) in the northeast portion of the park by exposing it.

F. Goal: CONTEXT: The design solution will recognize and address its environs.

Objectives:

1. To study the visual connections from Major's Hill Park so to better accommodate them in the design, i.e. to maintain and to enhance sight lines, views and vistas and to provide ample physical setting to enjoy these.
2. To study the physical connections to and from Major's Hill Park so to ameliorate current movement difficulties.
3. To study the nature and the potential use of the NCC parking lot and to address it in the final design, especially as related to a respect for current Market needs and those of pedestrians who desire it as a thoroughfare.
4. To study the railway terrace and to upgrade its length, as well as the existing connection between it and the park and the Rideau Canal, for pedestrian and cycle traffic.
5. To study contextual elements (forms and materials) to provide clues for the design of elements in the park.
6. To address the configuration of Confederation Boulevard and to determine how it will sympathetically interface and integrate with the park, especially as it pertains to access and nodal points (pedestrian crossings), as well as streetscape treatments, lighting, signage, etc.

G. Goal: PRAGMATIC ISSUES: The adaptive rehabilitation scheme for Major's Hill Park will address and ameliorate the practical concerns which confront the park.

Objectives:

1. To understand the existing difficulties experienced by those travelling to the park by foot as well as to understand future needs in this area.
2. To ameliorate pedestrian access difficulties by improving existing, and developing new, pedestrian access points and links with the surrounding community and open spaces.
3. To explore current vehicular traffic patterns which may exacerbate the difficulty of accessing the park.
4. To determine how pedestrian accessibility may be enhanced.
5. To identify and address existing negative sentiments about the park by proposing ways by which to ameliorate these concerns.
6. To suggest the placement of light standards so to properly illuminate the park's pathways and to highlight important elements *in situ*.
7. To properly identify the park, and elements throughout, using appropriate and sensitive signage.
8. To further develop the idea of "landscape crime prevention" in the park.

H. Goal: USERS: Major's Hill Park will become a vital open space in the National Capital Region once again for residents and visitors alike.

Objectives:

1. To develop the park in such a way that it does not remain a hidden and forgotten entity, and that it can again become more prominent, and reassert itself as the city's premier park.
2. To determine and accommodate the needs of users.
3. To provide public restrooms and other convenience facilities within the park, as well as to provide tourist information through an interpretative centre/kiosk facility.
4. To redevelop the potting shed as a concession stand with adjoining tea terrace.
5. To consider the needs of festivals and to determine how they can be accommodated in this vital festival site network.
6. To accommodate the needs of the Lower Town residents.



**Chapter Two:  
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION**

## 2.1 General

We live in a rapidly changing world. Complex technologies often become outdated as quickly as they are created; populations on the rise stress the ability of the land to support them; increasing cultural homogeneity threatens our multi-faceted societies.

The global landscape is undergoing marked change. From the rain forests of Brazil to the savannahs of central Africa, the landscape is experiencing stresses of its own, in accommodating new populations and new uses. The urban landscape is experiencing ever greater flux. Architectural movements leave their impressions on the cities as they have done for hundreds of years, although the results may not always be seen to be improvements. Quaint turn-of-the-century structures are expropriated for the new look of progress manifest in the cloak of modernity; the North American city through the 1960s witnessed an annihilation of what was once considered the city's essence—its richness and vitality—only to be replaced by sterile, cold, steel and glass configurations. The result spurred like-minded individuals to press for development control. From this was spawned the historic preservation movement.

### Growing Interest in Historic Preservation

Interest in historic preservation on this continent has existed since the late nineteenth century when American citizens banded together to protect their patrimony, such as George Washington's home at Mount Vernon. A renewed appreciation for architectural heritage began its ascent to prominence amid the rapid changes of the 1960s especially in light of new construction in the Modern/International style. Many have come to believe that in losing the traditional fabric of the built environment they would lose their roots and, subsequently, their identities.

The Venice Charter of 1966, the fundamental preservation statement, legitimized the growing interest in heritage and preservation by providing definitions and guidelines. Primary emphasis was placed on the preservation and restoration of architectural artifacts related to famous persons or to notable events. The opening paragraph of the charter states that "It is our duty to hand them (ancient monuments) on in the full richness of their authenticity". (ICOMOS, 1966, 1) The International Committee of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) developed the charter to act as a yardstick to ensure that the highest levels of consistency and professional judgement were brought to bear in the decisions required in any conservation project regardless of where it was found on the globe. Although references were made to the setting in which architectural work was situated (Articles 1, 6, 14), not until the Florence Charter of 1981 would the preservation of the landscape be paid due heed.

In landscape preservation, the dirth of a theoretical body of knowledge was a major obstacle in making gains, both in the public and in governmental arenas; there were

... no carefully articulated philosophies of landscape preservation, no



common disciplinary language, no analytic assessments of alternative methodologies equivalent to those that developed within the realm of architectural preservation. (Howett, 1987, 52)

The paucity of study models and examples from which to take cues has also prolonged the time over which we have come to recognize the importance of preserving worthy landscapes: popular opinion was partially to blame since landscapes were not considered as being preservable entities. Inevitably, many important landscapes began disappearing without concern for their inherent importance.

The landscape differs from its architectural counterpart in its inherently changing nature. It evolves and is transformed by cycles peculiar to its own dynamics, including the creation of soil, the growth of trees, the changing courses of rivers. One cannot expunge its vulnerability to time: if left unmanaged, it will become unrecognizable. Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe writes that the "landscape is in movement the moment it is created" (Jellicoe, 1984, 101), and James Marston Fitch states that "very few historic landscapes, at least in the western world, have a physiognomy corresponding to the ambitions of the original designers" (Fitch, 1976, 277). A lack of monitoring over time results in neglect and decay and, often, an invasion by plant species which were never part of the original design.

Historic preservation is gaining greater prominence in professional landscape architectural practice and academic research today. It is seen to respond to contemporary society's increasing recognition of its cultural and environmental heritage as an aspect of physical, social and economic well-being.

Despite early precedents in the United States —Williamsburg, Mount Vernon and numerous 'sacred sites', i.e. battlefields, cemeteries— recognition of the designed environment as a preservable entity was slow in coming. By the 1970s, however, the preservation movement had matured enough, to embrace the setting of a building or a group of buildings. A federal agency in the United States, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), widened its scope in 1970 to include the exterior environment, by recording the relation of buildings to each other, and the design of features such as fences, landscapes, street furnishings and thoroughfares. Tremendous gains have since been made. Moving beyond a building's immediate context, the movement came also to recognize historic neighbourhoods and districts and the renewal of urban parks. New York's Central Park is the finest example of this vision.

The founding of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation (AHLP) at New Harmony, Indiana in 1978 gave focus to this new concern for preservation of the landscape within the broader sweep of the historic preservation movement. Many subsequent meetings, conferences, and publications have helped drive the movement forward. As well, interest shown by landscape architects, historians, historical geographers, architects, archaeologists, and others has assisted. Publications have provided the opportunity for theorists and practitioners to disseminate the knowledge that they have gained; "wholesome pressure for an exchange of knowledge and experience having been created." (Howett,

1987, 52). The Association for Preservation Technology's Bulletin, Landscape Journal and Landscape Architecture, have all devoted many pages to this end. In the latter's case, "The Emerging Science of Garden Preservation" in May 1976, "Preservation Leaps the Garden Wall" in January 1981, and most recently, "Preservation: Defining an Ethic" in July/August 1987, have served to integrate the concerns of landscape preservation with those of the landscape architecture profession.

The Florence Charter of May 1981 addresses historic garden preservation specifically. The International Committee on Historic Gardens and Sites—a collaboration between ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)—referred to gardens as 'living monuments'. The document recognizes that as 'living monuments' they must be governed by specific rules and that these recommendations are "applicable to all the historic gardens in the world." (ICOMOS, 1981) The twenty-five articles of the charter embrace definitions, objectives, treatment, use and legal and administrative protection of historic gardens.

Canada has also ably joined the crusade to protect her landscape patrimony. In 1975 the federal government formally recognized historic gardens, parks and landscapes as worthy of protection. To date, the recommendations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada have resulted in the designation of four sites of national historical significance:

1. the grounds of Parliament Hill by designer Calvert Vaux;
2. the surviving eighteenth-century monastic garden of the Sulpician Seminary on Rue Notre-Dame in Montreal;
3. two late nineteenth-century country villa estates, Lakehurst and Beechcroft, at Roches Point, Ontario; and,
4. the Halifax Public Gardens, a late nineteenth-century Victorian park of remarkable integrity.

(Buggey in von Baeyer, 1984, 178)

The Canadian Park Service is responsible for a number of the country's recognized historic landscapes, and, as with the American National Parks Service, it "has sponsored research aimed at establishing working definitions, typologies and management guidelines for a wide range of sites." (Howett, 1987, 52)

Heritage resources in the City of Ottawa are protected by a number of mechanisms, including the Ontario Heritage Act (now under review), the Planning Act, the City of Ottawa Act, and the Municipal Act. Alone or in concert these acts assist in retaining and enhancing the national capital's historic fabric.

### Why Historic Preservation?

The preservation option is but one way of handling an historic artifact. However, as the following points, derived from Stipe, would testify, there are many merits in such an endeavour.

1. Historic identity. Preservation of historic elements provides a living, three-

dimensional link to the past, helping us to understand who we are by intimating from whence we came. It allows us to relate to past events, eras, movements and persons.

2. Feeling of distinction. Preservation can inspire strength and confidence in a community by asserting its heritage and its identity or image; by staving off homogeneity it will also inspire confidence in the future.
3. Education. Preservation provides a learning experience which supplements books and drawings by offering the opportunity to experience directly " the manner in which persons of the past responded to their environment." (Stewart & Buggey, 1975, 99)
4. Stabilization. Preservation interventions can aid in stabilizing otherwise nebulous neighbourhoods or districts.
5. Recreation. Preservation projects offer the chance for visitors to enjoy what others have contributed to, and retained of, local patrimony.
6. Intrinsic value as art. Preservation maintains buildings or landscapes as the products of creative and imaginative minds. As much as painting or sculpture, the preserved entity should be viewed as such and protected from wanton and mindless destruction.
7. Beautiful environments. Preservation tends to maintain those elements of the environment which make it beautiful and treasured. In the face of increasingly tepid urban interventions, the retention of humane artifacts embellishes the visual quality of the environment.
8. Economics. Preservation has been shown to lessen the financial burdens caused by new building. Further, historic districts attract new business and private fund investment. Tourist dollars are also attracted to areas where preservation has been instituted.
9. Social need. Preservation serves an important human and social purpose in our ever-changing and seemingly purposelessness society.

(Stipe in Williams et al, 1983, 59-60)

The benefits of historic preservation are many, and ultimately they lead to the improvement of the quality of human existence. Education is of the utmost importance in informing people of these merits, and in making them aware of the potential losses.

### Designation

On first consideration, gardens, parks and landscapes appear to be much more difficult to classify as warranting preservation designation than their architectural counterparts. Unlike the static nature of the latter, landscapes are composed of living, growing, changing components: they are dynamic, biological entities which experience the natural processes of growth and decay—succession— if left untended. "Unless organic growth is restrained by regular maintenance, the form and character of gardens may be transformed beyond

recognition, the strongest vegetation taking over the site." (Buggey in Von Baeyer, 1984, 179). The following list identifies some of the categories which are currently used to designate landscapes:

1. A garden which is a work of art, the product of a distinct and creative mind. (eg. Motherwell Homestead National Historic Park)
2. A garden which is not a distinct creation as above but which possesses in a pronounced form the characteristic qualities of the period which produced it. (eg. Halifax Public Gardens)
3. A landscape or garden designed by an important designer or theorist. (eg. Frederick Law Olmsted's Mount Royal)
4. Grounds which were associated with a national figure or which have been the scene of great events. (eg. Kingsmere, home of Canada's longest serving Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King)
5. A garden containing a collection of plants of outstanding botanic importance. (eg. Skinner Nursery, Dropmore, Manitoba)
6. A landscape or garden which is of outstanding regional ecological significance. (eg. Niagara Falls Parkway)
7. A cultural landscape. (eg. the Niagara escarpment)

(after Stewart and Buggey, 1975)

#### The Role of the Landscape Architect

In the growing realm of historic landscape preservation, the landscape architect has found another important cause to support. The stewardship role that the landscape architect views as his ethical and moral responsibility finds a welcome home in this realm, but now serving society through preservation and renewal:

As the megalopolis encroaches, the landscape of renewal, rest and recreation assumes an increasingly vital role in maintaining our physical and mental health. Landscape architects must be motivated to meet these challenges by a sense of altruism and social responsibility. (O'Donnell, 1987, 60)

As Fitch has noted, new and exciting challenges await the landscape preservationist with "emphasis on the art of creating to that of care-taking". He also observes that an "... understanding of the landscape's past and concern for its future will demand new levels of modesty, tact and discretion..." (Fitch, 1981, 280) The preservation ethic appears now to have come to occupy a part of the landscape architect's psyche, having outgrown its specialty status to "join the ethical underpinnings of the profession [of landscape architecture]." (Frey, 1987, 33)

#### Definitions

Until the American Society of Landscape Architecture's Committee on Historic

Preservation met in May, 1984, a shared language of historic landscape preservation had not existed; definitions were at best confused and muddled. Through the efforts of this body and others, the gaps in definitions, philosophy —and subsequently action— have been significantly reduced.

An historic landscape can be defined as

any landscape in the past that has been man-shaped either deliberately by design, or by an evolving use of land, which possesses a character distinctive of past uses and designs and technologies and cultural preferences and which retains significant evidence of those characteristics into the present, i.e. has survived with reasonable integrity. (Bugey, 1985)

The ASLA defines three categories of landscapes. Designed landscapes include those altered from their natural state under a plan by a professional or avid amateur with verifiable results; cultural landscapes are those altered through human interaction on the vernacular level, often related to a desired function and with a discernible pattern; and natural landscapes, those that are relatively unchanged by human intervention. (ASLA, 1984) This practicum focuses on Major's Hill Park, a designed landscape.

For too long, a lack of clear definition and direction had hindered the efforts of preservationists. The definitions which follow were tendered and accepted at the ASLA's meeting of the Committee on Historic Preservation.

PRESERVATION is a process of stabilizing, rebuilding, maintaining or improving the condition and specific qualities of an historic landscape so that the landscape is protected and the design intent fulfilled.

(ASLA, 1984, 2)

True historic preservation is objective in its attitude; every period has intrinsic worth that transcends our own personal choices.

Under the umbrella term of preservation there are a number of treatment options. Restoration and conservation are two such options.

RESTORATION connotes return of a site to its original appearance during a selected period. Strict authenticity of overall form, details and materials requires extensive research and funding to carry out a landscape restoration.

(ASLA, 1984, 2)

CONSERVATION is a passive process of preservation, protecting an historic landscape from loss or the infringement of incongruent uses,

and working to arrest deterioration. It is stewardship of a site.

(ASLA, 1984, 2)

Most people wrongly interpret preservation as being of a strictly conservation mode. Restoring a landscape to the state visualized by the original designer(s) is decidedly more difficult than simply to arrest its deterioration. However, the restoration and conservation treatments are not the sole options available. Today, there is opportunity to be more flexible in preservation efforts, and rehabilitation and adaptive use can be seen in this light. The ASLA defines other interventions:

REHABILITATION returns an historic landscape to a useful condition, generally bringing it to a state of good repair. The degree of authenticity is secondary, indicating that incomplete research findings, insufficient funding, choice of non-original materials or other areas of compromise have decreased the level of authenticity that is achievable.

(ASLA, 1984, 3)

ADAPTIVE USE retains and reinforces the original landscape form while accommodating new uses, needs and contemporary conditions. A careful process of historic research, contemporary use, management and other factors should accompany the comprehensive planning of an adaptive use program. The treatment should reinforce historic integrity while integrating all relevant factors.

(ASLA, 1984, 3)

These two definitions can be amalgamated to form a term applicable to urban parks such as Major's Hill Park in Ottawa. Considering our rich heritage as a continuum and not strictly as a fixed point in time, "adaptive rehabilitation" offers new and exciting challenges to the preservation professional .

## 2.2 Adaptive Rehabilitation

Many considerations must be taken into account when the potential for redevelopment arises. Of late, pragmatic issues have taken precedence over philosophical concerns in many situations. Major's Hill Park is a good example. The amelioration of circulation and access difficulties and the provision of a perceptually safer environment are prime design determinants today despite the mandate of the National Capital Commission to develop symbolic landscapes within its jurisdiction and especially as related to Confederation Boulevard. Unfortunately, as *genius loci* is blatantly ignored, a number of similar non-descript landscapes have become the norm instead of the exception.

Historic preservation offers one option for administering a long-established park in a modern urban context. However, rather than restoring a landscape to a certain period in time, at least one alternative merits closer inspection. The definitions cited above for

adaptive use and for rehabilitation can be amalgamated to produce a term which more accurately reflects the philosophical intent and direction of this study.

ADAPTIVE REHABILITATION returns an historic landscape to a useful condition while accommodating new uses, needs and contemporary conditions. A careful process of historical research, contemporary use, management and other factors should accompany the comprehensive planning of an adaptive rehabilitation program. The treatment should reinforce historical integrity while integrating all relevant factors.

The issue of appropriate treatment for a complex historical footprint requires careful consideration. In an older park like Major's Hill, the historic nature of the site should be fully examined to uncover any clues which can be exploited in achieving a truly singular design through a means such as adaptive rehabilitation. The first priority is to develop a concept which will drive the scheme forward with the understanding of the importance of heritage to the exercise. Beyond this, the relevant pragmatic factors should be attended to; in the case of Major's Hill Park they include safety, security, access and environmental quality. It is this harmonious interplay of past and present, with an eye towards the future, that forms the crux of this practicum.

The appropriateness of this option depends upon the surviving historical character of the place and the integrity of its historic resources. The contemporary environment, the availability of resources to improve and maintain the site, and popular will to do so are significant planning determinants.

Historic public landscapes are valuable as expressions of the past and aggregates of change. To survive and thrive in today's world, these landscapes must be relevant, functioning as integral aspects of every day life by intertwining past, present and future. To effectively integrate historic American landscapes —most dating back 100 to 200 years— into the fabric of current experience, decisions must embody a vision for another 100-year cycle. Being true to that vision requires a perspective that rises above the vagaries of popular trends in fashion, politics, economics and the like. The charge is indeed altruistic: to preserve a heritage and legacy crucial to our society and our quality of life.

(O'Donnell, 1987, 56)

### 2.2.1 Principles

The historic landscape is often a pastiche of elements peculiar to particular temporal layers. To peel away these layers, one peels away eras of history. Adaptive rehabilitation does not view the landscape as a museum piece inexorably tied to a set period in time, but

rather as a living, contemporary environment which must adapt to accommodate rapidly changing social needs and desires. Instead of insulating favoured sites from the "natural processes of continual change, and particularly of physical erosion, decline and decay" an existing footprint can be handled by layering new upon old to achieve a "more richly resonant sense of place". (Howett, 1987, 53) Adaptive rehabilitation becomes more relevant as a preservation mechanism when considering that the preservation of an historic landscape *in toto* as a museum piece may not be very practical; one should not be afraid to propose uses which are seemingly incongruent.

At a time when Nature was still understood as the complement of social life, the role of the painter, architect and landscape gardener was to *choose* from history (the memory of mankind) and from among those objects (that act on the intellect and the senses) the characteristic and varied elements of an order which appear as both natural and divine: these elements — pavilions, temples, buildings, lakes, trees, clouds, hills — all these objects are placed and recomposed within a new perspective, in a frame, a picture. In this way Nature is created anew and the History of the world is rewritten. (Lotus, 1981, 5)

The challenge today centers about giving modern expression to an historic landscape in offering a modern-day contribution for future generations to appreciate and to enjoy. As Tom Wright has explained, "To copy the historic form of the past is to raise a corpse from the dead and pretend it is alive. Only the spirit can be alive to activate the present." (Wright, 1982, 137)

"Creative conservation" is a phrase coined by the eminent English historian and theoretician, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, which echoes the sentiments of adaptive rehabilitation. It refers to re-evaluating a landscape design from its earliest records or beginnings and evolving a new, simple or appropriate late-twentieth century layer, while respecting character and quality in the process. (Jellicoe, 1983, 178) Jellicoe perceives the historic garden as the overlaying of a series of transparencies "each carrying an imprint of the experience of an era", resulting in a "veritable tapestry of history". (Jellicoe, 1983, ix) Creative conservation "adds continuity to the arts and the function of the garden, while taking into account modern usage and also the maintenance and management factors. (Wright, 1982, 135)

There have also been considerable gains made internationally in this realm.

In Massachusetts, the Department of Environmental Management has formalized their procedure for attending to Olmstedian landscapes in a preservation context. The four objectives which guide the Olmsted Historic Landscape Program are as follows:

1. Preserve, rehabilitate and provide a framework for ongoing maintenance of historic landscape features, furniture and structures determined through research and documentation to be integral components of the



original design intent, use and appearance.

2. Promote community participation, advocacy, stewardship and awareness of historic landscapes, open space heritage and the recreational and economic benefits of each park.
3. Encourage design solutions that provide for efficient maintenance, enhanced public safety and accessibility for the disabled, and improve circulation and separation of pedestrians and vehicles.
4. Reorganize alterations and additions that significantly diverge from original design intentions use and appearance, while recognizing community priorities and contemporary recreation needs.

(O'Donnell, 1987, 58)

Adaptive rehabilitation does not preclude the opportunity to explore the historical and cultural atmosphere from which landscapes were formed and nurtured; realistically, the elements and ideas manifest in such places are inextricably bound to these milieux. Nevertheless, the main intent of this practicum is to concentrate on those aspects which were once, or are, directly associated with Major's Hill Park.

#### 2.2.2 Precedents: Urban Parks

A number of examples of interventions to date in historic urban parks can serve as precedents and can provide inspiration in understanding the implications of the adaptive rehabilitation task at Major's Hill Park. The following examples provide a better understanding of those efforts which have been carried out in the past, internationally, nationally, and municipally (Ottawa).

##### Druid Hill Park, Baltimore, Maryland

The essence of this rehabilitation scheme was returning the usefulness and the relevance of a "down-at-the-heels, Victorian urban park suffering all the familiar pressures of neglect, crime and social changes prevalent in our large cities." (Potts, 1987, 76) At 125 years old and 648 acres in area, Baltimore's greatest natural asset offered a prime opportunity to illustrate how effective an adaptive rehabilitation scheme can be. This project will indeed "show the rest of the nation how to revive the glory and function of a Victorian urban park," (Potts, 1987, 77) by sensitively incorporating new elements (expanded gardens and conservatory, bandstand/theatre, café and boathouse, etc.) into an exciting new framework.

##### Emerald Necklace, Boston, Massachusetts

Boston's Emerald Necklace parks were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Elliot in the nineteenth century to provide a series of greenspaces for the use and enjoyment of pleasure-seeking Bostonians. The preservation opportunity undertaken by Walmsley and Associates of New York strove to reinstate Olmsted's original design intent (the unified integration of water, woods and meadow), while recognizing contemporary

limitations. (O'Donnell, 1987, 58) One major issue at hand was the reassertion of the park's boundary which had become muddled and indistinct over time. A further challenge was to integrate current park uses with the original intent of Olmsted.

#### Franklin Park, Boston, Massachusetts

One of Frederick Law Olmsted's famous parks, Franklin Park in Boston (1886), became the subject of a 'rehabilitation' scheme in the late 1970s. The challenge for the landscape architects was to prepare a new plan which would address the historical context of the park while responding to twentieth century needs and addressing current and future goals and objectives. On assembling all available data, the team was able to prepare a "fresh overview of the park" (Weinmayr, 1981, 51); subsequently they were able to find out what had made the design great in the first place and to analyse the reasons for its decline. The ensuing scheme attempted to reassert its greatness by maintaining "the overall Olmsted spirit" which made this "a park of national significance". (Weinmayr, 1981, 51)

#### Highland Park, Highland Park, Illinois

The natural attributes and visual character of this summer retreat for Chicagoans was embellished by the landscape architect Jens Jensen through the first decades of this century. Since this time numerous changes have altered the face of Highland Park and, in particular, the town of Ravinia, once a mecca for artists and architects. The Highland Park Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) set about in 1984 "to create a beautiful setting for the Ravinia business district that draws on its historic past while meeting the needs of the present." (Sniderman and Nathan, 1987, 91) Redevelopment in the Ravinia business district aimed to commemorate but not imitate Jensen's work. The HPC spent a great deal of time in researching the original design since "landscape heritage will not survive if it is not understood or appreciated."

There have been a number of fine examples of historic preservation relating to gardens or parks in our own country. The following are relevant to this study.

#### Grange Garden, Toronto, Ontario

Grange Park was originally laid out in the 1820s for D'Arcy Boulton, a member of one of Upper Canada's most powerful families. The remaining 4.5 acres, of 100 originally, had fallen into disrepair and Commonwealth Historic Resources Management Limited of Perth, Ontario, forwarded a scheme which would rehabilitate it as best as possible to its former splendor, while recognizing its current urban role.

The plan sought to:

1. identify the historic elements worthy of preservation and enhancement;
2. integrate community facilities;
3. permit an expanding educational and historic preservation programme both for the community and The Grange. (Stewart, 1987, 18)

The aim was not to restore the Grange to a specific time in the past but "rather to develop the grounds by capitalizing on the richness and variety of a garden which has survived over 160 years." (Stewart, 1987, 19)

For its size and its age, Ottawa has seen much work in the realm of historic preservation. John Guinon, a landscape architect with the City of Ottawa (interview, 25 July 1988), identified the following pertinent example.

#### Dundonald Park, Somerset Street

In the past decade, the neighbourhood surrounding Dundonald Park (circa 1920) placed pressure on the City of Ottawa to provide a children's play area. In revising the plan, the City chose to retain the original layout while implementing the play area, but chose also to install light standards which referenced those originally found in the park. The landscape architect hoped to increase awareness and appreciation of the park's history by incorporating these historic elements in the upgraded park.

In some way, each of the examples cited relate to adaptive rehabilitation. The common thread binding them is the notion of re-examining the history of the park or landscape, prioritizing retainable elements and blending them into a revised scheme which addresses current and future needs and desires. Major's Hill Park is ripe for such treatment and can benefit from such lessons.

#### 2.2.3 Precedents: Practitioners

Beyond these traditional modes of handling preservation, many individuals, past and present, have worked within such a context, manipulating elements to evoke historical associations. The explorations of two such people, the Scottish sculptor and philosopher Ian Hamilton Finlay and the American architect and theoretician Peter Eisenman, are worth examining.

#### Ian Hamilton Finlay

"Modern sculpture is wilfully ignorant", says Ian Hamilton Finlay, who, on his property of Stonypath in Lanarkshire, has developed a garden which evokes history and memory as well as stimulating the eye. In using history as the inspiration for his art, Finlay attempts to evoke a more learned age, having remarked at one point that "the world has been empty since the Romans". (Beardsley, 1984, 74) His tribute to art embodied in Stonypath consists of a number of sculptural and poetic objects which together visually unify the three distinct parts of the garden, but which also offer the psychological potential to inspire a variety of associations.

References to nature (the sea), to built form (Villa d'Este), to personalities (Poussin, Lorrain), and to society (battleships, nuclear submarines) abound at Stonypath. Finlay's 'neoPlatonic' emblems may be looked at, read, ignored, or better still read and meditated upon, according to their maker. Finlay's importance is based in his attempt to convey

deeper associations with the literary and spiritual world by means of references or 'hints' in the landscape. His subtlety is an important lesson for an adaptive rehabilitation scheme for Major's Hill Park.

#### Peter Eisenman

Peter Eisenman has recently experimented with the idea of how to express history in and through design; prominent examples of these explorations are the campus of the University of California at Long Beach and the fictional Romeo and Juliet project in Verona, Italy. Eisenman has mused over this design methodology, characterized by site scalings and registrations, to develop an architecture of 'transcendence', lifted beyond the false and narrow methods that currently predominate and, in their wake, reduce human experience. In part he was involved in "a discussion of architecture as a struggle against the dead weight of tradition, yet continuing to push towards a new mode of reality (that is an untraditional one)." (Whiteman, 1986, 76)

He has also experimented with translation across scale and place, taking into account present elements, elements of memory and elements of immanence. Eisenman despairs at typical designs of 'present origin' only, which ignore the subtle but profound conditions of the 'presence' of these 'absences'. The elements of memory and of immanence signify respectively the trace of a previous presence and the trace of a possible presence. In juxtaposing certain images fresh meanings can result and produce a 'new mode of reality' across the time continuum.

Eisenman's layering techniques may be applicable to Major's Hill Park in realizing exciting, relevant design. Adaptive rehabilitation may well take advantage of these concepts in offering ways of exploiting to a greater extent the historical interpretation opportunities in the park.

#### 2.2.4 Major's Hill Park

Major's Hill Park is a good candidate for closer scrutiny, especially in light of the impending completion of the neighbouring National Museum of Fine Arts and Confederation Boulevard. Monies for future development have been slated for both Major's Hill Park and Nepean Point by the National Capital Commission; this study then becomes all the more timely.

The question has arisen as to what constitutes the past. The exercise at hand offers the opportunity to delve into the cultural milieu from which Major's Hill Park arose. Adaptive rehabilitation is not necessarily limited to the physical manifestation of the past in a site's evolution, but indeed offers the freedom to include elements or ideas which are germane to the historical and cultural context from which it found roots and grew. Although this may play a role in the rehabilitation scheme, in fact, the intent is to respect and respond to what was actually there in situ, to recognize a site-specific past.

Major's Hill Park offers the opportunity to integrate a rich historic past with present-day activities and needs. A study of its evolution will identify those elements which can be

expressed in a contemporary fashion. To better understand both its physical and historical context, the next chapter examines Major's Hill Park since its inception.



**Chapter Three:  
HISTORY**

### 3.1 Historical Context

To properly address a redevelopment scheme which is based upon the heritage of Major's Hill Park, a thorough understanding of the park's history was required. Following extensive research the following document was prepared.

#### 3.1.1 Background: 1800-1826

At the time of Philemon Wright's arrival at the foot of the Chaudiere Falls in 1800, the plateau that would be known as the Major's Hill was draped in virgin forest. Two years later, Jacob Carman, the son of a United Empire Loyalist from Upper Canada, purchased a great stretch of land along the south side of the Ottawa River which included this property; he held the land until June 1812, at which time he sold it.

Rice Honeywell, one of the area's first important landowners, soon claimed a twenty-one year lease on all lands fronting the Ottawa River, designated "O" by the British military for its fortification potential. Thomas McKay, the founder of New Edinburgh and builder of Rideau Hall, would eventually own much of this property. In 1823 the Governor-in-Chief of the Canadas, the Earl of Dalhousie, purchased 400 acres of land along the high bluffs abutting the Ottawa River in anticipation of the construction of the Rideau Canal; the future Major's Hill was contained within this allotment.

#### 3.1.2 The Early Years . . . a name: 1826-1860

Activity about the site of present-day Major's Hill Park hastened following the arrival in 1826 of the British Royal Engineers and Lieutenant-Colonel John By. Under By's direction construction of the Rideau Canal began at Sleigh Bay (now Entrance Bay) at the base of the park's promontory (Figures 3.1, 3.2). As supervising engineer, By was also given land by Dalhousie for the purpose of constructing a home for himself and his wife; his second-in-command, Lieutenant Pooley, was accorded the same allowance. Their homes rose to the east of the canal on what is now Major's Hill Park.

By's two-storey 'cottage orné' home was soon built in the British picturesque mode (Figure 3.3). A visitor, Captain Alexander of the 42nd Highland Regiment, described By's home as "tastefully decorated, with rustic verandahs and trellis work, situated on a high bank overlooking the Ottawa and opposite a lofty promontory on which stood the barracks." (Legget, 1982, 72) (The promontory was referred to as Barrack's Hill and would eventually serve as the site for the Parliament Buildings). By's residence was constructed using small boulders and moss, plastered over with clay. Its five foot thick walls, covered with lime on the inside, and heated in the winter with iron stoves, provided year-round comfort. By chose not to use the cut stone masonry employed in the construction of the official workshops and other buildings associated with the canal.



Figure 3.1: Colonel John By, Royal Engineers (NAC, c28531)

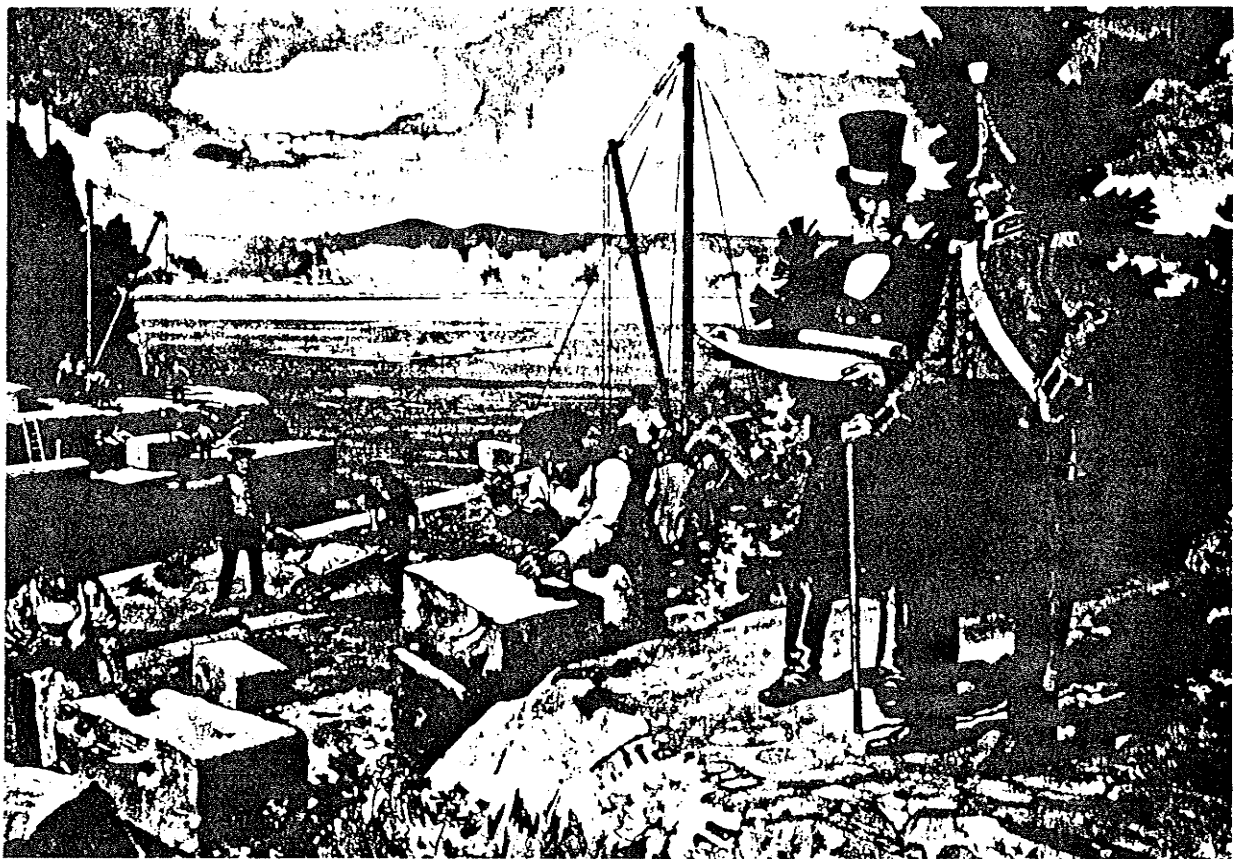


Figure 3.2: By supervising construction of Rideau Canal (Bond, 1961, 32)



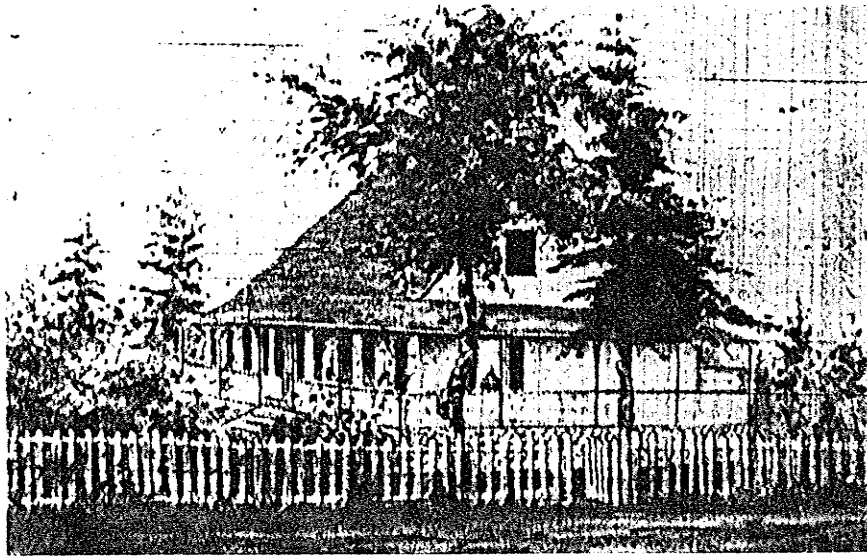


Figure 3.3: Colonel By's "cottage orné" (*Ottawa Journal*, 23 June 1973, 33)

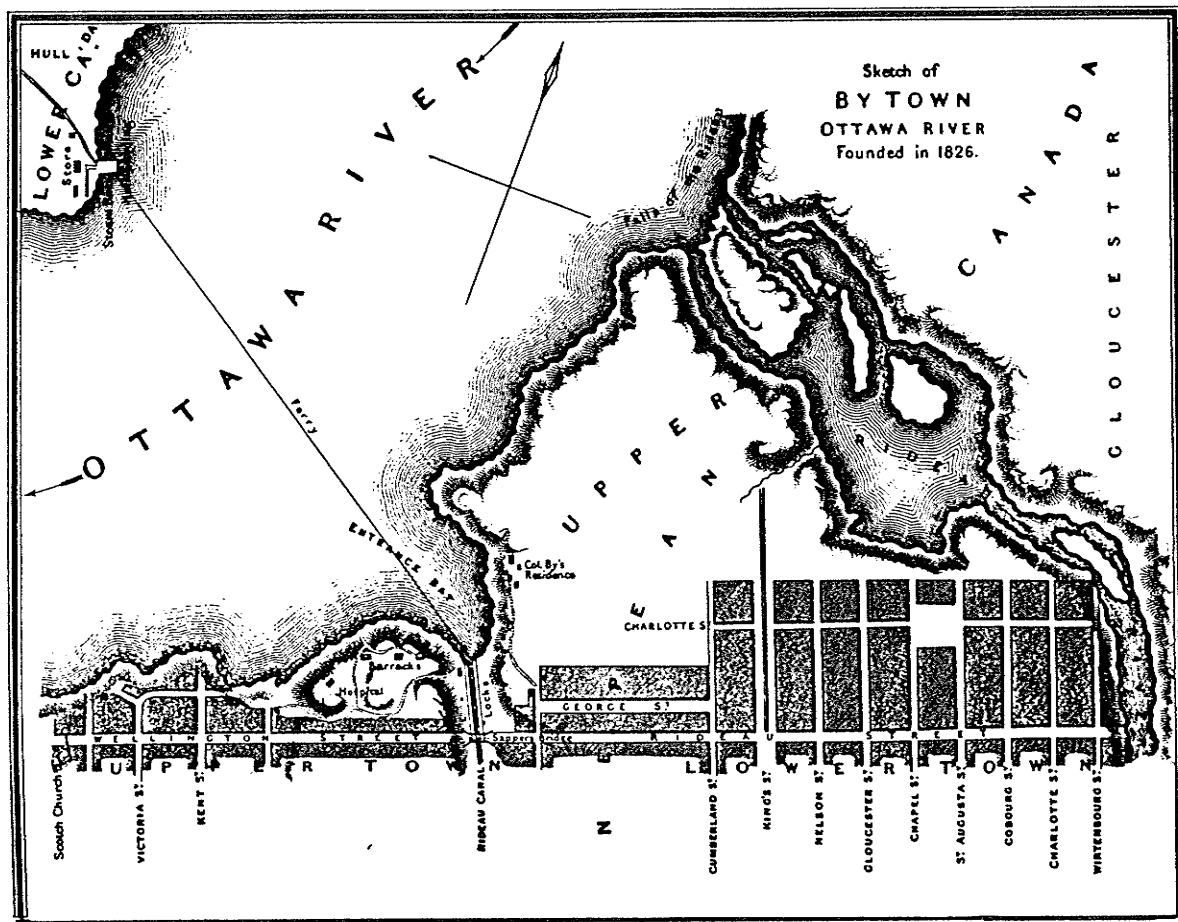


Figure 3.4: Sketch of By Town, Founded in 1826 (Bouchette, 1832)

On his travels through the British dominions in North America, Joseph Bouchette, Surveyor General of Lower Canada, described the view from By's home; the panorama included Barrack's Hill, the mighty Ottawa River, the growing town of Wrightsville (Hull) and the Gatineau Hills beyond.

... on the eastern side of the bay, is delightfully situated the residence of Colonel By, the commanding royal engineer on that station. From his verandah the most splendid view is beheld that the magnificent scenery of the Canadas affords. That bold eminence that embosoms entrance Bay, the broken and wild shore opposite, beyond which are seen part of the flourishing settlement and the Church at Hull, the verdant and picturesque islands between both banks ... the eye dwells upon a succession of varied and beautiful bridges abutting upon precipitous and craggy rocks and abrupt islands, between which the waters are urged with wonderful agitation and violence. (Bouchette, 1832, 81)

Figure 3.5, dated 19 October 1832, shows a view upriver from By's house much as Bouchette probably saw it.

Frances Ramsay Simpson, wife of Sir George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company, described By's home following a brief stay on the promontory in 1830.

The house which stands in a good garden, overlooks one of the most beautiful spots I have seen in the Country: it commands an extensive view of the river, on the opposite side of which is the little Village of Hull. The Spires of three Churches are visible through the trees, several Bridges (one of which is very handsome) are thrown over the different channels of the River, formed by the Islands and projecting banks at the Falls; from the upper story [sic] are to be seen the fine & romantic Kettle [Chaudière] Falls and beneath runs the Rideau Canal. (Nute, 1953, 51-52)

By's mandate was the development of a permanent settlement at By Town. On his arrival, he began to transform the virgin landscape into a grid-like patterning of streets and property lines (Figure 3.4). While By's primary role was to oversee the construction of a defensive canal, he was also concerned with the protection of this new town; to this end he allocated large reserves of land on either side of the entrance locks for military purposes, "and so Parliament Hill and Major's Hill Park were secured for public use for all time." (Leggett, 1982, 203) The property upon which By's residence was situated, was referred to as Colonel's Hill. The property today, however, bears the rank of By's immediate successor, Major Daniel Bolton, R.E., who served as commanding officer of the Royal Engineers until the completion of the canal. Befitting his position, Bolton occupied the By home until 1843.



Figure 3.5: Looking up the Ottawa from Col. By's House, Bytown 18th Oct. 1832, by Henry Byam Martin; sepia over pencil (NAC, c115045)

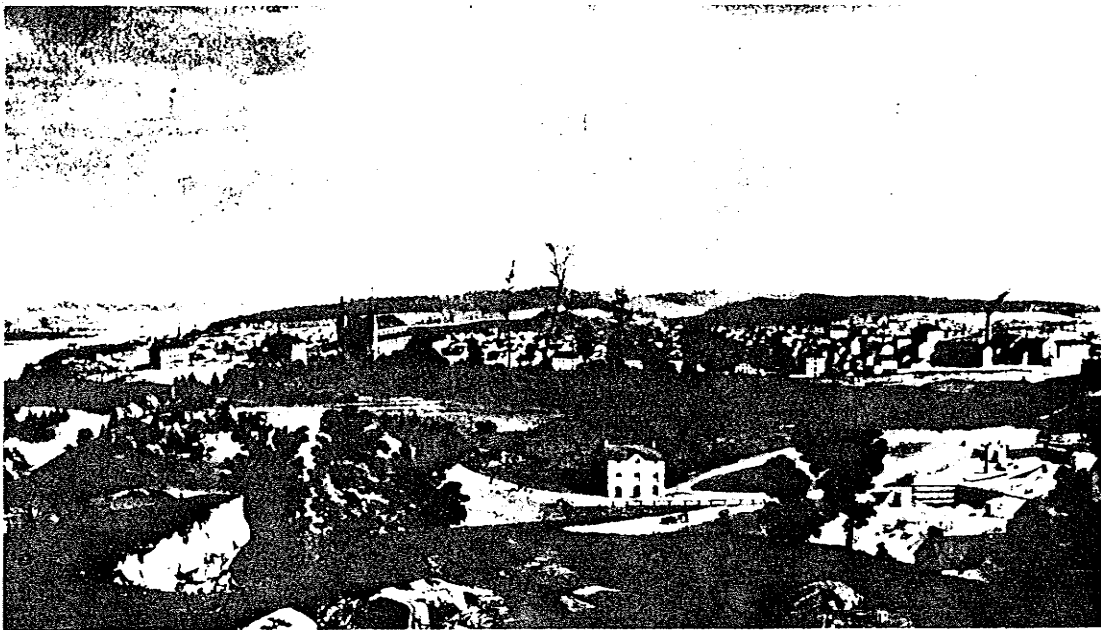


Figure 3.6: Ottawa City, Canada West; looking east from Barrack's Hill to Lowertown and the Major's hill; lithograph after drawing by E. Whitefield (NAC, c14344)

As well as sporting a garden, the military officer's property accommodated the grazing of milk cows, a scene which conjures up images of the English picturesque tradition. Within the context of a slowly-growing centre, the Major's Hill served as a pastoral setting for the townspeople to enjoy. In fact, from the late 1840s on, the inhabitants of Lower Town saw the property as common open space for their use and enjoyment.

On the 11th of January 1849 the building which had served both Bolton and By succumbed to fire. For almost ten years the ruins stood open to the sky, and they became a point of attraction for picnickers in the summer. In time, what had existed as an attractive ruin degenerated to a veritable eyesore as neglect and natural processes expedited its decay; builders also carried away some of the better stone. At the time of its demise, anti-British sentiment ran high in the culturally-polarized centre and no attempt was made at arresting the decline; by 1880 the walls had been pushed into the basement and the entire area was filled in and sodded over to completely erase any trace of the house (until an NCC archaeological exploration in 1972 exposed the ruins).

By 1855 John By's settlement had blossomed into more than a town, and civic leaders chose to change her name to Ottawa. Two years later, the Governor-General of the Province of Canada, Sir Edmund Head, presided over a gathering on Major's Hill during his vacation. At this function, Lady Head sketched the picturesque headlands of Barrack's Hill and environs. On the Governor-General's personal recommendation and influenced by Lady Head's skilled artistry, Queen Victoria chose Ottawa as the new capital of the Province of Canada.

### 3.1.3 The Push for a Park: 1860-1874

With the knowledge that Barrack's Hill would become the site of the new seat of government, civic officials engaged in a conservation program to preserve the picturesque beauty of the escarpments about the chosen site and in April of 1860 citizens were expressly forbidden to use it. This edict, however, was vociferously opposed; by the end of the year a petition was circulated among local residents urging the colonial government to make Major's Hill a public park and recreational area.

Ottawa citizens continued their quest for a formal park. The Daily Citizen joined the movement with an editorial on 1 July 1861 favouring the "breathtaking location on the bluff overlooking the Ottawa and the magnificent Gothic structures beyond and the canal below ... (an) irresistible magnet." The government seemed to favour the property for the development of the residence of the Governor General, but dropped the proposal on the purchase of McKay's Rideau Hall for that purpose in 1864. On 2 July 1866, the provincial government turned the site over to its municipal counterpart: "Two years later the city established a committee on public parks to run this first venture in "capital beautification"" (Taylor, 1986, 32).

By 1867 Ottawa had developed beyond her humble lumber town beginnings into a

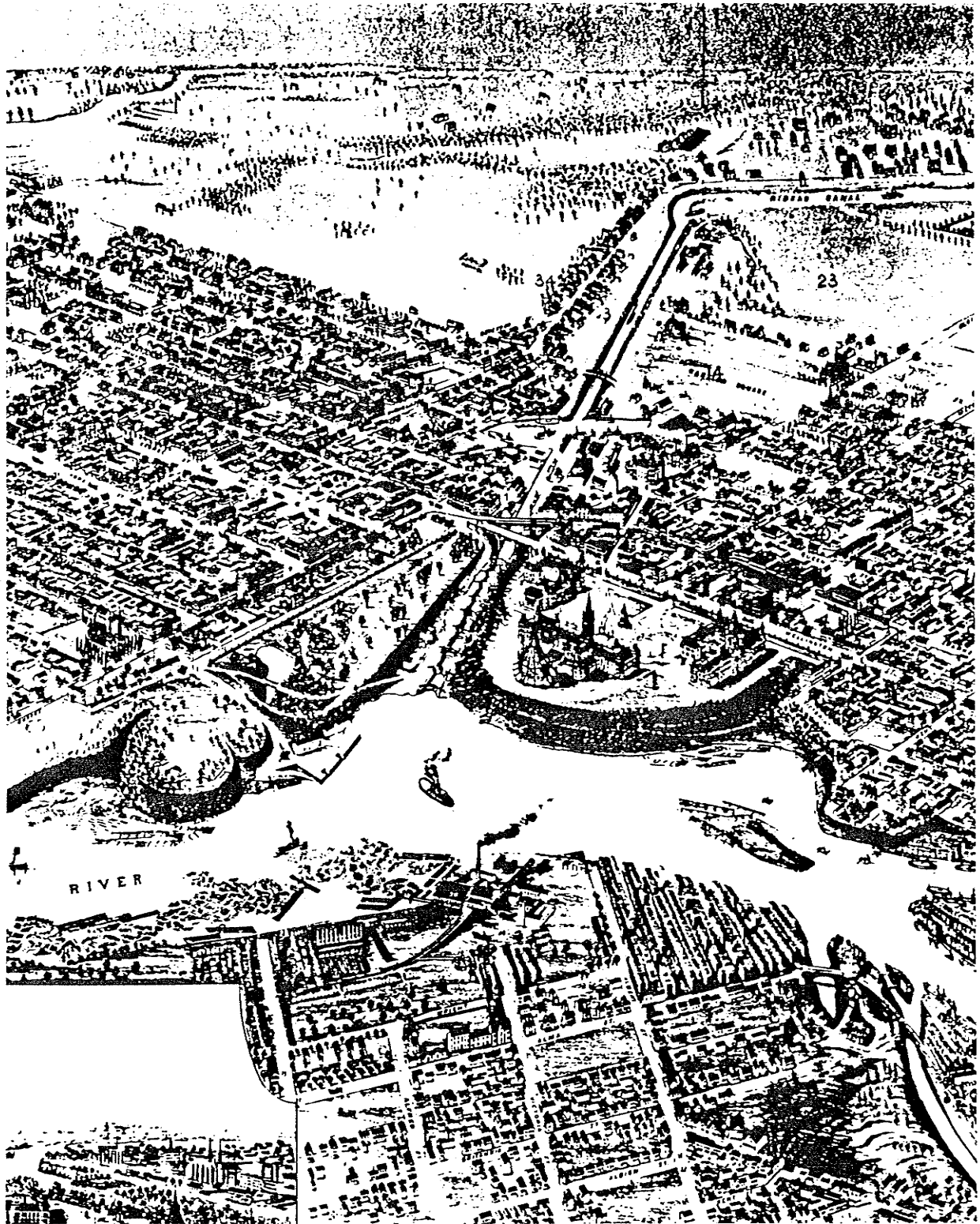


Figure 3.7: Bird's Eye View of Ottawa, 1876 (Brosius, 1876, NMC 4251)

maturing city, capital of the Dominion of Canada. This benchmark in Canadian history was marked in Ottawa beginning at midnight of 1 July by a large brushwood and log fire, followed by fireworks and celebrations. A 101 gun salute executed from Major's Hill by the Ottawa Field Battery welcomed the new Dominion. As might be expected, the festivities lasted all through that first night and long into the next day.

In the melee that accompanied Confederation, many issues of lesser importance were temporarily cast aside. A resurfacing of interest in developing Major's Hill as a public park became evident again in the late 1860s; however, unlike before, the municipal government favoured the suggestion and began to make plans to this end.

Major's Hill continued to grow in popularity for leisure activities through the 1870s, its location and magnificent vistas attracting citizens from near and far. Saturday and Sunday afternoons were especially enjoyable, enlivened by imperial regimental band concerts in the tradition of Hyde Park; even the presence of zealous god-fearing preachers from time to time duly entertained park users.

Although the issue of the site as a potential location for Government House had been ruled out in 1864, the new federal government still entertained the notion in the early 1870s; in fact, it was likely for this reason that they were reluctant to concede it as a civic park site. In March 1872, the government allowed the erection of a blacksmith shop on the southern end of the property where the lighter parts of the iron work on the new Dufferin Bridge could be wrought. As late as 1874, because of its acreage, it was being considered as the site for a new city hall:

Moved by Ald. Waller, seconded by Ald. McDougal, that a Committee of this Council ... be appointed to wait on the Government of Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, with a view of obtaining the "Major's Hill" as a public park and site for the proposed new City Hall, or such portion of it as the Government may feel disposed to grant for the object stated. Carried.  
(Ottawa Council, 16 February 1874)

This idea was formally dropped at a subsequent meeting of city council: "... in answer to a memorial from the Council ... the Government could not grant a site for a City Hall on the Major's Hill..." (Ottawa Council, 18 August 1874); it was eventually constructed on the corner of Elgin and Sparks Streets and opened in 1877. The property known as the Major's Hill seemed destined for a park designation.

### 3.1.4 Success: Dominion Park: 1874-1876

In May of 1874 — perhaps to incite some positive action — the City of Ottawa had formally criticized the federal government for its apparent lack of concern over the site: "offensive rubbish was deposited on the Major's Hill to the detriment of public health."

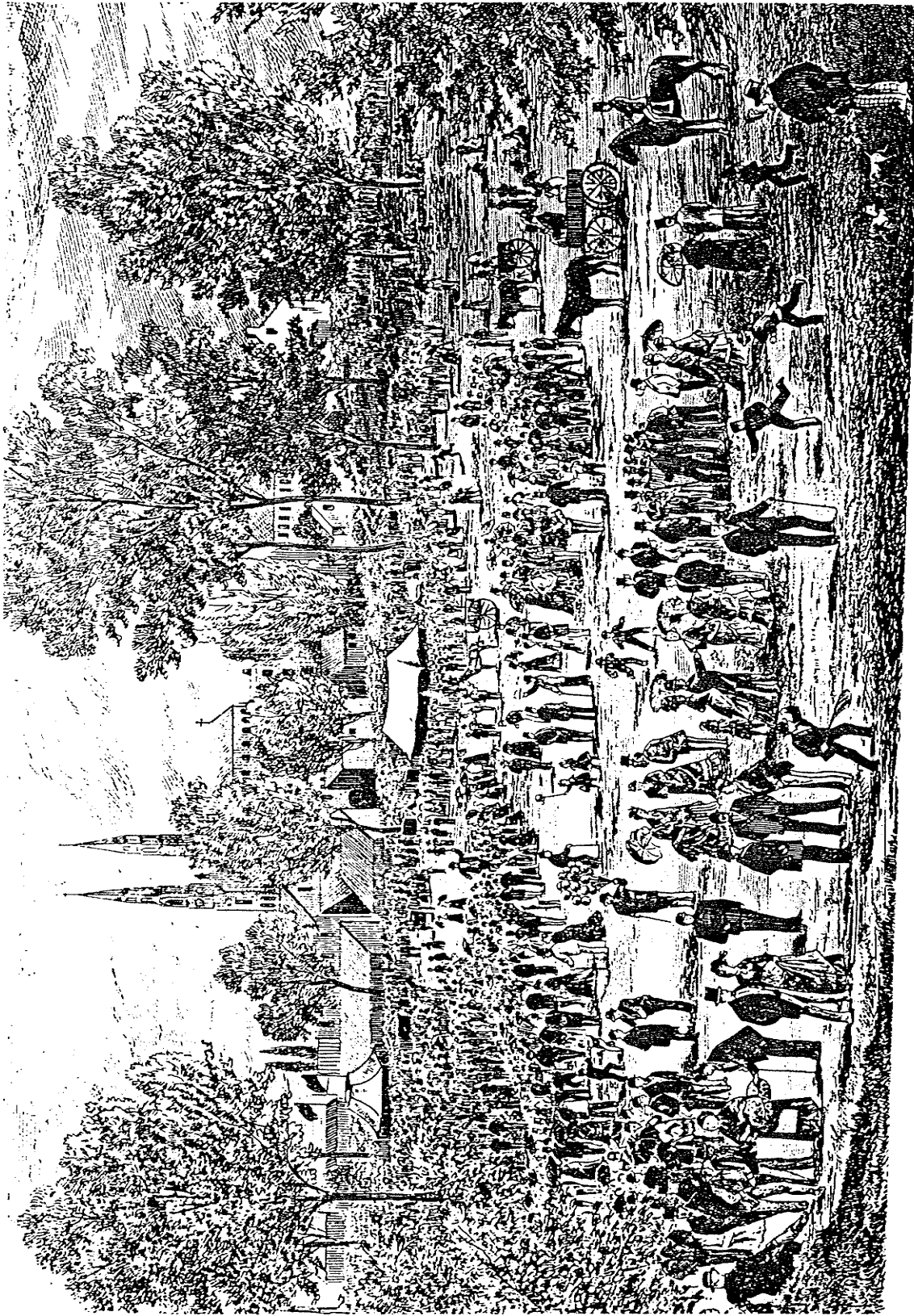


Figure 3.8: The O'Connell Centennial in Ottawa: Scene on Major's Hill on the Morning of the 6th August [1875] (Canadian Illustrated News, 28 August 1875)

(Ottawa Council, 18 May 1874); the City felt that it should be responsible for the land so that it could more properly safeguard the health and welfare of its citizens. Widespread sentiment amongst the citizenry prevailed regarding the use of the Major's Hill as a local park. Having negated the possibility of erecting a city hall on the site as of 18 August, Ottawa City Council voted in favour of developing Major's Hill as public parkland.

The City authorities to have the use during the pleasure of the Dominion Government, for the purpose of a Public Park, of the public property known as Major's Hill, in the City of Ottawa, between the Private Road proposed to be open along the rear line of the lots of land fronting on the west side of Sussex Street; the continuation of St. Patrick Street, leading to the Mill at Sterling's Wharf; the crown of the hill, and the line of the Canal lands, except such portions of Major's Hill as may already be in the occupation of, or owned by third parties, on the conditions following:-

That the City authorities shall take charge of the property, and shall protect the trees and shrubbery thereon; shall put it in order as a Public Park, make roads, place seats, plant trees, erect fences, and maintain same during the subsistence of this lease; and otherwise improve or ornament the property according to a general plan to be submitted by the City authorities, and approved of by the Minister of Public Works of Canada, keeping a care taker on the grounds at all times; and should the same or any portion thereof, be required at any time for public purposes, by the Dominion Government, the City authorities shall give up possession thereof, without any claim for compensation for improvements.

The Department of Public Works of Canada reserve the right of tipping earth and excavated material from the Parliament Grounds, in any holes or waste places on any part of Major's Hill at any time, and for that purpose to transfer or cart the same over the grounds upon railway tracts or otherwise. (Ottawa Council, 19 August 1874)

On 5 November 1874, Mackenzie Avenue's predecessor was established between Major's Hill and the rear line of lots fronting on the west side of Sussex Street, between Rideau and St. Patrick Streets.

The following year the question of a municipal park was presented in Council, and the issue was raised in the press, but unlike previous attempts, this effort was rewarded. With the permission of Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, the City of Ottawa designated the site as its first public park and named it Dominion Park. Thirty-five thousand dollars were set aside for its development. A leasing agreement was reached by late August of the same



year: Mayor John P. Featherson, a prominent Liberal, his Council, and the federal Department of Public Works set forth the park's boundaries, responsibilities of the two parties involved (federal and municipal governments) and the implications of the lease. In July of 1875, city council appropriated a further \$10,000. towards their acquisition.

The local newspaper kept the Ottawa citizenry informed about the park's progress. In the first week of August 1875, the man who had been charged with the design of the park unveiled his first plans for City Council (Figure 3.9). In the first stage of the park's formal development, and by City Engineer Robert Surtees' hand, the land known as the Major's hill was transformed from a primal plateau into Dominion Park. Its many serpentine paths, in the gardenesque style, echoed those found at Rideau Hall. Among its features the park boasted a semi-circular carriageway to the south, a glass pavilion, mounted cannon and several fountains. A small pond begun in the fall of that year and completed by the spring of 1876 graced the northeast section of the site (Figure 3.28).

An abundance of American elm trees (as well as European sycamore, maple, ash, basswood, and tamarack), flowering shrubbery and a profusion of Victorian style floral beds, complemented the scheme (Figures 3.11, 3.12). Surtees also envisioned an ornamental iron fence on the south edge of the park facing the Dufferin and Sappers bridges, and on the Mackenzie Street (east) edge. Following a revision of the initial scheme, Surtees received approval for the plan from the Department of Public Works in October 1875. The contract was awarded to a local contractor, J.H. Dwyre, whose crews began work immediately.

On 5 June 1876 a group of property owners on Sussex Street presented a petition to council asking that Major's Hill and Main Avenue (Mackenzie) be graded; the ensuing debate was intense. The following day, \$865.00 was apportioned for the levelling and grading of the new avenue. This sum represented the remainder of the unexpended appropriations for Major's Hill improvements.

### 3.1.5 Growing Pains: 1876-1885

With the development and improvements of Main Avenue (Mackenzie Avenue) alongside the park, local residents voiced many complaints. In the summer of 1876 concerns were raised about the derelict nature of its newly-opened north end: it had become "a receptacle for all kinds of filth . . . (a) blind alley." (Ottawa Council, 14 August 1876) The Daily Citizen joined the fray two weeks later noting that "the trees which have been planted along the brow of the precipice on the Major's Hill are nearly all dead." (29 August 1876) Dominion Park, however, was soon to become the focus of a long and heated battle.

About the time The Daily Citizen quelled its barbs, the original contractor, Dwyre, was not rehired. This insult spurred Dwyre to lay charges of incompetency against City Engineer Surtees at a meeting of council on 7 September 1876. In an attempt to salvage his reputation, Dwyre cited examples of general carelessness and neglect which he had found within the park.

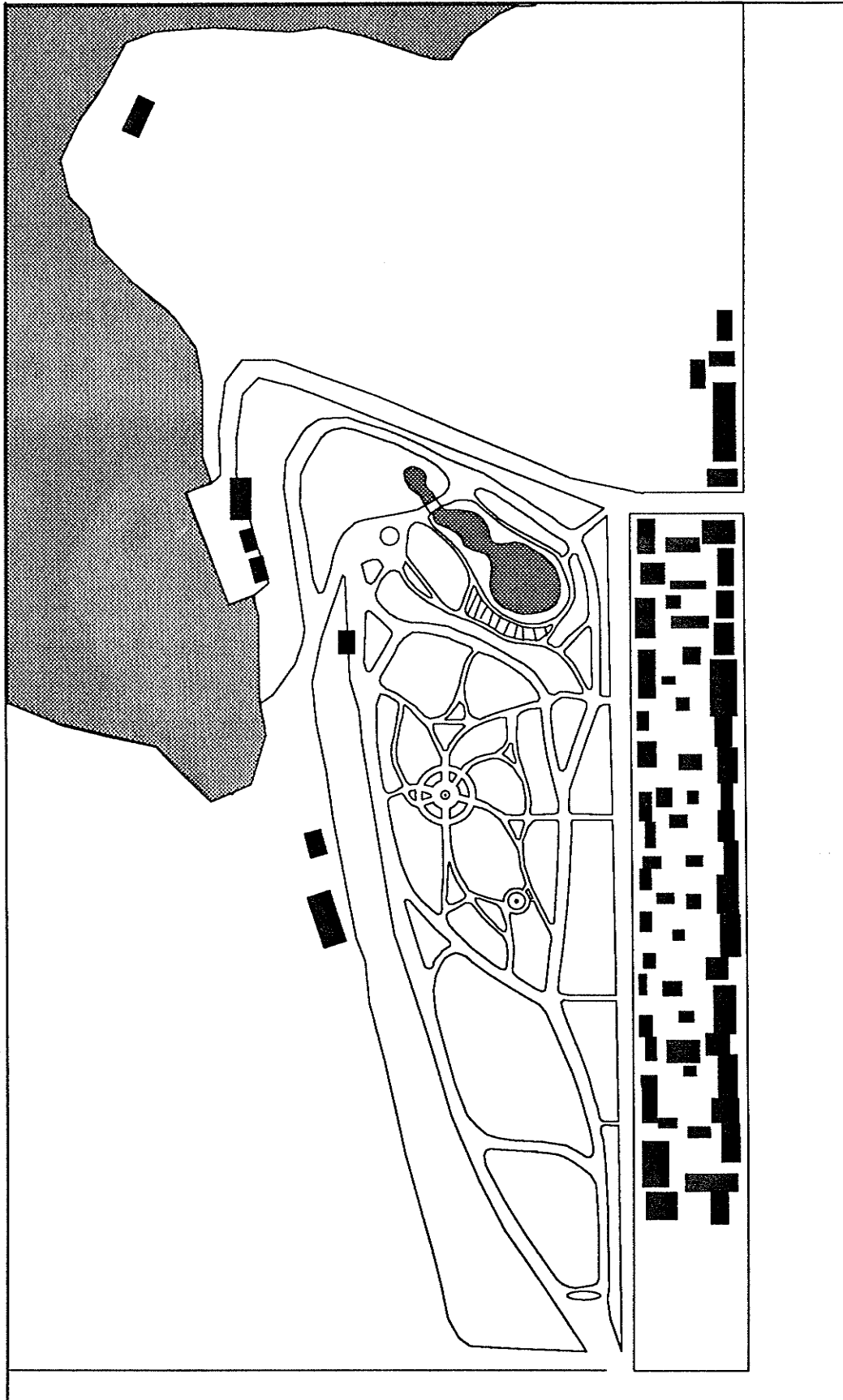


Figure 3.9: Major's Hill Park, 1876 (NCC Microfiche)



Figure 3.10: Robert Surtees, Designer of Dominion (Major's Hill) Park (Gard, 1904, 50)

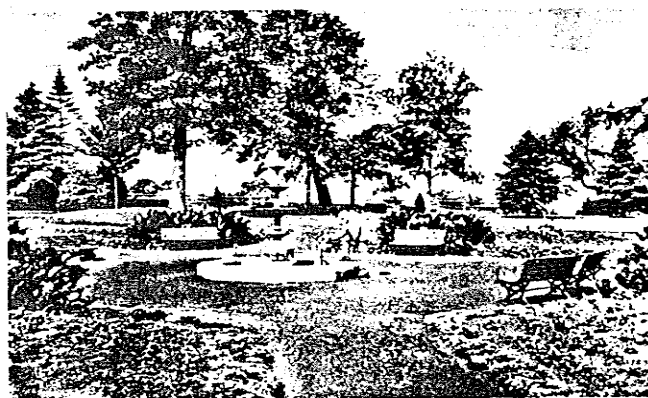


Figure 3.11: Floral displays and fountain, 1898 (City of Ottawa Archives, CA#1603)

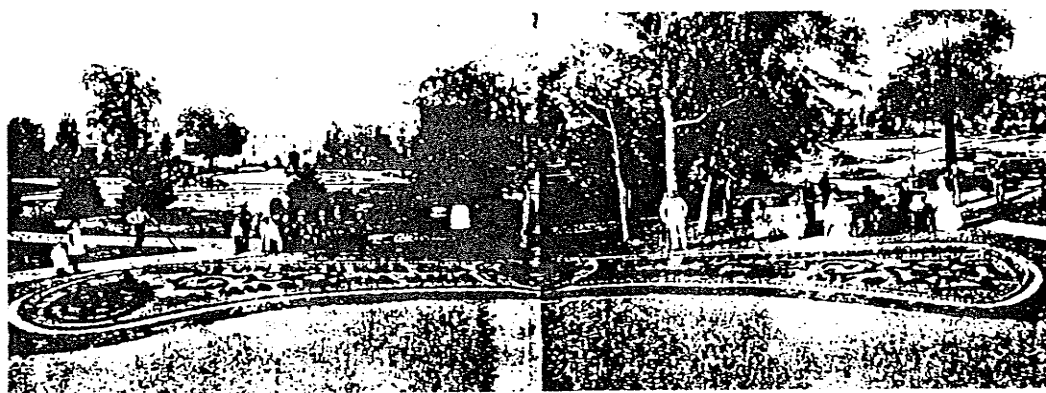


Figure 3.12: Decorative floral bed in Major's Hill Park, 1889 (NAC, c6978)

... walks are being laid out on the Major's Hill previous to the ploughing, levelling and grading of the grounds, which will thus necessitate the work being done over again; by the City Engineer's general carelessness and neglect in regard to the Park on which so much money has been already expended, as exhibited in the cedar on the rustic work, from which in a year or two, as now exposed, the bark will have peeled off, and thereby render it useless for ornamental purposes; also by his allowing the stone work at the outlet for the proposed lake to remain uncovered and exposed crumbling away by the action of the weather, and, as shown, many other acts of negligence which are patent to the eye of an experienced person. (Daily Citizen, 11 Sept. 1876, 3)

In response to his accusations, an investigating committee of five aldermen and the two men in question visited the park and found that Surtees had not acted incompetently nor had he been negligent. The issue was still volatile enough to warrant further investigations complete with witnesses and lawyers on 19 September. Nathaniel Robertson, a gardener for fourteen years, testified in Surtees' favour that the latter had "adopted the proper plan in carrying out the Major's Hill work." (Daily Citizen, 20 September 1876, 3) The ensuing proceedings further strengthened Surtees' credibility and the charges against him were dropped. Dwyre, however, would not accept defeat. Even through the following summer, via The Daily Citizen (7 May and 5 June), Dwyre continued the lingering vindictiveness in his crusade against the City Engineer's park program; the public soon perceived Dwyre as nothing more than a nagging eccentric whose vendetta against Surtees was without merit.

Throughout the summer of 1876 and into the spring of 1877, unconnected criticisms were lodged about the park: letters to the editor of The Daily Citizen and a renewed attack by the paper itself continued, aimed directly at Dominion Park. Letters expressed concern over the characters who frequented the park: a letter of 27 April 1877 expressed dismay at the lack of security which allowed the likes of "loose and desolute [sic] characters" to abound. General interest seemed to prevail for the hiring of a park security officer and a gate-closing at 9:00 every evening.

Not surprisingly, it was not too long again before the maligned Dwyre was once again condemning Surtees.

I also then pointed out the utter absurdity of making walks, and sodding the margins thereof before the grading was completed; but the dog-headed stubbornness of the engineer over-rode common sense, and we have to-day the sorry spectacle of up-rooted grounds which should have been perfectly laid out, graded and worked into shape, before a walk was made ... I am half inclined to yield in despair, the hope, that time itself will remedy the gigantic evil which ignorance, stupidity, and incompetency have in store for us. (Daily Citizen, 7 May 1877, 4)



Figure 3.13: Major's Hill Park with Parliament Hill in background, c.1880 (NAC, c10012)

One month later on 25 June, Dwyre submitted a letter to The Daily Citizen which was published under the title "What I saw on Major's Hill". Excerpts from the piece follow.

Now, sir, let me say that on entering the Park from Rideau street, the eye of the visitor is greeted by numerous unsightly drooping trees, recently planted there by that gentleman, "deserving of every credit," which give most unmistakable evidence of decay, a doom similar to that which overtook the evergreens of last year's planting. The Annuals are of a sickly and dwarfish character, scarcely making their appearance above ground. ... I have no hesitation in saying that the "efficient and obliging Engineer" is directly responsible for the useless waste of the city's funds ... it might be well for the over-burdened ratepayers of the city to remind them that such ignorance is inexcusable, and cannot be longer tolerated. (Daily Citizen, 25 June 1877, 3)

As damaging as this purported to be, Surtees was not required to answer to the accusations, and Dwyre faded into obscurity, a victim of his own bitterness.

In the ensuing years, money-conscious critics questioned the city's hold on a park for which they received no revenue yet upon which they expended \$35,000. between 1875 and 1885. Citizens joined with politicians to influence the city in dispensing of this financial burden. In May 1882 public concern also mounted regarding decaying cedar benches and summer houses. Yet despite the grievances, Dominion Park was still used regularly: a favourite attraction was the weekly band concert performed by the Governor-General's Foot Guards.

An extremely positive letter to the newspaper in 1882 read: "It is now a very pleasant place of summer resort, which our citizens could ill afford to be without." (Daily Citizen, 30 September 1882). The letter continued, praising the City Engineer for the fine manner in which it was kept. However, despite the accolades, pressure forced a change in ownership and responsibility.

### 3.1.6 Handing Over Responsibility: 1885-1910

Vandalism and decay continued to take their toll as did a crescendoing barrage of criticism; it was simply a matter of time before Dominion Park's control would be passed on to the federal government. The municipal government was well aware of the discrepancies in maintaining Dominion Park. Thus, coupled with a lack of incoming revenue and ever-rising costs, the city — with as much relief as regret — presented the park and all of its responsibilities to the Department of Public Works on 17 June 1885.

That the park known as the Major's Hill Park shall hereafter be under the control of the said Government of Canada, and that the said Government of Canada will resume possession of same. (Ottawa Council, 18 June 1885)

Despite the necessity of the transaction, local Members of Parliament criticized the transaction as a blatant loss of potential tax revenue. Also, the property would now be known as Major's Hill Park, immortalizing Major Daniel Bolton, R.E., Colonel By's successor in 1832. In July 1887, following the federal takeover, minor improvements were made to the park, including the erection of a new entrance gate at the north end.

The first memorial in the park, the bronze Sharpshooters' Monument, was unveiled on 1 November 1888, by His Excellency, the Governor-General Lord Stanley (Figure 3.14). The piece was dedicated to those "native sons falling in the service of the nation" during the Riel Rebellion of 1885, and, in particular, two Ottawa natives, Osgood and Rogers of the Sharpshooters' Company. Their burial in Ottawa was accompanied by a strong wave of patriotic fervor; the monument was a direct result of this enthusiasm. (The construction of the Chateau Laurier Hotel between 1908 and 1912 necessitated a relocation of the statue to the old City Hall property on Elgin Street, and subsequently to what is now Confederation Park, also on Elgin Street).

On the 12th of November 1895, the Department of Public Works recommended to Council that Mackenzie Avenue be opened up for public traffic and be used as a public thoroughfare; two years later it was formally handed over to the City of Ottawa. Immediately east of this artery lay a plethora of residential dwelling units.

In 1901, the Alexandra Bridge was officially opened, thus facilitating railway traffic between Quebec and Ontario (and Ottawa's new Union Station). The Grand Trunk Railway now passed between the two provinces along a terrace which had been carved out of the limestone cliff alongside Major's Hill Park (Figures 3.15, 3.16). To the north of the park lay an open, as yet undeveloped, promontory.

Also by 1901, work had begun on the construction of a new conservatory, complete with greenhouse and potting shed; the latter structure is still found in the park today. In 1903, a reference was made in the annual report of Public Works to the on-going construction of an overlook pavilion which lent an air of prestige and quality to the park (Figure 3.17).

A 2-story [sic] kiosk is in process of construction- to consist of a basement of stone to be used as a tool house, 17 feet x 26 feet and 13 feet in height, surmounted by a covered wooden pavilion of like size surrounded, by a gallery 6 feet in breadth, supported on brackets or corbels built into the stone walls below. The pavilion will be constructed of ornamental open framing, somewhat gothic in treatment.  
Clerk of works- F. Breton. (DPW, 1903-04, 3:17)

References were also made to the general work which was being carried out in the park.

A new drinking fountain was placed in Major's Hill Park, new seats were provided; a large quantity of earth was used in grading, a large



Figure 3.14: Sharpshooters' Monument at south end of park (NAC, PA 66757)





Figure 3.15: View of railway terrace from Chateau Laurier terrace, 1920s (NAC, PA 34371)

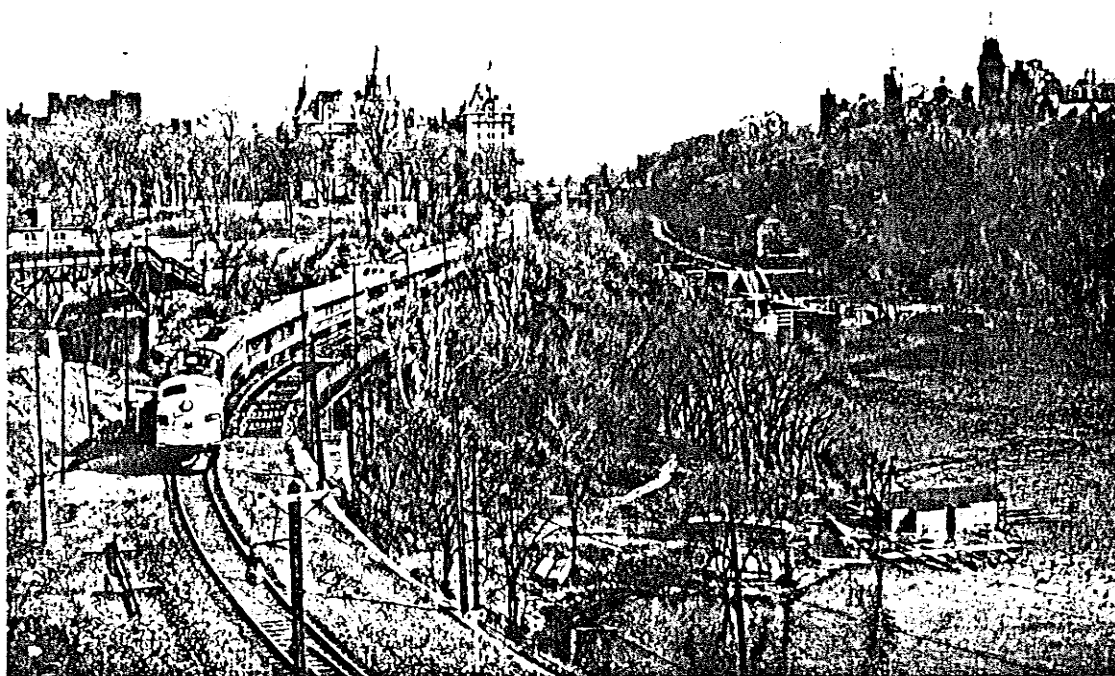


Figure 3.16: CPR Transcontinental travelling north to Hull, P.Q., c.1958 (Legget, 1972, 114)

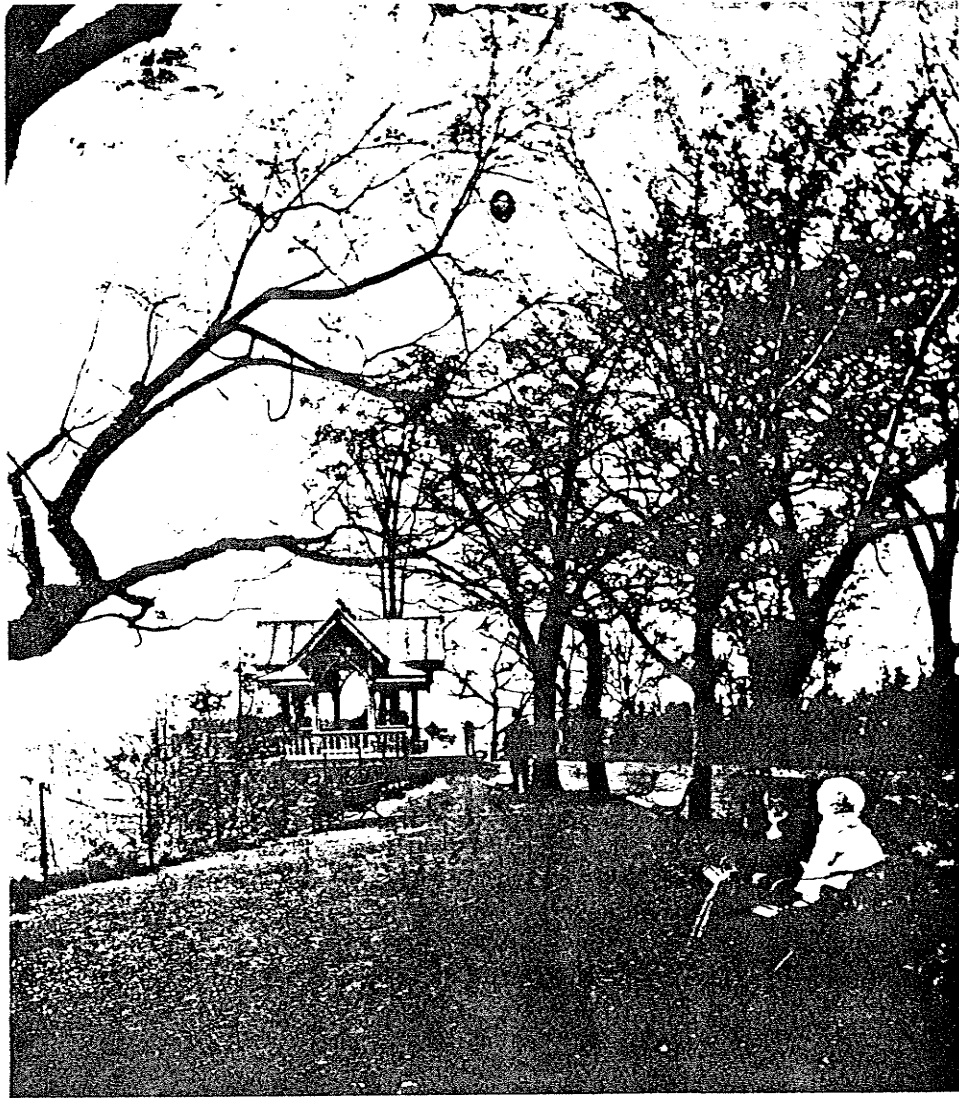


Figure 3.17: Overlook Pavilion in Major's Hill Park (NAC, c28890)

quantity of sods for lawns, trees, shrubs and herbacees [sic] plants were purchased and planted, as also a large quantity of native ferns and wild flowering plants. Some new species were acquired for the plant-house and green-houses. Work done under the supervision of this department. (DPW, 1904-05, 3:20)

However, despite the initial flurry of activity which surrounded its construction, and under the auspices of the federal Department of Public Works, very little development occurred in Major's Hill Park until the completion of the first phase of the Chateau Laurier Hotel in 1912.

### 3.1.7 A New Neighbour: 1910-1930

At the turn of the century Ottawa was a rapidly-expanding government centre. This growth posed new problems for the city, including stresses on the accommodation and transportation sectors. To this end, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) lobbied the Canadian government for land to construct both a central railway depot and a hotel. In July 1908, by order of the Governor-in-Council, the southern extremity of Major's Hill Park (fronting Wellington Street) was sold by the Ottawa Improvement Commission to the GTR for \$100,000.

In 1910 construction began on the Chateau Laurier Hotel, designed in the French Chateau style to harmonize with the Gothic vocabulary of the Parliament Buildings (see Section 4.2.8). The opening of this fine hostelry in 1912 satisfied an important need in the capital, but also began to isolate Major's Hill Park from the activity of Wellington Street (Figure 3.18). The Connaught Building and the Daly Building now occupied a portion of the land which once boasted residential dwellings.

The funds derived from the sale of the land were earmarked for the construction of a park on the promontory overlooking the Ottawa River north of Major's Hill Park. Nepean Point, named to commemorate the head of the British Colonial Office, formed a natural extension to Major's Hill (Figure 3.19). An 'artistic' iron footbridge was erected by the International Marine Signal Company to facilitate movement between the two parks: it was erected after 1910 following many delays on the part of the OIC (Figures 3.20, 3.21).

Eight hundred and thirty trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants were added to complete the shrubbery and 1,300 to cover bare spots on cliff. The mound at the rock garden near the lake, was sodded. The spring display of bulbs required 44,000 of them while the autumn display had 150 varieties [sic] (1,000) plants of chrysanthemum besides orchids, begonia, glorire de Dijon, etc, etc. (DPW, 1908-09, 3:24)

A panoramic series of photographs taken from the roof of the then recently constructed Government Printing Bureau, c.1920 (Fig. 3.18) provides particularly good evidence of

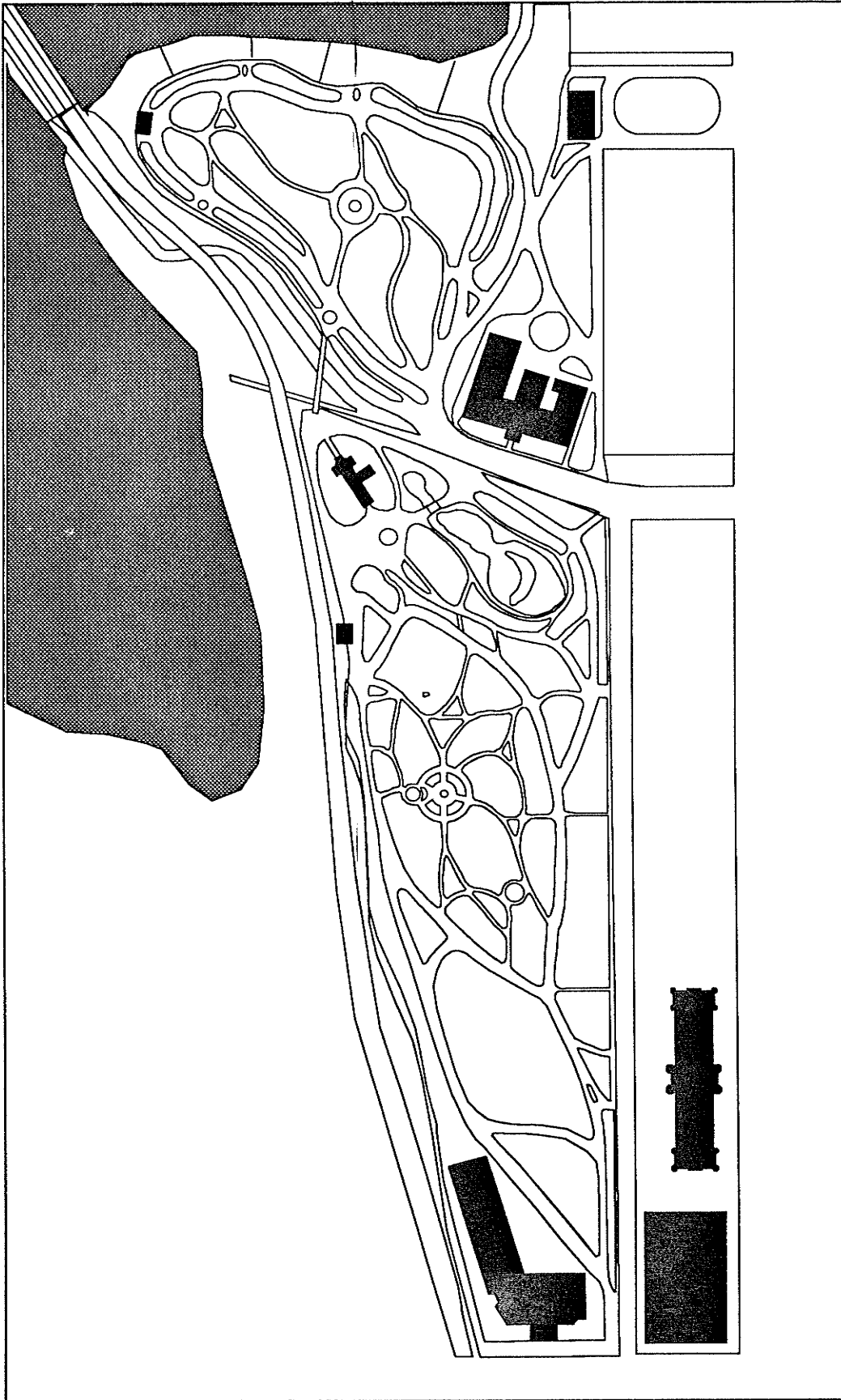


Figure 3.18: Major's Hill Park, 1912 (NCC Microfiche)

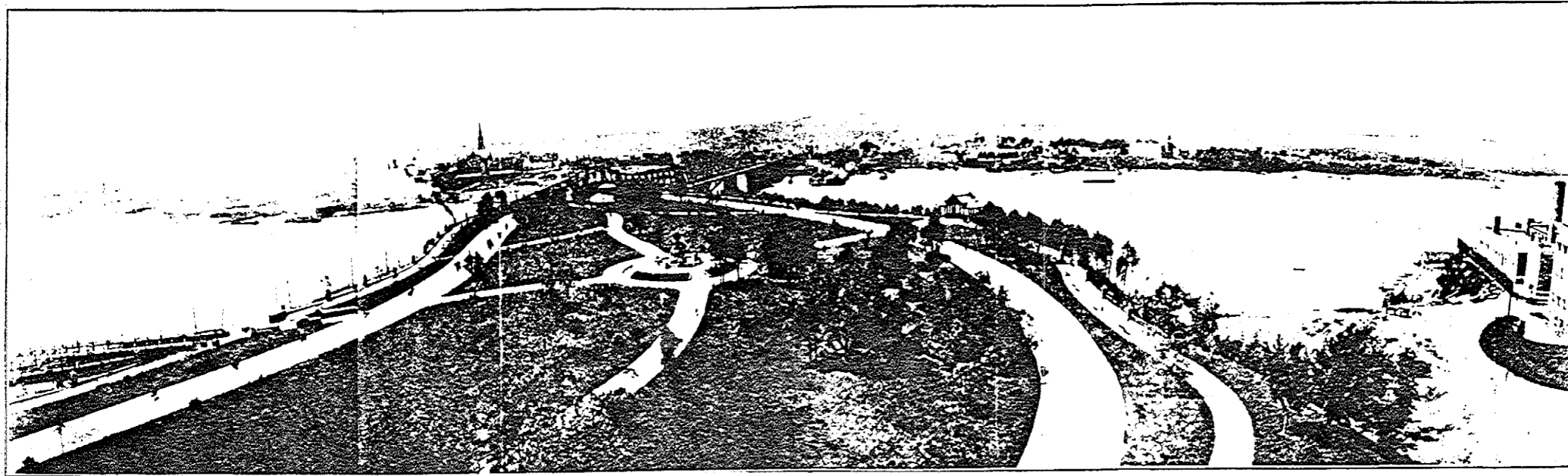


Figure 3.19: Nepean Point Park - Bird's Eye View, 1912 (OIC, 1912)

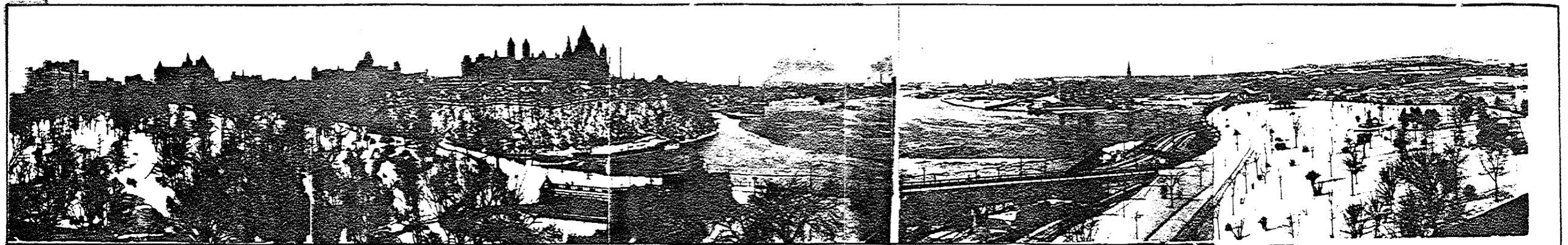


Figure 3.20: Panoramic view from Government Printing Bureau, c.1920 (NAC, PA 507-511)

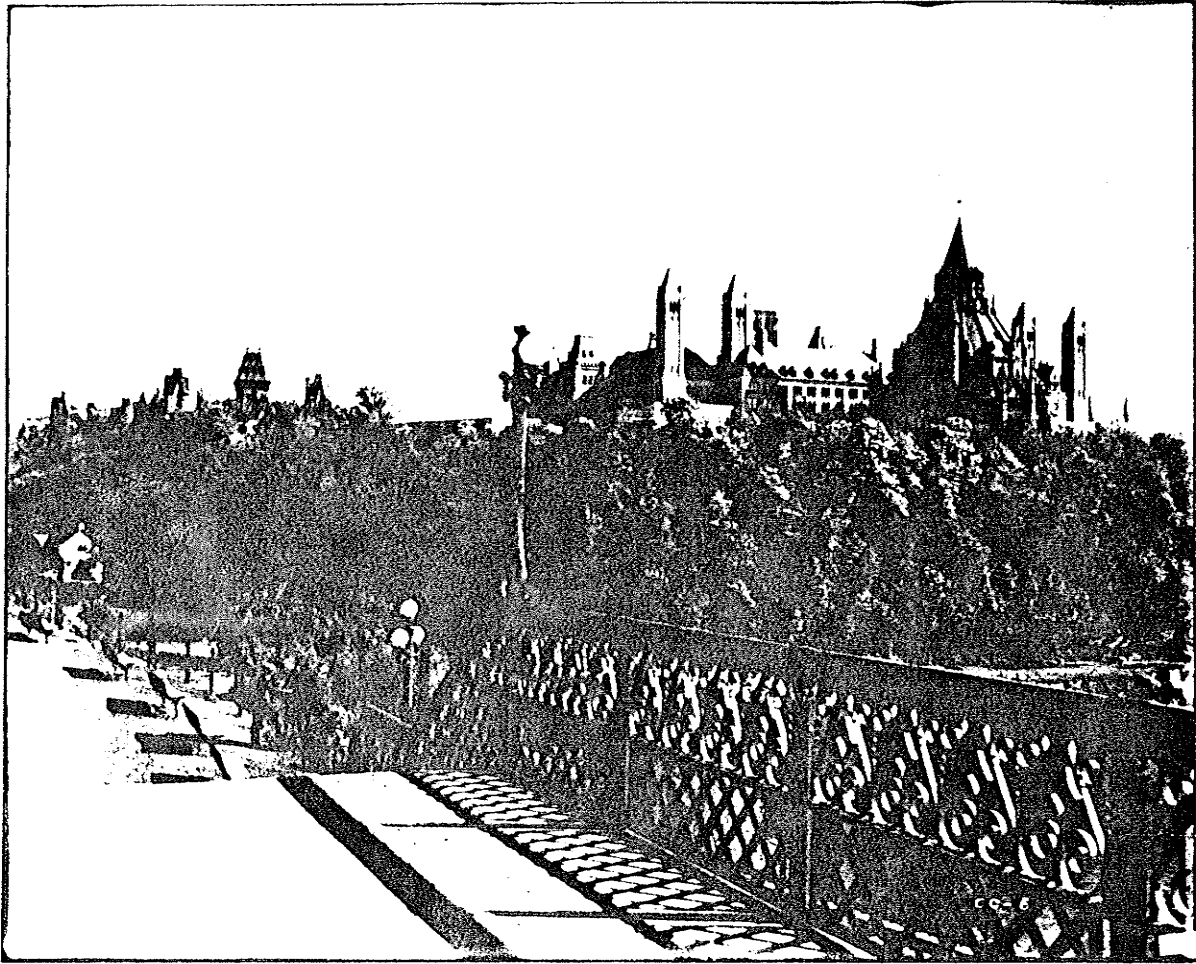


Figure 3.21: View towards Parliament Hill from footbridge, c.1920 (NAC, PA 48708)

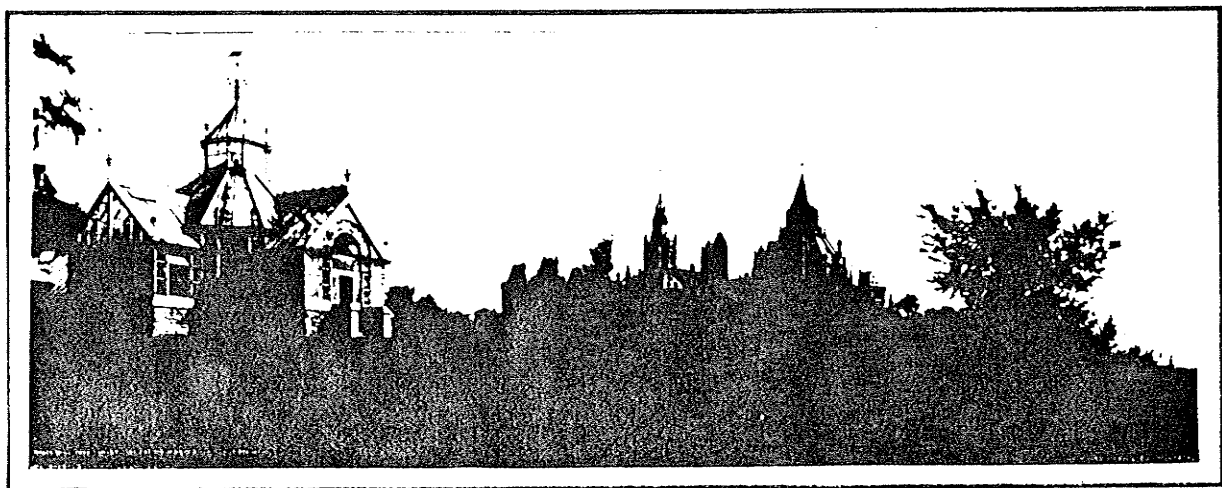


Figure 3.22: Major's Hill Park conservatory, c.1910 (NAC, PA 30917)

the nature of Major's Hill Park at that time. The most stunning feature is the preponderance of American elm trees in the park which virtually covered its length and breadth. Also evident in the photograph are the overlook pavilion at the western edge, and the greenhouse/conservatory. The iron footbridge connecting Major's Hill to the newly-established Nepean Point Park is plainly obvious, its patterning easily discernible. The park's original and distinctive light standards are also seen.

About this same time, in 1912, the original Sappers' Bridge over the Rideau Canal was dismantled to make way for Connaught Place and a single bridge. On the 27th of May 1915, the Duke of Connaught unveiled two large limestone blocks taken from the bridge; their position in Major's Hill designates the approximate site of Colonel By's original house. (see Section 4.4.8: Sappers' Bridge Stones)

The Holt Commission Plan of 1915 (Section 3.3.1) and the Cauchon Report of 1922 (Section 3.3.2) offered many suggestions as to the future planning of the Canadian capital, which took into consideration the Major's Hill Park property; the recommendations of each, however, were never implemented.

In 1916 one of the capital region's most nostalgic and revered institutions arrived at the park. The nine pound cast iron cannon known commonly as the Noon-Day Gun, had been previously positioned on Parliament Hill between the Centre Block and the Library, facing Major's Hill Park. Following the tragic fire of 3 February 1916 which engulfed the Centre Block, the gun was removed to take a permanent position at Major's Hill Park, facing upriver; it was moved in part because its reverberations seriously hampered reconstruction of the Centre Block. It is fired daily at twelve noon save for Sundays and holidays when it is fired at 10h00. (see Section 4.4.2: Noon-Day Gun)

Mackenzie Avenue was paved by the Ottawa Improvement Commission in 1924. New greenhouses were erected in the park in 1929, but otherwise most of the efforts carried out in the park were restricted to maintenance. By 1930, the completed second phase of the Chateau Laurier Hotel effectively isolated Major's Hill Park from the energy of Wellington Street. The hostelry did, however, provide a picturesque counterpoint to the park with its French chateau spires and copper roofs. The plan otherwise remained virtually the same.

### 3.1.8 Changes: 1930-1950

In the decades following the completion of the Chateau Laurier Hotel, further changes took place in Major's Hill Park which were of a subtractive nature, i.e. various elements of the park were gradually removed. The greenhouses in the park, for example, became a sustained object of consideration in the late 1930s. It was

... the decision of the commission to discontinue ... the use of the greenhouse in Major's Hill park and ... to continue in possession of the workshop adjoining this greenhouse for the storage of tools and equipment. (FDC, 14 May 1937)

Within the year, the flower house had been demolished. (FDC, 27 June 1938)

In 1936 an FDC memorandum addressed the ornamental plant material that was to be placed in the park. The species identified were bedding and standard geraniums, coleus, achyranthus, alternanthera, abutilon, Dusty Miller, tuberous begonias, canna lilies, caladiums, drascena [sic], celosia, amaranthera and balsams. Added to this list was the following recommendation: "A further reduction in annuals could be made by closing out some of the older beds containing perennials and shrubs which have been well past their prime for a number of years." (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 21 January 1936) Thus attention was given to the simplification of the park's structure.

At the close of the decade, Major's Hill Park was once again considered as a venue for public concerts. Correspondence from the Federal District Commission to the National Executive Committee of the Department of National Defence suggested that the park would be "a more suitable location for holding band concerts this summer than the parkway area adjoining the Driveway at Somerset on the Rideau Canal where driveway traffic would be a hazard to large crowds." (FDC, 12 June 1942) As a result permission was granted "for the R.C.A.F. Band to perform each Sunday at Major Hill Park May 16th, at 4.30 p.m. and on each Sunday thereafter for ten consecutive weeks." (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 13 May 1943)

There were a number of formal requests to use the park during the war years, including:

1. a request for permission for the employees of Daly, R.C.A.F., Connaught and No. 6 War Buildings to eat their lunches in Major's Hill Park. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 17 June 1942) (There is also reference to a full-time Patrol Constable in the park, who would be informed forthwith);
2. a request from the National Film Board of Canada to use the cellar in the park's 'small stone tool house' for the storage of surplus film (requiring low temperatures for safe storage), resulting from the rapid accumulation of war film material (FDC, 12 May 1944);
3. a proposal by the Civil Service Recreational Association for an outdoor stage in the northeast section of the park. "Portable sets would be used and trees and planting to form the back drop." (FDC, 14 July 1944);
4. another request regarding a stage in the park, this time from the Ottawa Summer Theatre Association. (FDC, 10 August 1945); and,
5. an application by the Chinese Patriotic Association of Ottawa was granted permission to use the park on the 10th of October for a fireworks display celebrating China's National Day and Victory over Japan (pending approval by Ottawa's Fire Chief). (FDC, 12 October 1945).



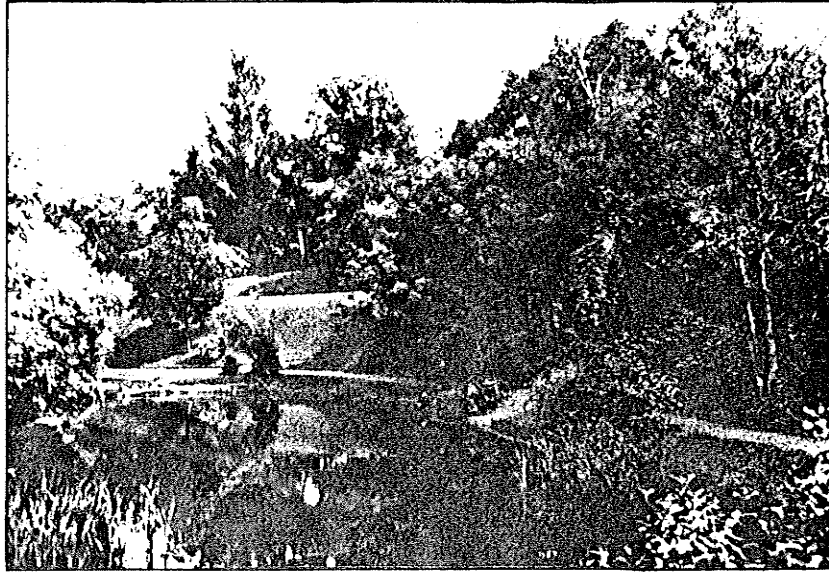


Figure 3.23: The pond in Major's Hill Park; note dense planting about edge (NAC, PA 9429)

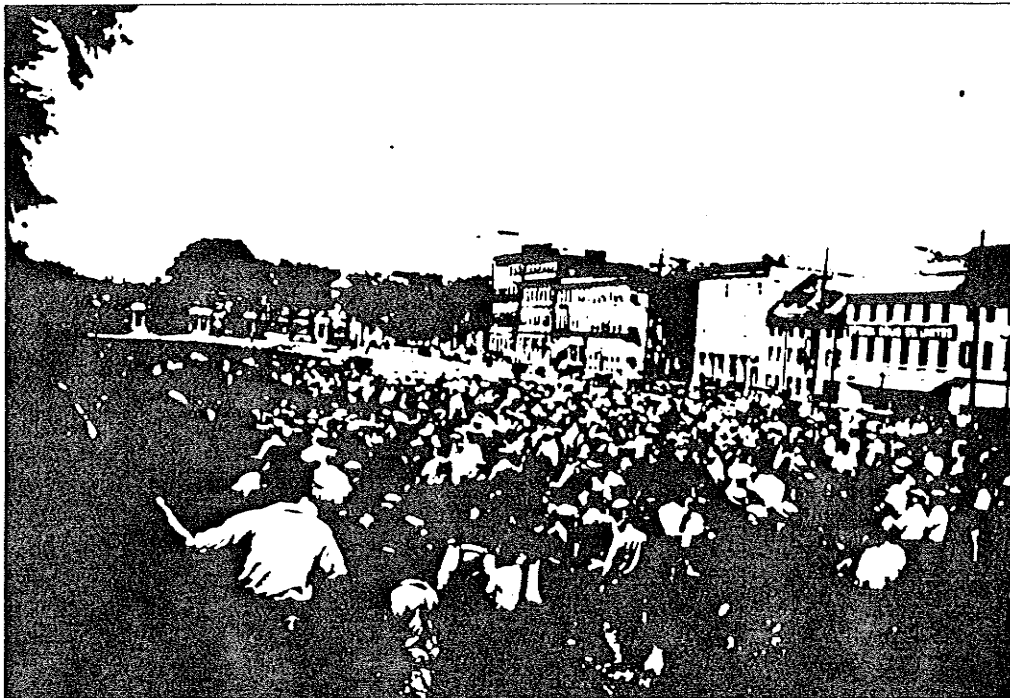


Figure 3.24: Workers' demonstration in park during Great Depression (Taylor, 1986, 163)

The RCMP were asked, and agreed, to provide police service during the summer in the form of a special constable. (FDC, 13 July 1945)

In 1945 the Chateau Laurier Hotel contacted the Federal District Commission regarding its concern about the platform which had been erected immediately next to the hotel for open air performances.

As explained to you we have received numerous and very definite complaints from residents of the hotel, particularly from guests who have rooms on the court side of the hotel, and even guests on the MacKenzie Avenue side complained of the noise from these concerts. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 7 September 1944)

In later documents there is no mention made as to how this issue was resolved. Two years later in an RCMP memo, a concern regarding undesirable transients was identified which still merits consideration today.

Mr. Mann [head of security at the hotel] stated that the corner where the park adjoins the hotel was being used for immoral purposes during the evening and late at night, he also stated that he was having trouble in the hotel with thieving from the rooms and that the fire escape door leading out into the park was found opened. ... Mr. Mann requests that the R.C.M.P. look into the matter of the undesirables hanging around the hotel in the park. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 2 March 1946)

The RCMP responded with a promise to continue surveillance of the park.

Although a continued check by members of the Radio Patrol Squad, as well as occasional visits by members of Ottawa Town Station, in plain clothes, has been made in this area, no untoward incidents have as yet come to light. As per instructions, many persons found hanging around the park have been questioned, but none were committing any acts which might warrant their being brought in. Those persons appearing to be of a somewhat "shady" nature, were told to move along, with no trouble developing. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 12 March 1946)

Through mid-century many alterations were wrought upon the park. In 1945 the lake at the northern end was filled in, the area graded and then seeded. The following year the glass pavilion/conservatory was dismantled by the Federal District Commission for fear of its unsafe condition. Two years later in 1948, the fence along the west side of Mackenzie Avenue was taken down and a sidewalk set along the thoroughfare instead.

### 3.1.9 Further Changes: 1950-1980

Spurred on by gifts of tulips from Princess Juliana of the Netherlands (for Canadian efforts in assisting her family during World War II), the Canadian Tulip Festival was inaugurated in the Capital and found a home in the park. As preparation for this in Major's Hill Park in 1951, more than sixteen hundred square yards of pathway were removed and seeded. Also in 1951, Mr. Davis, who managed the firing of the Noon-Day Gun, came under criticism for a theft of gunpowder from the tool shed on the west edge of the park by two youths.

Over the next few years park refurbishment continued with more pathways removed and elm trees replaced. In 1956, new tulip beds were established at the corner of Mackenzie Avenue and St. Patrick Street. In 1958, fifteen thousand tulip bulbs were presented to the capital by the Associated Bulb Growers of Holland and planted in Major's Hill Park (Figure 3.26).

In 1954 a letter was written to the Commission. It questioned the suitability of the Sappers' Bridge stones located in the park as a memorial to the men who laboured on the canal in the nineteenth century.

Around 1914 the Sapper's Bridge was demolished; however two stones were brought over to Major's Hill Park to form a Col. By Memorial. The upper stone is supposed to have the arms of the Royal Engineers on it. Today there is the marking of the outline of a shield on the upper stone, but nothing really commemorative of the Royal Engineers (as far as I can see). The lower stone does have the name of Col. By. When the Federal District Commission took over Major's Hill Park, was there some sort of bronze shield on the upper stone? I am wondering if some unfortunate vandalism has taken place since 1915. I would much appreciate some reply from you in this matter. I will also make inquiries from the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa, as to whether they have any information available as to the RE's "arms". (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 10 April 1954)

A reply was tendered shortly thereafter; unfortunately, no recollection could be made of either the bronze plaque or of the topstone.

About this time the proposed establishment of a bus terminal at the south end of Major's Hill Park became a prominent topic in local circles (Figure 3.27). The Hull City Transport Company had been experiencing difficulties in the area with the loading and unloading of its passengers. The City of Hull was adamant in its demands to have the City of Ottawa develop a new terminal for these buses. They proposed a terminus on the eastern edge of the park rather than on Mackenzie Avenue immediately opposite the Chateau Laurier Hotel so to expedite traffic flow on Mackenzie. However, the Chateau Laurier Hotel was deeply concerned about the proposal.

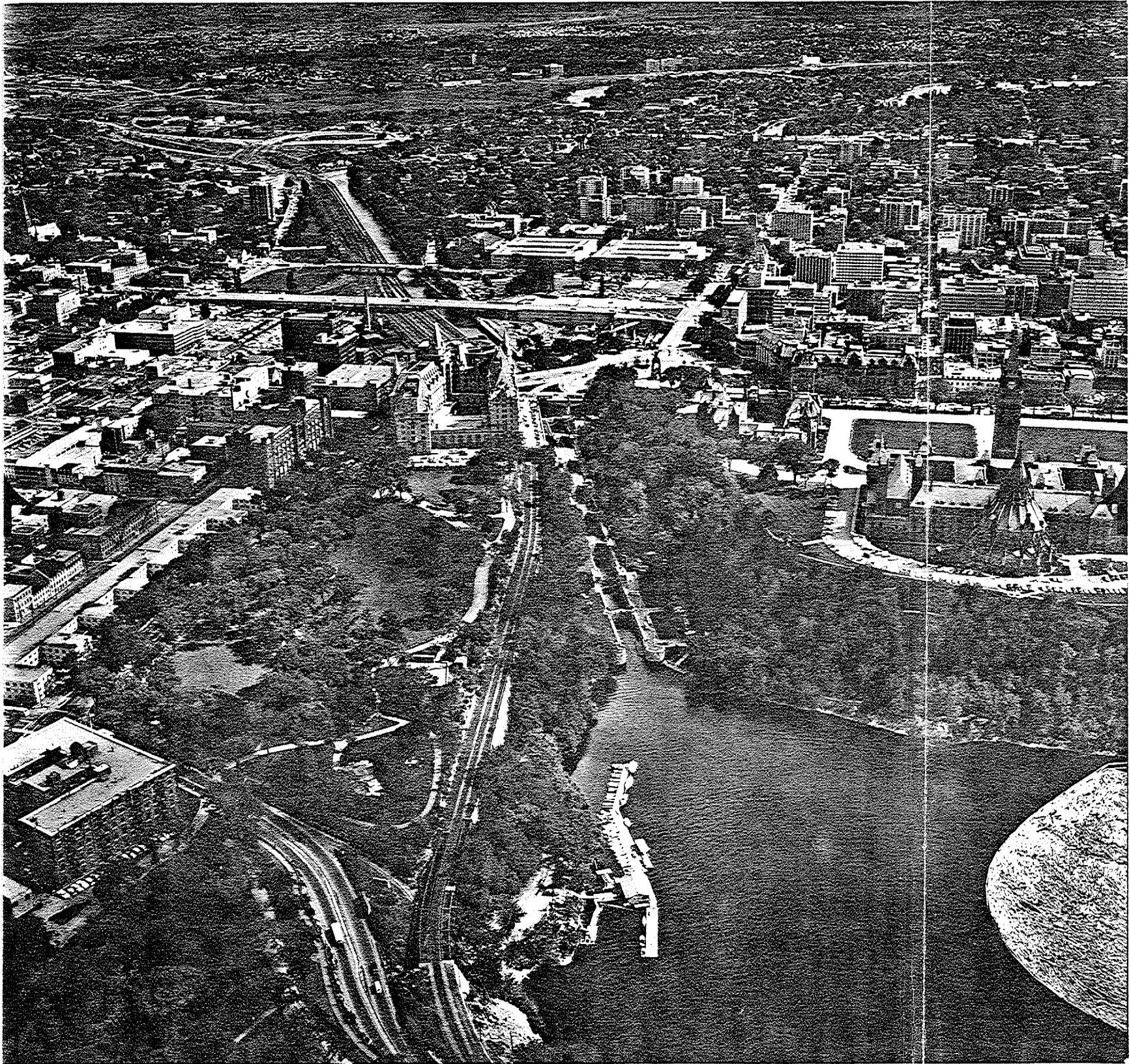


Figure 3.25: Aerial view of Major's Hill Park and context, c.1955 (NAPL)

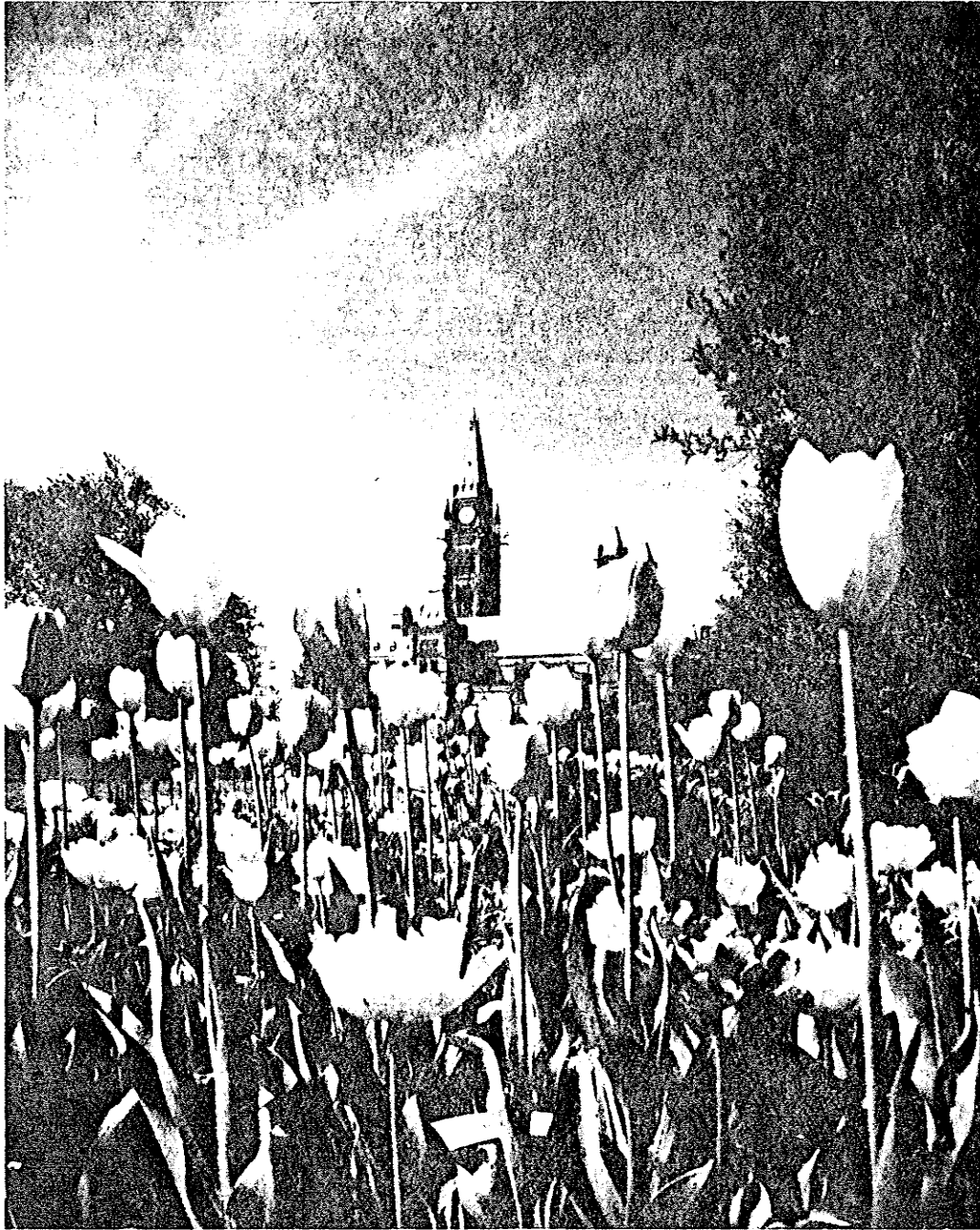


Figure 3.26: Major's Hill Park during the Canadian Tulip Festival, 1957 (FDC, 1957)

I am sure you will understand our concern as to the proposed location of this terminal and at the same time realize the inconvenience and disturbance that would be caused if this is carried out. Apart from the disturbance to a large number of hotel residents, our Ballroom and Banquet Room overlook the park and, as both of these rooms are used extensively for banquets at which there are guest speakers, many of whom are distinguished visitors to Canada, it will readily be appreciated that noise from such a terminal would be most disturbing to these gatherings in the hotel. I sincerely trust the Federal District Commission will give every consideration to this protest. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 20 September, 1954)

Influenced by the hotel's lobbying, the FDC reneged on their initial motion. A second effort by the City of Hull in 1956 to establish a terminus in this location also failed.

In 1955 the Government Printing Bureau, which had occupied a site across from the park next to Nepean Point Park, was demolished as the agency relocated in Hull; it was replaced by a parking lot.

Also about this time, there came to pass a debate within the capital as to the correct appellation of the park to the north of the Chateau Laurier Hotel.

Should it be Major Hill Park? Or Majors Hill Park? Or should the apostrophe be included- Major's Hill Park? (Ottawa Journal, 18 February 1955)

Prompted by a letter in the Journal that week which favoured the first name, and the FDC's own preference for the second condition, Mayor Charlotte Whitton took it as a personal crusade to render Major's Hill Park as the proper spelling. Whitton cited its original usage from the time of Bolton as the 'major's hill', and continued to cite two excerpts from the Ottawa City Council minutes of 1874 to cement her argument.

In 1956, plans were unveiled for a "new permanent site for national observances in memory of all of Canada's war dead" (Ottawa Citizen, 1 May 1956, 3) on Nepean Point (Figure 3.28). The scheme — to be chosen following a national competition — would accommodate up to 200 persons, and would house Books of Remembrances from the wars in which Canada participated; the cenotaph would be of "a design to keep alive the remembrance of all those who have given their lives for Canada." (Ottawa Citizen, 1 May 1956, 3) A preliminary design anticipated a tapered building in plan; the joining of the two parks by an overpass was also forwarded.

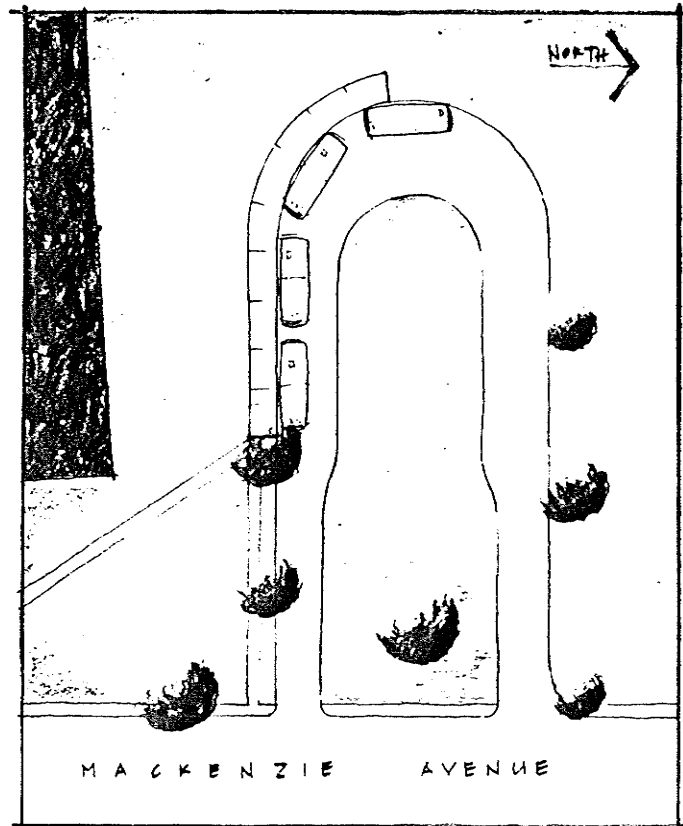


Figure 3.27: Schematic plan for proposed bus loop in Major's Hill Park, 1954 (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H: Major's Hill Park)

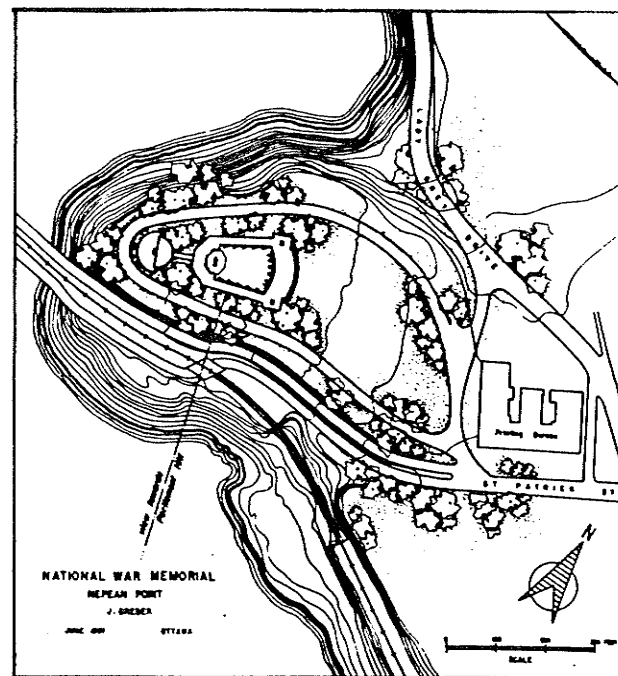


Figure 3.28: Proposed National War Memorial, Nepean Point, 1957 (NCC Microfiche, 1289-1)

Both Nepean Point and Majors [sic] Hill Park, if linked by the block-long overpass, would be completely "done over" by the FDC, to be made into one vast lawn space, as flat and even as Parliament Hill but almost three times larger. ... And when a new bridge, further downstream replaces the Interprovincial, St. Patrick street could be dead-ended at MacKenzie avenue. Then the rock cut of the old approach to the bridge could be earthed in and sowed to lawn, making one great park. (Ottawa Journal, 1 May 1956)

Originally to be completed by 1958, the plan never materialized and Remembrance Day ceremonies continued to be held in Confederation Square at the head of Elgin Street.

Over time, the perennial parking problems at the Chateau Laurier Hotel became more and more of a concern. An earlier letter from Jacques Gréber made note of this concern.

...the Hotel management would be permitted to use for parking purposes a small part of Major's Hill Park, it should be stated that the authorisation be of a temporary nature, and that no trees should be cut down, the grading and paving work of the parking space be reduced to the strict minimum necessary, in view of re-establishing the public garden in its integrity when final parking accomodations [sic] would be made possible on the Daly building site. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 29 January 1951)

In 1957, the Federal District Commission received a request from the Chateau Laurier Hotel to purchase three acres of Major's Hill Park immediately adjacent to the hotel for the purposes of guest parking; the request was accompanied by two design alternatives. The Commission unanimously chose to turn down the proposal, and responded to the hotel in writing:

Those of us involved in the long-term planning of the National Capital and its surroundings must, perforce, look beyond years and decades and we must think and plan for centuries. To the F.D.C. Major's Hill Park serves as a beautiful and necessary setting for the Government buildings on Parliament Hill and it is regarded by the Commission in much the same light as if it were a part of the Hill. When the old Printing Bureau and the temporary buildings on Mackenzie Avenue can be abandoned then the present park area will be an even greater feature in its role as a setting for Parliament Hill. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H-A, 24 July 1957)



Further, Kennedy argued, the Gréber Plan had been accepted *in toto* and did not include provisions for such a permanent intervention. The correspondence offered that the park site had been touted as the location for the proposed National Gallery; it was eliminated as a possibility when the FDC argued "that the view from Parliament Hill and the Peace Tower would be changed from that of a tree-covered green space to a roof top of a couple of acres in extent surrounded by a parking lot for visitors' cars." The FDC proposed alternative sites for parking to placate hotel management, including the existing rail freight yards in the area, the By Ward Market area, and space beneath both Major's Hill and Confederation Parks. Despite the pressing need for parking, the municipal parking authority realized and agreed that their suggestion regarding Major's Hill Park could not be "justified in the light of fuller information now in their hands." (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H-A, 24 July 1957)

During the late 1950s, public and governmental sentiment united to see the erection of the Royal Canadian Artillery Memorial on the park's northwest edge (Section 4.3.3: Artillery Monument). Commemorating gunners killed in military service, it was designed by the Department of Public Works and constructed by the newly-born National Capital Commission. The memorial consisted of a marble wall flanking one side of an open terrace and a 25-pounder gun used by the Royal Canadian Regiment of Artillery during World War II and in Korea. The unveiling took place on 21 September 1959, presided over by His Excellency, Governor-General Georges P. Vanier. Also in 1959, the iron footbridge joining Major's Hill Park with Nepean Point was demolished by the Commission.

In anticipation of Centennial celebrations in 1967, many projects were undertaken by the NCC. Across the road from Major's Hill Park, an amphitheatre was developed at Nepean Point for the staging of the Sound and Light Festival. Although unaffected by Centennial preparations, Major's Hill Park itself became a focus for redevelopment in the late 1960s as part of a larger plan to redevelop the capital's central area. In 1969, a long-range development plan and programme — prepared and submitted by Sir Hugh Casson — was outlined for the Major's Hill Park and Lady Grey Drive area, based on a study for the development of a memorial area there. Some disruption to the park occurred as the Chateau Laurier took the initiative to construct a three-storey garage to its north side.

Although his efforts had resulted in both the construction of the Rideau Canal and the creation of By Town, Colonel John By had never been properly memorialized; even the park's name had been taken from By's successor, Major Daniel Bolton. Through the efforts of the Ottawa Historical Society, a fund-raising drive began in 1961 for such a purpose; the effort saw its culmination in the ceremonious unveiling of a full-length bronze statue of By on 14 August 1971, by His Excellency, Governor-General Roland Michener. The event was enhanced by the presence of an honour guard of Royal Engineers brought over from England for the occasion. The statue was created by the renowned Canadian sculptor Emile Brunet (Montreal, Paris) and stands near the former site of By's original dwelling on the eastern shoulder of Entrance Valley, overlooking the locks: it is a position that By likely struck many times over the course of construction.

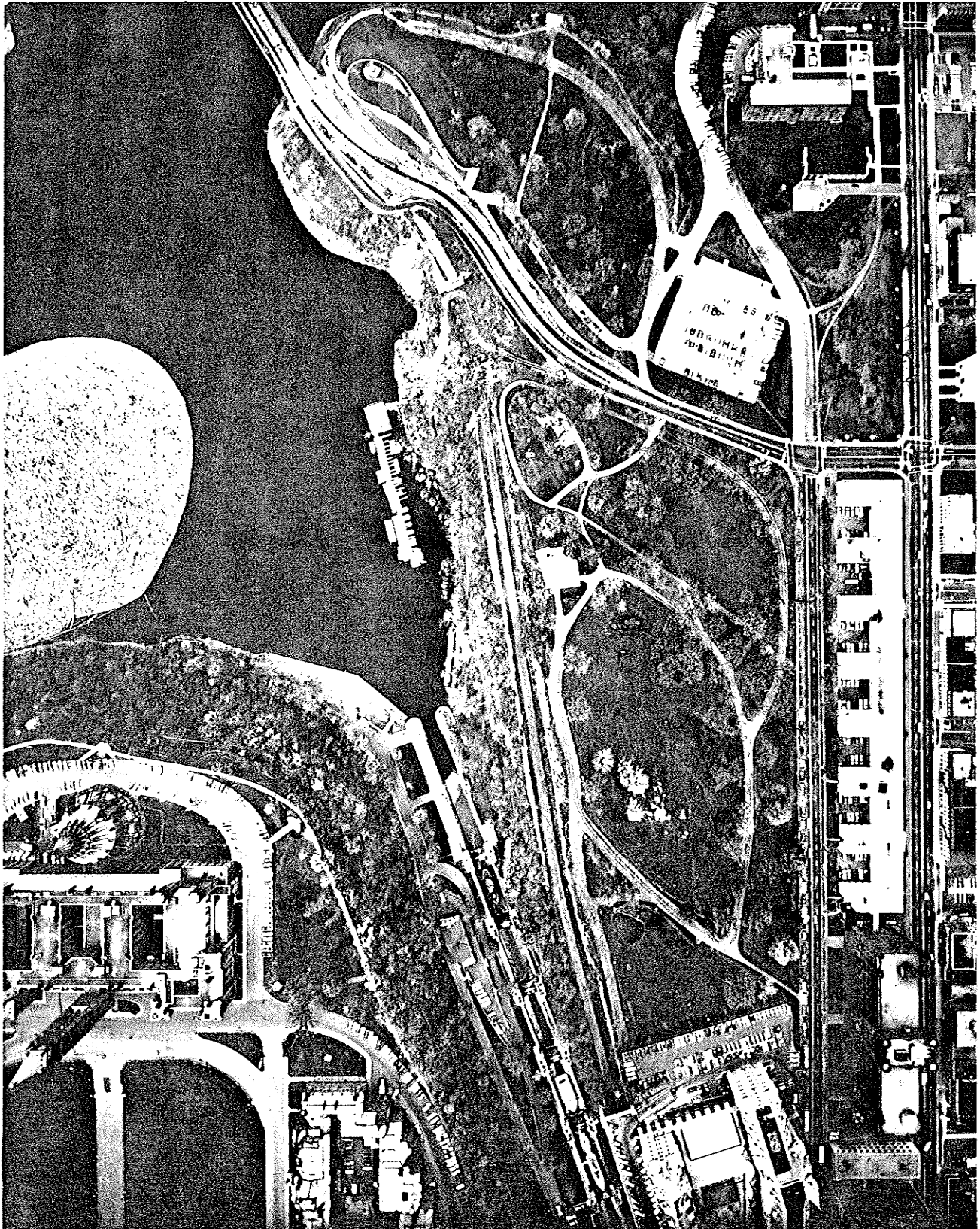


Figure 3.29: Major's Hill Park, 1968 (NAPL, A20899-59)

The following year, a master plan for the Major's Hill Park/Lady Grey Drive area was completed and circulated; the proposal, however, never saw fruition.

Through 1972 and 1973, the National Capital Commission conducted an archaeological exploration of Colonel By's former home. (see Section 4.3.1: Foundations) The result of the dig can be witnessed today with the presence of stone foundations *in situ*.

The plaque honouring Sir Edmund Head and the two art pieces, 1929-1934 and Twist One-Point Five, were added through the 1970s. The park's pathways have been converted from stonedust to asphalt; tree cover is minimal compared to earlier photographic records. With the consolidation of railway traffic away from the core, the railway bridge was removed and the terrace left without function or purpose. 'Temporary' War Building No. 6 provided an eastern edge to the park until its demolition in the late 1970s in anticipation of an architectural feature.

Although concerns had been raised over the years regarding aberrant behaviour in the park, more attention has been accorded it in the last two decades, with it meriting press attention.

Unfortunately, Major's Hill Park has not lived up to its illustrious beginnings. In the past few years it has become a hang-out for drunks and this summer the Ottawa police force had to assign extra men to the park to protect homosexuals from muggings and beatings. (Ottawa Citizen, 8 December 1973, 2)

These concerns have plagued the park for a very long time.

Through this period, budgetary concerns placed restrictions on the levels of maintenance and care allowable for Ottawa's parks. The implications for Major's Hill Park were the removal of many flower beds and pathways, leaving a greatly simplified greenspace in the wake.

### 3.1.10 Major's Hill Park in the 1980s

Robert Legget wrote once on the special quality of Major's Hill Park.

It was once suggested that the residence of the Governor-General of Canada should stand on this site to the east of the entrance locks, with its magnificent panorama of the Ottawa River and high cliff of Parliament Hill across the way, the majestic buildings upon which now fill the skyline. It is surely better, however, that this area has been kept as an open space in the midst of the steadily expanding city, for the enjoyment of citizens and guests alike. (Legget, 1982, 221)

From a form perspective, its current configuration is simply a distilled version of the original design of 1876 (Figure 3.30). The primary walking path which circles the park, is

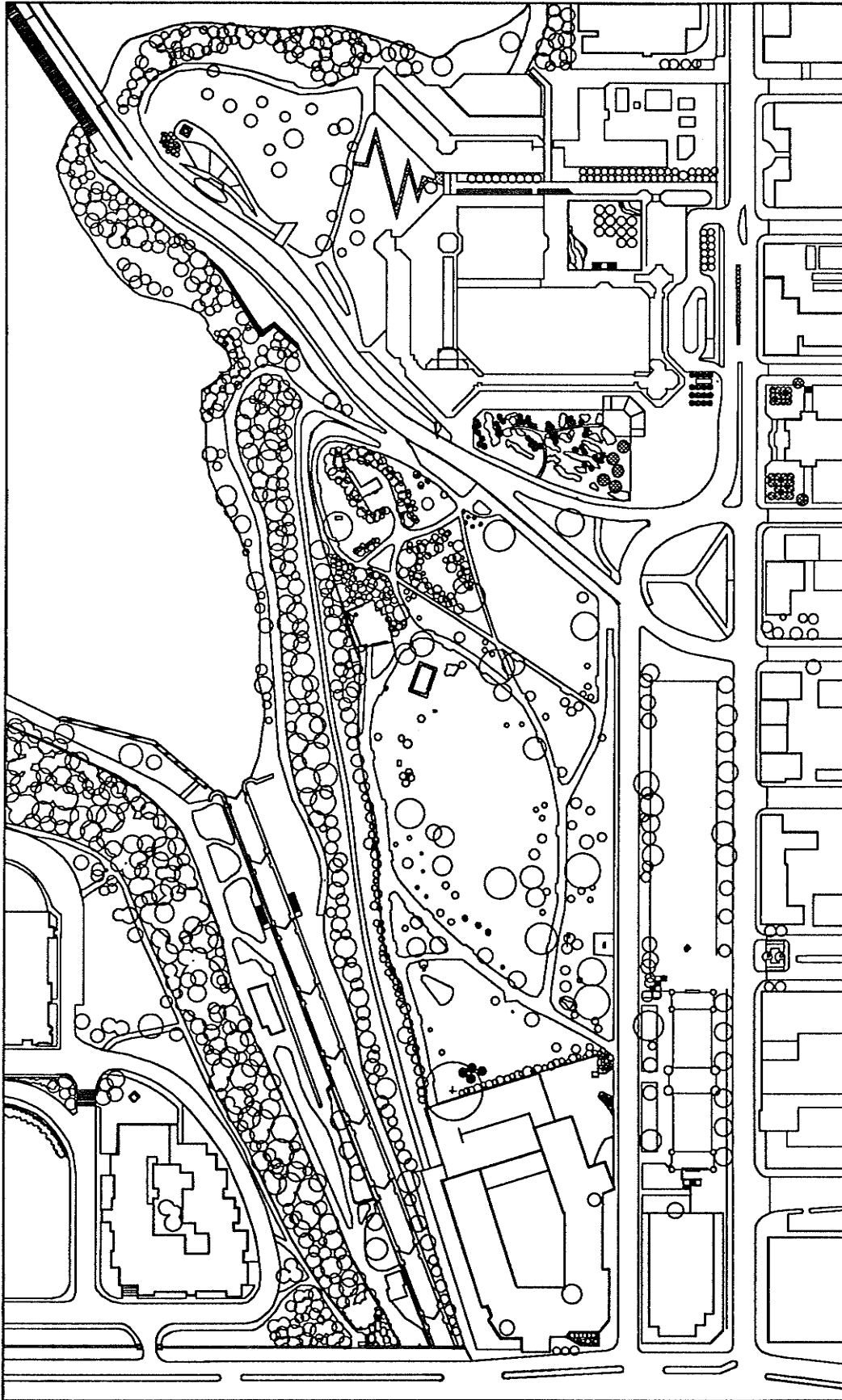


Figure 3.30: Major's Hill Park, 1987 (Altorio)

itself, lined with mature or recently planted trees, leaving a large open space in the center. Financial cutbacks have been manifest in the gradual removal of labour-intensive floral beds so that to this day, only one bed remains, a mere shadow of the park's former floral prominence. In essence, the park has been altered from a 'busy' Victorian layout to a more relaxed, gentle greensward.

A parking lot now occupies the former location of Temporary War Building No. 6, and the budding National Museum of Fine Arts has now been positioned across from the park's northeast corner.

The National Capital Commission is responsible for the maintenance of Major's Hill Park. It is used by the NCC and by the City of Ottawa on a few occasions during the year for the purposes of festivals and concerts. The most noteworthy are the week-long Festival of Spring in early May, and Canada Day, 1 July. (see Section 4.5) Although these events attract thousands of visitors to the park, they are the exception and not the rule when it comes to park usage.

There are still deep concerns about Major's Hill Park today. It is considered a hangout for both undesirable folk as well as a favourite haunt of the homosexual community; because of these reasons, the public's attitude generally precludes consideration of using the park 'after hours'.

Nevertheless, Major's Hill Park remains as one of the National Capital Region's most romantic parks, both from an historic and a scenic point of view. Throughout its history the park has been a favourite retreat on summer afternoons, the broad lawns, stately trees and magnificent views providing the attraction for citizens and for tourists alike.

It could be easy to reflect on the past from this tranquil oasis. Pondering over history here is enjoyable, considering the rich content, whether in terms of biophysical makeup (bluffs, Ottawa River), politics (Parliament Hill), society (LowerTown), or culture (Museum of Fine Arts). Major's Hill Park truly offers a focus for the multidimensional situation of the National Capital region, and a microcosm of the vast country of Canada.

Major's Hill Park has also been implicated in a number of redevelopment schemes over the past century: the following section identifies some of the ideas previously posited for the park and its context.

## 3.2 Former Studies

A number of studies in the past have identified either Major's Hill Park or it in its context as requiring change; in most of these schemes, circulation and access to and from the park have been of considerable concern. The following passages identify the more relevant studies.

### 3.2.1 Holt Commission Plan: 1915 (Figure 3.31)

The Holt Commission Plan of 1915 offered as its basic premise the creation of a federal district that would oversee the planning of the capital region. Efforts were concentrated about Parliament Hill and included Major's Hill Park. The Holt plan's most striking feature was the extension of Lady Grey Drive southwards along the west edge of the park connecting to Wellington Street across a diagonal bridge; this recreational pathway was to serve the pedestrian desire line to Wellington Street. Other paths were aligned to conform to this major intervention: the desire line from York Street in the ByWard Market was also acknowledged and accommodated. Access points from Murray and Clarence Streets were also included, passing between building volumes to meet with a semi-circular path in the park. Nepean Point was determined to be a possible location for a desired war memorial.

### 3.2.2 Cauchon Report: 1922 (Figure 3.32)

Nolan Cauchon's redevelopment plan of 1922 concentrated specifically on Confederation Place (now Confederation Square) and implicated Major's Hill Park accordingly. The most striking feature of his scheme was the extension of the park eastwards, eliminating Mackenzie Avenue and occupying the property north of the Connaught Building. The plan is distinguished by sinuous drives or pathways, dominated by Vimy Way which originated at Courcellette Place at the west end of St. Patrick Street; it wound its way further westwards, down underneath the railroad terrace and subsequently across the canal and around the base of Parliament Hill. Other elements included in the scheme were a fountain at Courcellette Place and three monuments, including one to Colonel John By.

### 3.2.3 Gréber Plan: 1950 (Figures 3.33, 3.34)

The comprehensive planning scheme proposed for the National Capital District by Jacques Gréber offered some interesting changes for Major's Hill Park. The most obvious intervention proposed was the creation of a large cross-shaped terrace, at the junction of whose arms Gréber proposed the siting of the war memorial; the rest of the park was to be covered in dense vegetation to properly accommodate the memorial. The idea was never implemented, however, and the memorial remains today.



Figure 3.31: Holt Commission Plan, 1915 (duToit, 1983, 8)

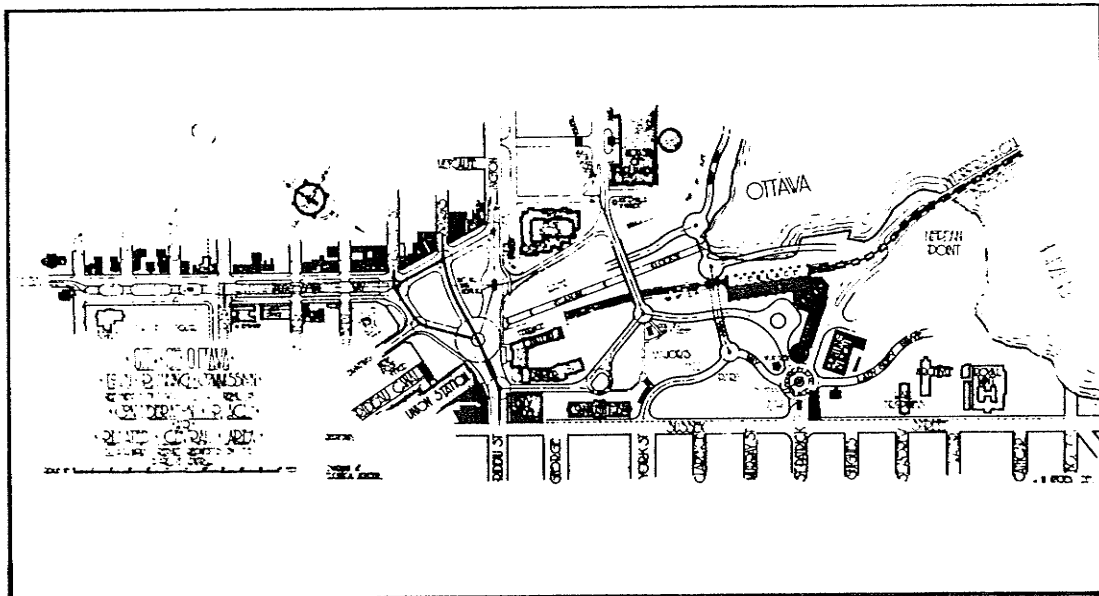


Figure 3.32: Cauchon Plan, 1928 (NCCe, 1984, 18)

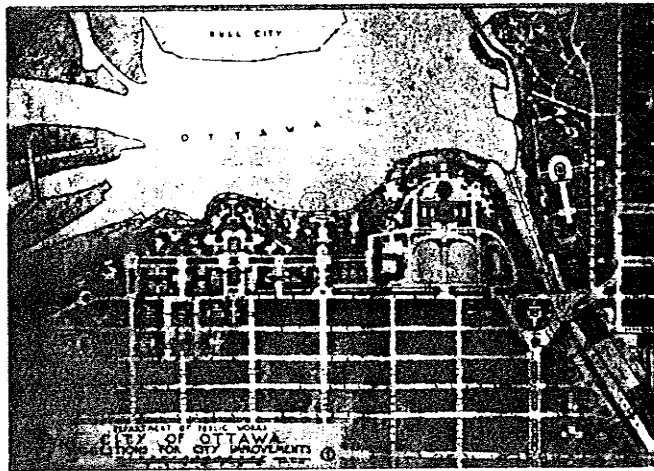


Figure 3.33: Gréber Plan, 1938 (duToit, 1983, 8)

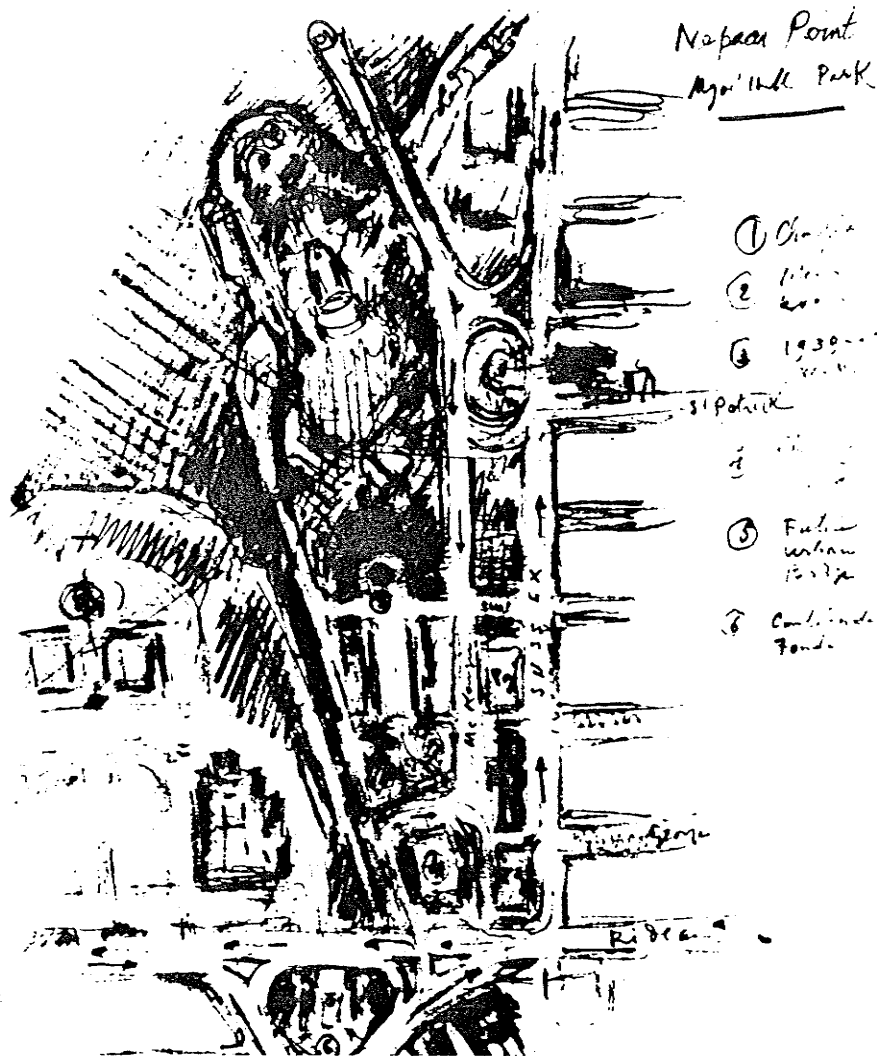


Figure 3.34: Design sketches by Jacques Gréber, c.1955 (NCC Microfiche, 1289-1)



### 3.2.4 Ottawa Central Area Plan: 1969

Among the recommendations of the Ottawa Central Area Plan was the protection of the silhouette of Parliament Hill. In protecting and enhancing the stature of the Canadian seat of government, there were two design objectives:

1. to protect the view of the Parliament Buildings from points of vantage where the silhouette is already clearly visible; and,
2. to preserve the symbolic integrity of the dominant structure of the complex — the Peace Tower — by maintaining its height dominance in the Central Area. (OCAP, 1969, 72)

Among those specific vantage points identified was the western edge of the ByWard Market area which included Major's Hill Park.

### 3.2.5 Johnson Sustronk Weinstein Study: 1972 (Figure 3.35)

Johnson Sustronk Weinstein's redevelopment plan for the Major's Hill Park/Lady Grey Drive area referred to the park as being seldom used and existing as a "backwater": access was limited to and through it despite its location in the core of the capital, "with many pedestrians — tourists, and office/shop employees —" milling about its fringes. (JSW, 1972, 19) The report identifies the park's amenities as being "fine mature trees, interesting historical monuments, sheer cliff faces, and some of the most dramatic views in the Capital." (JSW, 1972) However, it also expressed concern that these views and the historical significance of the park were scarcely exploited in the park's plan and that "Scattered monuments and rocks are not particularly interesting to most tourists." (JSW, 1972, 17)

The proposal dealt with the difficult problem of access and circulation to and from Major's Hill Park. It identified the need for a connection between Wellington Street and to the park via the western flank of the Chateau Laurier Hotel across the abandoned Canadian National Railway (CNR) tunnel. Lower Town's ByWard Market was also cited as being "vital and attractive" and "could be more closely related to Major's Hill Park by strengthening the pedestrian connections." (Johnson Sustronk Weinstein, 1972, 10) As in the Holt Plan, direct connections would be made between major generators of pedestrian traffic about the park.

### 3.2.6 EDA Collaborative Study: 1983

The EDA Collaborative developed an open space concept for the Ottawa-Hull Inner Core which included a plan and accompanying guidelines. Major's Hill Park was identified as an integral aspect of the study area. EDA's objectives regarding Major's Hill Park included improving pedestrian access points and linkages, maintaining and enhancing views, and increasing programmed activities for year-round usage. Although many recommendations accompanied these objectives, further study ideas included integration

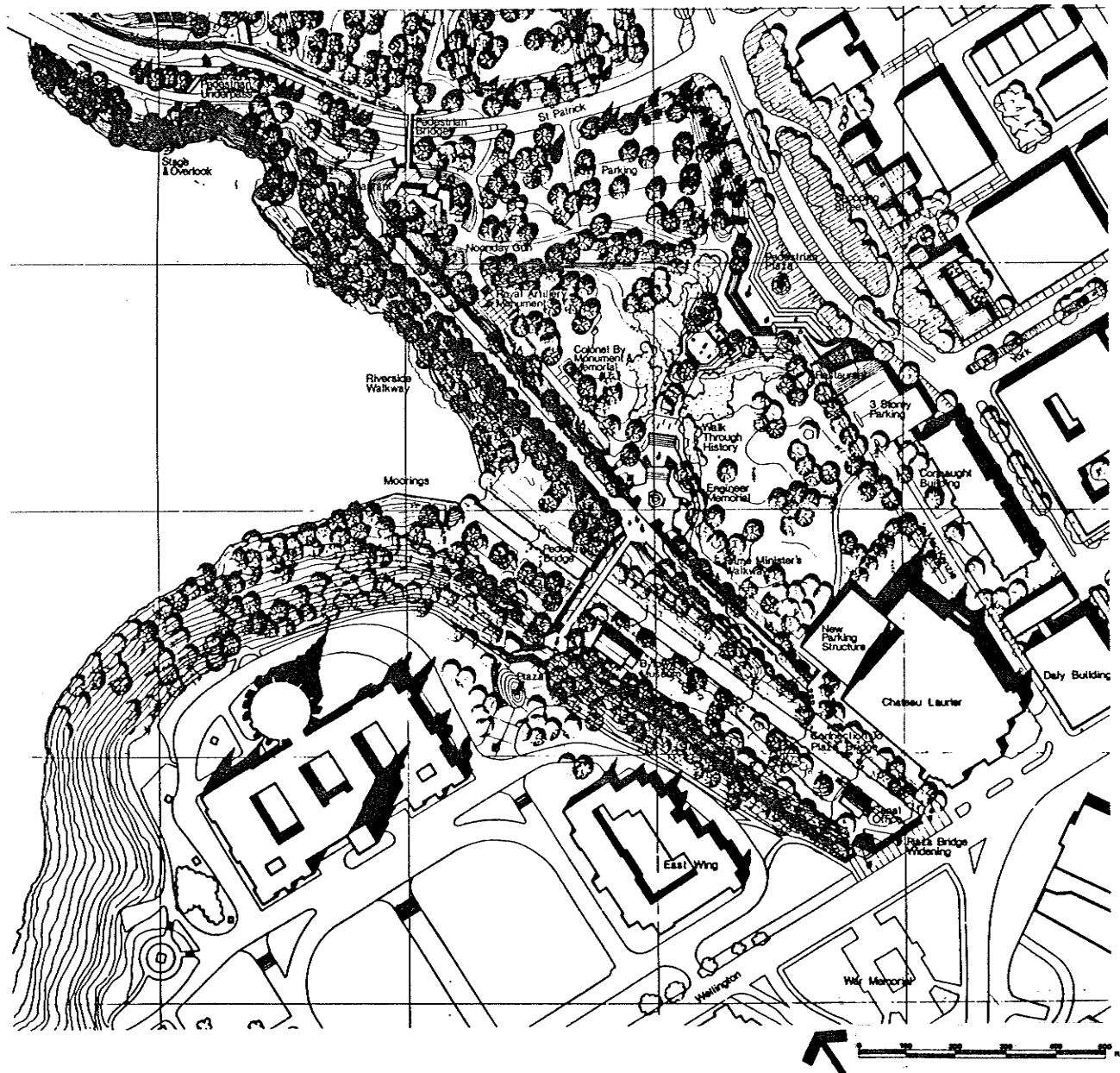


Figure 3.35: Johnson Sustronk Weinstein Plan, 1972 (JSW, 1972)

with the Ceremonial Route (Confederation Boulevard) and access to Wellington Street from the west side of the Chateau Laurier Hotel.

### 3.2.7 Ceremonial Routes Study: 1983 (Figure 3.36)

This urban design study commissioned by the National Capital Commission delved deeply into the ceremonial linking of Quebec (Hull) and Ontario (Ottawa). It outlined the opportunities and constraints along the 4.8 kilometre route, and identified Major's Hill Park as a major greenspace on the route, accommodating the Esplanade component on its eastern edge (along Mackenzie Avenue). No other intervention regarding the park is outlined. (At the time of its publishing in 1983, the report also identified the placement of the American Embassy on the existing parking lot site north of the Connaught Building, thus raising some interesting urban design issues) The Sussex/St. Patrick Node, Sussex Drive and Mackenzie Street, and the St. Patrick Street Escarpment were all discussed as to how they affected, or were affected by, the Ceremonial Route.

### 3.2.8 Altorio Associates Ltd. Study: 1987 (Figure 3.37)

In August of 1986, Altorio and Associates (Ottawa) were hired by the National Capital Commission to develop a conceptual plan for Major's Hill Park. Initial work included a study of the existing site's features, elements, connections, etc. Although no funds are currently allocated to further work (until 1989-1990), the work ongoing at the Museum of Fine Arts and Confederation Boulevard, which has impacted considerably on this site, was seen to warrant this study.

The ultimate driving force behind the Altorio plan was an amelioration of the poor pedestrian access to and from the park from its environs, especially from the gallery, the By Ward Market and Wellington Street. Interior circulation is reconfigured as an oval, evolving naturally from an enhancement of circulation and projected functions. All existing trees were retained in the process.

The open area next to the Chateau Laurier Hotel's parking structure has been slated for a semi-circular seating wall sporting a sculpture court. Its placement reorients the main entrance slightly to the north of its current situation to align with a desire line from the market area. The central open space will provide enough room for a double row of kiosks during festival times, along an axis stretching from the new staircase at the northeast portion of Confederation Boulevard to the new sculpture court.

The current maintenance building is slated for a permanent concessions outlet as well as for washroom facilities; a tea terrace is also proposed. To its east, formed by the semi-circular esplanade of Confederation Boulevard, the resultant space will become the location for detailed horticultural beds and displays.

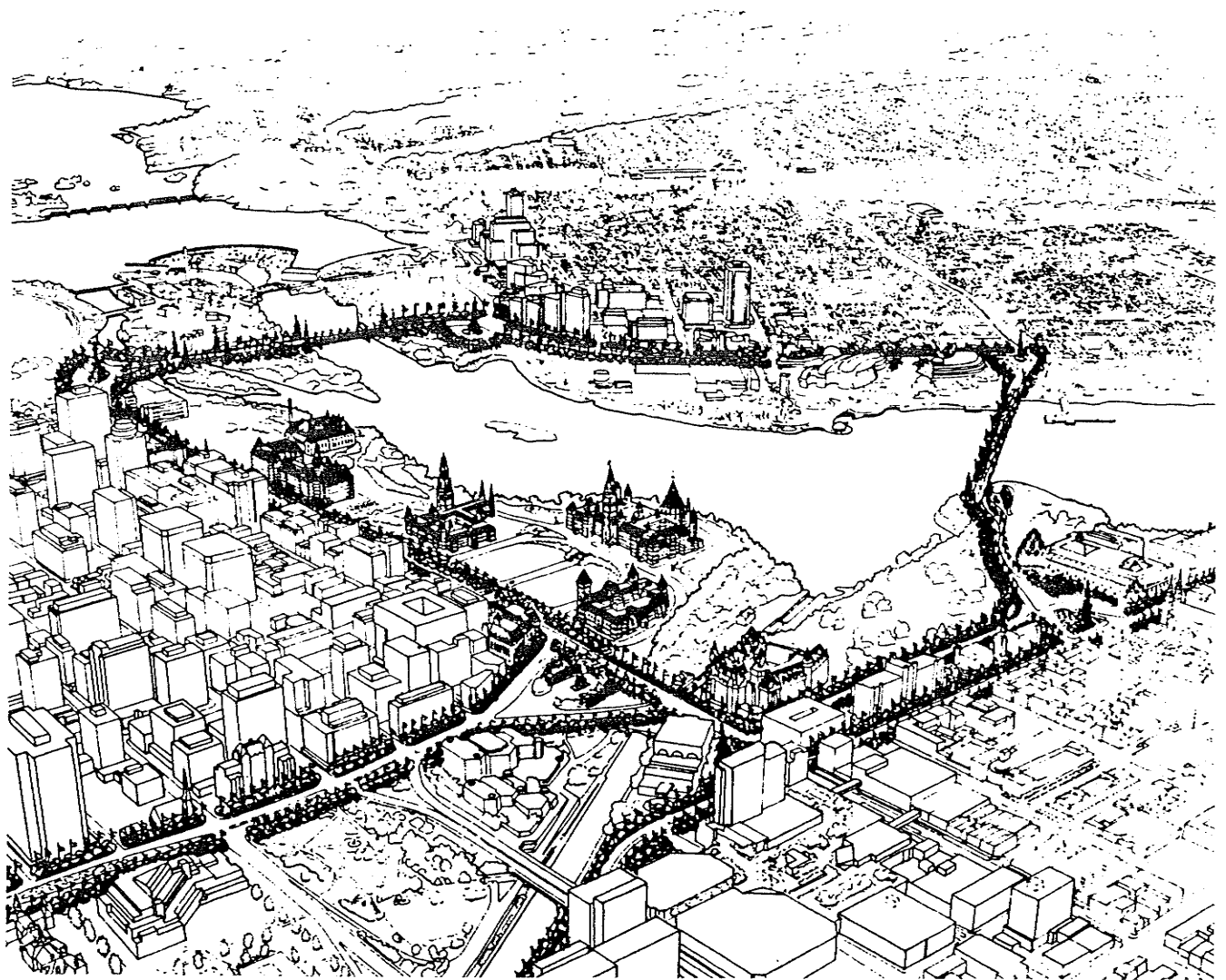
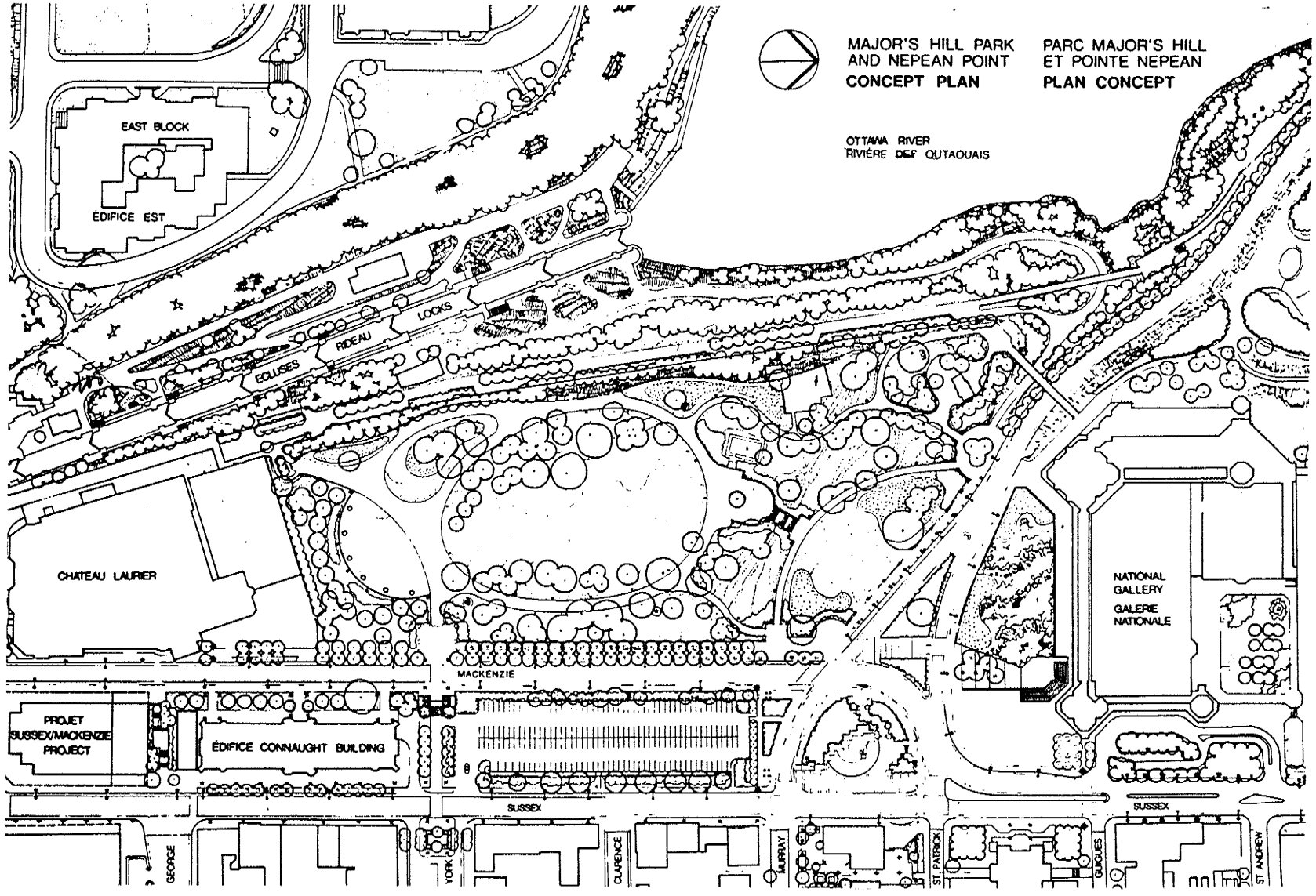


Figure 3.36: Ceremonial Routes Study, 1983

Figure 3.37: Altorio Associates Ltd. Plan, 1987 (Altorio, 1987)





**Chapter Four:  
ENVIRONMENT**

The Ottawa River had always served the native peoples well: it connected distant villages and peoples, it provided food; in short, it existed as a lifeline or 'highway'. With the white man's arrival and the advent of the beaver pelt trade, the river became an integral link in a waterway network that would eventually stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The turbulent Chaudiere Falls — acting as a natural stopping point in journeys upriver — promoted settlement in a region rich in forests and natural beauty.

Ottawa, the Canadian capital, saw germination on the banks of this river and from this location has experienced an illustrious and colourful history. From her humble beginnings as a lumber town at the turn of the nineteenth century to her position today as the national seat of government, Ottawa has witnessed many changes, both in her physical makeup and in her social character. At Confederation, Ottawa's 18,000 people were spread over 760 hectares; in 1984, 740,000 persons in the National Capital Region — spanning the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario — occupied 466,200 hectares. (Taylor, 1986) (Figure 4.1) The NCR envelopes twenty-six local municipalities and two regional governments, each with its own jurisdiction over land use planning powers and responsibilities (including the preparation of official plans and zoning by-laws, and the delivery of major infrastructure development, ie. transportation, water, sewage, and community services). (NCC, 1987, 1)

#### 4.1 Built Context

Major's Hill Park lies centrally in Ottawa within easy reach of both the commercial/retail and business core. From this location some of the most attractive views of Parliament Hill can be had, especially of the Peace Tower and the Parliamentary Library. Its four hectares (13.2 acres) are skirted on the west by the Rideau Canal, to the north by the Ottawa River, and to the south, by one of the city's most memorable landmarks, the Chateau Laurier Hotel; to the east lies Mackenzie Avenue and beyond it the vibrant ByWard Market. Because of its situation, however, the park has become somewhat isolated and remains today a place for quiet respite within the busy city. The following descriptions attempt to clarify this setting.

##### 4.1.1 Lower Town / By Ward Market (Figure 4.3)

Lower Town, bounded by Sussex Drive, King Edward Avenue, St. Patrick Street and the By Ward Market, was originally the bastion of Ottawa's Roman Catholic French and Irish communities from the 1830s until the mid-1900s. Its proximity to the downtown core and its historic flavour make Lower Town a very attractive area in which to live; it boasts 2200 households. Today it has become gentrified by an affluent class, and is no longer considered a Francophone enclave. The market, which has traditionally served the interests of the inhabitants of the Lower Town area, is unique in the Ottawa area. It boasts many restaurants, boutiques, taverns, wine bars, bookstores, galleries, and patisseries.

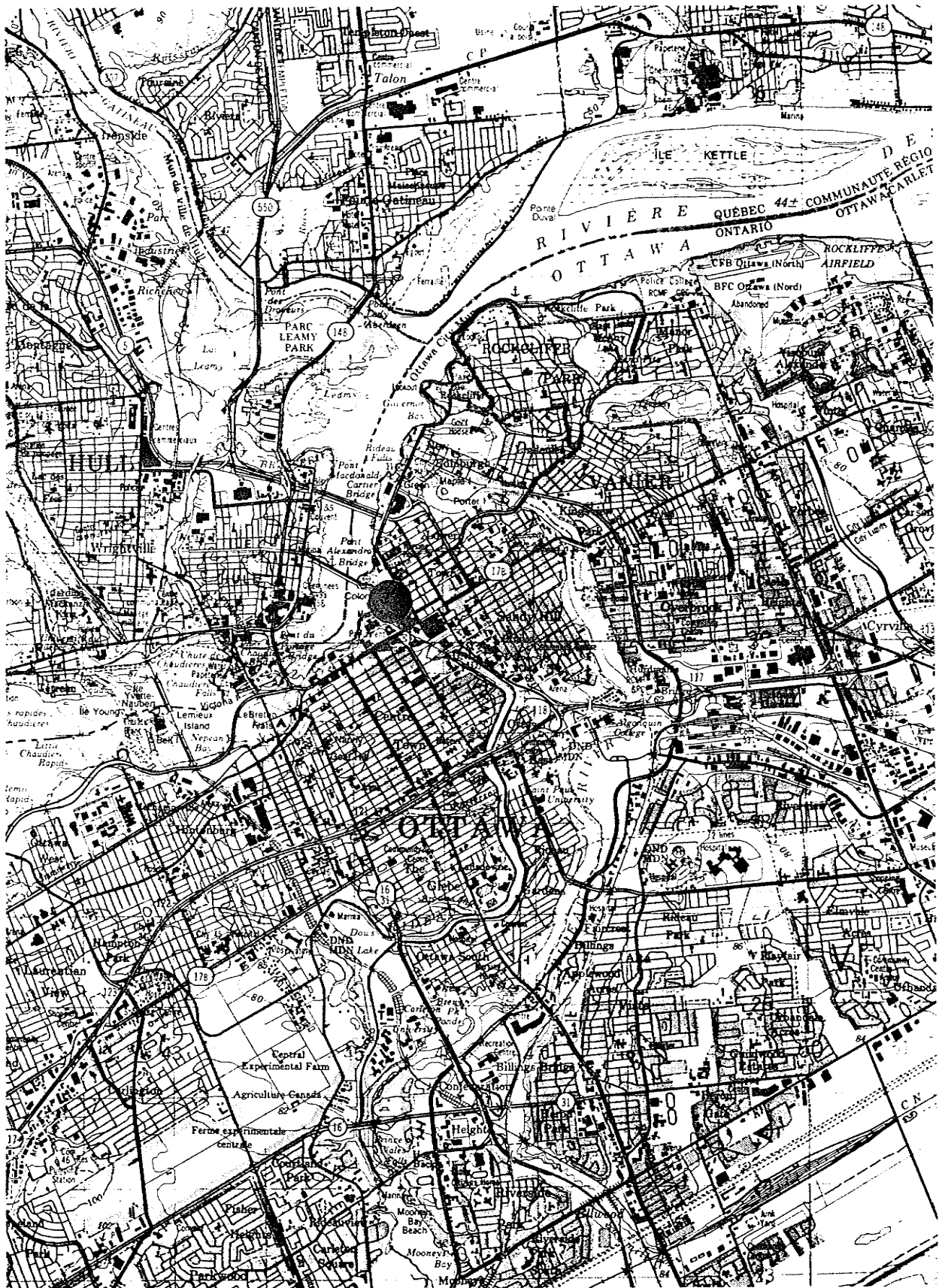


Figure 4.1: The National Capital Region

● Major's Hill Park



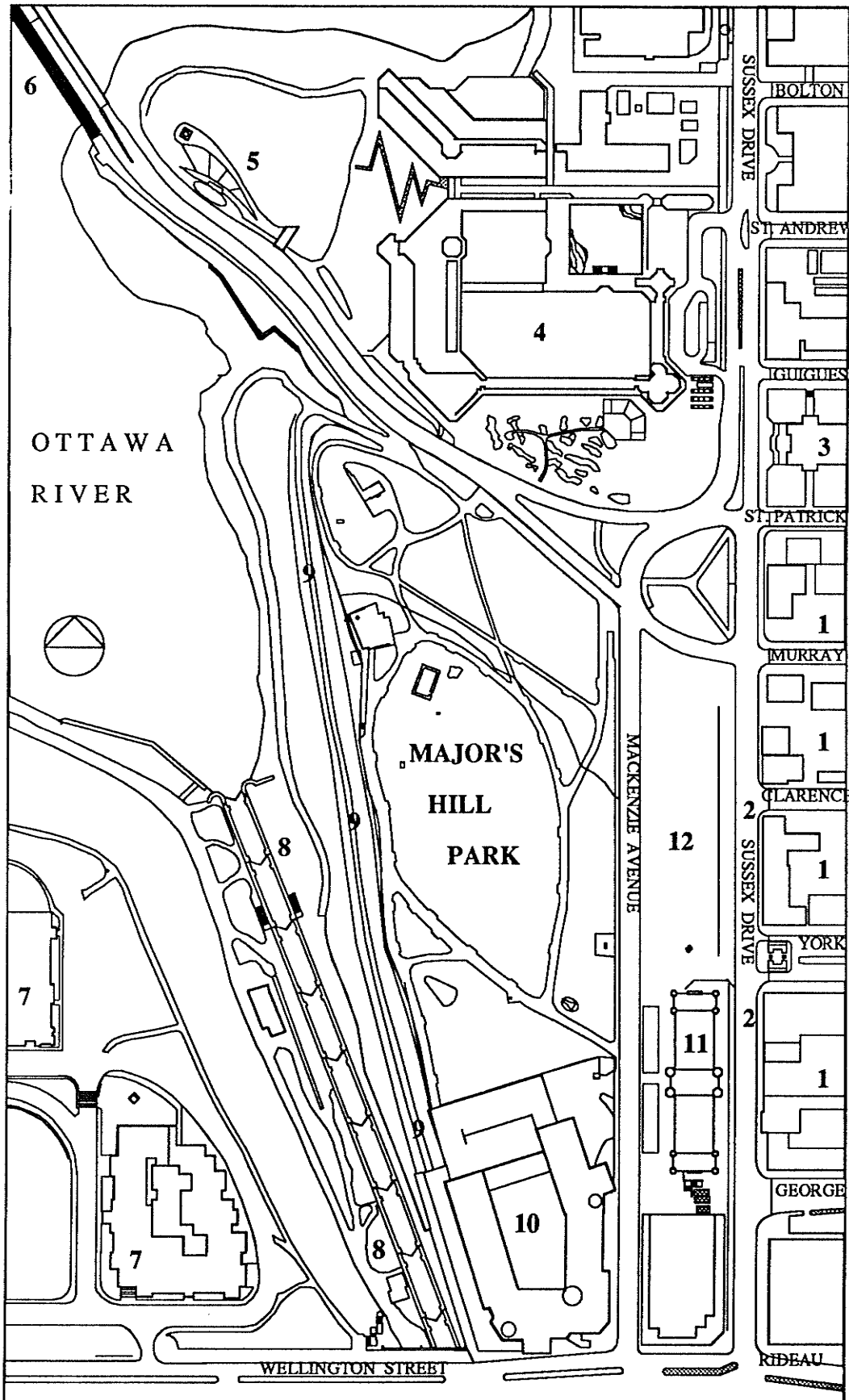


Figure 4.2: Built Context of Major's Hill Park

- |                           |                     |                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 LowerTown/ByWard Market | 5 Nepean Point Park | 9 Railway Terrace        |
| 2 Sussex Drive Facades    | 6 Alexandra Bridge  | 10 Chateau Laurier Hotel |
| 3 Basilica Notre Dame     | 7 Parliament Hill   | 11 Connaught Building    |
| 4 Museum of Fine Arts     | 8 Rideau Canal      | 12 NCC Parking Lot       |

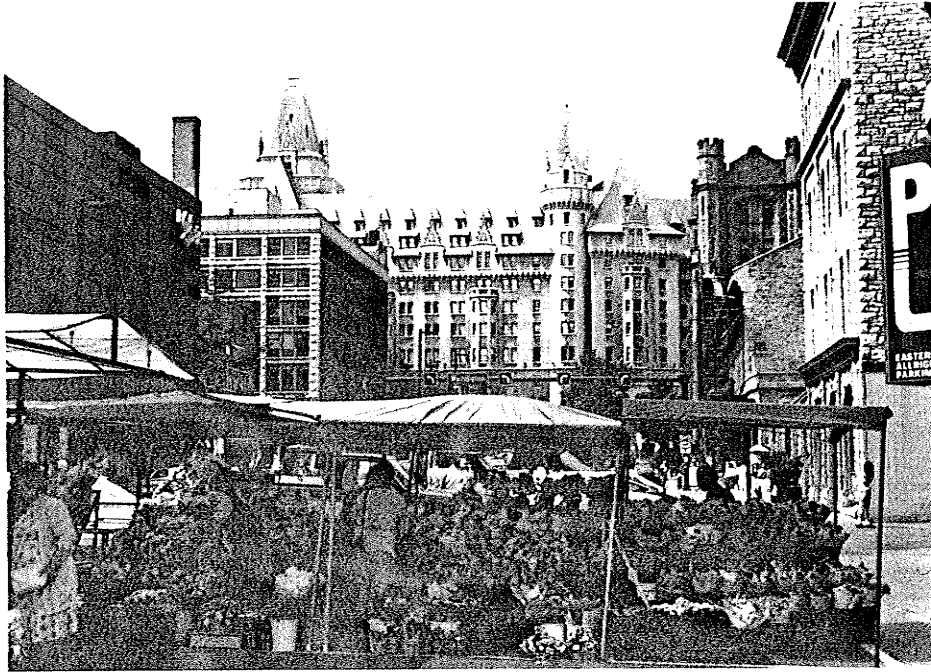


Figure 4.3: Lower Town / By Ward Market

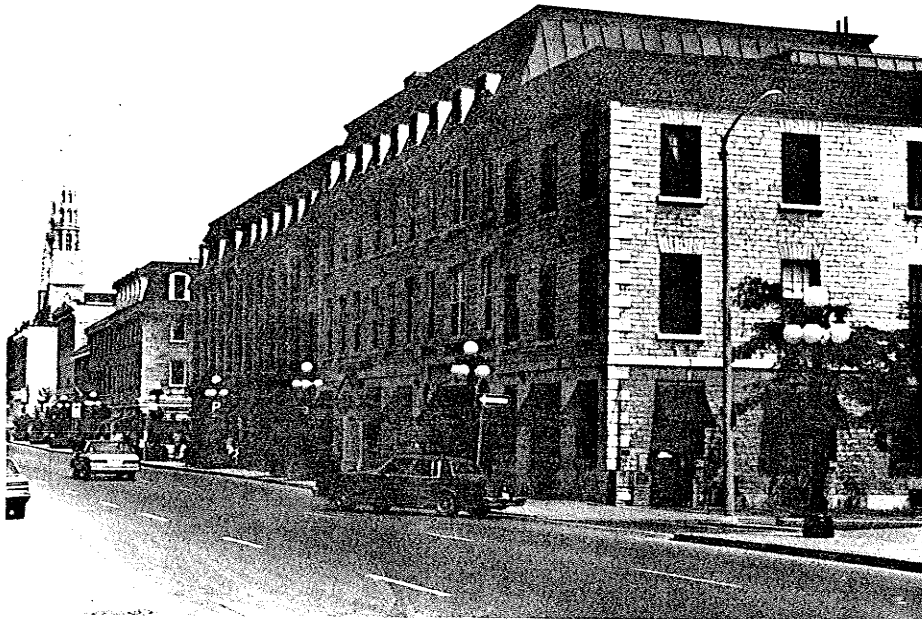


Figure 4.4: Sussex Drive (Mile of History)

#### 4.1.2 Sussex Drive (Mile of History) (Figure 4.4)

One block east of Major's Hill Park is Sussex Drive, also referred to as the Mile of History. The longest continuous stretch of heritage buildings in the city, circa 1865-1875, is found along its east side. The distinctive three and four storey structures between George and St. Patrick Streets were erected in a period typified by a thriving lumber trade and a rapidly growing number of civil servants in the burgeoning capital city; the resultant demand for commercial and residential properties spurred Lower Town, Centre Town and Sandy Hill on to substantial growth. Today these buildings house Institut Jeanne-d'Arc, shops, art galleries, an architect's office, and the Canadian Ski Museum, to name but a few.

In 1961, in the face of disappearing heritage buildings, the National Capital Commission purchased and subsequently rehabilitated this area; work included burying overhead wiring, installing new light standards, laying new sidewalks and cleaning, repairing and redecorating the line of historic buildings to expose and strengthen their century-old qualities. One expressed concern is that after business hours, this section of Sussex Drive becomes virtually dead quiet.

To the east of these buildings lie an interesting series of open spaces developed over the last twenty years by the National Capital Commission joining St. Patrick Street to George Street called the Sussex Courtyards; these courtyards have offered quiet respite off the busy market streets, as well as preserving an important aspect of Ottawa's architectural heritage. Today, combined with commercial and retail establishments, this area along Sussex Drive on the Mile of History remains as a vivid reminder of the City of Ottawa's early development.

#### 4.1.3 Basilica Notre-Dame (Figure 4.5)

As a fledgling settlement on the banks of the Ottawa River, ByTown was the refuge and home to many different cultural and religious communities. Among them, the Roman Catholic population grew steadily to such a point that a formal setting for their worship was required. Therefore, on three lots granted by Colonel John By (on what is now the corner of Sussex Drive and St. Patrick Street), a wooden church was erected by 1832. Within the decade, a larger structure was required, and construction began on a stone cathedral modelled on St. Patrick's Church in Quebec City. The design of Basilica Notre Dame was begun in traditional, Romanesque style but was completed in the garb of English Gothic Revival, popular in Europe at the time. Although the majority of work was not completed until 1858, services commenced in September 1846 and the church was consecrated in September 1853. Basilica Notre Dame was completed in the 1880s.

Ottawa's oldest extant church is familiar to the general public by its two towering spires (55 metres in height) which together frame a wooden statue of the Madonna and Child. Ottawa River raftsmen and woodsmen in the Gatineau Hills later rendered the statue homage as Notre-Dame des Voyageurs. Basilica Notre Dame's lancet windows, tracery

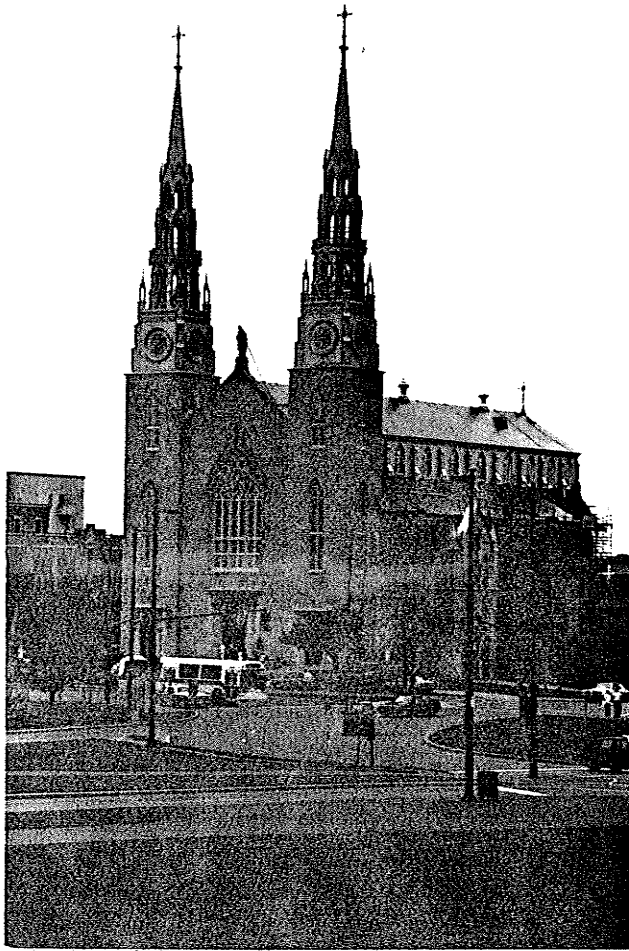


Figure 4.5: Basilica Notre Dame

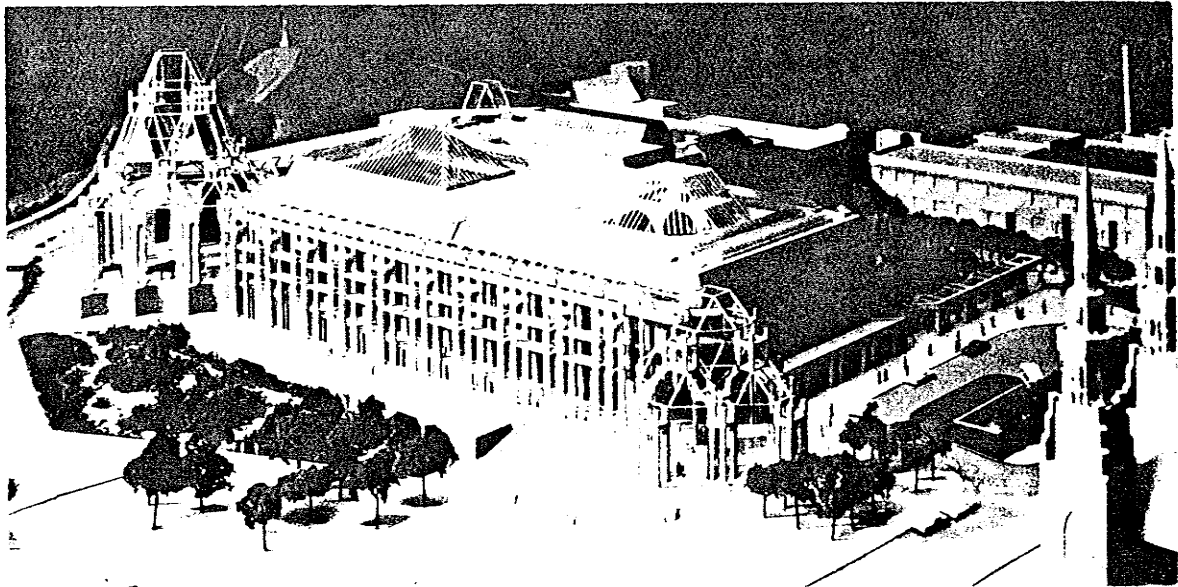


Figure 4.6: National Museum of Fine Arts (NCCe, 1984)

and delicate proportioning pronounce its Gothic heritage and, with its tolling bells, provide an elegant addition to the context of Major's Hill Park.

#### 4.1.4 National Museum of Fine Arts (Figure 4.6)

In 1982 the renowned architect Moshe Safdie won the competition to create a new, more appropriate home for Canada's national collection of fine art. Safdie's design, currently under construction, with an opening set for 1 July 1988, has boldly entered into dialogue with Parliament Hill, and, more specifically, with the Parliamentary Library. In its location, the new Museum of Fine Arts must respond concurrently to Major's Hill Park, Nepean Point, Basilica Notre Dame, and the War Museum, a challenge to which Safdie has ably responded. The museum fills in a lively skyline which also includes Nepean Point and the spires of the Basilica.

The museum contains the park's northeast edge with a four-storey wall of pink granite and tinted glass whose strong vertical concrete members are tempered by the transparency of glazing and lighter horizontal members. The landscape scheme, developed by Cornelia Oberlander, plays on the theme of the Group of Seven's work (accepted as the purveyors of a truly Canadian style of painting), with special emphasis on the boreal forest of Canada's Shield country; the inclusion of pines and maples will set off the structure and draw the art work out beyond the gallery walls. The opening of this new museum will generate greater pedestrian traffic in and about the north end of Major's Hill Park, thus creating new challenges and opportunities for design.

#### 4.1.5 Nepean Point (Figure 4.7)

Sir Evan Nepean (1751-1822), head of the British Colonial Office, was immortalized in 1876 when the promontory north of Major's Hill Park, extending into the Ottawa River, was named after him. At one point a landing for steamboats, Nepean Point has always been a good vantage point from which to view the water-dominated scenery of the area.

In 1909, following the sale of land at the southern extremity of Major's Hill Park, formal park space was developed on the point. It was characterized by a fountain and meandering paths leading towards a central water fountain. A steel footbridge joined it to the park for easier access (dismantled in 1959 by the FDC). On 27 May 1915, a bronze statue of Samuel de Champlain was unveiled by the Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, in honour of Champlain's passage up the Ottawa River in June of 1613; an astrolabe dated 1603 is held aloft by the explorer.

Centennial year, 1967, witnessed great change on Nepean Point. The flat bluff was redeveloped into a high mound of seats and terraced walkways; the composition focused on a stage whose backdrop was Parliament Hill. The 800-seat amphitheatre served as the venue for the newly-developed sound and light show (*son et lumière*), a depiction of the tragic burning of the Parliament Buildings in February of 1916. Since this time the Astrolabe Theatre has accommodated concerts, plays and dance performances. From its heights, one can look southwards to view the strong green presence of the Major's Hill, contained at its south end by the Chateau Laurier Hotel. It is anticipated that with the

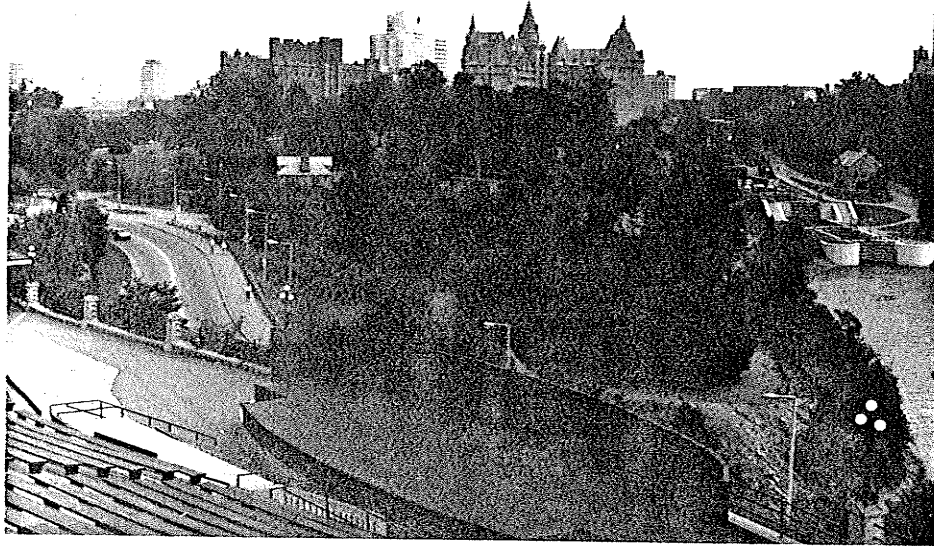


Figure 4.7: Nepean Point looking south to Major's Hill Park

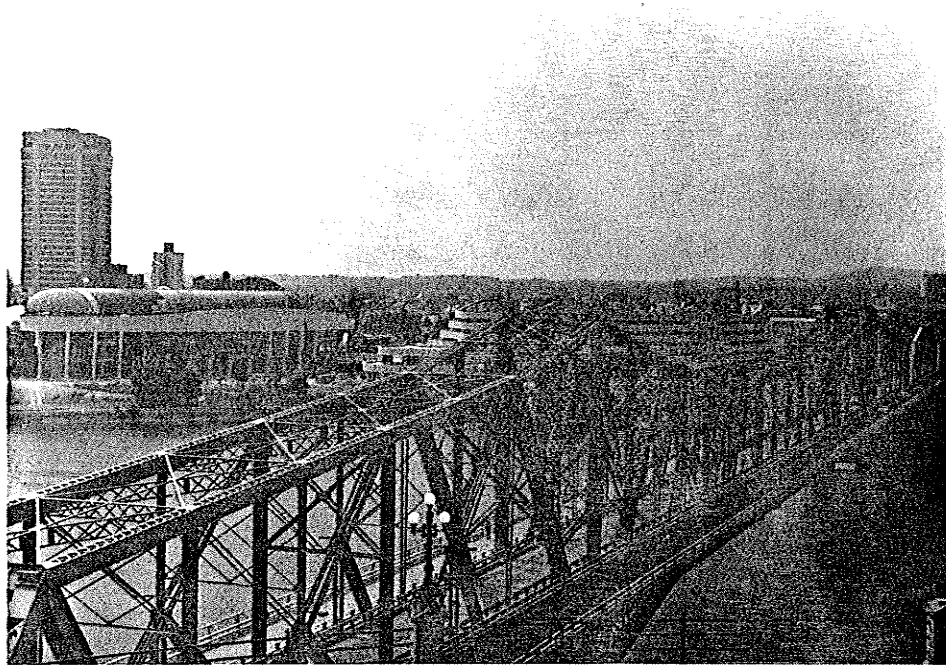


Figure 4.8: Alexandra (Interprovincial) Bridge

opening of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Nepean Point will be revitalized once again to serve as splendidly as it has in the past.

#### 4.1.6 Alexandra (Interprovincial) Bridge (Figure 4.8)

As the capital city of Canada grew and approached the twentieth century with a population of nearly 60,000 people, transportation needs became an important issue. The golden age of the railroad begged increased linkages to the capital and, in particular, connections from the Quebec side. The construction of the Alexandra Bridge (or the Interprovincial Bridge as it is more commonly known) allowed the passage of the Pontiac Pacific Junction Railway across the expanse. The bridge was constructed between 1898 and 1901 with the Duke of York presiding over its official opening on 21 February 1901 in honour of Queen Alexandra.

On its completion it was the longest steel cantilever bridge in North America with a main span of 320 metres, and a total length of 575 metres, including its approaches. As well as supporting a rail line, the bridge accommodated electric trams, vehicular and pedestrian traffic across its 15.5 metre width. Since that time many agreements have been struck related to its use and maintenance, between the railway companies, the City of Ottawa and the federal government.

The removal of streetcars from the Ottawa landscape in 1959, and the subsequent closure of Union Station in 1966, created an opportunity for changes in the bridge's function. Ownership of and responsibility for the bridge was transferred by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to the federal Department of Public Works. As the tracks were no longer required, DPW removed them and a roadbed was installed in their place; automobile traffic has since dominated the central and eastern portions of the bridge. A wide pedestrian and bicycle boardwalk developed along the western side has afforded breathtaking views of the Hill and Ottawa River environs ever since.

#### 4.1.7 National Museum of Civilization (Figure 4.9)

As with the nation's collection of art, many of Canada's historic artifacts are improperly exhibited; instead they are spread pell mell over a variety of venues in the City of Ottawa. The object of the competition for a new Museum of Civilization was to consolidate these integral pieces of Canadian history under one roof in a structure that would appear Canadian in every sense. Douglas Cardinal, given this mandate, designed a museum showcase boasting organic forms sculpted as the Canadian landscape is by wind, rain, and snow. Currently under construction, the museum will be opened in 1989, and shall be prominent in its location on the Hull side of the Ottawa River. Major's Hill Park will offer a good vantage point from which to view the museum.

#### 4.1.8 Parliament Hill (Figure 4.10)

Parliament Hill consists of three structures, the East, the West and the Centre Blocks, situated on a majestic bluff overlooking the Ottawa River. In anticipation of the founding

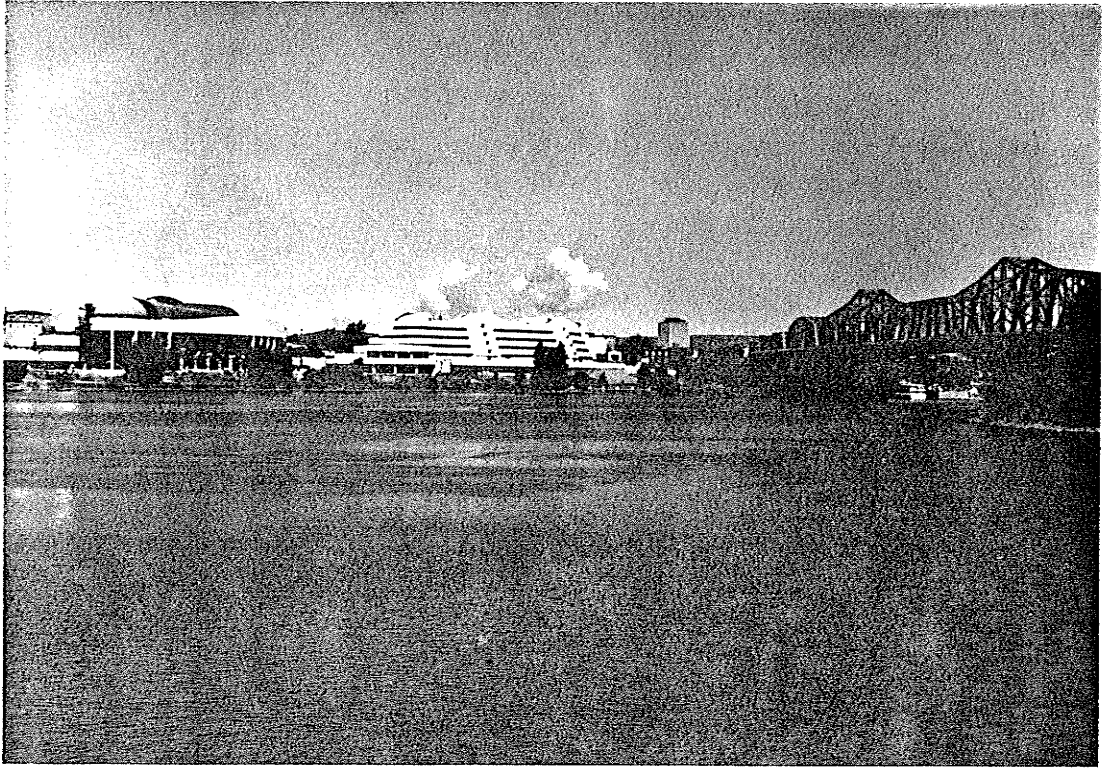


Figure 4.9: National Museum of Civilization

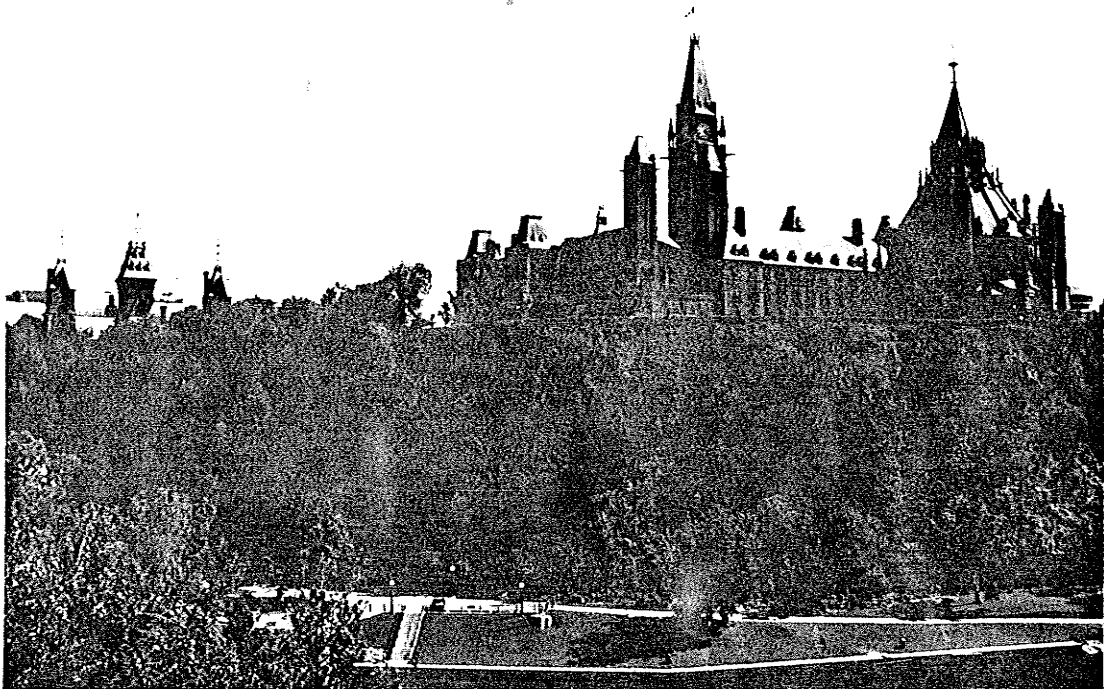


Figure 4.10: Parliament Hill



of the Canadian nation, the site was chosen in 1857 to suitably display the place where the new nation's legislation would be debated and passed.

The original building complex, designed by the architects Fuller and Jones, was completed in 1866. The Centre Block serves as the setting for both the Senate and the House of Commons. The fire of February 1916 destroyed this edifice, save for the Library. It underwent a complete rebuilding in the ensuing decade in the neo-Gothic style; the Peace Tower, symbol of a proud and free nation, was completed in 1927. The tower houses a memorial chamber for the war dead, a viewing gallery for the public, and a carillon which is sounded at certain times during the day.

The East and West Blocks were constructed between 1859 and 1865 to house those departments and offices necessary to the running of government. Many changes have occurred over time, yet these structures remain virtually as they did when they were first opened. The East Block, more recently renovated, is prominently displayed and easily seen from Major's Hill Park across Entrance Valley.

In general the structures that make up the Parliament Buildings complement each other and the environment in which they exist. Edmund Bacon remarks in Design of Cities that the composition is perhaps one of the finest examples of Victorian exuberance in the world. Any interventions made in Major's Hill Park should recognize and make reference to these magnificent symbols of our country.

#### 4.1.9 Rideau Canal / Entrance Valley (Figure 4.11)

The deep ravine which abuts Major's Hill Park's west side was the site chosen as the starting point for the 200 kilometre Rideau Canal ending on Lake Ontario. Following the War of 1812, the British feared American reprisals; a new canal system would allow the safe passage of military traffic between Montreal and Kingston without interruption. Lt. Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers envisioned it as "an imperishable monument". (By, 1826, Bytown Museum) Entrance Valley boasts eight locks (of a total 47), with an elevation change of 25 metres. The limestone cliffs on either side provided the building blocks for the project.

Two original structures exist to the west of the locks. One of these, the Commissariat (1827), served as the headquarters of Colonel By himself, from which he directed the construction of the canal; it also served as storehouse and treasury. The Ottawa Historical Society currently runs the Bytown Museum in this building. The second structure was constructed in 1888 and served as the lockmaster's house; it is used today by ParksCanada staff. Following refurbishment in 1982-1983, the Rideau locks still operate as efficiently as they did 155 years ago.

#### 4.1.10 Railroad Terrace (Figure 4.12)

Following the agreement between the federal government and the Grand Trunk Railway, the Alexandra Bridge was officially opened in 1901 to accommodate a new railway line; a terrace to allow the passage of train traffic to Union Station was chiselled out

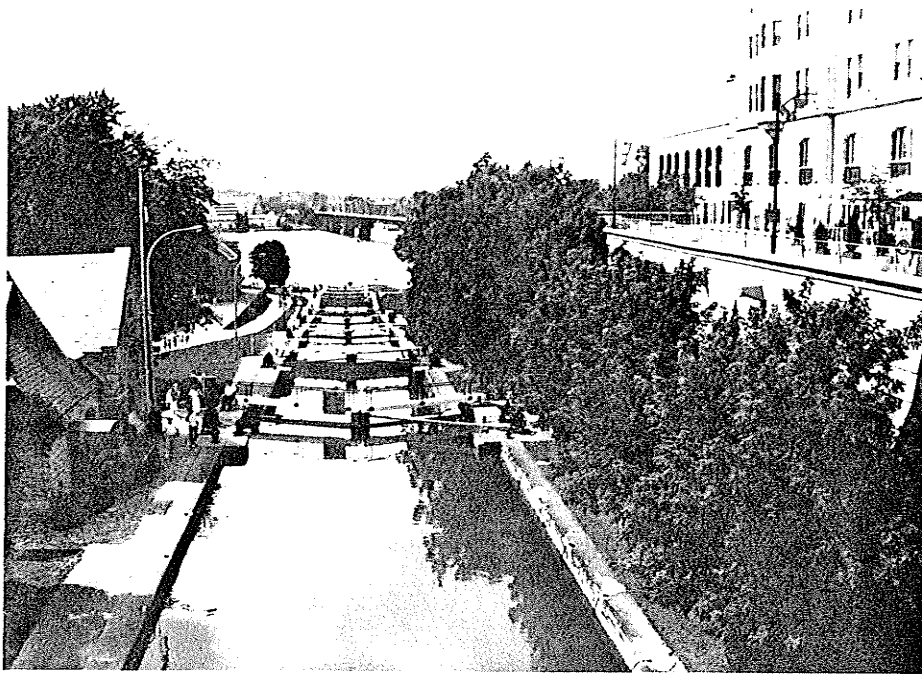


Figure 4.11: Rideau Canal / Entrance Valley



Figure 4.12: Railroad Terrace

of the craggy cliff alongside Major's Hill Park. Railway traffic utilized this line until the 1960s when the National Capital Commission chose to relocate Ottawa's main railway station in accordance with the Greber Plan. The terrace became redundant as a transportation link and fell into disuse; it has since existed as derelict land, coming to an end at the Chateau Laurier tunnel. Currently, its derelict, unrefined nature prohibits more than minimal usage, and this by 'social outcasts' who prefer the solitude that the terrace provides them.

With the pressing development of the first phase of Confederation Boulevard for July 1988 as well as the opening of the National Museum of Fine Arts, the railroad terrace has also been slated for redevelopment. The railway terrace refurbishment currently being undertaken under the auspices of the NCC, proposes a regrading of the property and laying of paving stone; it also promises the addition of site furniture (including light standards and benches), and the revitalization of existing plant material.

The railroad terrace offers many good vantage points along its length for views towards the Museum of Civilization, Nepean Point (and more specifically, Champlain's statue), the Commissariat Building alongside the Rideau Canal, Parliament Hill, and the wide sweep of the Ottawa River.

As well, on traversing its length from the Chateau Laurier tunnel (terrace), there is an interesting periodic disappearance and reappearance of the Champlain monument atop Nepean Point which, too, is missed. Unfortunately, frustration and disappointment at reaching a 'dead-end' appears to be felt by pedestrians along this stretch. Severe bluffs separate the park from the railway terrace and the Rideau Canal, making access to and from the park difficult.

#### 4.1.11 Chateau Laurier Hotel (Figure 4.13)

One of the city's finest architectural statements, and a historic landmark, the Chateau Laurier Hotel is prominently displayed at the intersection of Rideau Street and Confederation Square in the shadow of Parliament Hill; the hotel delineates the southern edge of Major's Hill Park.

In response to its growing mandate in the first decade of this century, the Grand Trunk Railway Company looked to develop a station and luxurious hotel in the heart of Ottawa. In 1907, land was purchased on the southern extremity of Major's Hill Park for \$100,000; Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier approved the transaction amid protests from the public who felt that this intervention would effectively isolate the park from CentreTown. As a way to alleviate concerns, the resulting sale did ensure funds for the enlargement of Major's Hill Park to Nepean Point.

The hotel was constructed during two periods. The west and central portions were begun in 1908 and opened on 2 June 1912 in conjunction with Union Station across the street, both of which were grander than anything Ottawa had known. The hotel was designed in the Chateau style and complemented the elegance of Parliament Hill; the style was already evident in the Chateau Frontenac of Quebec City, and on the growth of the



Figure 4.13: Chateau Laurier Hotel



Figure 4.14: Connaught Building

railway and its subsequent nationalization after World War II, it became distinctive right across the country. The building itself is faced in granite and buff sandstone, and is capped by steep copper roofs complete with turrets and dormer windows, oxidizing over time to a pastel green hue. The hotel was named after Prime Minister Laurier who had been instrumental in the realization of the project, and whose government was subsidizing construction of the Grand Trunk's Pacific Line at the time; his was the first name on the newly opened hotel's register.

In 1929, following two years of construction, the eastern wing of the Chateau Laurier Hotel was opened to the public. By 1926 it had become associated with the Canadian National Railway chain of hotels. In anticipation of the nation's centennial, extensive renovations were carried out in 1963, and further additions were carried out in 1984-1985.

Since its opening in 1912, the Chateau Laurier has been an favourite place of repose for politicians and tourists alike because of its position next to the Hill and downtown core, and because of its superb service.

#### 4.1.12 Connaught Building (Figure 4.14)

On Mackenzie Avenue, to the east of Major's Hill Park and across from the Chateau Laurier Hotel, stands the Connaught Building. It was erected during two decades of extensive building outside the periphery of Parliament Hill begun in 1896. It was named after the Canadian Governor-General of the time, the Duke of Connaught (1911-1916), the third son of Queen Victoria. The nine-storey building was begun in 1913 and opened as a Custom House (customs examining warehouse) in 1915. Since this time it has housed the customs and excise branch of the federal Department of Revenue.

The Connaught Building was designed by David Ewart, chief architect of the Department of Public Works, who considered it to be his greatest accomplishment. "He elaborated the Gothic Revival with touches of Tudor and Elizabethan, infused with a dash of his native Scottish Baronial". (Kalman and Roaf, 1983, 29) Its turreted facades were made of locally-extracted Nepean sandstone. Like the Chateau Laurier, its presence provides a strong physical and visual edge to Major's Hill Park.

#### 4.1.13 NCC Parking Lot (Figure 4.15)

Immediately north of the Connaught Building lies a piece of land which functions today as an NCC-regulated parking lot, bounded by Mackenzie, St. Patrick and Sussex Streets respectively. Its function is important because of a lack of parking space in the market area.

The property boasted buildings such as can still be found across Sussex Drive; they were destroyed after the turn of the century and the lot sat vacant until 1942. World War II increased activity in the capital and many temporary facilities were erected to allay space needs. Temporary Building No. 6, as it was referred to, occupied the site until the late 1970s, when it was dismantled. Since this time the property has remained as a gravel parking lot.

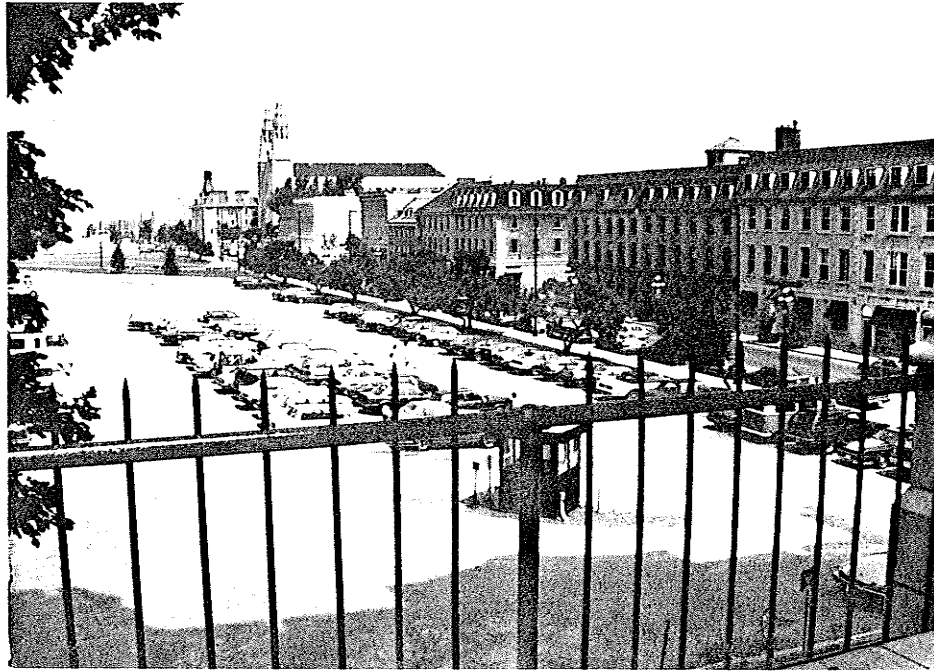


Figure 4.15: NCC Parking Lot

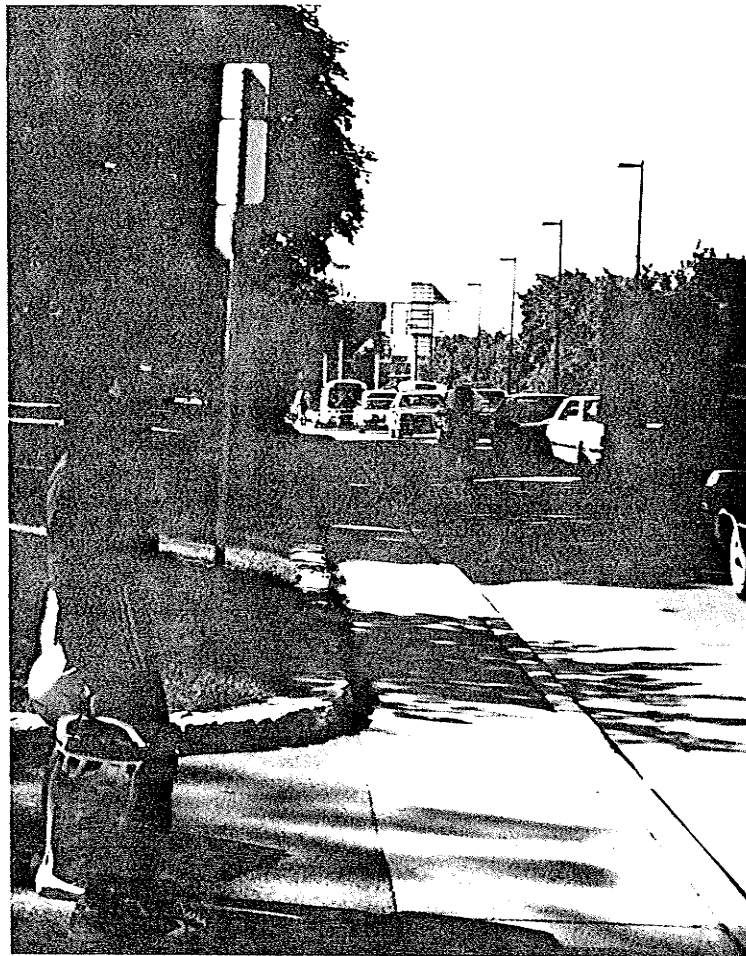


Figure 4.16: Confederation Boulevard, existing situation along Mackenzie Avenue

In the past decade it had been touted as the site for the proposed American embassy (replacing the Wellington Street quarters) and designs were effected to this end. However, the location offered scant security, and a new site is currently being considered.

Today it is also used as an ad hoc pedestrian thoroughfare via a concrete staircase from the ByWard Market to Mackenzie Avenue, the Chateau Laurier Hotel and Major's Hill Park. The dense vegetation on its western edge precludes most views through from the park towards the facades on Sussex Drive.

#### 4.1.14 Confederation Boulevard (formerly, Ceremonial Route) (Figure 4.16)

In its unceasing effort to further strengthen the capital's image, the National Capital Commission has proceeded with Confederation Boulevard. Jean Pigott, the NCC chairman, refers to it as a symbolic linking of Canada's two founding cultures by a national street along which the nation's treasures are situated (museums, government buildings, etc.). Its opening will coincide with that of the National Museum of Fine Arts on 1 July 1988.

A thirty-two foot wide granite esplanade, graced by a double row of red oaks and Norway maples, will follow the park along Mackenzie Avenue, serving as a viewing platform for special ceremonies and gatherings on the Boulevard. On the lower plateau in the northeast sector of the park, a crescent-shaped esplanade will skirt the base of the ridge connecting two portions of the Boulevard; a horticultural display will lie between it and the esplanade.

Desire lines to the new gallery from Mackenzie Avenue required strengthening across the traffic flow to and from the Alexandra Bridge. Desired movement from York and Clarence Streets must also be accommodated with the new Boulevard design. The fountain island to the northeast of the park will act as a major node on the Boulevard, sporting a 15 metre height water fountain; it will be landscaped to balance the informal (wild) landscape of the Museum of Fine Arts landscape with the formal plantings along the Ceremonial Route.

## 4.2 Natural Conditions: Biomorphology

### 4.2.1 Micro-climate

The Ottawa region experiences a continental temperate climate, characterized by hot summers, cold winters and high humidity. The prevailing winter winds are from the northwest and affect pedestrian comfort most significantly; easterly snow-bearing winds are comparatively slower and milder (Figure 4.17). Since it is located in the midst of the Ottawa Valley, a major snowbelt, the nation's capital is prone to heavy snowfalls.

Major's Hill Park is closed during the winter months when northwesterly winds blow across the Ottawa River. The recent inauguration of the Festival of Lights and the expansion of Winterlude (see Section 5.2: Festivals), promise to have Major's Hill Park utilized to a much greater degree in the winter.

### 4.2.2 Geomorphology / Open Space Structure

The Ottawa River divides two very distinct landscapes. The Quebec side to the north is typified by the Gatineau Hills of the Laurentian range whose pre-Cambrian highlands are characterized by rugged hills and precipitous slopes; these are covered in dense maple/birch/oak forests. Its Ontario counterpart exists in stark contrast as gently undulating lowlands whose deep glacial soils support prime farmland; the sedimentary rock is comprised of sandstone, limestone, dolomite and shale.

Nine thousand years ago, the area was characterized by bedrock knolls surrounded by water. As ancient waterways found their way to the St. Lawrence River, they carved out the landscape as it is known today. The exposed bedrock of the escarpments upon which sit Parliament Hill, Nepean Point and Major's Hill Park, are the most striking reminders of Ottawa's primeval landscape.

Major's Hill Park is located on a high limestone bluff, once one of the ancient river terrace plateaux overlooking the Ottawa River. On its initial settlement in the 1820s, its shallow soils and good drainage existed in marked contrast to the swampy lowlands of neighbouring Lower Town.

Major's Hill Park is distinguished by two distinct topographical areas. The first is the largest (about 70%) and comprises the entire southern and a portion of the northwestern section of the park. It is characterized by a broad expanse of lawn surrounded by pathways and plantings. The second portion is located in the northeast part of the park and is separated from the first by a ridgeline, with a four to five metre elevational change. Save for the cliffs on the west side, there are no other major elevational changes.

### 4.2.3 Hydrology

Although there are no water features extant in the park — save for the drinking fountain at the south end — the two most important water elements in the National Capital Region, the Ottawa River and the Rideau Canal, border it to the north and to the west respectively (Figure 4.18). Today, these water arteries are actively used for recreational purposes.



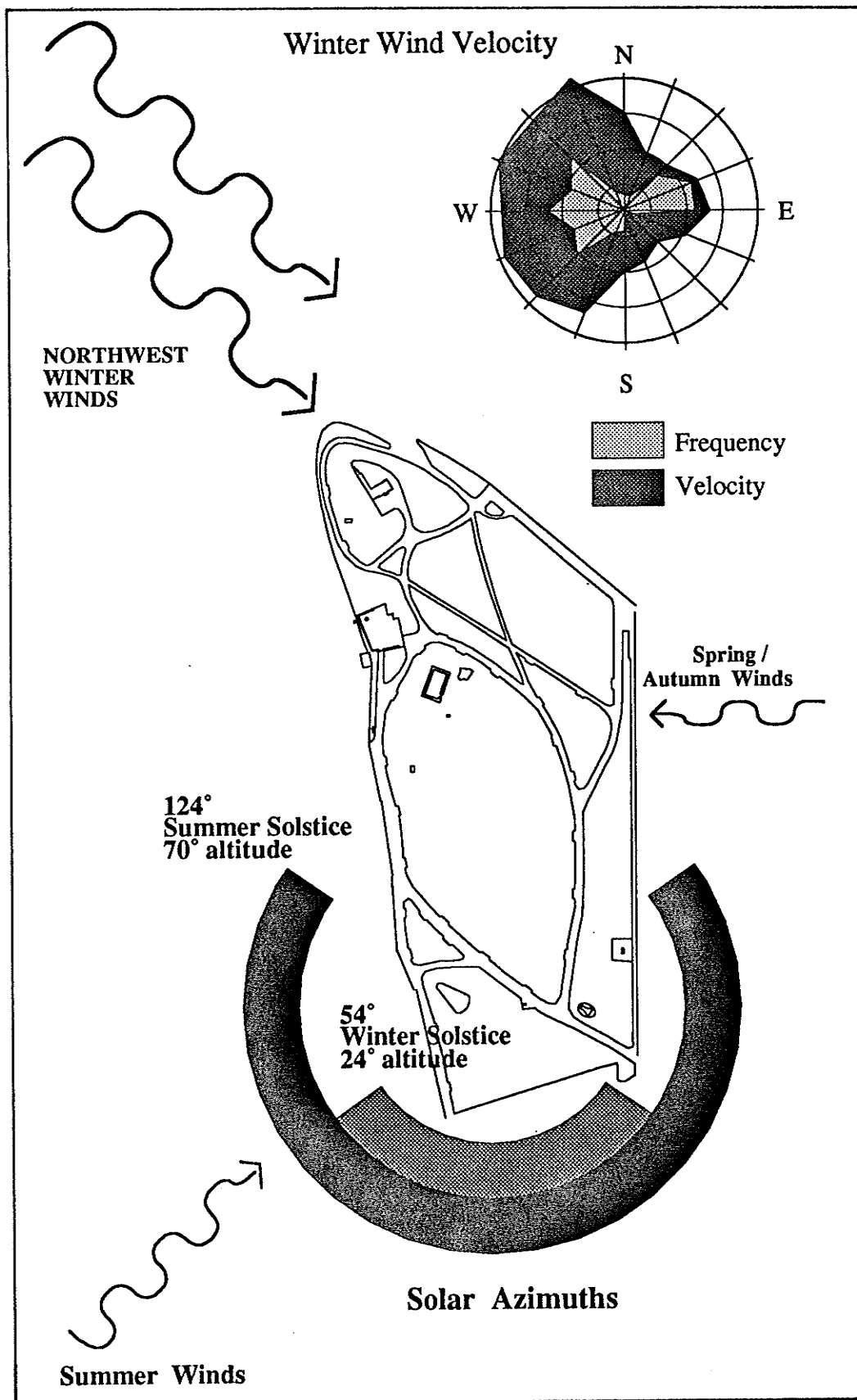


Figure 4.17: Climatic Conditions (75°42' West Longitude, 45°26' North Latitude)

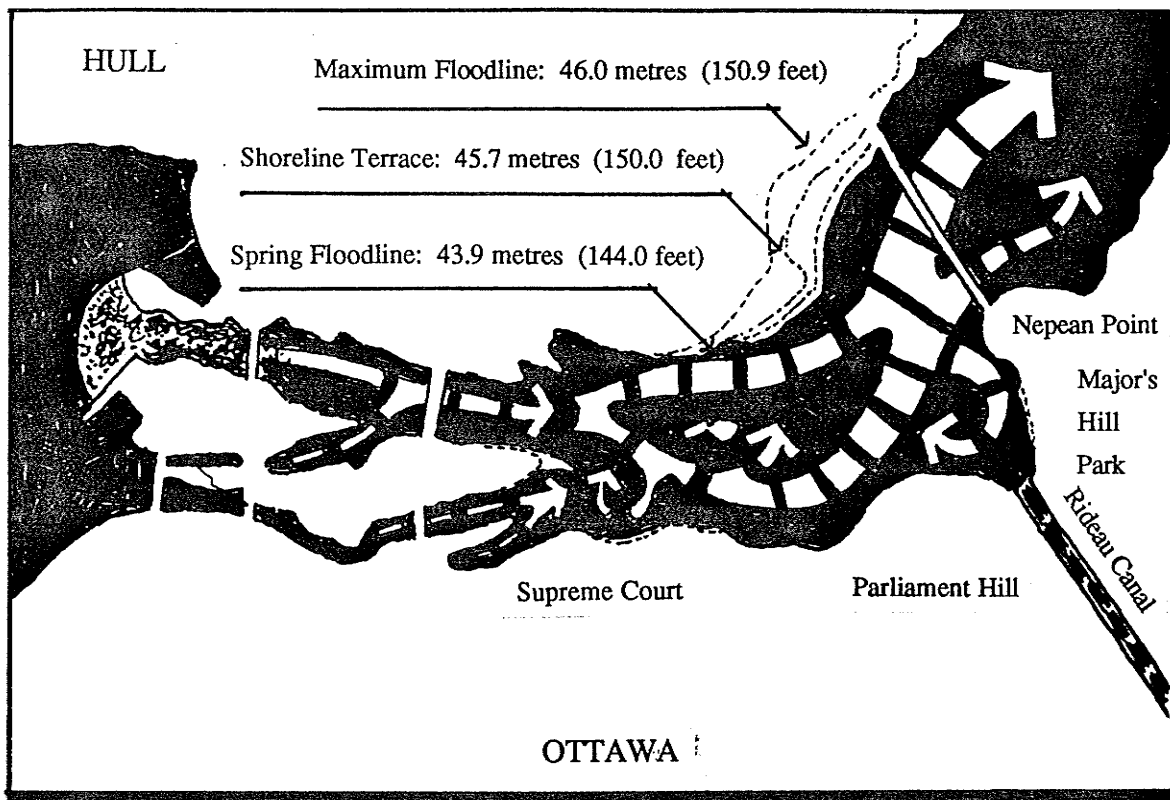


Figure 4.18: River flow and floodplain of Ottawa River (from Carter, 1982, 4)

The Rideau Canal was the transformation of a mere Ottawa River tributary to an engineering wonder still marvelled at today; its splendor can be viewed fully from the Major's Hill promontory.

The Ottawa River is the major waterway in the National Capital Region into which all other tributaries flow. It is the major resource from both a historical and a recreational point of view. As it flows eastwards it is interrupted by a number of waterfalls or rapids, the most prominent being the Chaudiere (Kettle) Falls; between these points are long stretches of navigable waterways. Its largest tributaries are the south-flowing Gatineau River and the north-flowing Rideau River; the latter enters the Ottawa as a magnificent sixteen metre height twin waterfall called the Rideau Falls (named so because the original French explorers had likened them to curtains or *rideaux*).

In the spring, thaws cause the river's water to become turbulent and rise sharply. The average spring water level peaks at 43.9 metres ASL, with maximum flood levels recorded at 46.0 metres ASL. The average low water level is in the range of 39.5 metres ASL. (Carter, 1983, 4) Although the flood waters have been the cause of extensive damage throughout the region, the Major's Hill plateau has been unaffected by its fluctuations, as its elevation precludes any flooding concerns.

In terms of shoreline development at the base of the slope leading down from the park, there existed a boathouse and docks to the east of the entrance locks for many years; the first structure erected at this point — joined to the Major's Hill elevation by a steep winding road — was named Stirling's Wharf; at one point it was also known as Cholera Wharf. The most recent boathouse and docks were dismantled in the late 1970s (see Figure 3.26). The National Capital Commission's plans for a water taxi that would shuffle people across the Ottawa River to the Museum of Civilization will again necessitate some type of docking facility in this location.

#### 4.2.4 Vegetation

The National Capital Region is situated in the transition zone between the deciduous forests of the east and the coniferous forests of the northwest. In its virgin state, that which would become Major's Hill Park was covered in forest. As settlement progressed in the area, many of the trees *in situ* were felled for the canal effort, i.e. for scaffolding, shoring, etc., as well as for new dwellings. That vegetation which occupied steeper slopes remained virtually untouched. The characteristic upland species included beech, maple, elm and white pine; birch, ash and pine would have been found closer to the river's edge.

Into the twentieth century, the park has seen the decline of its tree population until what was once a virtual forest has been diminished to but a ring of trees; only three American elm trees remain from what was once an elm-dominated landscape (see Figure 4.19). Today much of the vegetation in the park is comprised of heavy shrub plantings which, unfortunately, too often exist as havens for undesirables. The rerouting of vehicular circulation from and to the Alexandra Bridge by the RMOC has isolated a large willow tree, which was once within the park, on a traffic island to the north of the park.

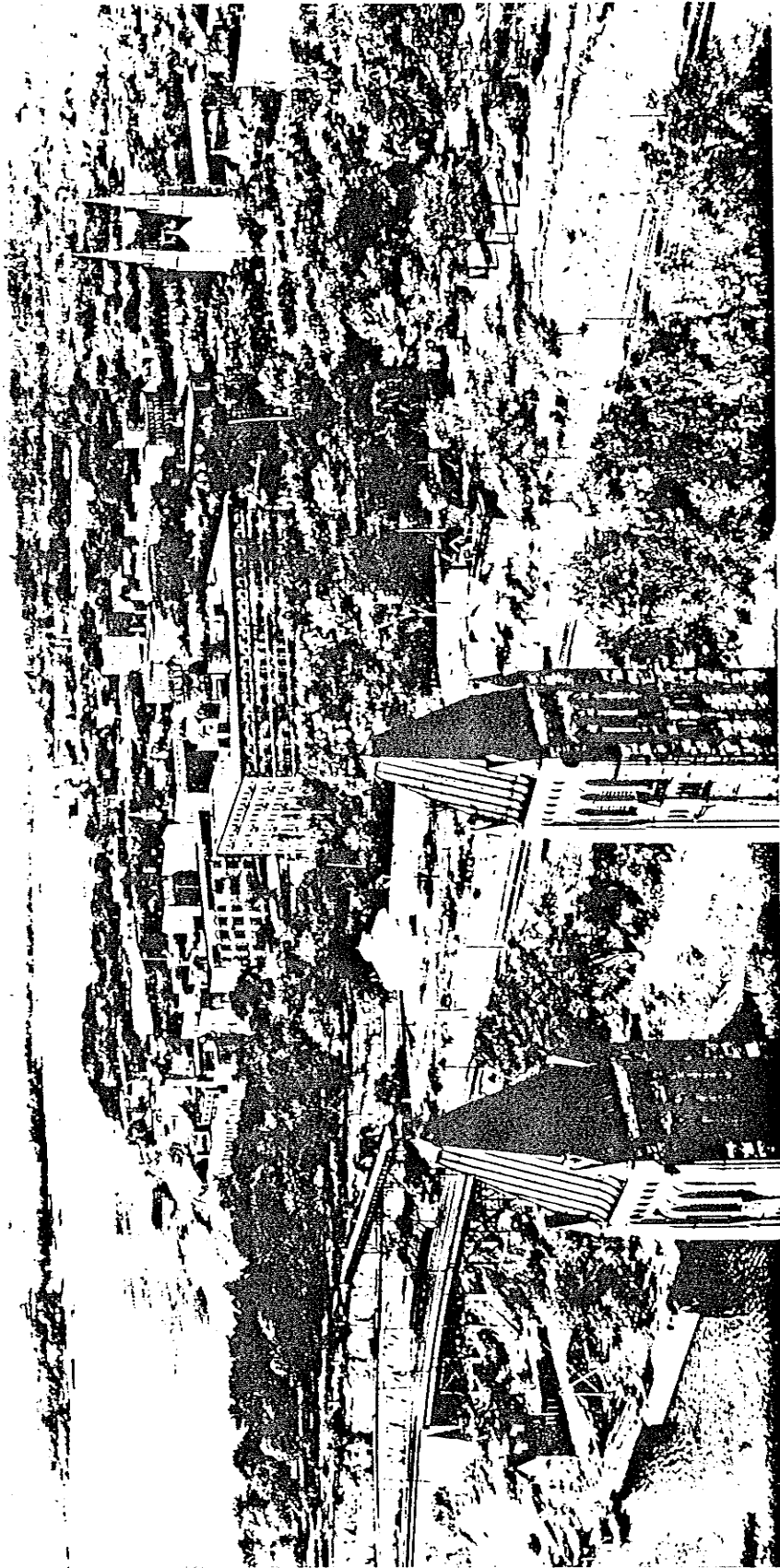


Figure 4.19: Dense cover of vegetation in Major's Hill Park, c.1930 (NAC)

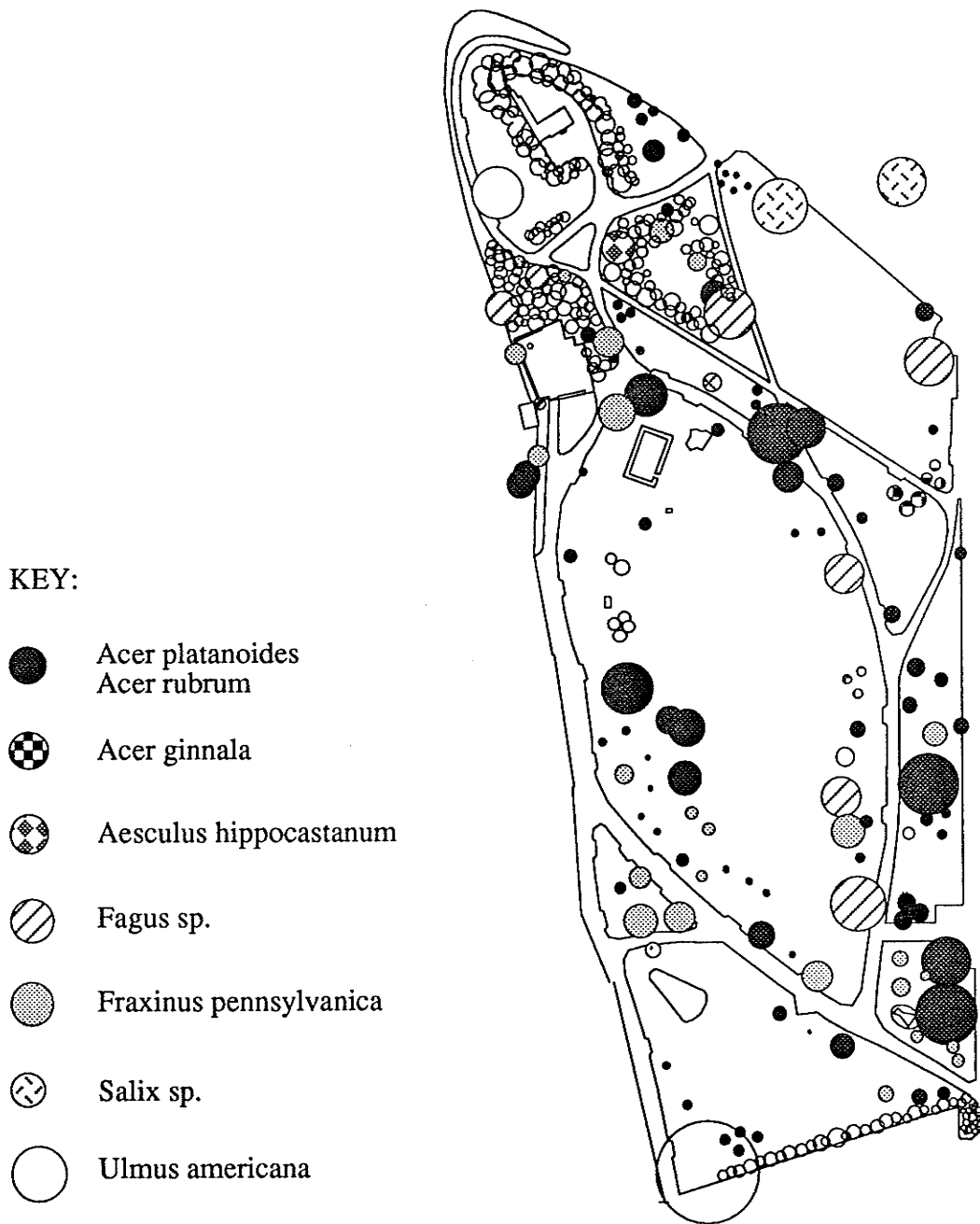


Figure 4.20: Predominant tree species in Major's Hill Park

The predominant tree species, as illustrated in Figure 4.20 include:

<u>Botanical name</u>	<u>Common name</u>	<u>Botanical name</u>	<u>Common name</u>
<i>Acer ginnala</i>	Amur Maple	<i>Picea glauca</i>	White Spruce
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Manitoba Maple	<i>Picea pungens</i>	Colorado Spruce
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway Maple	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	White Pine
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red Maple	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scot's Pine
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple	<i>Quercus borealis</i>	Red Oak
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar Maple	<i>Salix sp.</i>	Willow
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse Chestnut	<i>Syringa amurensis japonica</i>	Japanese Tree Lilac
<i>Fagus sp.</i>	Beech	<i>Tilia americana</i>	Basswood
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White Ash	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	American Elm
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Green Ash	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	Siberian Elm

Shrubs include:

<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	Rugosa Rose
<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	Hawthorn	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Staghorn Sumac
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>	Tatarian Honeysuckle	<i>Spiraea sp.</i>	Spirea
<i>Lonicera sp.</i>	Honeysuckle	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Common Lilac
<i>Pinus mugho mughus</i>	Mugho Pine		

Groundcovers include:

<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia Creeper	<i>Vitis sp.</i>	Wild Grape
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A large bed of mugho pines, near the southwest end of the park, once boasted 10,000 tulips each spring; a neighbouring counterpart contained about 8,500 of the same. The only ornamental flowers in the park today are isolated in this latter bed. In the spring it is resplendent in the bright hues of the tulip; these are then replaced by ornamental annuals for the remainder of the summer season; red 'Firecracker' zinnias brightened up the park during the summer of 1987. The single floral bed is a far cry from the plethora of beds which once dominated the park (see Figure 4.21).

The NCC's 250-acre tree nursery at Blackburn Hamlet supplies most of the plant material required in the park, although in the last few years — because of budget cuts and in anticipation of Confederation Boulevard — the NCC has been hesitant to institute new plantings; currently, any trees struck by lightning or affected by disease are not being replaced.

#### 4.2.5 Visual Character / Views

The gently undulating greensward of Major's Hill Park is complemented by a number of mature trees and the occasional man-made element (statue, sculpture piece, etc.). It is a park of many personalities, each unveiled through exploration: the wide open expanse of the center lawn; the smaller northeast area edged by speeding traffic; or the quiet confines

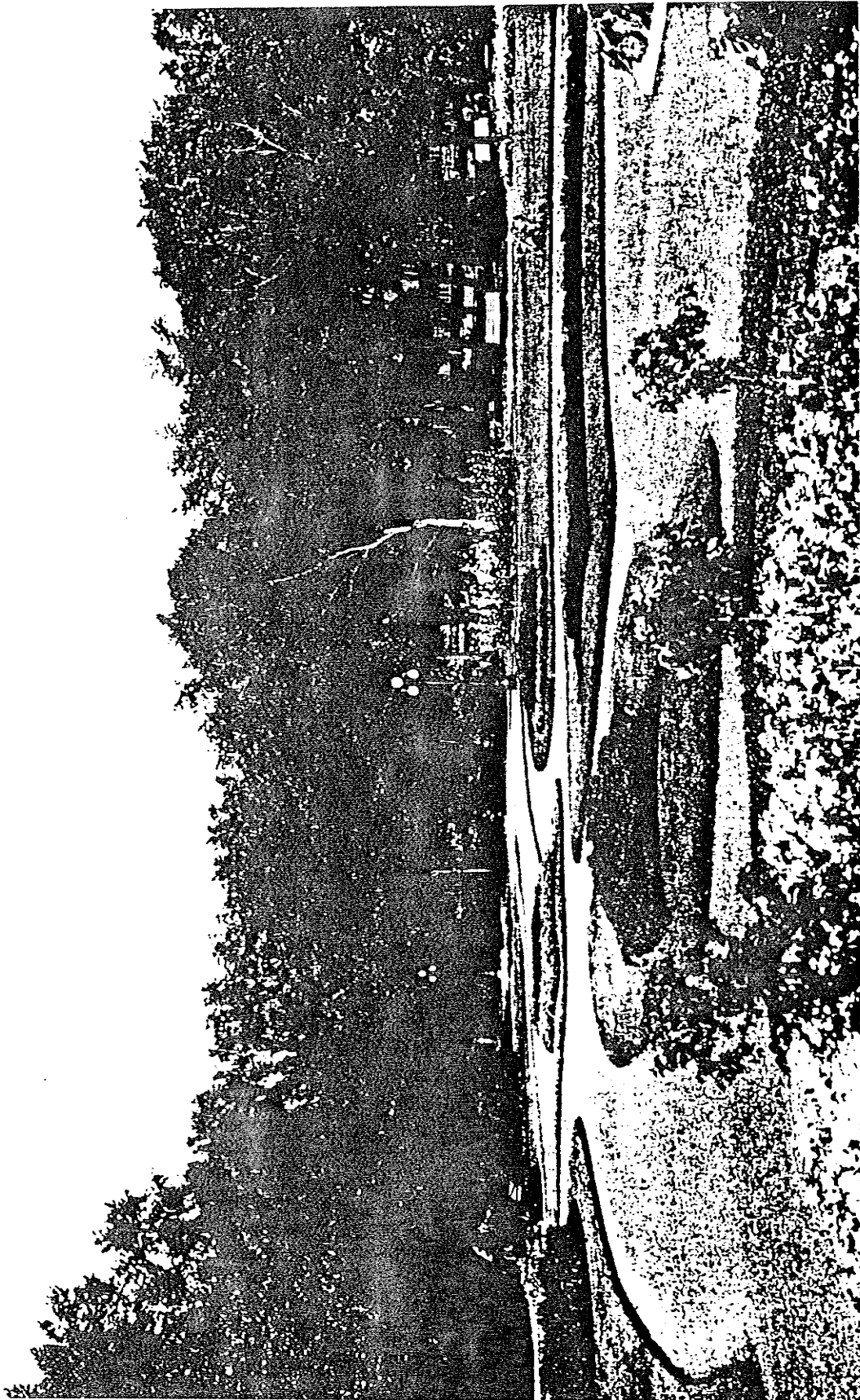


Figure 4.21: Victorian floral beds in Major's Hill Park during the 1920s (NAC, PA 34225)

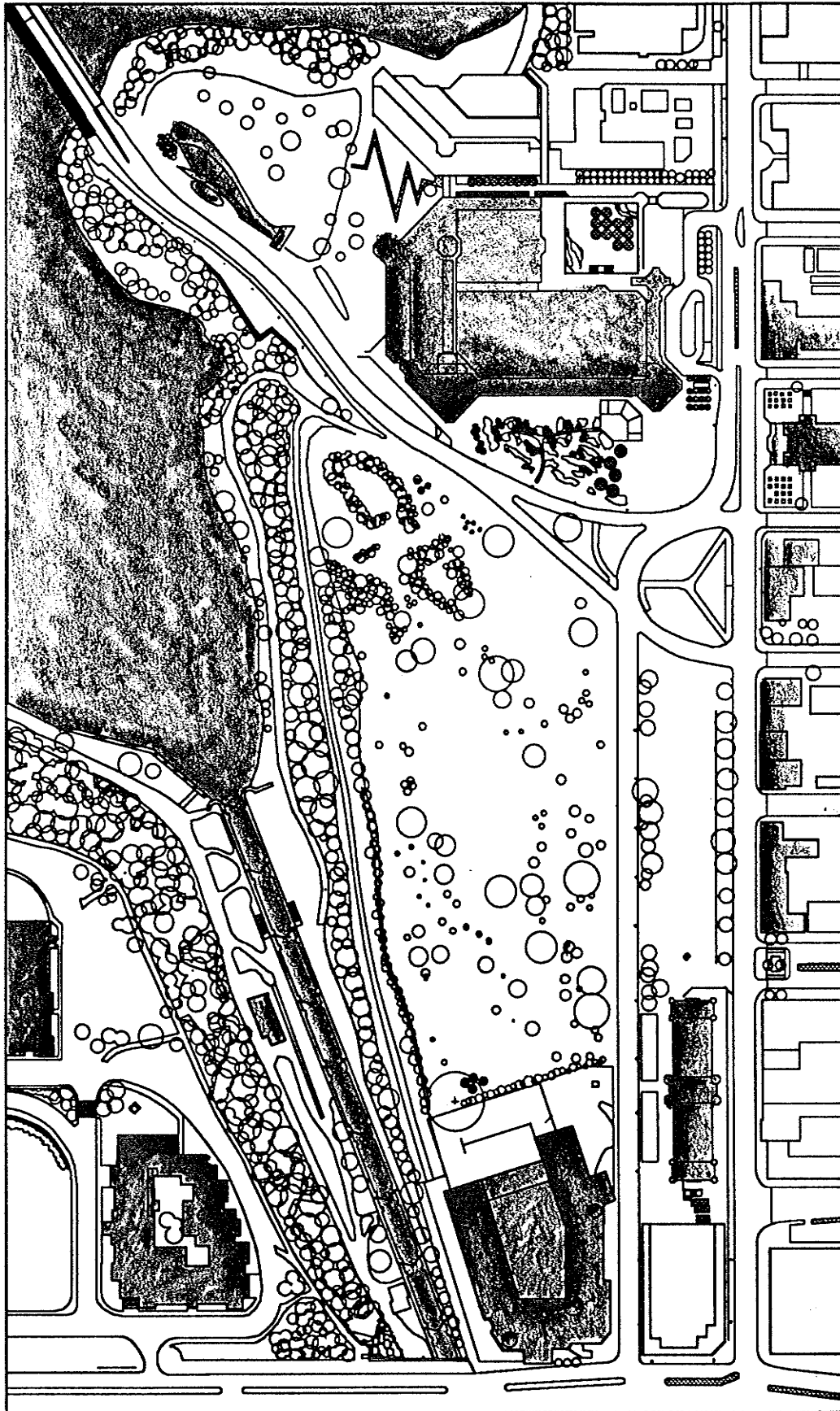


Figure 4.22: Views and vistas from Major's Hill Park



of the Noon-Day Gun area in the northwest corner. Each of these areas has different qualities which attract people either to remain or simply to pass through.

As beautiful as the park itself is, it is perhaps the views to the west which it offers which make it so particularly attractive. From Major's Hill Park the best views of the magnificent Parliament Buildings, its Peace Tower and the Library are had; time and time again photographs are taken in this location with these Gothic structures acting as background elements. In his book Design of Cities, Edmund Bacon refers to this composition as perhaps one of the best examples of Victorian exuberance extant in the world today.

From the market area, views along the east-west streets York and Clarence, do not offer the possibility of seeing the Parliamentary Library on axis, although these are the desire lines of the pedestrian. Views towards Nepean Point, the National Museum of Civilization, the Ottawa River, Parliament Hill, and the Rideau Canal are among the best as seen from the abandoned railroad terrace just below the park. Currently, as one ascends from the terrace to park level, the dominant spire of the Museum of Fine Arts (echoing the Parliamentary Library) offers a very strong visual statement. Figure 4.22 offers a synopsis of the many magnificent and varied views that are captured from Major's Hill Park.

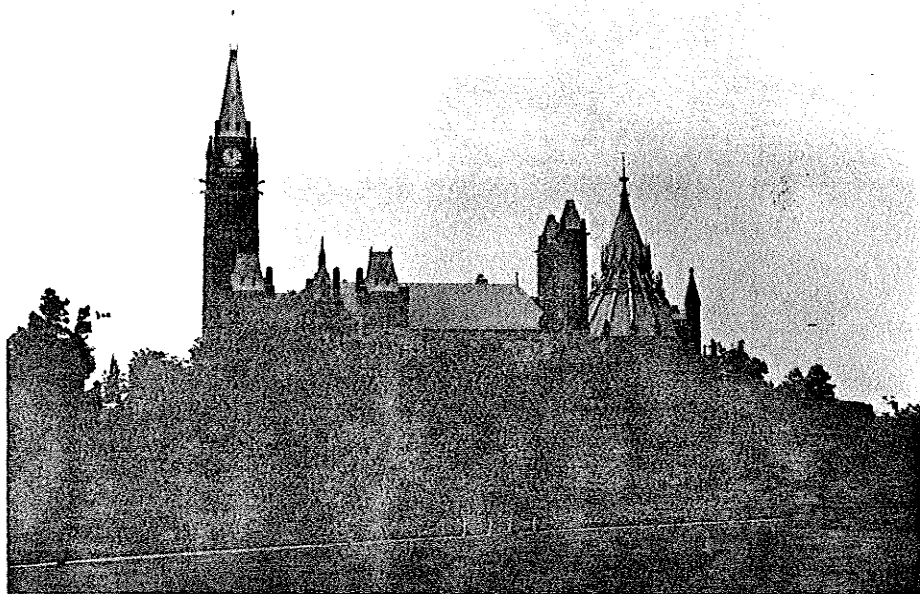


Figure 4.23: View of Parliament Hill (Peace Tower, Parliamentary Library)

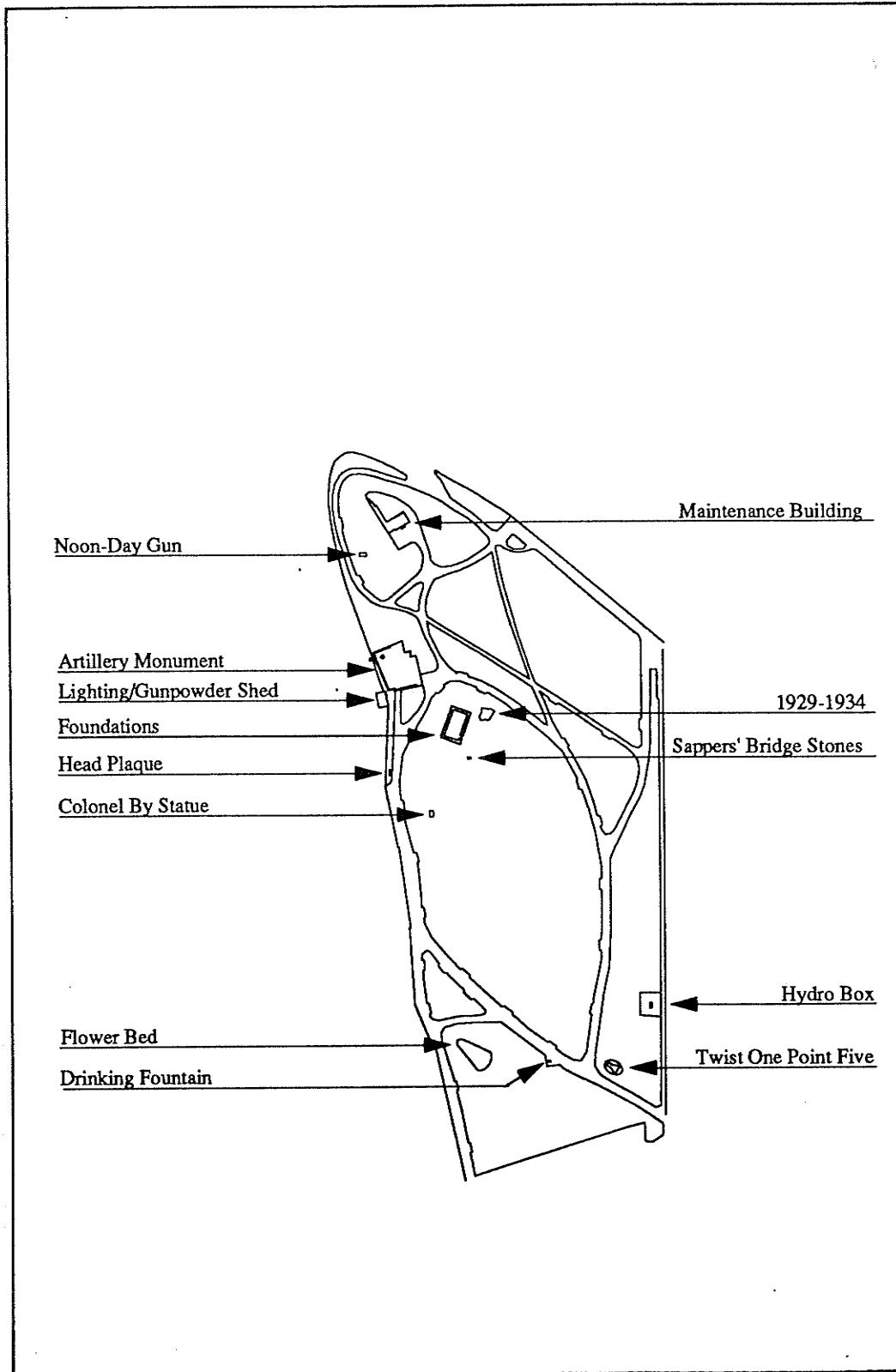


Figure 4.24: Site Elements in Major's Hill Park

### 4.3 Site Elements

Major's Hill Park boasts a variety of elements within its confines which merit further exploration.

#### 4.3.1 Foundations (Figure 4.25)

On 6 October 1972, an archaeological dig commenced in Major's Hill Park to uncover what were believed to be the foundations of the house in which Colonel John By had once lived. Led by the NCC's archaeological historian Dr. Mary Burns, experts from the National and Historic Parks and Sites Branch of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and a group from Carleton University began excavations on the site (Appendix 9.2). Spurred on by "bits of scorched glass, burned wood, nails, tools" (*Citizen*, 21 June 1973, 37) and subsequent research, Burns decided upon an area which for years had sported only lawn and rose bushes. Burns' hope was to uncover brass or iron fittings, furniture, parts of weapons or any artifacts which might have been preserved since that time. (*Journal*, 11 October 1972, 1)

The effort seemed to prove worthwhile. Within the 8 by 19 metre foundation that was uncovered, a number of artifacts were found, including a Spanish silver coin dating to 1811 (lending credence to the notion that Colonel By had served in the Spanish Peninsular wars of that period), fine glass and china, cutlery, dolls and dollhouses, and marbles. In focusing on the basement, walls and two chimney stacks of the former two-storey structure, the dig also uncovered many iron nails, hooks and hinges, storage crocks, and three chamber pots (indicating the existence of indoor sanitation).

Trees on the edge of the excavation site dating to By's time were carefully treated by the group. Plans at the time of the dig were to restore the stone foundations and resurrect the chimneys although the latter plan was never carried out. Further explorations revealed that the uncovered items likely belonged to one of the succeeding majors and not to By himself. Many of these artifacts can be found in the Bytown Museum.

The foundations themselves occupy a highly visible location in the park and attract visitors; unfortunately, the lack of interpretative documentation lessens the total story which they foster.

#### 4.3.2 Noon-Day Gun (Figure 4.26)

The Noon-Day Gun was originally cast in Wales in 1807 and used in the Crimean War. It had been presented to the British garrison in Canada by the British army (Appendix 9.3). The nine-pound muzzle ship's cannon weighs 1818 kilograms and was purchased in 1869 by the Postmaster-General of Canada on the authority of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald.

The significance of marking a correct point of time is to enable Post Office clerks to check departmental clocks so as to maintain mail service on correct schedule. (Haig, 1975, 130)

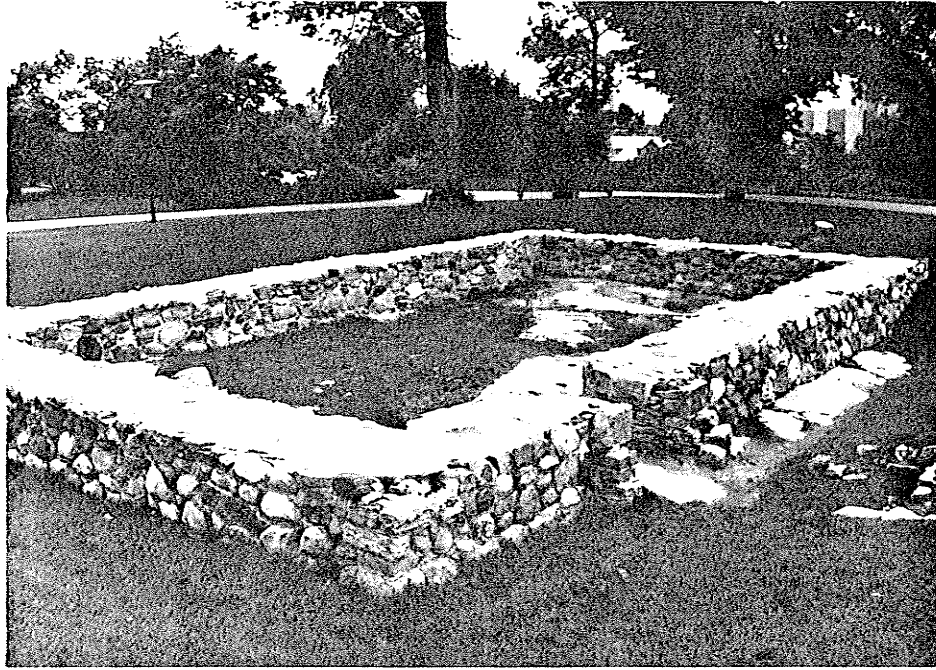


Figure 4.25: Foundations

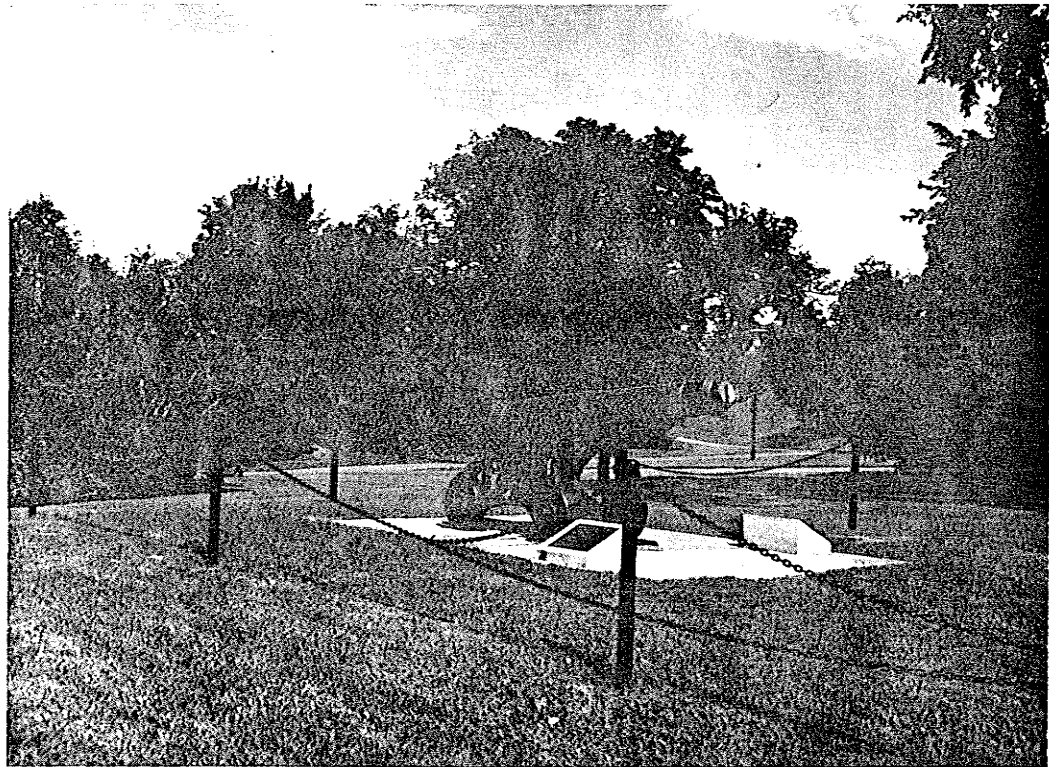


Figure 4.26: Noon-Day Gun

It was first fired on 26 April 1869 for the purpose of coordinating government clocks, especially those of the postal clerks, as well as for informing Members of Parliament as to when they could take their lunch. The signal arrived from McGill University's Observatory in Montreal. Today it is still influenced by the electronic signal from the Montreal Observatory's atomic clock (losing only two seconds every five years), but now, using an electric wick instead of a black powder wick.

In 1966, the cannon was unceremoniously removed from its site by a group of enterprising University of Ottawa students who hoped to use it in a winter parade the following day; the RCMP recovered the cannon that day. In 1961, a fourteen year old boy who had ventured too close to the gun prior to its firing, experienced an abrupt throw to the ground and a damaged ear drum. It was fired until 1965 by the Department of Public Works when this role was taken over by the NCC.

The gun has become something of an institution in the capital, firing unceasingly since its purchase in 1869. The only exceptions to its noon-hour firing are Sundays, Labour Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, and Thanksgiving when it is fired at 10h00, to respect nearby church services. As of New Year's Eve 1986, the Noon-Day Gun will be fired at midnight every New Year.

The following inscription is found on a bronze plaque secured to the ground near the front end of the gun.

THIS GUN, A NINE-POUNDER MUZZLE-LOADER (WILLIS GARRISON, 1807), WAS ACQUIRED UNDER AUTHORITY OF AN ORDER IN COUNCIL ISSUED ON MARCH 6TH, 1869. IT WAS SIGNED "JOHN A. MACDONALD" AND IT STATED THAT THE PURPOSE WAS "FOR ASCERTAINING FROM MONTREAL BY THE TELEGRAPH (FROM MCGILL COLLEGE OBSERVATORY) THE TRUE TIME DAILY, AND COMMUNICATING THE SAME TO THE PUBLIC BY FIRING A GUN AT NOON."

THE GUN FIRST FIRED THE NOONDAY SIGNAL ON APRIL 26TH, 1869, AND HAS BEEN USED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE THEN FOR THAT PURPOSE.

#### 4.3.3 Artillery Monument (Figure 4.27)

During the late 1950's, public and governmental sentiment united to see the erection of the Royal Canadian Artillery Memorial on the park's northwest edge commemorating gunners killed in military service. Designed by the Department of Public Works and constructed by the National Capital Commission, it was composed of a marble wall flanking one side of an open terrace, with a 25-pounder gun used by the Royal Canadian Regiment of Artillery during World War II and in Korea completing the arrangement. The unveiling took place on 21 September 1959, presided over by His Excellency, Governor-General Georges P. Vanier.

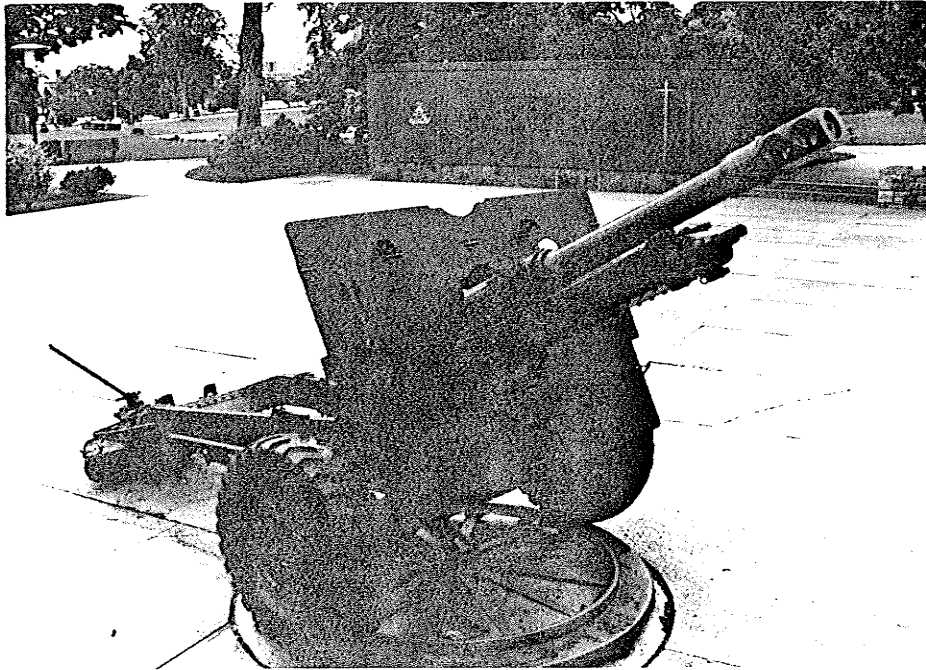


Figure 4.27: Artillery Monument

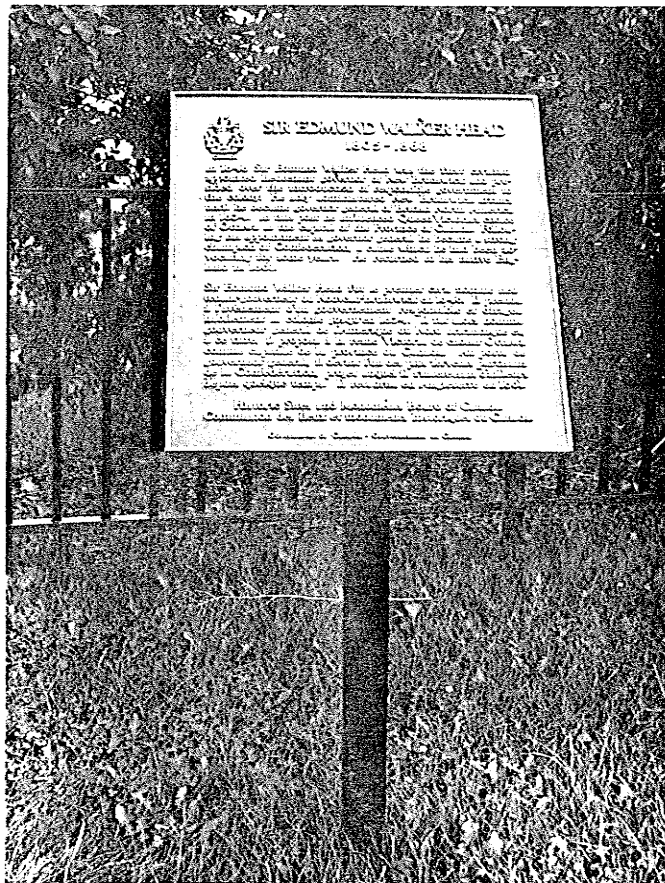


Figure 4.28: Sir Edmund Walker Head Plaque

The words inscribed on the marble wall read as follows:

A NOS GLORIEUX MORTS  
 IN GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS AND MEN  
 OF THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF CANADIAN ARTILLERY  
 WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF CANADA.  
 UBIQUE QUO FAS ET GLORIA DUCUNT

#### 4.3.4 Sir Edmund Walker Head Plaque (Figure 4.28)

On the west side of the park is a mounted plaque beyond which one can observe the grand expanse of the Ottawa River and the Eddy mills. The plaque commemorates Sir Edmund Walker Head, Governor-General of British North America; he and his wife were very influential in the choice of Ottawa as the capital of the new Dominion of Canada (see Section 3.1. Historical Context). The plaque cites Head's accomplishments during his tenure in Canada.

#### SIR EDMUND WALKER HEAD

1805-1868

IN 1848 SIR EDMUND WALKER HEAD WAS THE FIRST CIVILIAN APPOINTED LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF NEW BRUNSWICK AND PRESIDED OVER THE INTRODUCTION OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT TO THE COLONY. HE ABLY ADMINISTERED NEW BRUNSWICK AFFAIRS UNTIL HE BECAME GOVERNOR GENERAL OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA IN 1854. IN THIS POST HE INFLUENCED QUEEN VICTORIA'S CHOICE OF OTTAWA AS THE CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE OF CANADA. FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT AS GOVERNOR GENERAL HE BECAME A STRONG CHAMPION OF CONFEDERATION, A CAUSE WHICH HE HAD BEEN ADVOCATING FOR SOME YEARS. HE RETURNED TO HIS NATIVE ENGLAND IN 1861.

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS BOARD OF CANADA.  
 COMMISSION DES LIEUX ET MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES DU CANADA.  
 GOVERNMENT OF CANADA - GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA

It is interesting to note that this is the only interpretative element found in the park, except for some engravings on the By statue.

#### 4.3.5 Colonel John By Statue (Figure 4.29)

Although his efforts resulted in both the construction of the Rideau Canal and the creation of the community which would blossom into Ottawa, Colonel John By had never been properly memorialized. Through the efforts of the Ottawa Historical Society, a fund-raising drive, begun in 1961, culminated in the ceremonious unveiling of a full-length bronze statue of By on 14 August 1971, by His Excellency, Governor-General Roland Michener. The event was enhanced by the presence of an honour guard of Royal Engineers brought over from England for the occasion. The piece was created by the

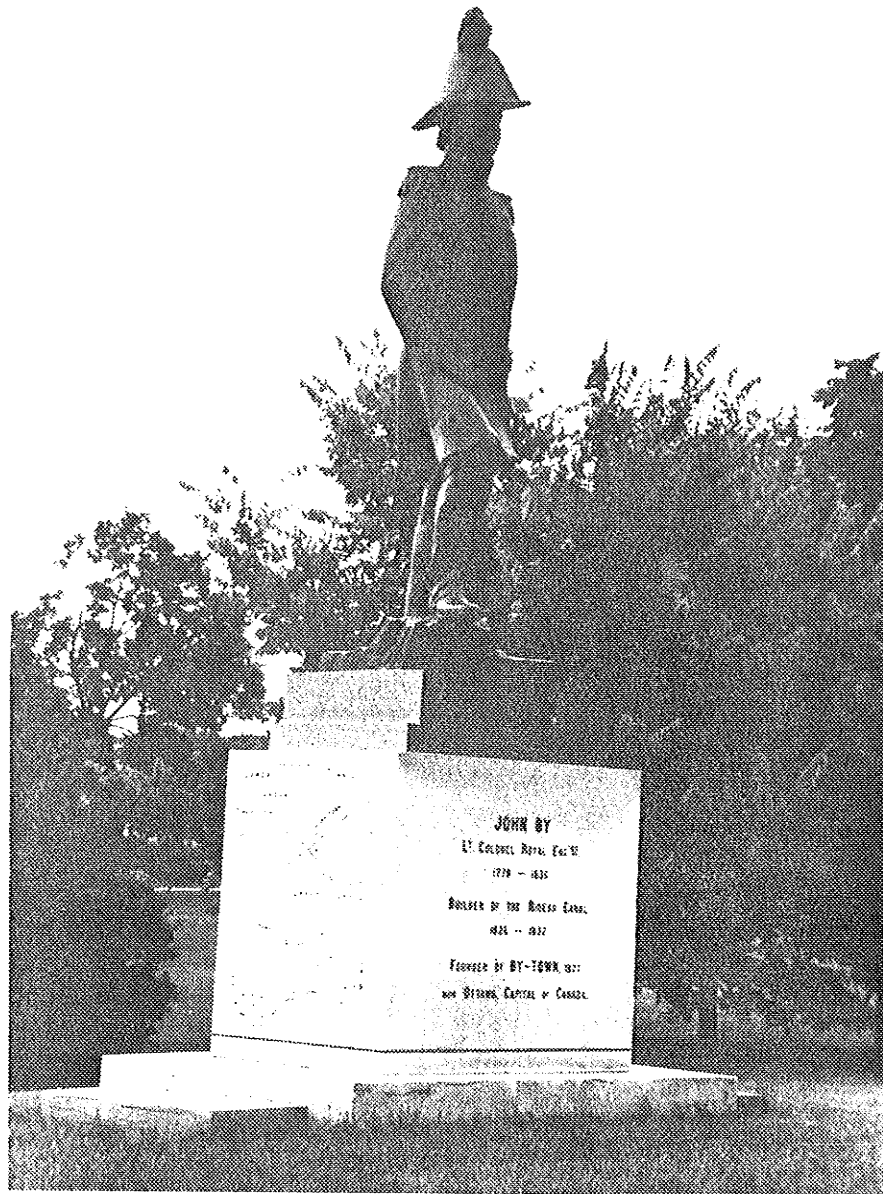


Figure 4.29: Colonel John By Statue



renowned Canadian sculptor Emile Brunet (Montreal, Paris) and stands near the former site of By's original dwelling on the eastern shoulder of Entrance Valley, overlooking the locks. The statue and the setting make for a fitting commencement to the waterway. The inscriptions found on the marble plinth read as follows.

(west side)

JOHN BY  
 LT. COLONEL ROYAL ENGRS  
 1779-1836  
 BUILDER OF THE RIDEAU CANAL  
 1826-1832  
 FOUNDER OF BY-TOWN, 1827  
 NOW OTTAWA, CAPITAL OF CANADA

(east side)

ERECTED BY  
 THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OTTAWA  
 ASSISTED BY  
 A GRANT FROM THE CITY OF OTTAWA  
 AND  
 CONTRIBUTIONS BY FRIENDS  
 UNVEILED AUGUST 14, 1971

(north side)

PLAN BASED  
 ON PART OF  
 LT. COLONEL BY'S MAP  
 OF RIDEAU CANAL AND  
 BY-TOWN OF 1828  
 1 INCH TO 400 FEET

(south side)

RIDEAU CANAL  
 SHOWING LINE OF  
 NAVIGATION BETWEEN  
 OTTAWA AND KINGSTON  
 SCALE  
 1 INCH TO 2 MILES

#### 4.3.6 Twist One Point Five (Figure 4.30)

On entering Major's Hill Park from the southeast corner, one is immediately taken by a large wooden arrangement entitled Twist One Point Five. The sculpture is comprised of spiralling wood slats supported on metal posts. Approximately 2.5 metres in height, the work has become a climbing attraction for children, as well as a landmark in the park.

ALEX WYSE AND KEN GUILD 1978  
**TWIST ONE POINT FIVE**  
 WOOD 254 cm X 297 cm  
 COLLECTION: NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

#### 4.3.7 1929-1934 (Figure 4.31)

The sculpture piece 1929-1934 predates Twist One Point Five in the park, and is located to the east of the foundations in the north end of the park. Although little is known about the work, it was described by a regular user of the park as symbolic of the family

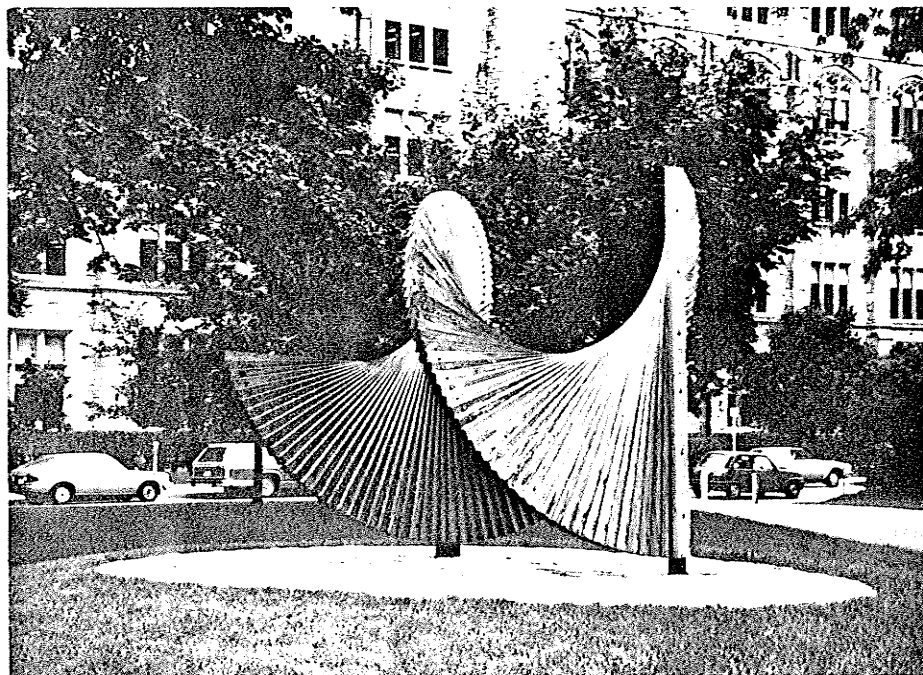


Figure 4.30: Twist One Point Five

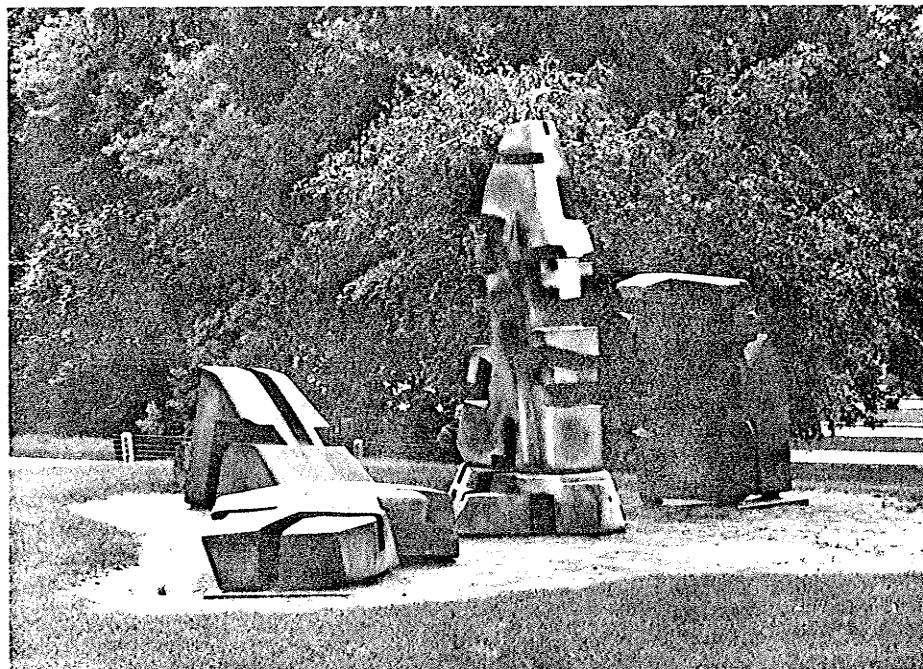


Figure 4.31: 1929-1934

unit, its five pieces each representing a member. Unfortunately, one of the pieces is missing. Like its counterpart at the opposite end of the park, 1929-1934 has become very popular with young and old alike and has become quite an interactive element in Major's Hill Park.

WALTER REDINGER 1974  
 1929-1934  
 Fiberglass and steel  
 5 Elements  
 AREA- 10'6" X 23' X 19'  
 COLLECTION: CANADA COUNCIL ART BANK

#### 4.3.8 Sappers' Bridge Stones (Figure 4.32)

In his book, Rideau Waterway, Robert Legget pauses to reflect upon a most curious element in Major's Hill Park.

The pleasant little park has other reminders of the past in addition to the sweep of stone, tree, river, and rock. Near the centre, in the unbroken grass, is a strange monument, made up of two blocks of stone, on one of which some carving can still be made out with difficulty. ... The carvings on the bridge, the last remains of which are to be seen here and which must have looked somewhat incongruous when the bridge stood almost alone in the forest, were carried out, records show, by Private Thomas Smith of the Royal Sappers and Miners. The inscription also tells that the stones mark the site of Colonel By's own house. (Legget, 1982, 221)

On 27 May 1915 two stones were unveiled in Major's Hill Park. These artifacts had once belonged to Sapper's Bridge, Ottawa's first, named in honour of the Sappers and Miners of the British Army who had constructed the canal under Colonel By; in fact, By had personally laid these cornerstones himself. In 1912 the bridge had been dismantled in the name of urban renewal and these remnants were salvaged. The ceremonial unveiling was presided over by the Governor-General, the Duke of Connaught, on the same day that the memorial to Samuel de Champlain was unveiled on Nepean Point.

The following is taken from the address given at the time:

Upon this exact spot stood the stone house built and occupied by Colonel By, the officer chosen to construct the Canal which was completed in 1832, the two historic stones here placed come from the Sappers' and Miners' Bridge, demolished to make way for Connaught Place". (HSO, 1976, 5)

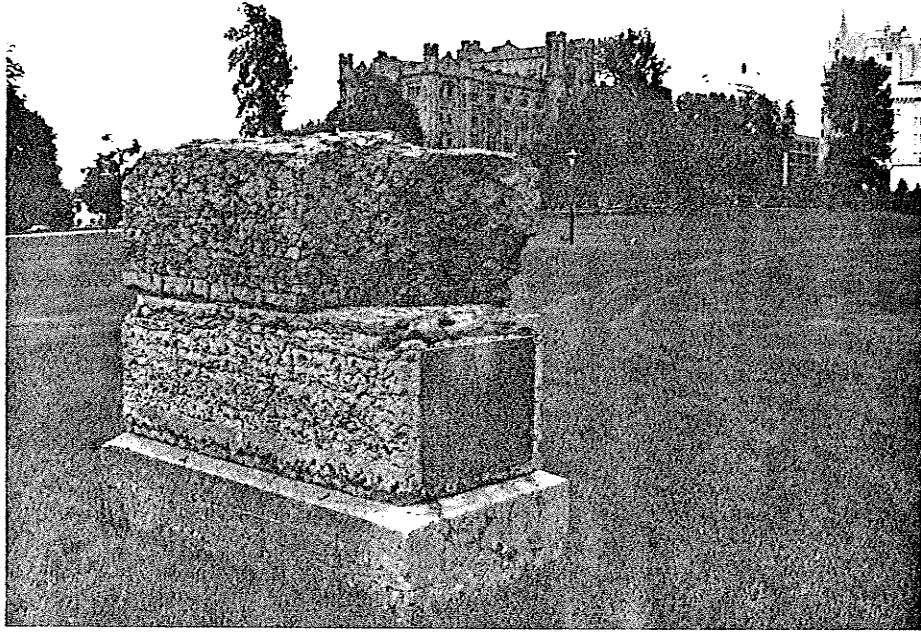


Figure 4.32: Sappers' Bridge Stones



Figure 4.33: Potting Shed (NCC Maintenance Building)

One of the stones is supposed to bear a bronze plaque displaying the Coat of Arms of the Royal Engineers; the other is supposed to bear the words, "Lieut.-Colonel By, Comm. Royal Engineers". Disfigured by time and weather, these traces are no longer evident. The following words were originally found on a plaque on the stone setting as well.

TO COMMEMORATE  
LIEUT. COLONEL JOHN BY R.E. FOUNDER OF  
BY-TOWN, OTTAWA, THE FEDERAL CAPITAL OF THE DOMINION  
OF CANADA BUILDER OF THE RIDEAU CANAL 1826-1832  
COMM. THE ROYAL BRITISH ENGINEERS

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED ON THE SITE  
OF HIS HOUSE ON MAJOR'S HILL  
BY THE HISTORIC LAND MARKS ASSOCIATION  
OF CANADA - MAY 1915.

#### 4.3.9 Potting Shed (NCC Maintenance Building) (Figure 4.33)

By 1901, plans were underway for the construction of a new conservatory, complete with greenhouse and potting shed; work began that year.

The potting shed is of stone, 28 feet by 19 feet, consisting of a basement, ground floor and cockloft, is lined with brick and has brick partitions and brick chimney. The basement floor is of concrete, while that of the ground floor is of wood, of which also is the roof. (DPW, 1902-1903, 3:17)

The 'potting shed' is currently used by the NCC as the headquarters for the maintenance staff who tend the park. One half houses the supervisor's office; the other houses the lunchroom and a washroom. According to the NCC, there are no immediate plans slated for the building.

#### 4.3.10 Lighting Building/Gunpowder Shed

Just below the Artillery Monument on the west face of the park are two stone buildings. The smaller of the two structures — located at the bottom of the stairs leading from the monument area — houses the gunpowder for the Noon-Day Gun. The larger building houses the electrical panel and the time clock for the park's light standards; the roof of this particular building is currently surrounded by dense vegetation and is frequently used by the vagrants of the park as a sunning/drinking hideaway.

In 1902, a reference was made to the on-going construction of a two-storey kiosk which would function as the tool house.

A 2-story [sic] kiosk is in process of construction- to consist of a basement of stone to be used as a tool house, 17 feet x 26 feet and 13

feet in height, surmounted by a covered wooden pavilion of like size surrounded, by a gallery 6 feet in breadth, supported on brackets or corbels built into the stone walls below. The pavilion will be constructed of ornamental open framing, somewhat gothic in treatment. (DPW, 1903-1904, 3:17)

"The tool-house ... is the structure remaining from the old summer-house on the side of the cliff overlooking the canal. It is of stone and concrete construction. It also houses the switchboard for lights and some items in storage." (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 6 May 1951). The superstructure of this extant building is remembered through photos as being the quaint overlook pavilion which once graced the western edge of the park (see Figure 3.16).

There are also a number of elements which, although not currently found in the park, once made their home there. As well, there are other elements which could realize a position in the park by the very nature of their association with Colonel John By.

#### 4.3.11 Sharpshooters' Monument , Confederation Park (Figure 4.34)

The first memorial in the park, the Sharpshooters' Monument, was unveiled at the south end of Major's Hill Park on 1 November 1888, by His Excellency, the Governor-General Lord Stanley. Sculpted in bronze by the Englishman Percy Wood, the piece was dedicated to those "native sons falling in the service of the nation" during the Riel Rebellion. The memorial became an important issue following the burial of two Ottawa natives in Beechwood Cemetery in June 1885. Privates W. B. Osgood and John Rogers of the Sharpshooters' Company of the Governor General's Footguards fell in the battle against Chief Poundmaker's forces at Cut Knife Hill, Saskatchewan on 2 May 1885. Their interment in Ottawa met with a strong wave of patriotic fervour which culminated in the monument. The construction of the Chateau Laurier Hotel between 1908 and 1912 necessitated a relocation firstly to the old City Hall on Elgin Street, and subsequently to what is now Confederation Park. The inscription on its south face reads:

ERECTED  
BY THE  
CITYZENS OF OTTAWA  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
WM. B. OSGOODE,  
AND  
JOHN ROGERS,  
OF THE  
GUARDS COMPY OF SHARP-SHOOTERS,  
WHO FELL IN ACTION AT  
CUTKNIFE HILL,  
ON THE SECOND OF MAY 1885.

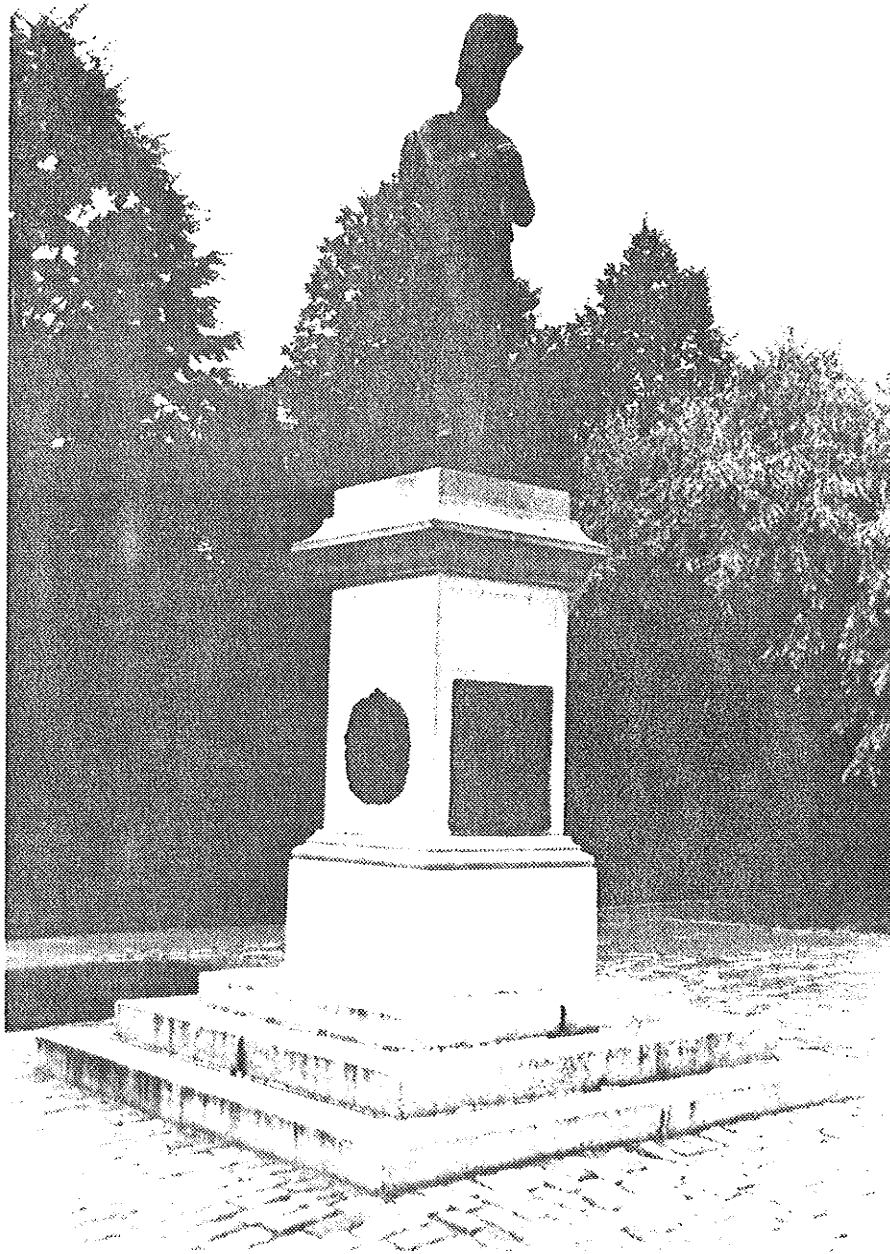


Figure 4.34: Sharpshooters' Monument, Confederation Park

#### 4.3.12 By Fountain, Confederation Park (Figure 4.35)

Another memorial to Colonel John By, located in Confederation Park, is a fountain donated to the City and placed in Major's Hill Park in 1955. Its inscription reads as follows.

THIS FOUNTAIN  
HONOURS THE MEMORY OF  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN BY  
ROYAL ENGINEERS  
BUILDER OF THE RIDEAU CANAL, 1826-1832  
AND FOUNDER OF BYTOWN,  
RENAMED OTTAWA IN 1855.

DESIGNED BY SIR CHARLES BARRY R.A.,  
ARCHITECT OF THE BRITISH  
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, THIS FOUNTAIN PLAYED  
IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE  
LONDON FROM 1843 TO 1948  
given to the National Gallery of Canada by the National Arts  
Collection Fund of England  
Dedicated 5 October 1955  
Restored and Re-dedicated  
23 May 1975  
by  
the NCC  
the City of Ottawa  
the Engineers of Ottawa

The Historical Society of Ottawa had believed that said fountain would find a home in Major's Hill Park, to be "unveiled in 1971 as part of a special Colonel By site development". (HSO, 1976, 9)

#### 4.3.13 By Tablet/By Plaque (Bytown Museum)

A number of artifacts pertaining to the development of early Ottawa are found at the Bytown Museum. Many items which once belonged to Colonel By — including cutlery, writings, and china — are also exhibited there. In the museum one will also come across a tablet and a bronze plaque which commemorate By and his men. They read:

##### i) By Tablet

(Bytown Coats of Arms Ottawa)  
1855  
COLONEL BY FOUNDED THE CITY  
WHICH BECAME THE CAPITAL OF CANADA  
THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OTTAWA





Figure 4.35: By Fountain, Confederation Park

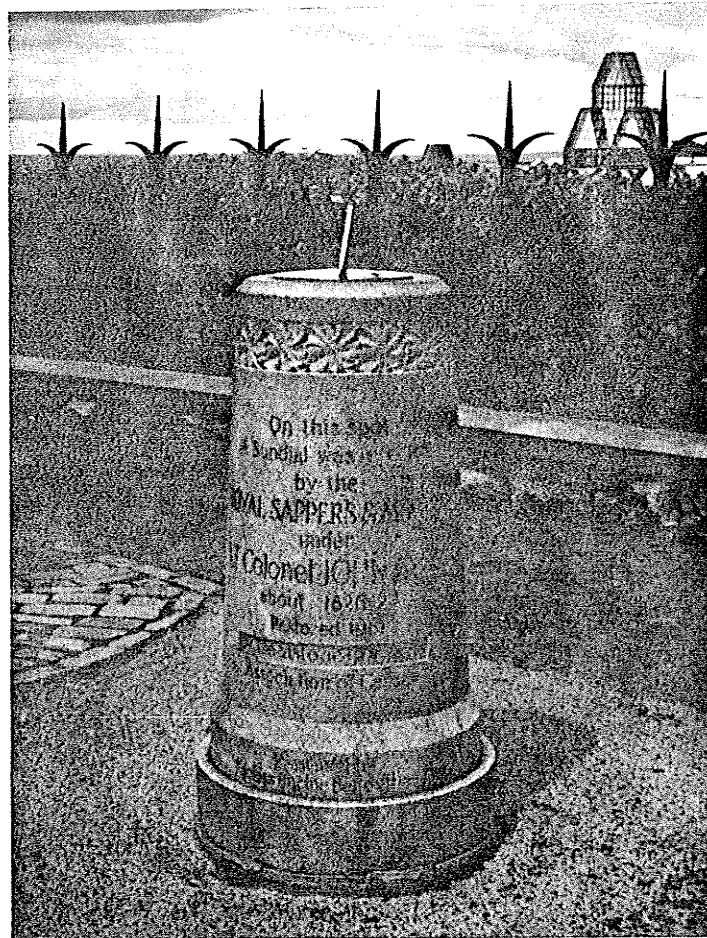


Figure 4.36: By Sundial, Parliament Hill

## ii) By Plaque

THIS CANAL COPING STONE  
 WAS DEDICATED HERE IN AUGUST 1971  
 BY OFFICERS AND MEN  
 OF  
 THE CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS  
 TO COMMEMORATE  
 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIDEAU CANAL 1826-1832  
 BY ROYAL SAPPERS AND MINERS UNDER THE COMMAND  
 OF  
 LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN BY, ROYAL ENGINEERS

## 4.3.14 By Sundial, Parliament Hill (Figure 4.36)

On the eastern edge of Parliament Hill near the overlook towards Major's Hill Park one will find a sundial which stands about 1200 mm tall. On its southwest face the following inscription is found:

On this spot  
 A Sundial was erected  
 by the  
 ROYAL SAPPERS & MINERS  
 under  
 LT. Colonel JOHN BY R.E.  
 about 1826-27  
 Restored 1919  
 by the Historic Landmarks  
 Association of Canada  
 Presented by  
 Thomas Richie Belleville Ont.

## 4.3.15 Conservatory, Experimental Farm (Figure 4.37)

Consistently through the first half of this century, mention was made of the greenhouses which were found in Major's Hill Park. An entry in the Public Works Annual Report of 1902-1903 offered a detailed account of the impending completion of such a complex.

This building, which is situated near the northwestern angle of Major's Hill Park, has been in course of construction during the year 1901, and is now nearly completed. ... the greenhouse is an oblong, 70 feet long by 20 feet broad, 33 feet from floor to apex of roof and 19 feet [sic] from floor to spring of roof. A portion of the extreme southeastern end, 12 feet broad by seven feet long is carried up 11 feet from floor line capped by a pyramidal roof 17 feet from floor to apex. Attached to the northwestern end of the greenhouse is the conservatory which is in the form of a Greek cross, 40 feet by 40 feet, the arms 17 feet broad, the

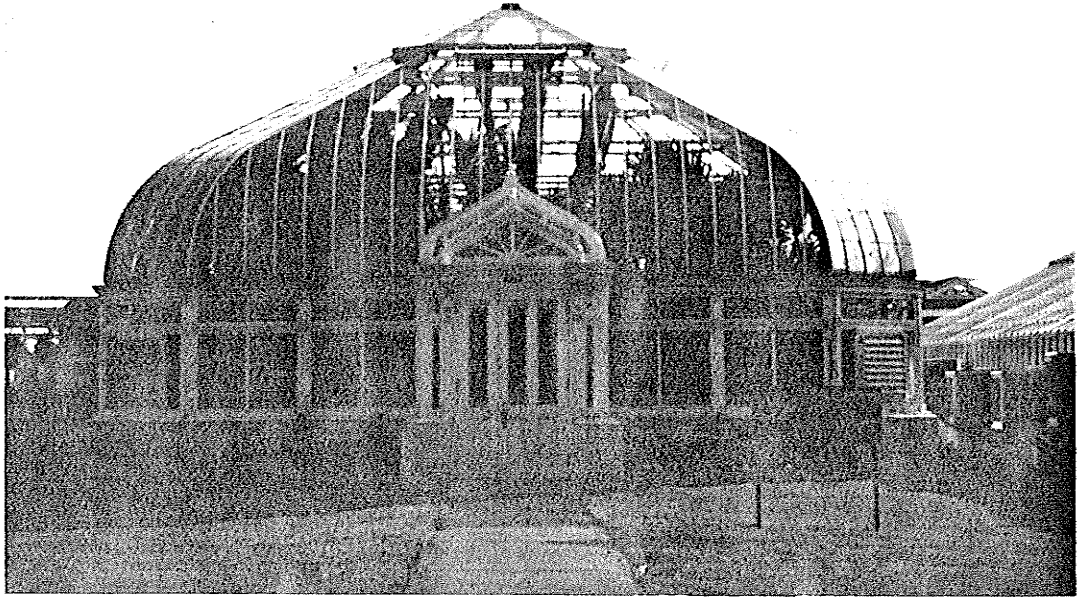


Figure 4.37: Conservatory, Central Experimental Farm



Figure 4.38: "Colonel By Day" Banner (Bytown Museum)

centre an octagon, 30 feet in minimum diameter. The walls of this octagon are 25 feet high from floor to spring of roof, 44 feet from floor to lantern and 65 feet from floor to apex of lantern exclusive of finial. The lantern is 13 feet in diameter. The arms of the cross are of the same height as the greenhouse. Both conservatory and greenhouse have a stone foundation extending up to the top of the plant tables, 5 feet from floor. The floor throughout greenhouse and conservatory is concrete. The framing of the glazed portions is composite, the parts being of 3 in. iron pipe the remainder principally wood. The plant tables are of iron and wood. Heating is by hot water. The stonework is limestone, random coursed, with cut stone plinth, cut stone dressing to openings and cut stone entrance steps. The heating is by a hot water system. Plans, etc. prepared and work superintended by this department. Clerk of works, P. Canty. (DPW, 1902-1903, 3:17)

When the greenhouse was dismantled and removed from the park in 1945, it was resituated at the Central Experimental Farm grounds. Devoid of its original Victorian motifs, it houses the tropical plant exhibit.

There are also a number of other elements to be found at the Bytown Museum pertaining to the man who oversaw construction of one of the greatest engineering feats of the early nineteenth century. As well as numerous personal belongings there, the following items were particularly interesting:

- i) a piece of Bytownite (rare feldspar): excavated in 1827 during the digging of the Rideau Canal (originated in glacial formations).
- ii) handmade nails from the site of By's house, as discovered by W. J. Davies who was digging in a flower bed there.

The Bytown Museum also holds its annual "Colonel By Day" on the first Sunday of August each year (see Figure 4.38).

As has been illustrated, there are a number of interesting elements within the park — and beyond its borders — which can be positively utilized in an adaptive rehabilitation effort.



**Chapter Five:  
USE**

## 5.1 Current Use Patterns and Programs

### 5.1.1 User Survey (Appendix 9.4)

In order to better understand the issues and concerns which impact upon Major's Hill Park, and to bring to light those which had not been identified, a formal user survey was carried out. One hundred interviews were administered over a five week period during July and August 1987. Respondents were chosen at random; no distinctions were made to either sex, age or appearance in attempting to solicit the best-rounded responses to the questions.

The survey was derived from the City of Ottawa's Park User Survey, administered by its Community Development Department which sought:

1. To monitor and collect data on the nature of use by the public at a representative sample of public parks and school sites in the City of Ottawa.
2. To assist city staff and elected officials in undertaking future facility development, park design and park programming. (Ottawa, 1986)

Through the Major's Hill Park survey, comments, observations and user views assisted in understanding how the general populace felt towards it. This survey deviated from that of the City of Ottawa's effort in that it also attempted to understand how the public felt about heritage, and more specifically, how they felt about the history embodied in Major's Hill Park.

#### Responses

At first glance, the typical user profile could be outlined as follows:

- had visited the park no more than two times (44%);
- walked (63%) less than two kilometres (61%);
- came to enjoy beautiful scenery (25%) and views (16%), to relax (16%) or just chanced upon it (25%);
- liked peaceful nature of park (33%), views (29%), and cleanliness (20%);
- had very little to criticize about the park: "It's fine as it is." (49%);
- suggested few improvements (33%); and,
- had little understanding of the park's history but did feel that more and better signage could help in alleviating this situation.

On closer inspection of the facts, some significant findings become apparent.

A.1. Slightly less than half of the respondents (44%) had been in the park only once or twice: these persons were usually tourists. Roughly 10% of those individuals questioned used the park on a daily basis. Others visited the park a few times during the week or month, with weekends seemingly a favourite time.

A.2.3. Roughly 60% travelled less than two kilometres to get to the park; most walked, usually from nearby hotels, the ByWard Market, or Rideau Centre (a nearby shopping complex). The pedestrian issue, identified earlier, was confirmed by these findings. There was also a correlation between those travelling to the area either by bus or by car and the distance travelled. For these people, Major's Hill Park was not necessarily the primary destination, but rather a pleasant diversion while downtown.

A.4. The lure of a beautiful park with beautiful scenery was the reason cited most often (25%) as motivation for visiting Major's Hill Park. Words used to describe this sentiment included nice, pretty, pleasant, green and natural: the presence of trees was seen to be a very positive amenity (25%). The opportunity to view and often to photograph Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River and environs (16%) was also reason given for visiting the park; simply to relax and to enjoy the peace and quiet (16%) was also offered. Interestingly enough, eighteen respondents had visited the park only because it had appeared in their wanderings or because they had entered into it accidentally (18%). Major's Hill Park's proximity to the market area, Parliament Hill and Nepean Point was cited as another reason for visiting (12%). Eating lunch (8%), reading (7%), and socializing (6%) were also mentioned as reasons why people were in the park.

A.5. When questioned as to what they specifically liked about the park, nearly half of the respondents mentioned the natural and scenic aspects, including greenery (trees, lawns), flowers and the scenery specifically (43%). One-third designated the peace and quiet as important and slightly less than that cited views (29%); 20% attested to the park's maintenance program and cleanliness. Other aspects included its uncrowded nature and space (13%), its location (12%), its climatic factors (10%), and its amenities (8%), including the lone drinking fountain, seating and statues. Generally, it appeared that individuals felt that the scenic character of Major's Hill Park was crucial in the urban fabric.

A.6. When queried as to the possibility of improvements in the park, one-third of the respondents answered that none were required, and another twelve percent really could not respond to the question in any significant fashion. No one improvement cited by others seemed to take prominence, although the addition of more colour through flowers (9%) and the addition of ornamental fountains (9%) were seen to be desirable. Picnic tables, more drinking fountains (with cold water), public washroom facilities, and better lighting were all listed as potential improvements. Various other possibilities were raised and can be found in the appendix.

B.1.2. Just slightly more than two-thirds of the respondents were unaware that Major's Hill Park was over 100 years old. Those who were aware mentioned the elements in the park such as the foundations, stones, plaques, cannons and large trees as indicative signs (12%). A smaller percentage of respondents said that they knew either because they had

lived in the capital region for a long time and knew about Major's Hill Park that way (8%), or were simply aware of its history through study and its context in the capital (8%).

B.3. In attempting to elicit some indication from the public as to how history might be made more apparent to them (through design), the most typical response was to place more plaques or signs in the park (40%), as well as to include more monuments or statues which could celebrate certain historical figures or events. The erection of entry signage at primary access points was also considered to be an important aspect (11%). Other suggestions included written literature (pamphlets), guided tours, and construction of an information/interpretation structure. Four percent felt that the creation of a special day celebrating either John By's birthday or the park's anniversary might be worth considering.

#### Other Comments

In completing the interview, people were asked to offer anything which might have been bypassed in earlier questioning. "Keep it clean and green", said one of the earliest respondents; this phrase seemed to express the sentiments of the majority of those questioned. Some offered that the park gave them licence to do those things which only such a place might allow, for instance composing music, studying, enjoying nature (especially squirrels and birds), rekindling memories (of past days with parents in the park), or listening to the nearby bells. A tourist from England was reminded of Hyde Park and stated that as working people pass through the park their spirits can be rejuvenated by the natural surroundings; Major's Hill Park could potentially have the same effect. It was felt that within the harsh city such an oasis was crucial. Its greenspace and trees have been and will continue to be a vitally important amenity for Ottawa.

The one hundred interviews brought to light the fact that park users do consider their surroundings, albeit to varying degrees. The exercise allowed the researcher to stand back objectively and listen to what the user had to say about his or her environment. A number of common ideas became evident throughout the course of the interviews, oftentimes reinforcing preconceived thoughts and feelings. As well, many ideas came out in the questioning which will be taken into consideration in the design phase of the practicum.

#### 5.1.2 Observational Study

Observational studies, to complement the verbal surveys, were also carried out over the same period. During this time, it was possible to observe in a relatively thorough manner the way in which this park — and each of its component spaces and niches — was used. Informal observations throughout June provided impetus to begin formal cataloguing of observations, and in July a more rigorous method of data collection was instituted.

The author noted information while traversing a set course through the park. This path usually began at the main entrance next to the Chateau Laurier Hotel and continued until the majority of the park had been visually covered (taking approximately twelve minutes).



Specifically, observations accounted for the numbers and the locations of:

1. people walking or jogging;
2. people cycling; and,
3. people sitting or lying down.

These activities had been identified earlier as the most common occurring *in situ*. Other activities were also noted, including anything out of the ordinary, and these findings were placed into a data file titled "Musings" for future reference (see Appendix 9.6). Subsequent analysis of this information has assisted in the design process.

Walkers generally entered the park from the Chateau Laurier corner on Mackenzie Avenue (from Wellington Street). A fair proportion crossed Mackenzie at the northeast corner lights on St. Patrick, as well as meandering into the park on arrival from Hull along the Alexandra Bridge. A smattering of individuals also boldly ventured across from the Nepean Point/Museum of Fine Arts site, as well as across Mackenzie along the desire line from York Street in the ByWard Market.

Except when festivals occupy the park, the Major's Hill is used moderately at best. From personal observation, the heaviest use periods (save for festivals) never saw more than 80 or 90 persons in the park. The findings bore out the fact that Major's Hill Park is generally a passive use open space within the Ottawa core. There was little surprise in terms of the activities in the park, with walking/strolling, sitting, and lying (sunning, sleeping); people engaged in conversation and people reading were also represented, with the occasional frisbee and football being tossed about on the greensward (Figures 5.1, 5.2). During the noon hour many users would be eating lunch; the arrival of a busload of children or tourists in the late morning for their repast was almost a daily routine.

Cyclists accounted for a good proportion of park users, a natural "bleeding off" from the plethora of recreational paths in the region which begin or terminate in the immediate vicinity. Cyclists were never seen to be a hindrance or a danger to pedestrian traffic within Major's Hill Park, especially because of wide pathways and low speeds.

From this information it can be seen that there are a number of places within Major's Hill Park which attract people, whether for short periods of time or for lengthy stretches (Figure 5.3). The most heavily used benches in the park were those which were situated at nodes, and more specifically, where paths met other paths. Although typically people sat on the benches, individuals were occasionally found spread across their lengths (Figure 5.4).

Major's Hill Park is a place where users of many types can coexist naturally and peacefully. As in Central Park's 'sheep meadow', Major's Hill Park functions as a passive park. What can be determined from this point in the study is that people have certain needs which must be accommodated through design, eg. seating in sun, seating in shade, protection from wind, position for viewing, etc. These findings assisted in the design process when it came to determining how to prioritize spaces.

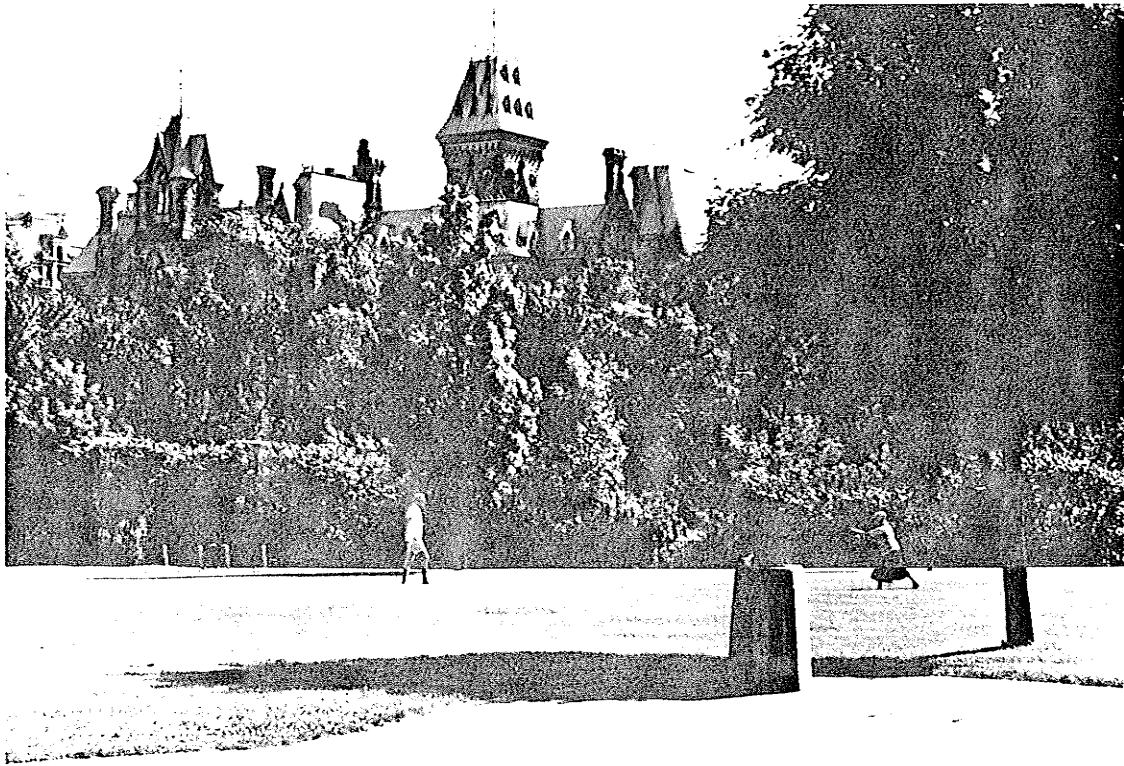


Figure 5.1: People playing ball in southwest part of Major's Hill Park

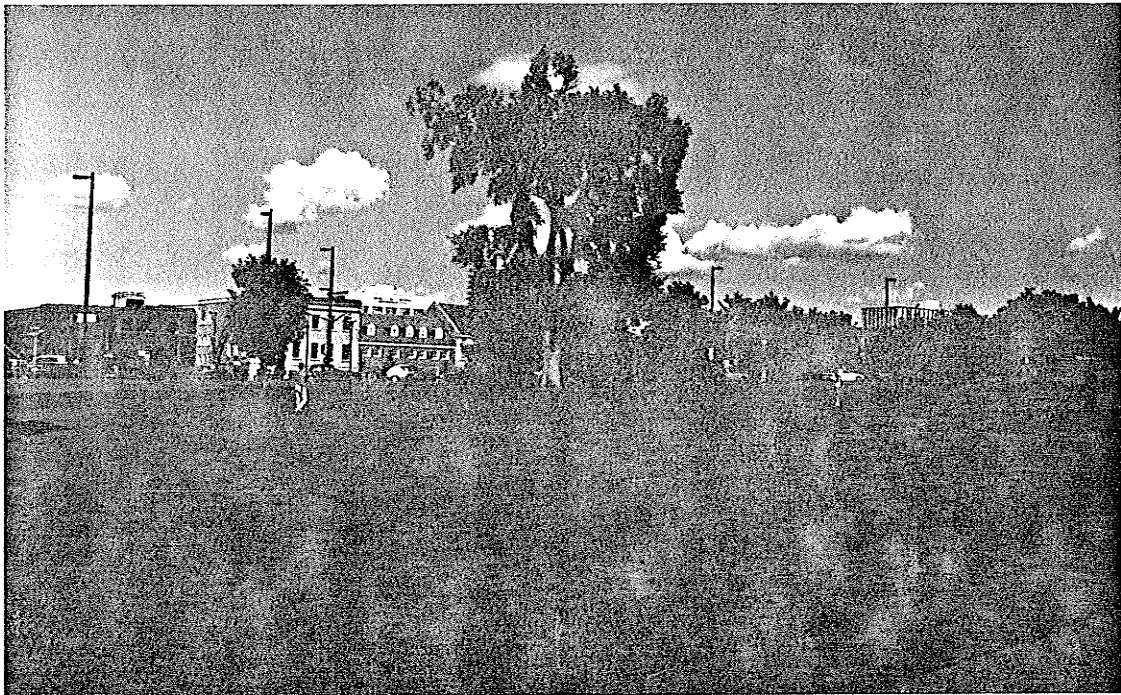


Figure 5.2: People playing frisbee on lower northeast plateau of Major's Hill Park



Figure 5.3: People sitting in Major's Hill Park

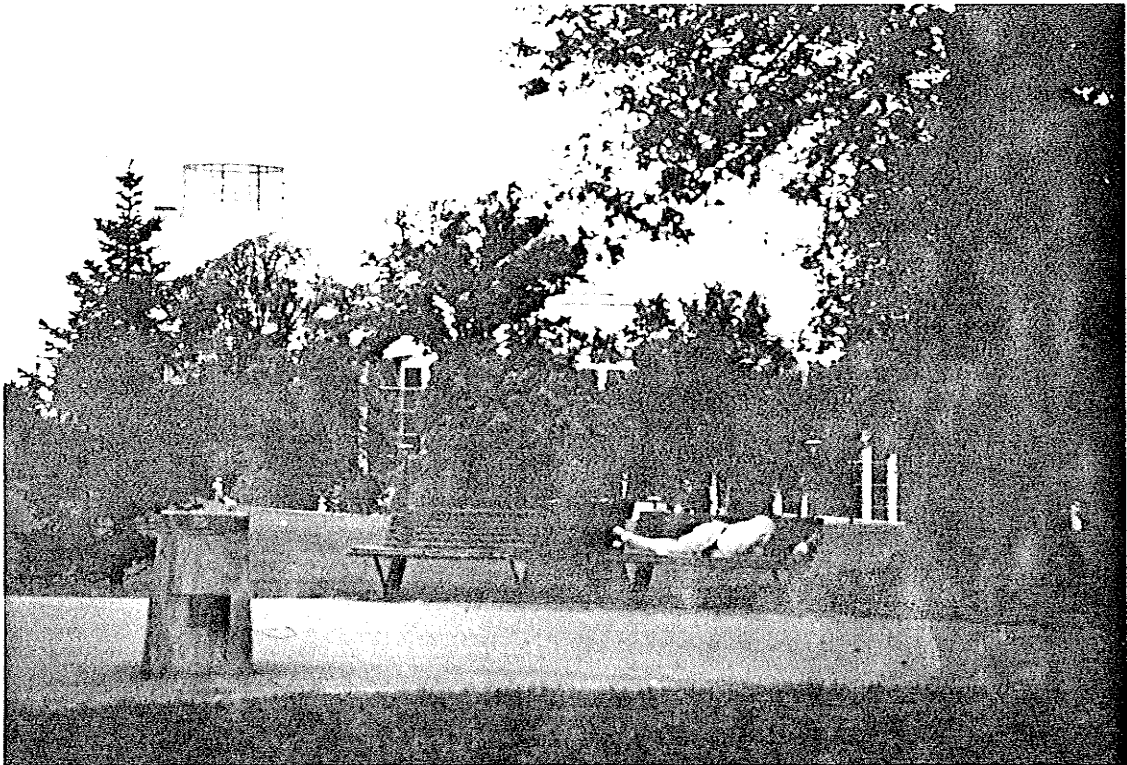


Figure 5.4: A person lying on a bench in Major's Hill Park

### 5.1.3 Pedestrian Circulation

A necessary component of a public park is people, therefore it is necessary to move people into the park from peripheral buildings, streets and zones. Many dramatic changes have occurred about the edge of Major's Hill Park in the last few decades. Unfortunately in ensuing development, with vehicular traffic given top priority by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, pedestrian access to and from the Major's Hill Park site has been ill-managed at best and links remain weak and tenuous. It is also important to note that although the following sections pertain to access into the park from the periphery, the opportunity to move from the park to other points of interest is greatly hampered by the same factors (see Figure 5.5).

#### Rideau / Wellington Corridor

Access from one of the city's busiest streets — Rideau/Wellington — is made only by passing along the eastern flank of the Chateau Laurier. A prominent desire line from this thoroughfare, along the western terrace of the hotel, is effectively blocked by a parking garage. This has been identified as a negative aspect, as people passing eastwards along Wellington Street from the prime generators of pedestrian traffic, namely Parliament Hill, the War Memorial, the National Arts Centre, Sparks Street Mall and the Elgin Street strip, must take a long detour about the Chateau via Mackenzie Avenue to reach the park (if they take it all). Figure 5.6 vividly illustrates the desire line from the park to Wellington Street disrupted by the Chateau Laurier parking garage.

#### By Ward Market

Although one of the region's liveliest areas lies immediately east of the park, the fast-flowing traffic on both Sussex Drive and Mackenzie Avenue precludes easy access. Currently, entry is gained by proceeding north along Sussex to St. Patrick then crossing with the traffic lights to arrive at the northeast corner of the park. Access can also be gained by walking through the NCC's parking lot to the north of the Connaught Building; on climbing a flight of concrete stairs, and then awaiting a break in traffic on Mackenzie, one enters Major's Hill Park just slightly north of the existing entry point; this desire line has been illustrated boldly time and time again as pedestrians move from the market area. The market area could be more closely related to Major's Hill Park by strengthening these pedestrian connections.

#### National Museum of Fine Arts, Nepean Point

On its completion, the National Museum of Fine Arts will welcome thousands of visitors a day to view its treasures. Proximity to this pastoral park should draw many of these same visitors to enjoy lunch or simply to experience the magnificent views of Parliament Hill. However, as has been the problem in the past with Nepean Point, park access promises to be difficult: problems with traffic speeding to and from Hull, Quebec along the Alexandra Bridge make current at-grade crossing a dangerous proposition. With an anticipated increase in pedestrians along this desire line, this concern will intensify.

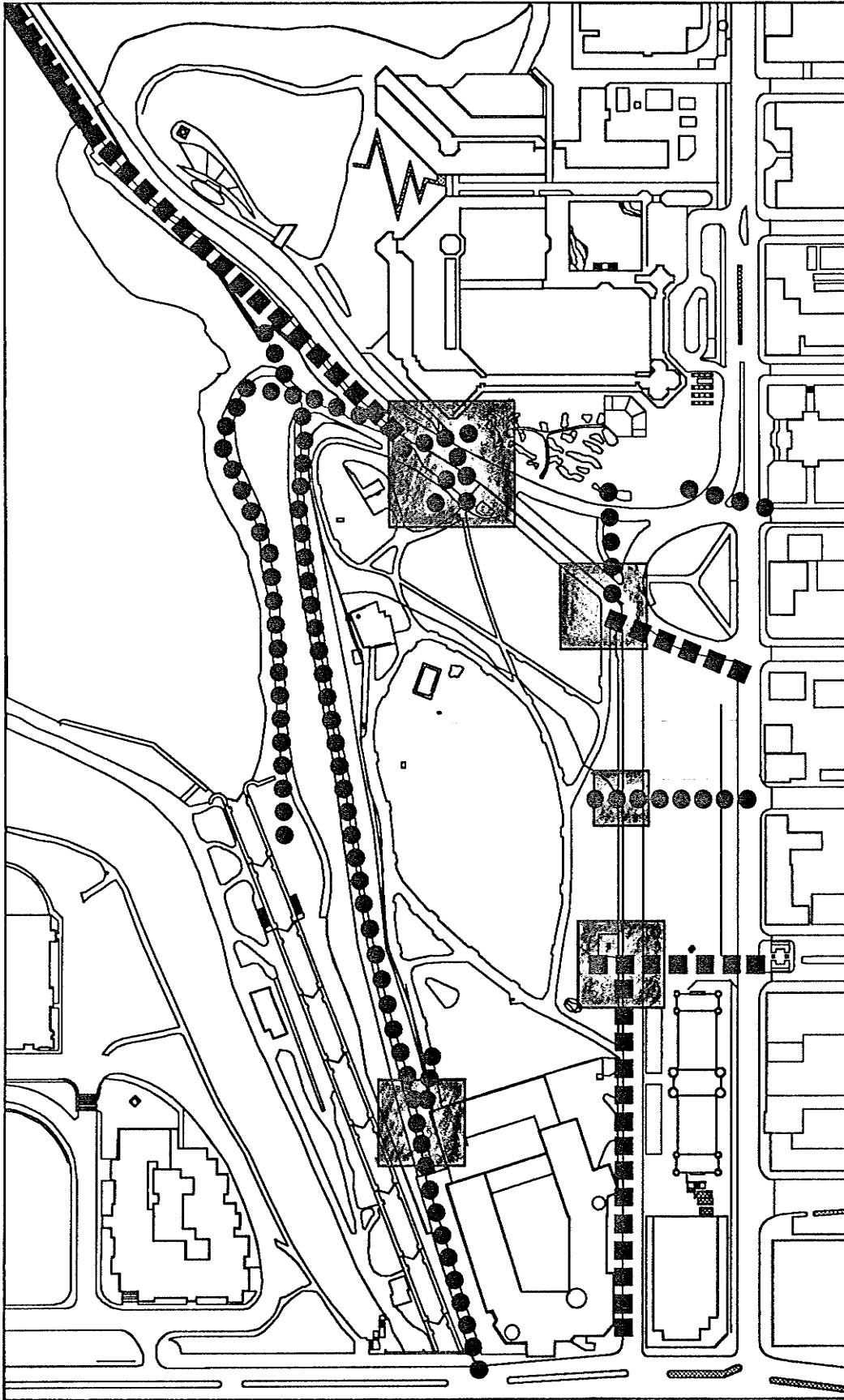


Figure 5.5: Pedestrian Circulation Patterns

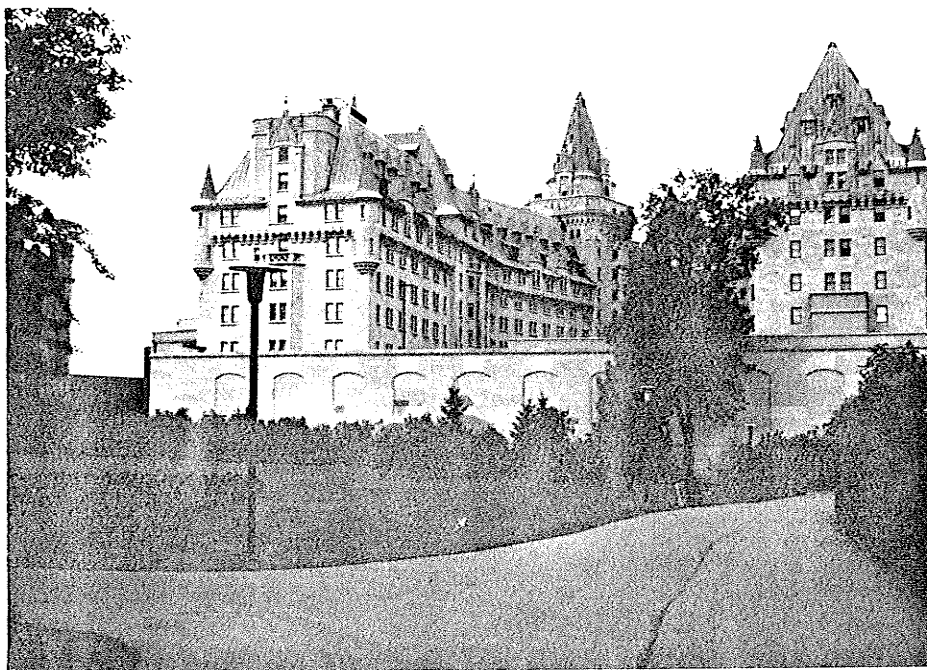


Figure 5.6: Looking south to Chateau Laurier: disrupted desire line from park to Wellington Street



Figure 5.7: Treacherous pedestrian access from park to canal level at north end

### Alexandra Bridge, National Museum of Civilization, Hull, P.Q.

Currently pedestrian and cycle traffic from Hull is handled along the Alexandra Bridge's recreational boardwalk. Movement into the north end of the park is made easily along St. Patrick Street, although connections to the canal level and to the railroad terrace are poor. From this direction, most pedestrians and cyclists consider Major's Hill Park as a thoroughfare only: a convenient greenspace to pass through on the way to another place. The Federal Land Use Plan (NCC) identifies Major's Hill Park as an integral component of the National Capital Region's open space system (see Appendix 9.1.3). To this end, better connections must be developed in fusing with existing recreational pathways to the north in Hull and to the Gatineau Hills beyond.

### Railroad Terrace, Rideau Canal Entrance Locks

Those who wish to ascend to Major's Hill Park site from either the railroad terrace or the entrance locks to the Rideau Canal, must make an arduous climb along a steep, dusty gravel road that winds its way along the north slope below the park (see Figure 5.7). It is surrounded by a wild vegetative cover that increases a feeling of insecurity and promotes uneasiness, even in broad daylight. There is no mid-span pedestrian connection to the railway terrace or to the locks from the park, although this has been deemed a desirable aspect in interviews; many expressed a desire to access these points but found the endeavour to be extremely difficult, frustrating and, oftentimes, dangerous. Those who make the effort to travel the length of the corridor find that they confront a dead-end and must turn around and retrace their steps (see Figure 5.8).

Circulation within Major's Hill Park is directed along bituminous asphalt pathways (four metres wide) which encircle the central greenspace in a roughly ovular form (Figure 5.9); this width accommodates the occasional patrol car which surveys the park after hours, or the maintenance vehicles which are necessary during the day and about festival time. This primary system is met tangentially by four paths which carry pedestrians into the park from the southeast corner, the east, and the north via the Alexandra Bridge. Joggers use the circuit for noon-hour exercise.

Along these black ribbons are thirty-eight benches of standard redwood slat, usually in pairs, with trash receptacles in between. Some of these are positioned underneath trees to take advantage of shade during the summer.

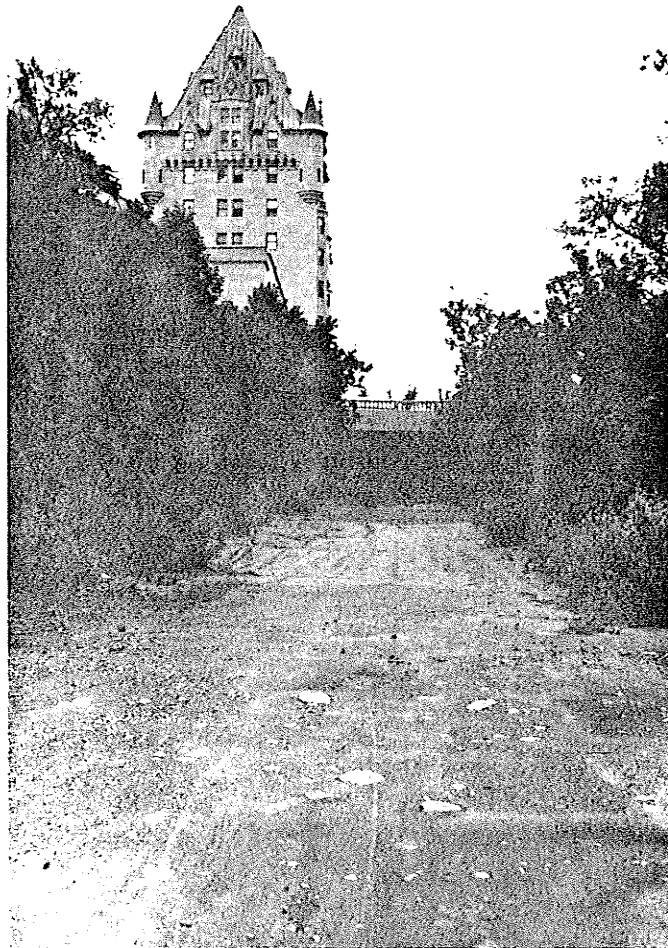


Figure 5.8: Chateau Laurier Hotel: dead-end at south end of railway terrace

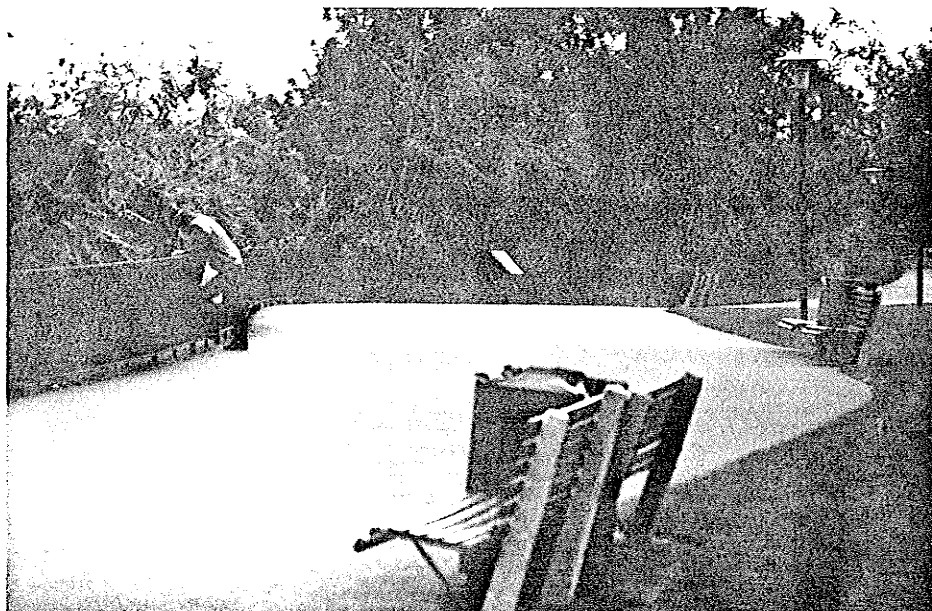


Figure 5.9: Pedestrian walkway on western edge of park



#### 5.1.4 Vehicular Traffic Patterns / Parking

One of the major obstacles hampering pedestrian access to Major's Hill Park is adjacent traffic flow (see Figure 5.10); user interviews and observational studies of Mackenzie Avenue and the approach to the Alexandra Bridge boldly confirm this.

Two important arterials directly affect Major's Hill Park: the approach to the Alexandra Bridge from St. Patrick Street to the north, and Mackenzie Avenue — a one way artery carrying traffic south towards Wellington Street — to the east. Both interrupt pedestrian traffic, effectively preventing easy access to and from the park; in fact, Mackenzie Avenue has been likened to a motor speedway. The inherently quiet nature of the park is disrupted only by the din of traffic on Mackenzie. At this time — as Confederation Boulevard commences development — no changes have been slated for the existing traffic patterns about the park. Again, the opening of the National Museum of Fine Arts in 1988 will only exacerbate the problem.

The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) maintains and monitors these thoroughfares; statistics for the traffic volume on these can be found in Appendix 9.5.

Parking in the core has been a perennial concern, and intensifies in the ByWard Market area. Many automobiles take advantage of the NCC's parking lots in the area, especially that north of the Connaught Building. An expressed concern has been the paucity of parking available for park users; they must vie for space along the eastern edge of Mackenzie. During festival times, the west lane of Mackenzie Avenue is usually restricted to tour bus parking; Canada Day finds the entire length of Mackenzie blocked to all but pedestrian traffic. The erection of the Chateau Laurier's parking garage helped to alleviate the hotel's parking problems but did not accommodate park users in any way. Ancillary parking, then, is a prominent concern, however, for the purposes of this practicum will be simply mentioned as an issue.

#### 5.1.5 Security

The issues of security and the perception of personal safety within Major's Hill Park during the evening and into the night have been a decided hindrance to park usage. Patricia O'Donnell writes that, "Social factors are affected by actual and perceived safety and security", and that "antisocial/criminal behaviour will limit social use in urban parks". (O'Donnell, 1987, 58) In the case of Major's Hill Park these words are pertinent. Through the interview process, the feeling of insecurity was identified as a major deterrent to park use. Although daylight hours reduce the impact, the presence of socially destitute and undesirable folk in Major's Hill Park has caused concern and negative impressions amongst users: "Having a beautiful park is fine but if you can't go into it what's the point?" (Interview, survey respondent, 1987)

Generally, Major's Hill Park is perceived as being unsafe at night, the spectres of prostitution, gay activity and associated violence acting as the primary determinants. The park's maintenance supervisor advised that prostitutes congregate about the southeastern corner of the park near the Chateau Laurier Hotel in the evening; users in the

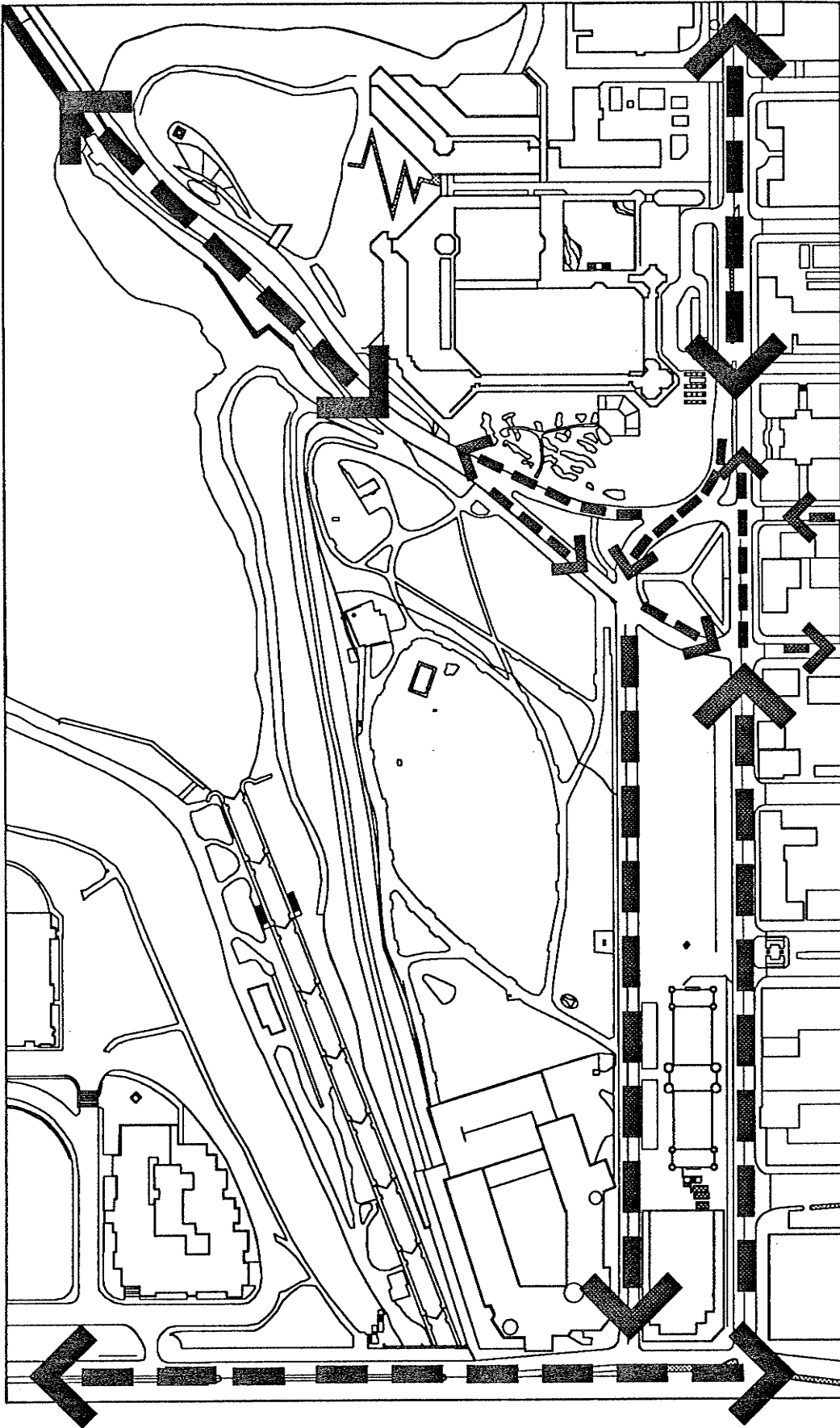


Figure 5.10: Vehicular Patterns about the periphery of Major's Hill Park

rest of the park were susceptible to muggings and violence: "Don't come after dark ... people get rolled." (Interview, Rochon, 1987) A minimal patrol program by the RCMP (perhaps two times between 18h00 and 06h00) was cited as a factor; the City of Ottawa police force has no jurisdiction over the park and thus does not patrol it. Although the actual number of 'incidents' involving criminal activity is very low, the public perceives it to be otherwise.

The problem was put even more bluntly by an individual who maintained that Major's Hill Park was but a place for "boys looking for men and men looking for boys." (Interview, Latté, 1987) Another mentioned that "Little boys shouldn't be walking around here." (Interview, survey respondent, 1987) The unsavory and unreliable characters who seem to frequent the park, often influenced by alcohol, give it an air of unpleasantness: empty beer and wine bottles scattered about favourite hideaways within the park pay chilling testament to this. Coupled with a modicum of lighting and no maintenance over weekends, a negative scenario overshadows the pastoral beauty of the park.

The areas which are considered to be unsafe are either screened off completely by vegetation or are deadends not frequented by either pedestrians or cyclists. They become especially conspicuous in the evening and into the night: crossing into the park from Nepean Point or from Hull is considered to be a risky venture and the railway terrace is generally considered 'off-limits' (forbidden territory) at night.

#### 5.1.6 Lighting

During the evening hours, as during the day, the best views of Parliament Hill are still to be had from Major's Hill Park: encroaching darkness and the subtle lighting of the Peace Tower and Parliamentary Library add a romantic charm to the setting. Even Colonel John By's bronze statue is floodlit and takes on an ambience unknown while the sun is shining.

However, the lighting situation at night is minimal at best and contributes to the anxious feelings that the Ottawa citizenry have about the park at this time; expired bulbs are only occasionally replaced (since the maintenance staff works but during the day), adding to the tension. During daylight hours, the undistinguished black-painted steel standards (topped by white spherical heads and referred to as 'lollipop lights') do not contribute to the historical ambience of the park.

#### 5.1.7 Maintenance Personnel / Procedures

Major's Hill Park is currently cared for by the National Capital Commission. The NCC employs seven men in the park including a supervisor; they are quartered in the old stone building at the north end of the park. Budget and manpower cuts in the last few years have had marked effect on the park's face as floral displays have been minimized and replacement plantings have been all but eliminated. Despite these setbacks, many visitors comment on the immaculate nature of the park, and laud the efforts of the maintenance staff (see Figure 5.11).

A smaller but insistent percentage commented on the maintenance of the park. One

individual said that the NCC has been neglectful in transplanting those trees that have been lost in the park (to disease, to lightning, etc.); an apparent lack of policy in this matter may eventually result in a denuded park. Another commented on the lack of litter pickup and the pruning of vegetation; in the case of the latter, it was felt that vegetation should be cleared away, or at least pruned back, from the top of the cliffs so as to maximize views outwards from the park.

Vandalism is a major problem in the park, costing the NCC thousands of dollars annually. The most blatant examples of this destruction occur to the park's many benches and trash receptacles (receptacles are often tossed onto the railroad terrace below). The lone drinking fountain in the park is often damaged.

Festivals — although few in number — place considerable stress on the park in terms of physical damage, and in terms of garbage buildup: Canada Day 1987 saw a fulltime crew of five men on garbage detail. The aftermath saw forty-four men working for two days to clean up the "snowfall".

On completion of the National Museum of Fine Arts, the maintenance staff will be relocated to new quarters there, from which they will oversee the care of Major's Hill Park, Nepean Point and the gallery's landscape. The stone house in the north end of the park is not currently slated for development.

#### 5.1.8 Musings (Appendix 9.6)

This section shares many of those feelings and impressions that were recorded over the author's course of visits to the park. From a sensual point of view, ie. sights, sounds, etc., this effort was of importance in terms of supplementing the hard data gathered.



Figure 5.11: Immaculate Major's Hill Park

## 5.2 Festivals

The National Capital Region is known far and wide for the many festivals which it supports annually, and is often referred to as the "Festival Capital". Festivals are important for several reasons:

1. they inject a great amount of capital into the city's economy via tourism;
2. they provide incentive for visitors to fully participate in the capital's events;
3. they enliven the city and region whether in the doldrums of winter or the slow days of summer.

Whatever the reason, festivals are a certain fixture and a *fait accompli* on the Ottawa scene.

Major's Hill Park has been and will continue to be an ideal site for festival purposes.

Its merits include:

1. proximity to major generators of pedestrian traffic;
2. varying terrain;
3. significant primary open areas and secondary open spaces;
4. different options for movement of pedestrians;
5. vehicular access for setting up of displays, booths, etc.; and,
6. provision of water and electricity.

The limitations of the park include:

1. awareness: as beautiful as it is, lack of programming minimizes the potential public activity that could happen there;
2. parking: accommodating the thousands of visitors and especially those driving to the area has always been an acute problem for festival organizers, although the Rideau Centre and ByWard Market assist somewhat to this end;
3. the Chateau Laurier Hotel effectively isolates the park from the lunch crowd and visitors from the busy Wellington/Elgin core.

The National Capital Commission has no set policy pertaining to the use of its parks for festival purposes; the only criteria seem to be utilization for non-profit, non-commercial purposes. The NCC's mandate, however, does describe animation as an important feature.

There has also been some controversy in the recent past over the consideration of LeBreton Flats as a common festival site: the aim is to have all of the Capital's festivals using this property west of the downtown core for their purposes. Vehement opposition has been levelled against this proposal because:

1. the site is located outside the core in a comparatively lifeless, sterile environment;
2. pedestrian activity is minimal;
3. future development *in situ* will require further movement.

The current festival network, including Major's Hill Park, Jacques Cartier Park (Hull), Parliament Hill and Confederation Park, functions comfortably and conveniently. It was

decided that energy be directed towards enhancing this situation. The design development stage illustrates how festivals will be accommodated in the park.

### 5.2.1 Canada Day

Major's Hill Park, in conjunction with Parliament Hill, Victoria Island and Jacques Cartier Park, serves as a vital link in the loop of venues about the Ottawa River which accommodate the 300,000-400,000 visitors who partake in Canada's birthday celebrations each July first (see Figure 5.12). Major's Hill Park offers a convenient location, and excellent views for the Canada Day participant; it is a well known fact that Major's Hill Park offers a magnificent setting from which to view the fireworks programme later in the evening.

The NCC aims to make this most important of all national holidays accessible to all Canadians and to all visitors. Canada Day 1987 was a celebration of multiculturalism and of those ethnic groups who have made this country diverse and strong; this theme was reflected in Major's Hill Park by lively entertainment on three stages and the provision of ethnic foods for over 30,000 people. The NCC anticipated a circuit which would be linked in a vibrant European fashion by vendors and street entertainers (mimes, jugglers, troubadours, etc.). It was believed that such an ambience should be continued throughout the year in the park and not only at festival time.

### 5.2.2 Festival of Spring

Early each May, the thirteen-year old Festival of Spring, takes place in the capital; the celebration existed previously as the Canadian Tulip Festival, founded in 1944, with close ties to the allied Dutch and Queen Juliana. The Festival of Spring supports many activities: the Rideau Canal flotilla parade from Dow's Lake to downtown, a fireworks display, the National Capital Marathon, and the blossoming of over one million tulips in the city's parks and along its driveways (see Figure 5.13). A prominent feature in later years had been the montage of craft stalls in Major's Hill Park.

The year 1987 saw a turnaround in the bias of the Festival as it looked once again to her floral-based roots: the well-known craft market was moved from the park and situated indoors at Lansdowne Park, providing better security and protection from inclement weather; 'novelty gardens' (floral sculptures) in the central open space were implemented instead. This, coupled with the Market terrasse, consolidating gourmet concessions alongside the Chateau Laurier's north wall, and entertainment occurring on the lower northeast plateau, was a revised concept which, by all accounts, proved to be very successful.

Greg Larsen, director of the Festival of Spring, stressed that the intent was to avoid a "carny-like" atmosphere (thus, the terrasse idea), and to keep it as natural as possible. Major's Hill Park is important to the Festival, not only because of its proximity to Parliament Hill and the Rideau Canal, but because of its long-standing association with the park: the loss of its use would be a loss of the Festival's heart. May 1988 will be a true

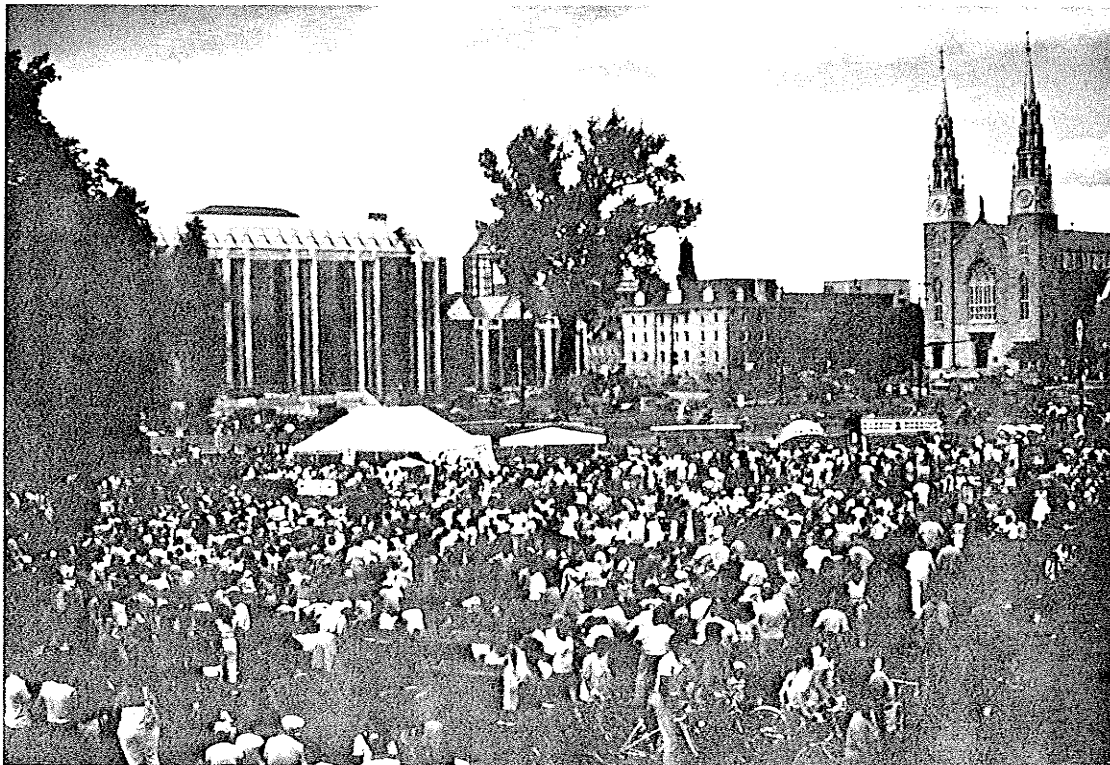


Figure 5.12: Canada Day celebrations in Major's Hill Park



Figure 5.13: Festival of Spring activity in Major's Hill Park (Festival of Spring)

test: construction of Confederation Boulevard alongside Major's Hill Park will preclude any activity there until after the opening of the Museum of Fine Arts on Canada's birthday; the Festival will relocate to a site near Dow's Lake in the interim.

### 5.2.3 Winterlude

The ten day Winterlude celebration commences in the National Capital Region during the first week of February. Celebrating the beauty and joy of the winter season, Winterlude offers numerous choices for the thousands of participants, including ski and skate races, ice sculpture competitions, entertainment of all varieties, sleigh rides and sporting matches. But perhaps the essence of Winterlude is the opportunity to skate along the Rideau Canal, from the Congress Centre downtown to Dow's Lake, near Carleton University, eleven kilometres distant (see Figure 5.14). It is a well-attended event that is admirably capped off by closing ceremony fireworks on Dow's Lake.

The NCC anticipates moving into Major's Hill Park in the near future for the first time for Winterlude, currently idle through the winter months. Because of the growth of the festival and the proximity of the park to the canal, Major's Hill Park will likely take on an added dimension. Destination '88 — the year-long celebration to be held in the capital in 1988 — will also honour the tenth anniversary of Winterlude.

### 5.2.4 Franco-Ontarien Festival

Perhaps the fastest growing event in the capital, the Franco-Ontarien Festival, celebrating the artistic and the cultural French community in Ontario, has also shown interest in utilizing the Major's Hill Park for some of its events (currently spread over the capital from Confederation Park on Elgin Street to Riverain Park in Vanier). Twelve years in existence now, the Franco-Ontarien Festival purports to offer alternative entertainment with a more European flavour, resplendent with jugglers and animators, popular, classical and folkloric performances by nationally- and internationally-acclaimed performers and professional groups; this festival looks to foster dynamic cultural and artistic interchange. Children and the elderly are important components of this philosophy with activities geared especially for them: "a fantasy world with lots of colour". Monique Miron, *la directrice générale du Festival*, aims to make the festival the cornerstone of French language and culture in North America.

Major's Hill Park is considered by the Festival as *la place publique*, a people place well-suited to their goals, unlike the too-often-touted alternative site, LeBreton Flats. Mme Miron's interest also extends to the Sussex Courts to the east of the park, comfortably-scaled spaces which could ably support small gatherings listening to French story-tellers or to jazz musicians. Strengthening connections to the market area would solidify vital pedestrian conduits for visitors to the festival's park activities. Its special place in the city should guarantee success as a future component of the Franco-Ontariens' growing network in the National Capital Region.



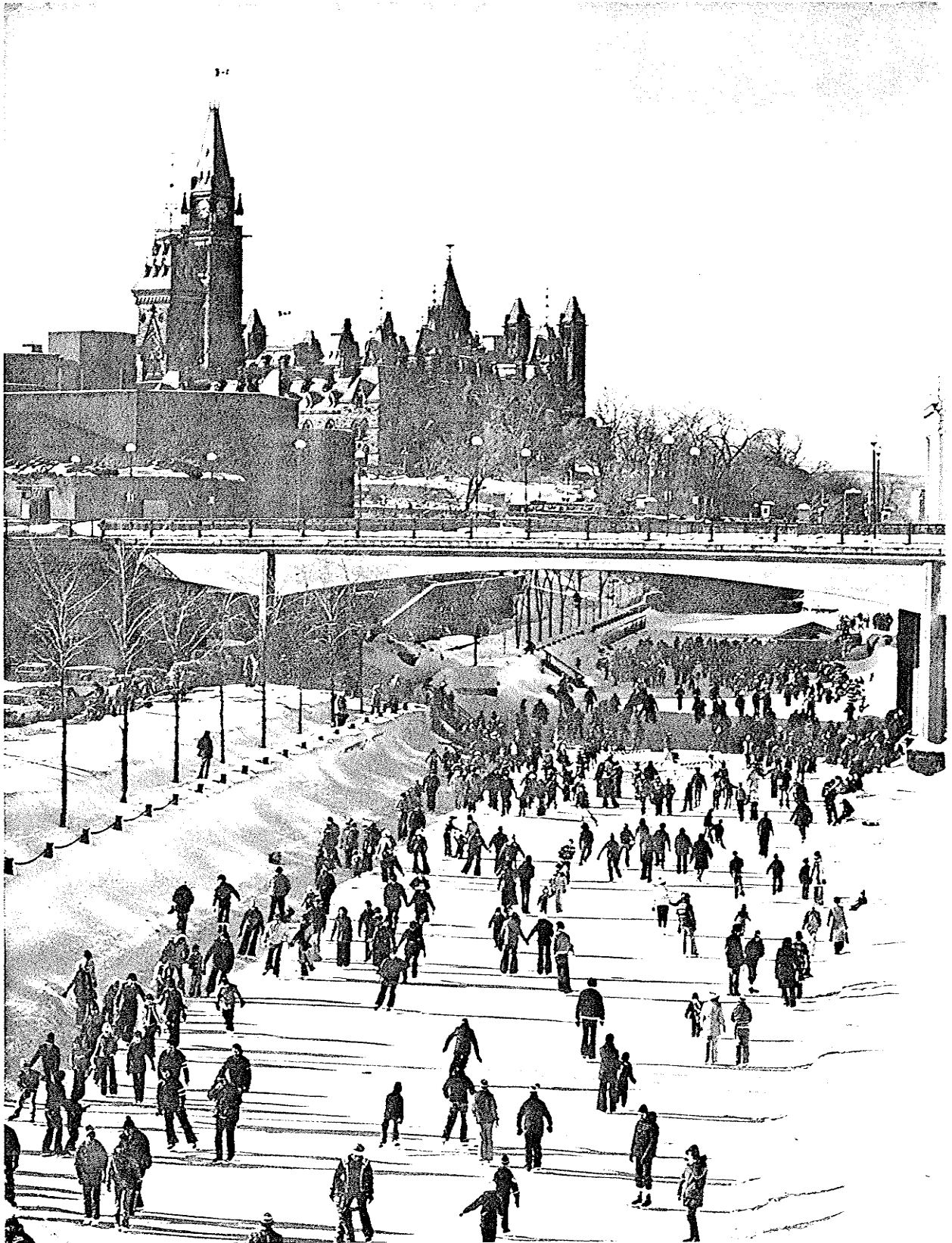


Figure 5.14: Winterlude: skating on the Rideau Canal (NCC)

### 5.2.5 Ottawa Jazz Festival

Another group interested in the Major's Hill Park site is the Ottawa Jazz Festival, the younger compatriot of the internationally-renowned Montreal Jazz Festival. The capital's version takes place in the middle of July and is currently centered out of the National Arts Centre (NAC) alongside the Rideau Canal. As it too is in an expansive mode, the Jazz Festival is exploring new sites to exploit its 'wares', and Major's Hill Park is a likely candidate because of its location and potential for high visitation.

Today, the NAC provides the festival with the use of its summer stage, terrace, and indoor salon for performances — as well as staging equipment — free of charge, and provides technical assistance at cost. The Festival's growing acceptance within the community has stressed the limits of the NAC's handling capability, i.e. overflows, thus making Major's Hill Park and its larger spaces all the more appealing. However, Major's Hill Park would beg added expenses in setting up equipment, and does not provide access to indoor facilities if the festival is beseged by inclement weather. Therefore despite its seductive open space, economics would inevitably determine the likelihood of jazz resounding through the park and over the entrance locks.

### 5.2.6 Festival of Lights

A new tradition has begun in the nation's capital, and the National Capital Commission calls it the Festival of Lights. From December to January, Ottawans and visitors to the capital will participate in an event that will see the winter night sky ablaze with shimmering colours. The initiation of this 'tradition' began in December 1986 and saw the proposed Confederation Boulevard route decorated from the Governor General's residence at Rideau Hall to Elgin Street below the war memorial; Parliament Hill was alit with over 8000 lights.

Major's Hill Park was also dressed for the occasion, its prominent elm dressed in 250 white lights (of 2500 altogether in the park) (see Figure 5.15). For the first time, the great tradition of the Noon-Day Gun was extended, as it was fired at midnight to welcome the new year. It is hoped that along with the newly created New Year's Eve celebrations for the capital, Major's Hill Park will take on a new role in an otherwise cold winter period.

### 5.2.7 Canadian Heritage Festival

According to the NCC, both Major's Hill Park and Jacques Cartier Park are being touted as the main venues for the proposed Canadian Heritage Festival to be held annually in late July. This Festival was to be a celebration of multiculturalism versus a celebration of the region's history (which would have made the Major's Hill a prime candidate). As with the Canada Day festivities, this festival would illustrate the contributions of the many and varied ethno-cultural groups which comprise the complex mosaic of Canada.

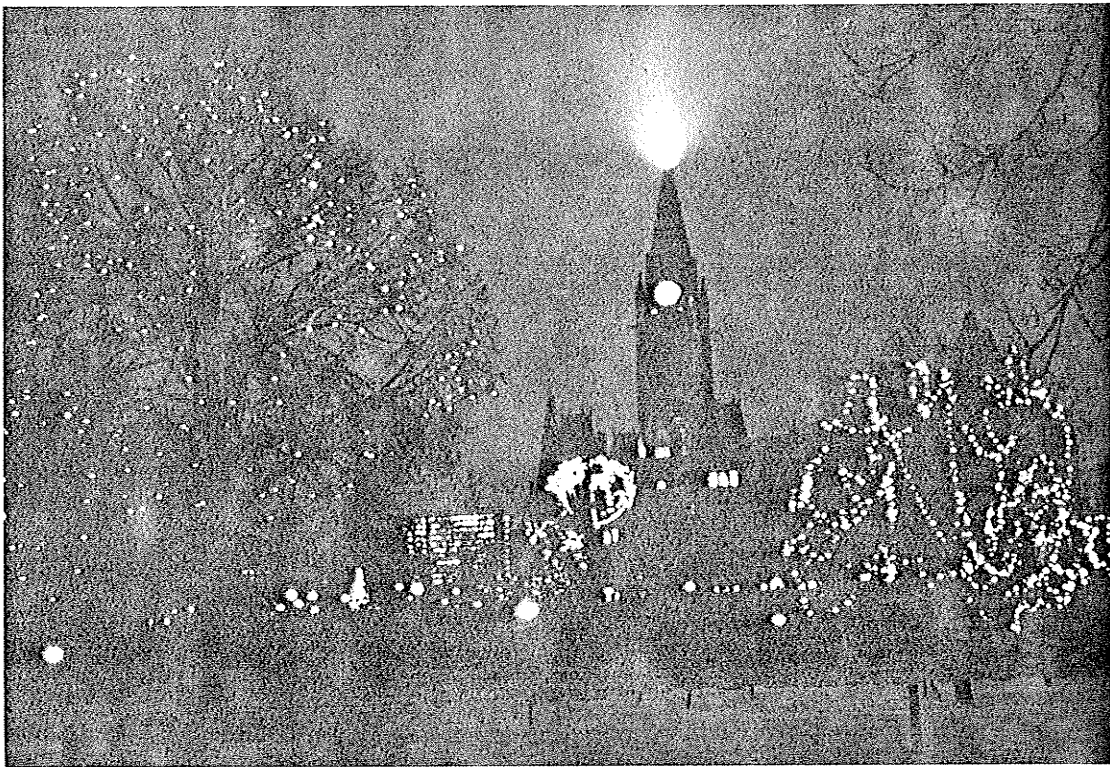


Figure 5.15: Festival of Lights in Major's Hill Park (Atkinson, NCC)

### 5.3 Interest Groups

#### 5.3.1 Lower Town West

Lynn Baxter, President of the Lower Town West citizen's group, offered that Major's Hill Park is not seen as a vitally important amenity for the residents of Lower Town, mainly because it is effectively isolated from the community by Sussex Drive and Mackenzie Avenue. Interviews *in situ* also vividly illustrated this fact: of those interviewed in the park, less than 5% made their homes in Lower Town. Bingham Park, a smaller but children-oriented park in the heart of the community provides those amenities which Major's Hill Park does not, namely play structures and formal playing fields. Despite this, Major's Hill is viewed as nicely sheltered by the Chateau Laurier Hotel and as a terrific observation platform for the Hill. Concerns were raised about security in the park during the day or the night: knifings, drug dealings and homosexual activity have all been cited to this end. From the community's point of view, only by offering a worry-free park twenty-four hours a day, i.e. enhancing security, could it be restored to a more appealing light. To the community, the inclusion of positive programming for children would also be considered a step in the right direction.

#### 5.3.2 The Committee for Responsible Government for the National Capital Region (CRGNCR)

The Committee for Responsible Government for the National Capital Region is an ad hoc group formed in December of 1986 to prompt the National Capital Commission into reconsidering its proposed implementation of the Ceremonial Route (now Confederation Boulevard). Boasting prominent persons in the capital region — especially from the Lower Town neighbourhood — the group has established itself as a powerful voice, especially with respect to social concerns: their initial aim was to save the park from 'elitist and expensive interventions'. The route, they argued, would effectively eliminate a sizeable portion of the Major's Hill Park's eastern edge and northeastern plateau. Since it was one of the few parks in the Lower Town district, the Committee felt it was their duty as regional watchdogs to nip the action in the bud. Therefore Major's Hill Park became the crux of what proved to be the Committee's larger strategic game plan, namely to monitor the activities of federal agencies such as the NCC, who have since become more open and sympathetic to public concerns.

#### 5.3.3 Heritage Ottawa

Heritage Ottawa's interest in Major's Hill Park comes from a policy-oriented position. As with the preceding group, their curiosity was piqued in the winter of 1986-1987 as information was divulged regarding the Ceremonial Route and its subsequent impact on the park site. The objectives and initiatives served did not take into account the views of the community affected, the city or the region, thus making it a prime candidate for consideration by the group. In attempting to understand to what extent citizens' groups have a role in any NCC initiative the unfortunate answer was that — at the time — they did

not and could not have a role. Resultant public criticism through the media forced the NCC to review its planning process and it currently has worked to include outside views, of both individual citizens and concerned groups: the NCC's open forum on design in the capital was the first major step in this direction. According to Marc Denhez, a member of Heritage Ottawa, most of Lower Town's concerns were accommodated. The Major's Hill Park controversy provided the catalyst for a new era in the capital's growth and development, as now the NCC is willing to develop a more orderly planning system, with a multi-lateral decision-making bias.



**Chapter Six:**  
**DESIGN**

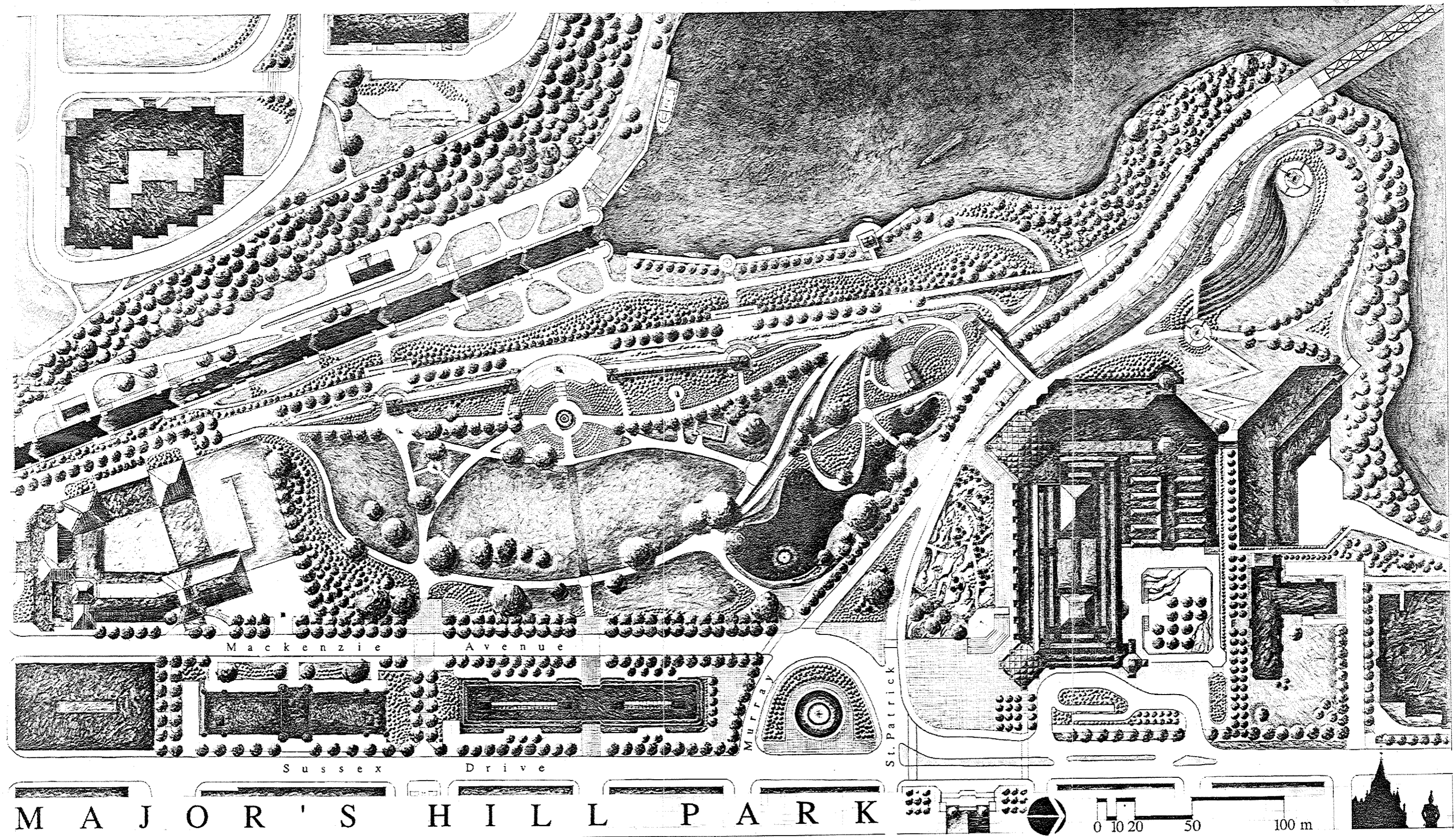
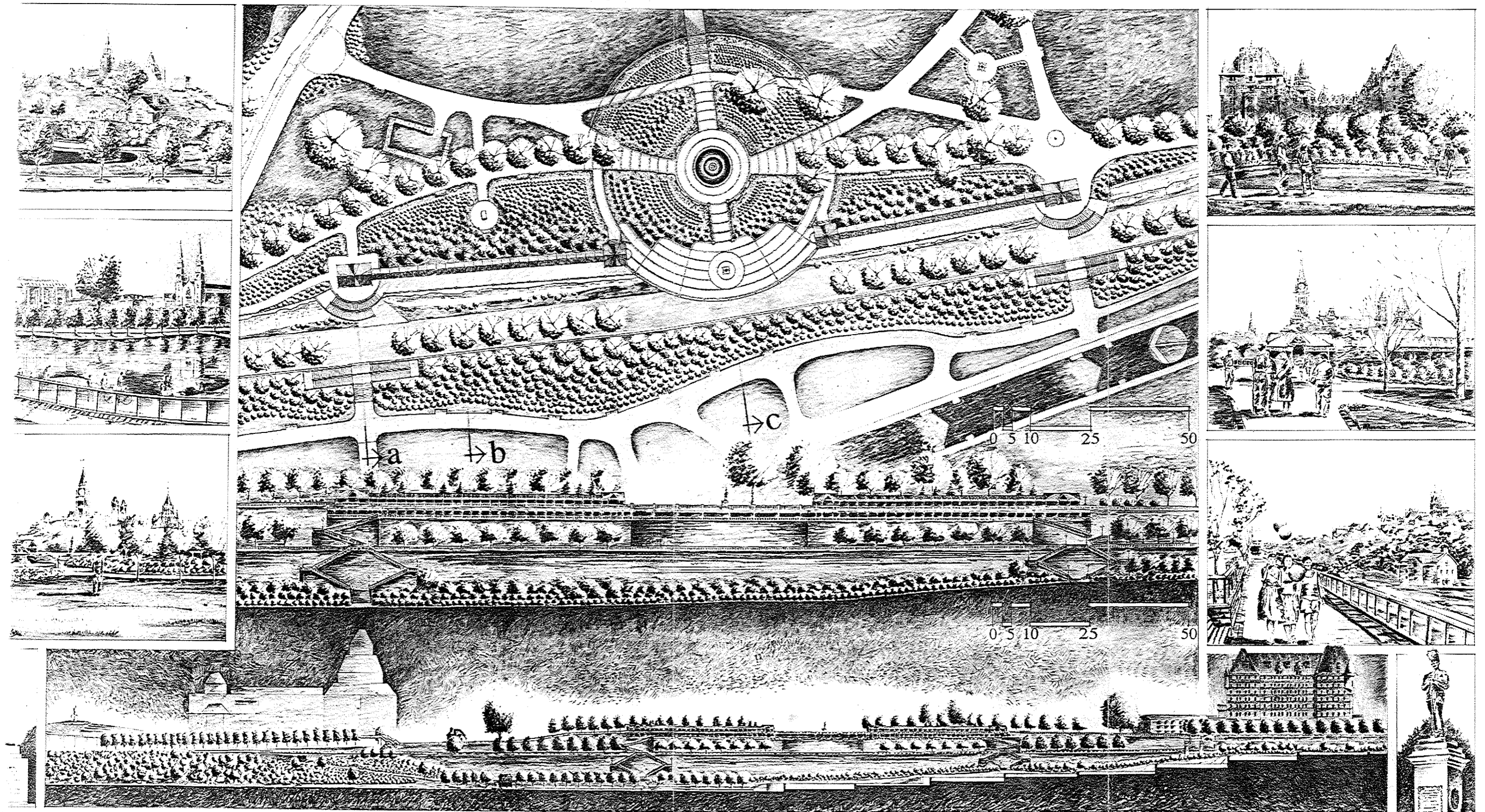


Figure 6.1: Final design (plan)



. . . a s t u d y i n a d a p t i v e r e h a b i l i t a t i o n

Figure 6.2: Final design (detailed plan, elevations, vignettes)



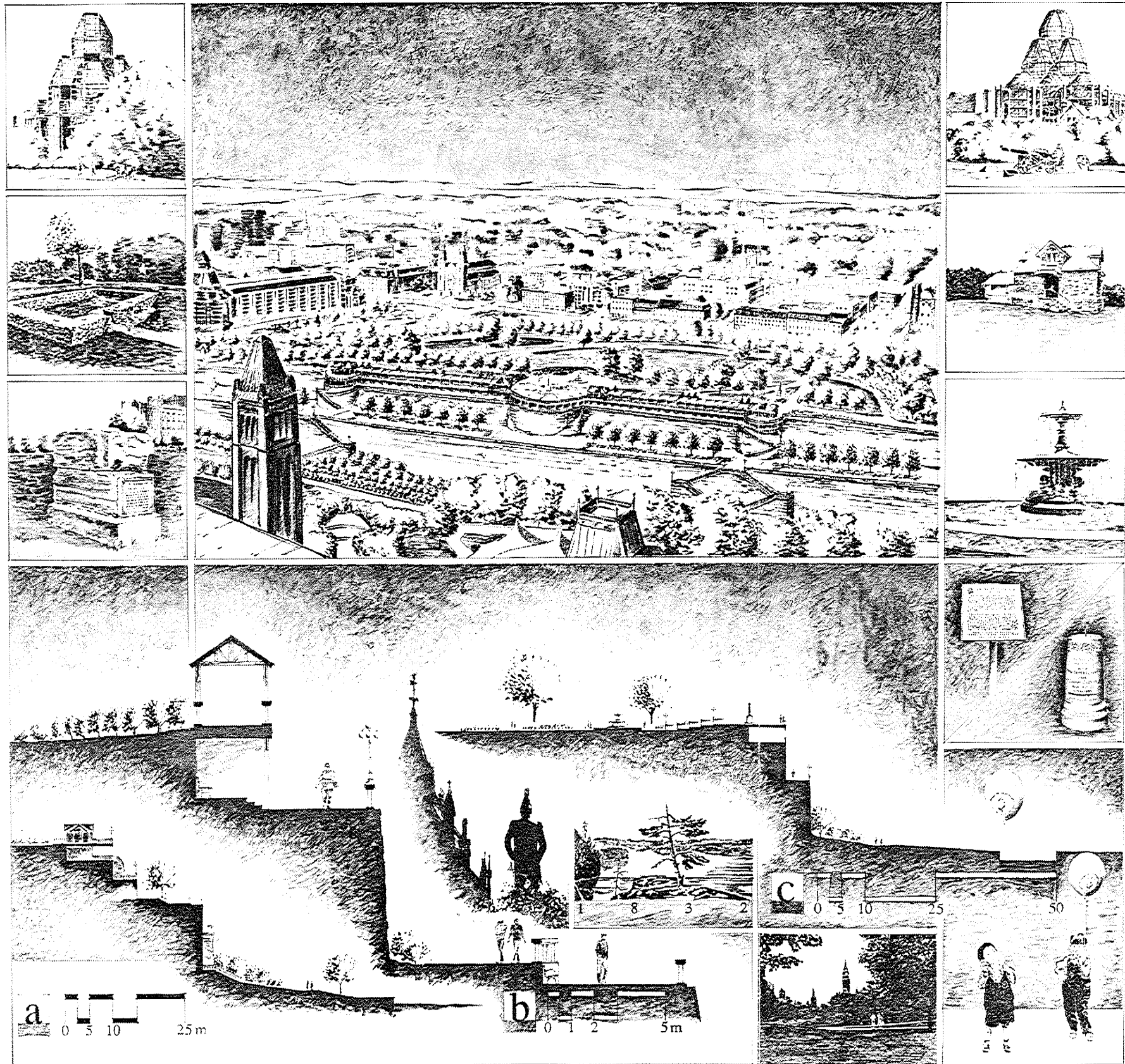


Figure 6.3: Final design (perspective, sections, vignettes)

The evolution and the usage of Major's Hill Park have been amply documented; issues and concerns have been reconsidered. One aim of this study is to proffer a design which suitably acknowledges and addresses the deeper understanding derived from intensive study of the park, its past and its environs. Robert Haig contends that few cities, like Ottawa, have "retained in such perfect representation the very soul of their community." (Haig, 1975, 37)

Major's Hill Park exemplifies a complex footprint on the Ottawa landscape, composed of a series of layers. These 'transparencies', as Jellicoe refers to them, include symbolism, heritage, passive nature/attractiveness, geomorphology, context, pragmatic issues, and users, each identifiable and important as entities in themselves. Each in turn must be developed properly and then woven into a responsible, holistic design solution. In the quest for an enriched aesthetic and spiritual experience for the park visitor, the resultant complexity found in the landscape should provide sufficient fodder. As at Finlay's poetic garden, Stonypath, the elements exist to be seen, to be read, to be ignored or to be read and meditated upon; Major's Hill Park will provide sufficient opportunity for this.

With this in mind, it is imperative to choose a concept which will provide direction for all design decisions to follow. In analysing the myriad of possibilities to this end, one use was seen traditionally to be considered particularly more or less synonymous with Major's Hill Park.

#### 6.1 Symbolism: Park as Belvedere

The National Capital Commission has stated that Confederation Boulevard will support national cultural, institutional and diplomatic functions along its length, and where possible, will emphasize symbolic entities. Major's Hill Park is an important link on the route, and the opportunity at hand begs that warrants its symbolic integrity be well-managed.

Historically, very few events of any significant nature occurred within the boundaries of Major's Hill Park; it has always seemed to be on the periphery of the 'action' in the capital. Rather, it has always served as a passive greenspace platform from which to view those elements situated about it: the foci include Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal, the Chateau Laurier Hotel, the Ottawa River and the Gatineau Hills. Its elevated position has always allowed one to experience the beautiful surroundings unhindered by obstacles or distractions; the views most certainly make it unique and give it distinction. During the course of interviews, views were cited by approximately one-third of respondents as to what they liked about the park. (One individual spoke eloquently of the view up the Ottawa River and its blending with the distant sky as alone being worthwhile for visiting the park). The adaptive rehabilitation scenario for Major's Hill Park accepts the premise that the most important aim is the preservation and the enhancement of these views from the park.

Traditionally, one method of harnessing vistas and views was through the development of a contrivance called a belvedere. Translated from its Italian origins, it literally means 'beautiful view'. Symbolically, Major's Hill Park can be likened to a belvedere.

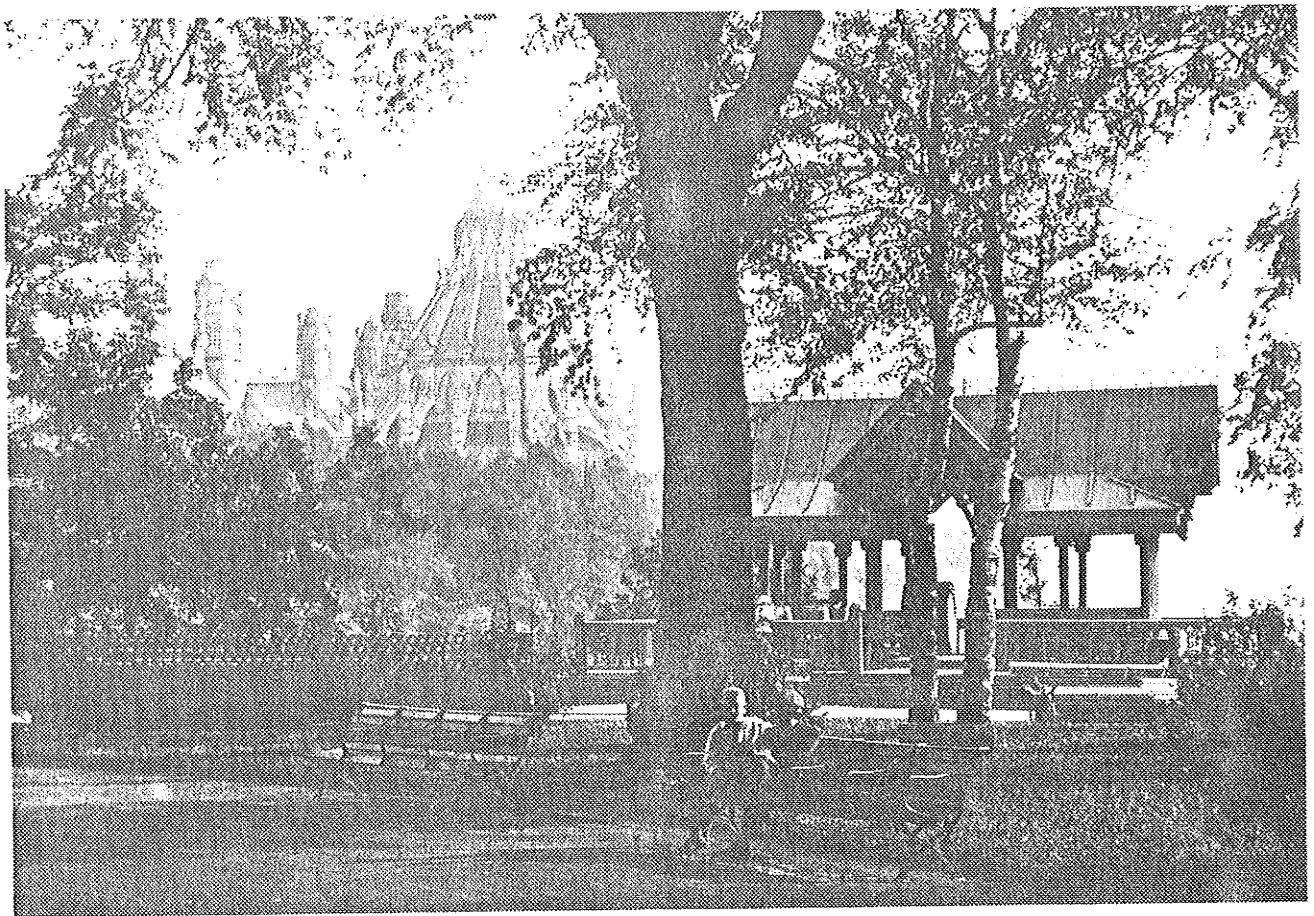


Figure 6.4: Overlook Pavilion, c.1900, with Parliament Buildings in background  
(City of Ottawa Archives, CA#2929)

Major's Hill Park once boasted a formal belvedere (from 1904) on its western edge (see Figure 6.4); the stone base has survived over time and is still found in that location. The National Capital Region, too, is not without its precedents: near the Village of Rockcliffe, a romantically-situated belvedere is positioned above the Ottawa River.

Joseph Bouchette was one of the first to formally express his wonder at the scenery when he described the panorama: "...the most splendid view is beheld that the magnificent scenery of the Canadas affords". (Bouchette, 1832, 81) The forested skirt of Barrack's Hill, the Ottawa River and the Gatineau Hills beyond are all there as Bouchette would have witnessed, but now the modern capital and all of its trimmings dominate the setting. Nevertheless, it is this harmonious juxtaposition which will be maintained and enhanced.

The park as belvedere can be translated into reality by manipulating the entirety of Major's Hill Park such that views and vistas are considerately handled, structured and emphasized. A number of devices are available to achieve this goal, such as the framing and the layering of views. Literary allusions and references will also be allied to the views and vistas from the Major's Hill stage.

In the adaptive rehabilitation plan proposed for Major's Hill Park, the most overt manifestation of the belvedere is an architectural expression on the western edge of the park (Figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3). Figure 6.5 illustrates some of the preliminary design sketches which led to the general form of the park. Figures 6.6 and 6.7, illustrate preliminary sketches for the belvedere itself.

Stately and simple, the belvedere remains sympathetic to the park's limestone edge, while addressing the reintroduced floral arrangements, By fountain and circulation system (Figure 6.3, Section a). This three part feature is composed of a central plaza from which emanate a bi-level belvedere on either side; each is marked by distinct pavilions (Figure 6.2). The plaza will symbolize a celebration of the achievements of Colonel John By (see following section). The belvedere edge offers the best formal viewing venue in the park: Parliament Hill and the Rideau Canal can be seen unadulterated from a variety of different angles and from different levels.

As mentioned, the belvedere consists of two levels: the uppermost is primarily a covered corridor with pavilions at either end, each housing stairs to a lower level, offering seating and shelter; each will have opportunities for historic interpretation (Figure 6.3, Section b). Clues for its form and style were derived from that of the original overlook which once adorned the edge (Figure 6.4). It will be of light metal frame construction, and coloured green to harmonize with the pastel hues of the Chateau Laurier and Parliament Hill roofscapes.

The belvedere zone will act as the interface between the manicured aspect of the park and the natural, 'wild' nature of the limestone cliff area. It will offer exciting opportunities on moving down and through it, with ever-changing vistas and experiences as the reward.

Another opportunity to enhance views is by framing the subject. Characteristically about the city, many important profiles are seen to be floating above vegetative masses; the

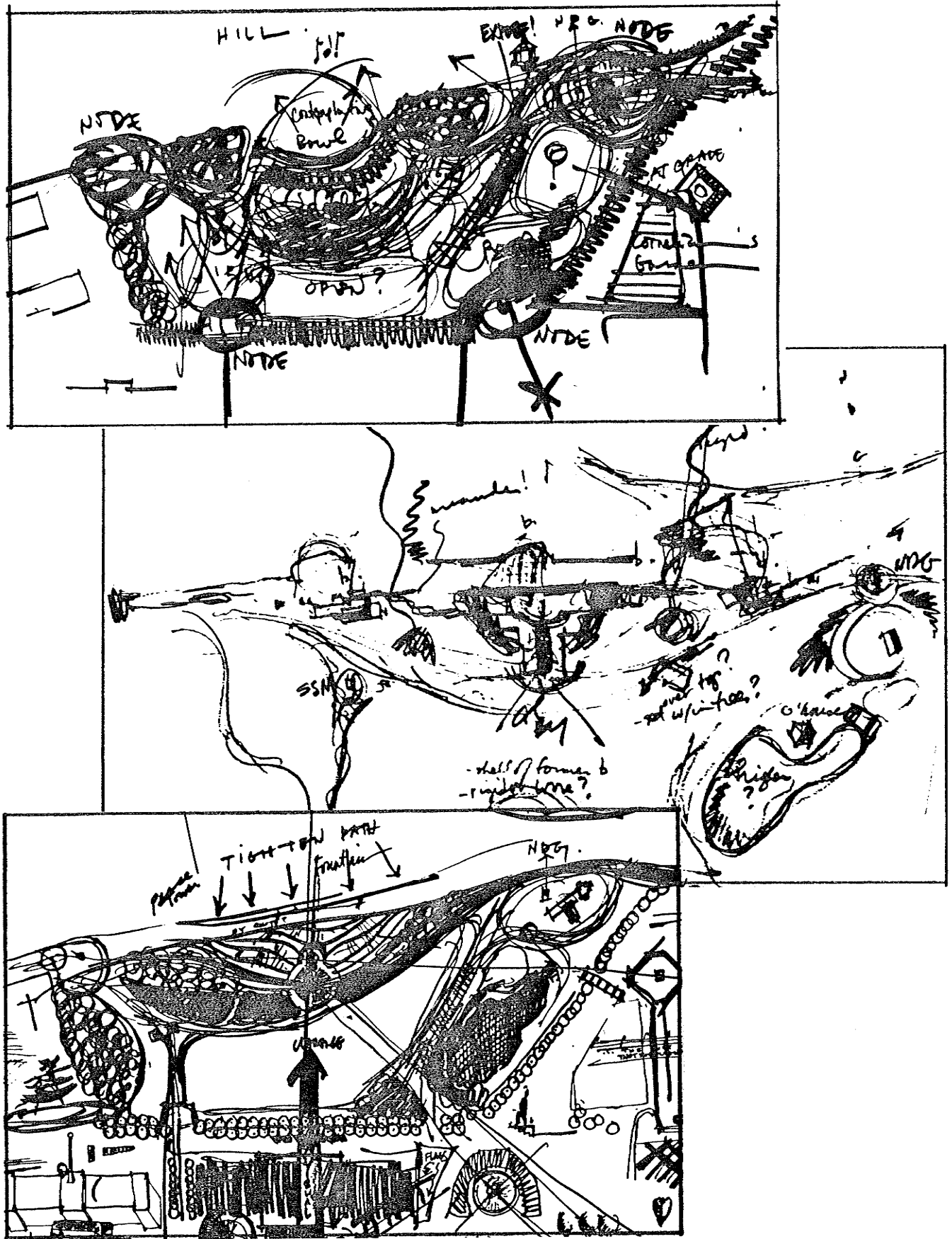


Figure 6.5: Preliminary design: park layout (see Figure 6.9)

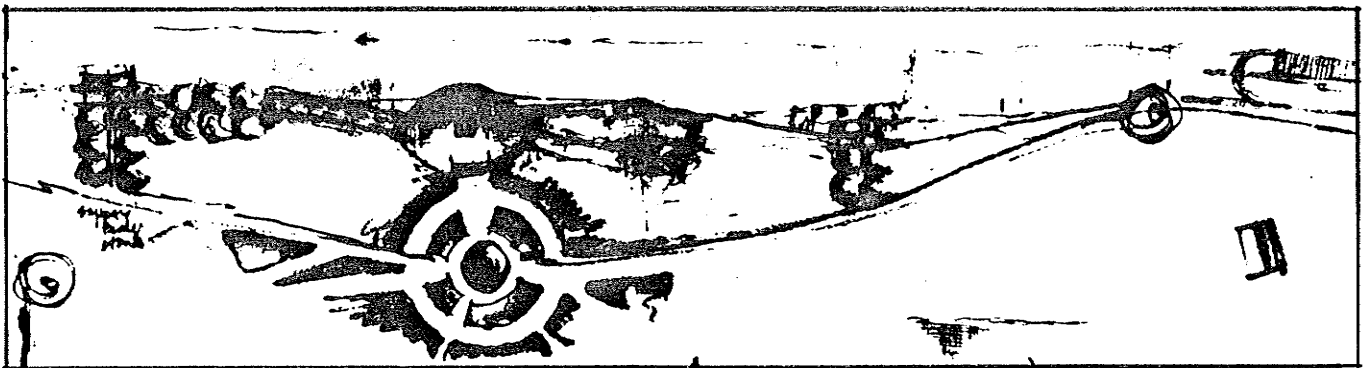
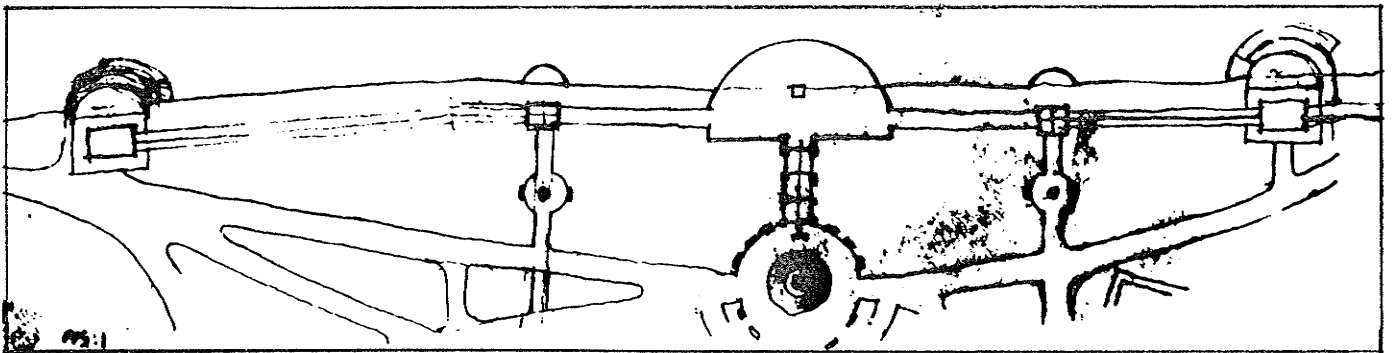
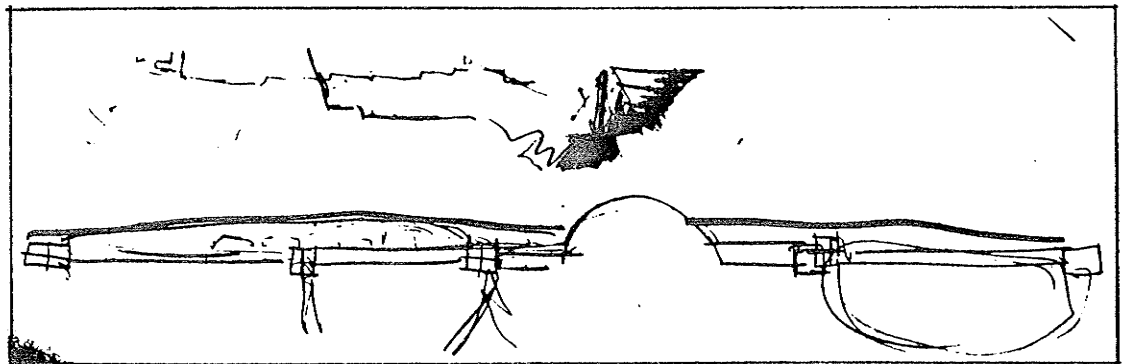
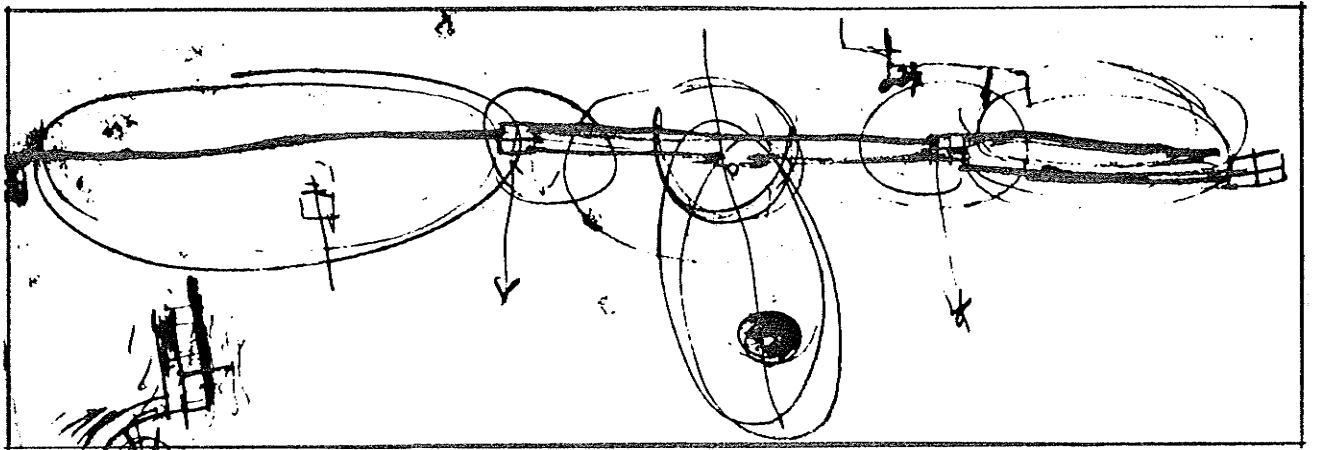


Figure 6.6: Preliminary design: belvedere edge

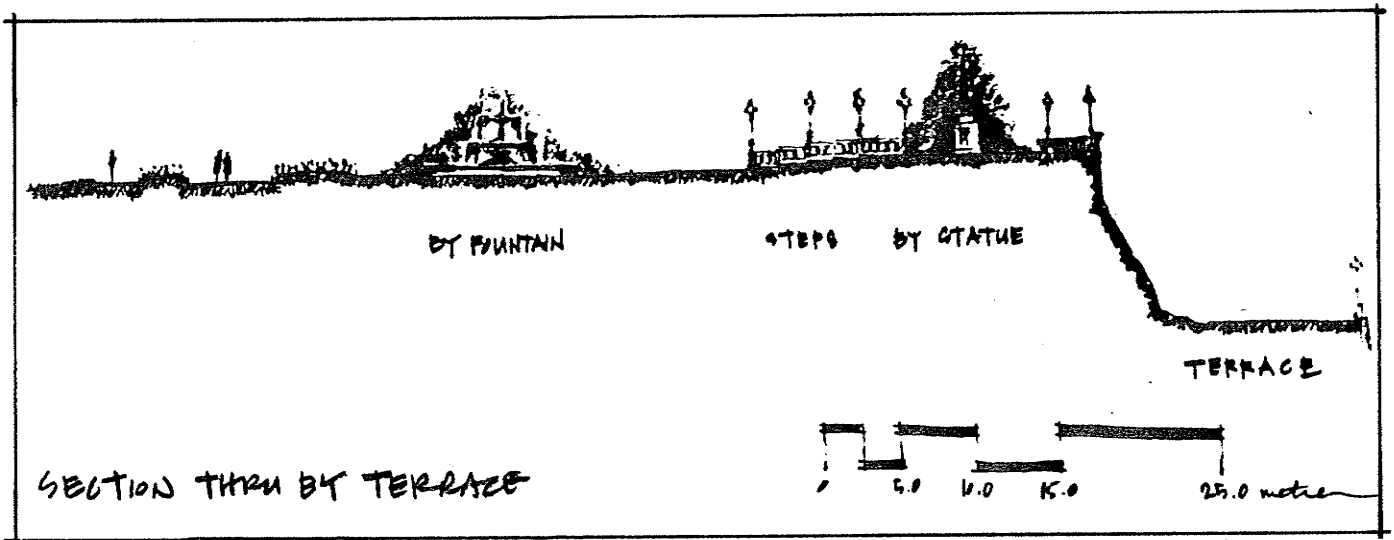
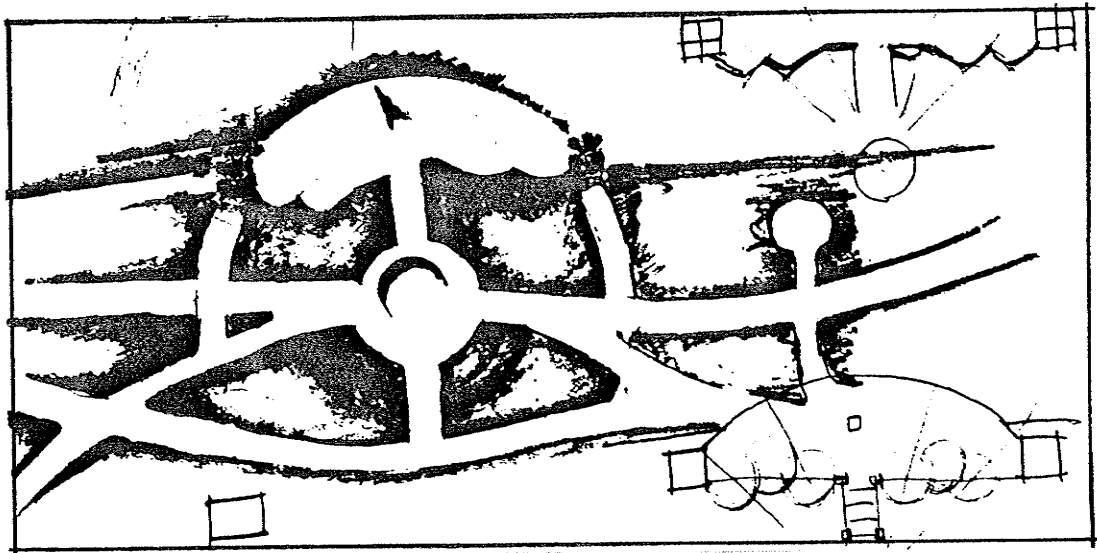
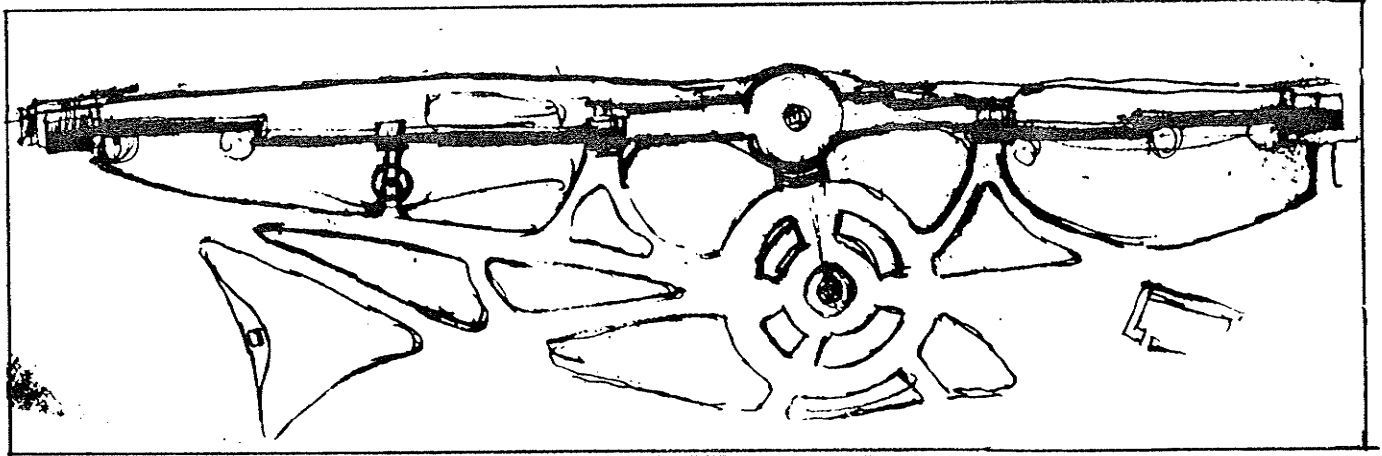


Figure 6.7: Preliminary design: belvedere edge

Chateau Laurier Hotel is a prime example. Implementing a dense mass of planting before the Chateau Laurier garage will negate that structure while emphasizing the striking upper reaches of the hotel (Figure 6.8). This same effect will be applied to the Connaught Building, the National Museum of Fine Arts and Parliament Hill, so that depending on one's situation in the park, buildings of import will be highlighted in picturesque surroundings. The Champlain monument atop Nepean Point will be emphasized and made to stand out as planting configurations within the park frame it as well.

Considering the importance of the overlook function of the park, references to the view from the site will be incorporated into the design.

... from his verandah the most splendid view is beheld that the magnificent scenery of the Canadas affords." (Bouchette, 1832, 81)

... described By's home as "tastefully decorated, with rustic verandahs and trellis work, situated on a high bank overlooking the Ottawa and opposite a lofty promontory on which stood the barracks." (Legget, 1982, 72)

The house which stands in a good garden, overlooks one of the most beautiful spots I have seen in the Country; it commands an extensive view of the river, on the opposite side of which is the little village of Hull. (Nute, 1953, 51-52)

The quotations from Joseph Bouchette, Captain Alexander and Frances Simpson respectively, will be inscribed into limestone slabs adorning the belvedere's top level. On reading the words — while overlooking the panorama beyond — the experience will become all the more rich and intense.

## 6.2 Heritage

Since this practicum is grounded in the philosophy of historic preservation, the heritage of Major's Hill Park must also be given high priority in the redevelopment. As views have been, the historical significance of the park has, to date, been feebly expressed. Survey results lead one to believe that the average user is not very responsive to, nor does he/she appreciate, the park's history unless it is already obvious in some way, for example, through the use of monuments, plaques, or some form of descriptive scenario. Despite the fact that Major's Hill Park exists within the historical epicentre of the region, a truly comprehensive picture of the park's heritage is woefully absent.

For example, the stone and mortar foundations uncovered *in situ* are left unexplained (Section 4.3.1), and the two stones placed in the park following the dismantling of the Sappers' Bridge are also ill-defined (Section 4.3.8). A concerted effort is made to



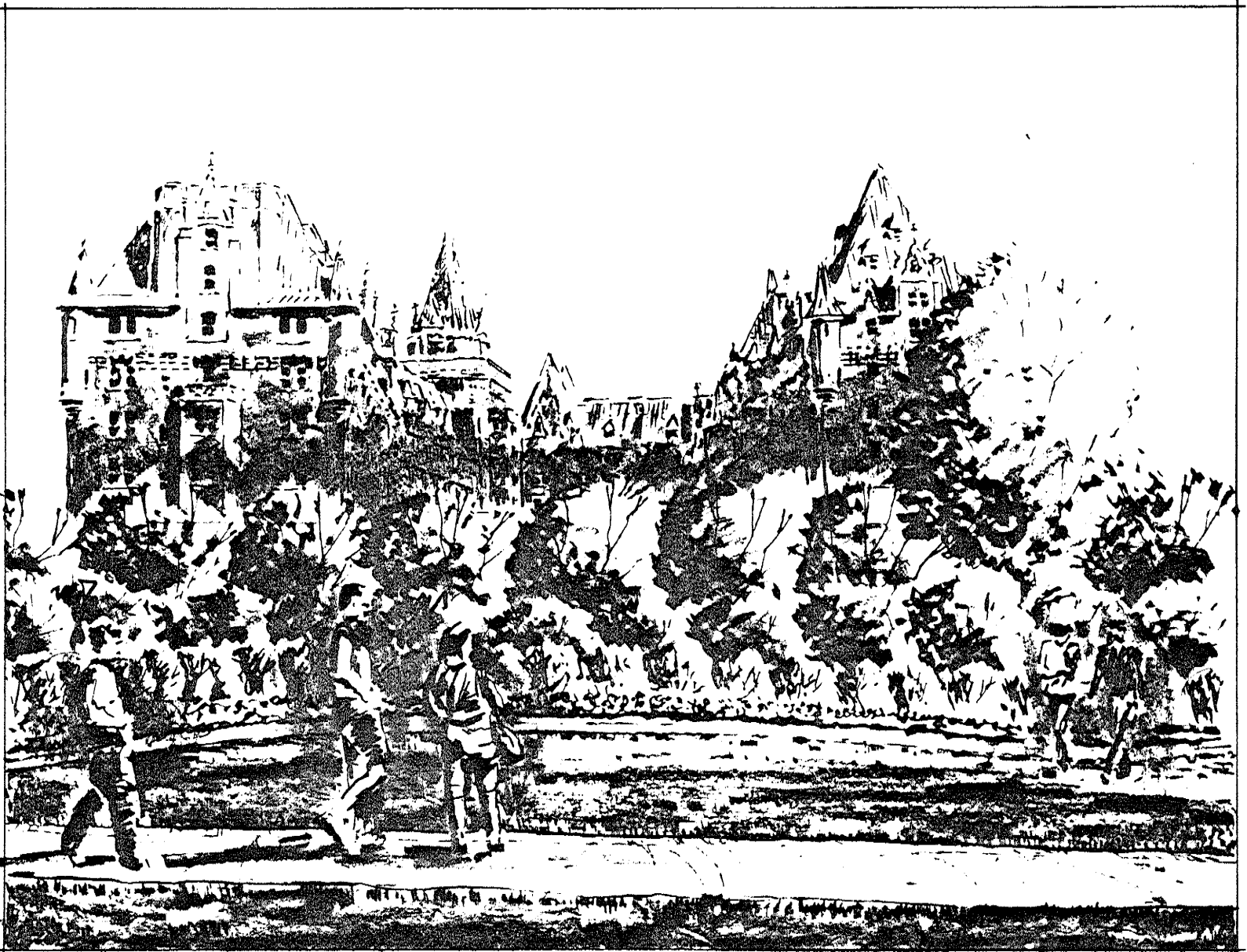


Figure 6.8: Chateau Laurier Hotel framed by mass planting

reintroduce and reinforce the history and the historical elements of this park properly and coherently. Methods and means which can be used to achieve this are many, but will be expressive of this age, while referencing an earlier time.

The crux of this matter is to acknowledge which elements might best celebrate the spirit of the heritage of Major's Hill Park while accommodating a myriad of contemporary objectives. The eminent Chinese professor Chen Congzhou says "neither indiscriminate borrowing nor total rejection leads to anything constructive." (Chen, 1984?, ?) This, then, begs the questions: "What is it that is to be shown?", and, "What is it that is considered to be relevant and worthwhile?" Careful study of past and present elements and ideas, and *in situ* reconnoitering, have given the author ample information to decide what was to be maintained and enhanced; from this experience, the following elements have been deemed appropriate and essential to an adaptive rehabilitation plan for the Major's Hill (Figure 6.9).

### Colonel John By

The contributions of Colonel John By to the future capital of Canada were many: the development of the Rideau Canal and the community which formed about its entrance locks, By Town, are the two most obvious examples. However, as witnessed in the 1830s — with his hasty recall to England to answer to charges of budget overruns in the construction of the Rideau Canal — By has, more often than not, been underrecognized and underappreciated: his importance from both a supervisory and an inspirational point of view has generally been unheralded.

The unveiling of a statue to his honour in 1971 offered a modicum of appreciation for the achievements that he had rendered (Figure 6.10). Robert Haig wondered if the inert stone had "the spiritual value desired in a memorial. Perhaps, with a little imagination," he continued, "some other expression of remembrance can be found, one more representative of the heritage of our capital city." (Haig, 1975, 37) By's stature in the community which he helped settle and create has been downplayed, and he decidedly deserves better.

In the design, between the flanking belvedere courses, the bronze statue of By is set in a position of prominence atop a broad sweeping plaza above the canal and railway terrace on the western flank of the park (Figure 6.11). Overlooking the canal, By is positioned much as he may have been while actually supervising its construction (see Figure 3.2). The By Terrace will be directed towards the Parliamentary Library, the only surviving portion of the original Centre Block.

The terrace is incorporated into the concentric rings of the fountain to its east so to consolidate the otherwise disparate elements. Moving towards the elevated statue, one ascends shallow steps; by moving upwards this way, one celebrates Colonel John By and his achievements (Figure 6.3, Section c). By's words (Bytown Museum) will be inscribed in the limestone so to be read while enjoying the fruits of his labours (the Rideau Canal). It is a setting which better befits his deserved lofty stature in the community.

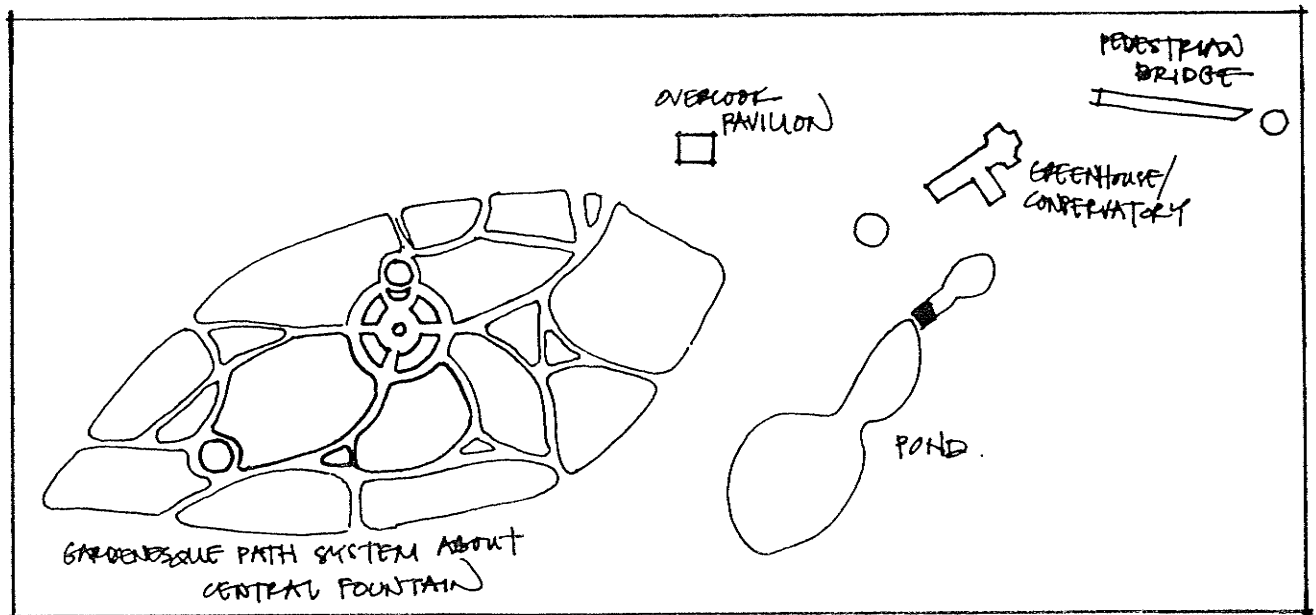


Figure 6.9: Heritage elements and forms utilized in adaptive rehabilitation scheme



Figure 6.10: Colonel John By statue (with Parliamentary Library beyond)

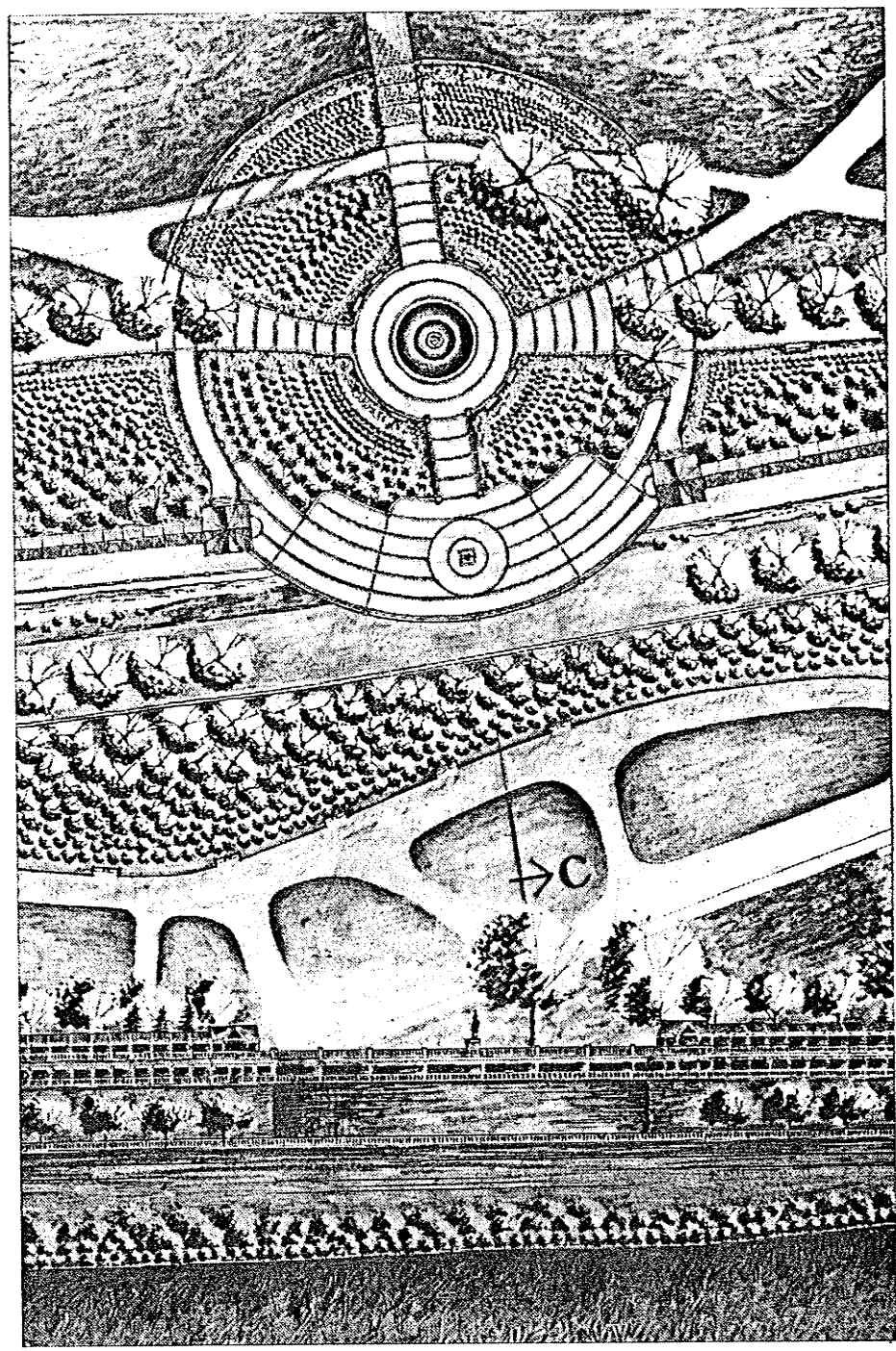


Figure 6.11: By Terrace

### Overlook Pavilion

This quaint wooden structure was the subject of many photographs taken within Major's Hill Park (Figure 6.4). Although it has long been dismantled, its base still survives and shall act as one of the termini for the belvedere (Figure 6.12 illustrates the location of the pavilion above the railroad terrace).

The previous form and style of this structure inspire the design of the new, greater architectural expression along the park's western flank. Although metal replaces cedar as the building material, proportioning and stylistic references will ably relate the eras. The balustrade will reference the quality of the former pedestrian bridge which once joined the park to Nepean Point (see Figure 3.19). As a visual framing device, it will be complemented by a grille set below the eave of the covered walkway, not unlike that found in Chinese garden pavilions.

Important linkages between this feature and the railway terrace below are introduced. The pavilions, acting as anchor points, will house staircases carrying people between the two levels of the belvedere; the pavilions at each extreme, however, will also offer the chance for users to access the railway terrace, a decidedly negative omission so far (see Figure 6.3, Section a). The entire system naturally connects with circulation and topographic systems within the park.

The balustrades encircling the terrace, and radiating along the front edge of the lower belvedere promenades, will be formed from limestone to complement the cut limestone of the floor, and will contrast sharply with the coarse naturally-occurring limestone of the adjacent cliff edge.

In total, a layering of elements along this edge shall result in contrasting profiles in plan. These layers will include: (1) natural/railway edge (cut); (2) paved edge (stone, balustrade); (3) roofed shelter/covered walkway, or overlook pavilion; and, (4) overhead vegetation, where planting exists (see elevations, Figure 6.2).

### Carriageways / Internal Circulation System

Extant pathways in Major's Hill Park closely approximate the layout of the principle carriageways of 1876: the original plan boasted flowing lines which afforded smooth recreational strolling and meandering throughout the park. These arteries will be altered according to the overall redevelopment of the park — the arrangement of other elements and circulation and access — such that natural, flowing connections will be made to important access points and features introduced to the park, eg. belvederes, bridges, follies. The paths shall not revert to their original crushed limestone state but will remain hard-surfaced: hexagonal asphalt pavers with limestone sett borders.

### Ornamental Fountain

The park's original floral beds were focused about an ornamental fountain (Figure 6.13). Although the existence of the original artifact could not be determined, popular opinion and aesthetic decency have joined to merit one being returned to the park

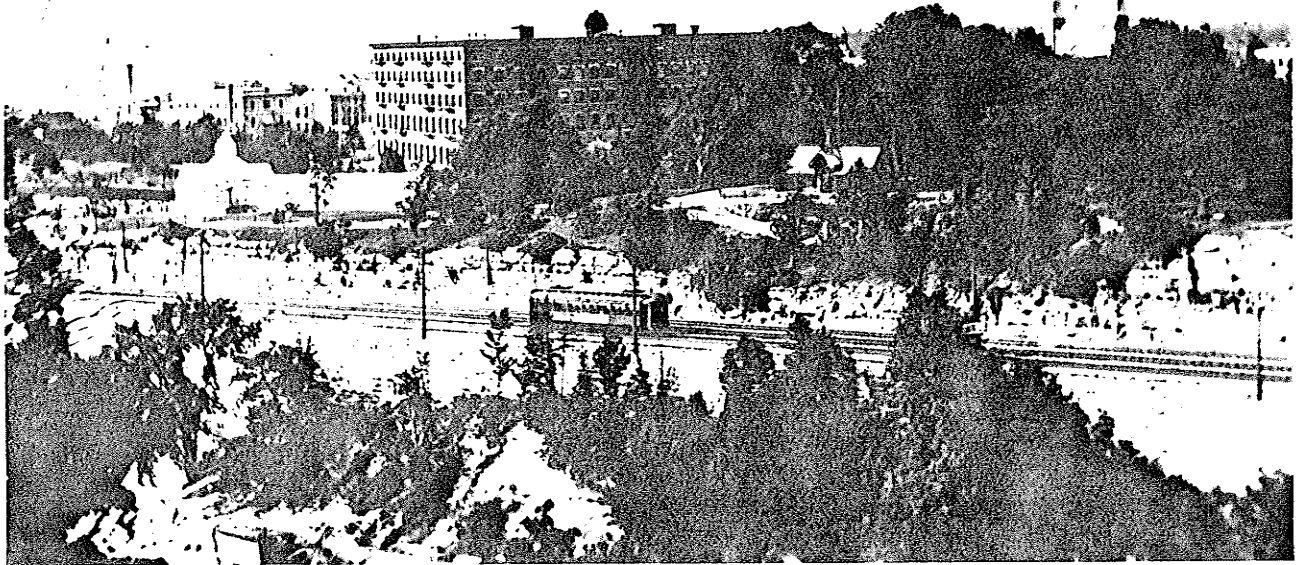


Figure 6.12: Railway terrace showing location of overlook pavilion and conservatory; note printing bureau building in background, 1913 (City of Ottawa Archives, CA#2015)

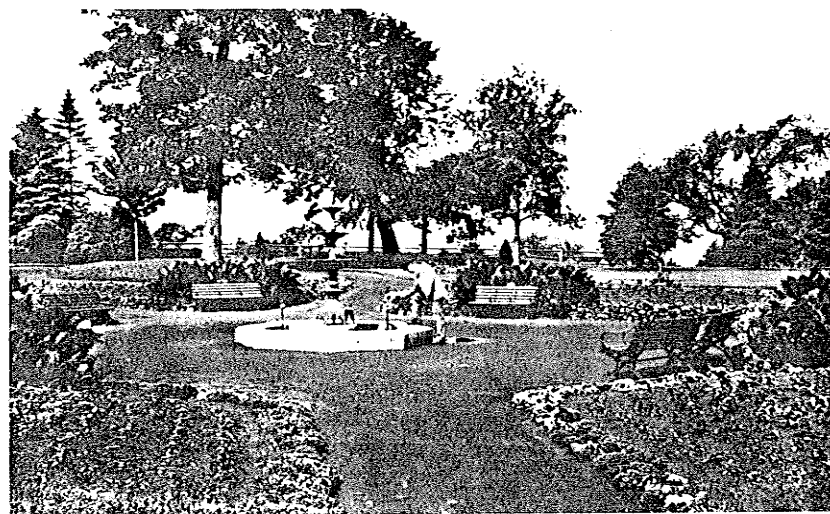


Figure 6.13: Ornamental fountain surrounded by floral displays, 1898 (City of Ottawa Archives, CA#1603)

environment. Currently, the fountain dedicated to Colonel John By, found in Confederation Park, is the prime candidate to fill this role in Major's Hill Park (Section 4.3.12). It is anticipated that the ten metre wide fountain will be of sufficient scale to draw visitors to the area. Redeveloped planting beds will emanate from it and most of the park's main pathways will lead towards it, thus naturally coaxing the pedestrian into the most important area of the park, the By terrace (overlooking the Rideau Canal and Parliament Hill beyond). As well as providing a visual focus, the By fountain will offer cool respite with its refreshing spray.

#### Floral Beds

Major's Hill Park once boasted a plethora of Victorian floral beds which found a focus and emanated from the aforementioned water fountain. Beds are to be redeveloped within the park to elicit their former stature and elegance while accommodating present pedestrian needs; they shall also find focus in the ornamental fountain which is being reintroduced. The perceived desire for more colour and interest in the park supports this decision. Through research, it was determined that among the floral species which adorned Major's Hill Park over time, the following were found in its beds:

native ferns and wild flowering plants, tulips and hyacinths, varieties of chrysanthemum, orchids, begonia, glorire de Dijon, bedding and standard geraniums, coleus, achyranthus, alternanthera, abutilon, Dusty Miller, tuberous begonias, canna lilies, caladiums, dracena, celosia, amaranthera and balsams. (NAC, RG34, 241, 118-H, 27 June 1938; DPW, 1904-05, 3:20; DPW, 1908-09, 3:24)

Depending on current availability, many of these species would be considered prime candidates to adorn the floral beds of the park. Pursuant to this, planting beds in general — including trees, shrubs and groundcovers — would reflect the species which once beautified the park while respecting existing material.

#### Potting Shed (NCC Maintenance Building)

When the NCC's maintenance staff departs for new quarters at the National Museum of Fine Arts, this cut limestone structure will be open for use. Discussion has surrounded its potential as a teahouse. Popular opinion would merit some type of refreshment outlet within the park, thus the structure and its environs will be developed in this fashion (Figure 6.14).

In its location near the egress point for the proposed footbridge, the structure will take advantage of the increased pedestrian traffic passing by. The building will be renovated to function as a tea house (not unlike that found at the Mackenzie King Estate in the nearby Gatineau Hills), offering beverages and light snacks; restrooms will also be incorporated.

Ample room about the structure will be developed to allow patrons the chance to sit,

relax, take in the views, and, most importantly, enjoy the environment. To enhance the ambience even further, beds of roses and other flowers (periodically changing) will surround and embrace the tea terrace, with access paths incorporated into the organically-ordered setting.

#### Iron Footbridge

The 'artistic' iron footbridge which once connected Major's Hill Park to Nepean Point Park boasted beautiful tracery along its length, and was complemented by period light fixtures (Figure 3.21). Considering its original purpose, the addition of a footbridge/overpass to an area anticipating greater pedestrian traffic will be a timely intervention. The bridge will be reinstated perpendicular to the roadway and not at an oblique angle as originally situated. It will be constructed of light metal fabric, of the same type used throughout the park's other features. Its style will reference the previous structure by way of proportioning and tracery motif.

#### Noon-Day Gun

The daily noon-hour firing of this Crimean War relic has long been considered an institution in the capital. Presently because of its isolated location, many hear the gun but do not see it firing over the Ottawa River firsthand. The Noon-Day Gun will now be positioned near to its present location (and the new tea terrace), but will occupy a podium atop the cliff overlooking the redeveloped railway terrace (Figure 6.14). Its location is signified by a marked widening in the pedestrian path along which it will rest, highly visible on descending from the bridge. The location of the Noon-Day Gun will also be noticeable from the railway terrace below. It will continue to sound loudly across Entrance Bay on the Ottawa River for the enjoyment of generations to come.

#### Pond

Since it was filled in 1945, the pond in Major's Hill Park — an original feature from 1876 — has been remembered only through photographs (Figure 6.15). The adaptive rehabilitation plan for the park recognizes the importance of this traditional element and will incorporate it in the proposal. The preferred location of this water feature is its former place, which offers a good introduction to the park from a variety of penetration points, most notably from the Alexandra Bridge, the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Sussex Drive/ByWard Market area.

The form of the water body will be amorphous (vs. geometrical), with subtle variations in topography to make it sit better — more naturally — with the land (Figure 6.14). A priority will be to accommodate users who might wish to use the edges to sit, relax and enjoy the setting. The organic forms will also require subtle changes in the edge of the Confederation Boulevard promenade to better oblige the pond. Its edges will be formed with cut limestone as per its original configuration.

The reflective qualities of the pond surface can also be enhanced: the National Museum of Fine Arts, the Basilica Notre Dame and the proposed conservatory can all be bolstered in



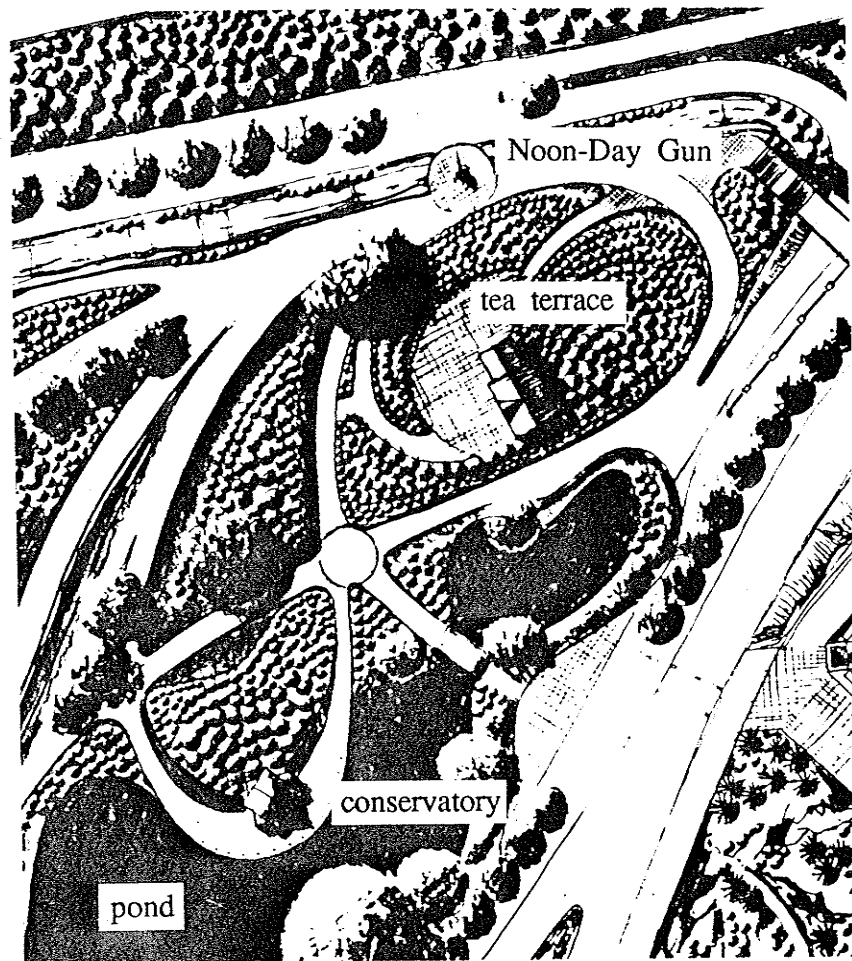


Figure 6.14: Location of Noon-Day Gun, tea terrace, pond and conservatory

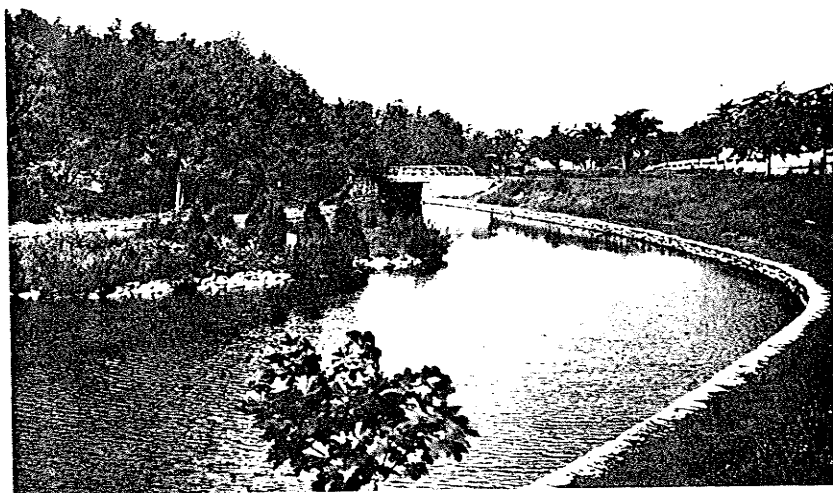


Figure 6.15: Pond with limestone edge; bridge in background, 1898  
(City of Ottawa Archives, CA#1477)

this way (see Figure 6.16). A sensitive handling of this element will aid in masking the roadway which separates the park from the museum, as the 'ha ha' served to do in the English landscape.

A water jet feature will be situated in the pond's northeastern sector; as well as adding elegance to the pond, the jet will also echo the proposed water fountain on the island to the northeast of the park. On entering from the northeast corner of the park, its exuberance will be set against a background whose layering includes the open framework conservatory and Parliament Hill.

#### Conservatory (Greenhouse)

Resituated at the Central Experimental Farm after 1946, the return of the conservatory to Major's Hill Park as a functioning greenhouse would be inappropriate. However, an open framework structure reminiscent of the conservatory, i.e. proportioning and style, (its contemporary expression), will be placed into the landscape in much the same way that an isolated folly, à la the English romantic landscape style, was positioned. It will be set on a terrace which adjoins the pond (Figure 6.14). Although of open metal fabrication, the conservatory will offer shade or shelter, in case of inclement weather, as well as room for respite and peace. Its juxtaposition against the crystalline structure of the gallery should provide an interesting counterpoint. The conservatory will also provide opportunity for interpretative information panels, regarding events that might have happened in the park over the years.

#### Sharpshooters' Monument

The first statue in the park, this monument embodies the sentiments of a proud city before the turn of the century; it sat prominently on Wellington Street for almost 25 years before the erection of the Chateau Laurier Hotel. Its subsequent removal to the city hall on Elgin Street and eventually to its current setting in Confederation Park, seem to have left it strangely displaced. It rightfully belongs within the confines of Major's Hill Park.

The monument will be situated at the juncture of the pedestrian arteries leading from the Chateau Laurier Hotel terrace and the main entrance to the park at Mackenzie Avenue. It will be set off on its own podium facing towards Saskatchewan, where the Métis rebellion occurred, and surrounded by appropriate plantings. Its prominent location will rightly display this historically important creation.

#### Foundations

Despite circumstantial evidence as to their connection with the past, the foundations found in the park have a charm and mystery all their own, and will be retained in their existing location. No attempt will be made to reference the superstructure which once might have accompanied the stone and mortar, although some interpretative information

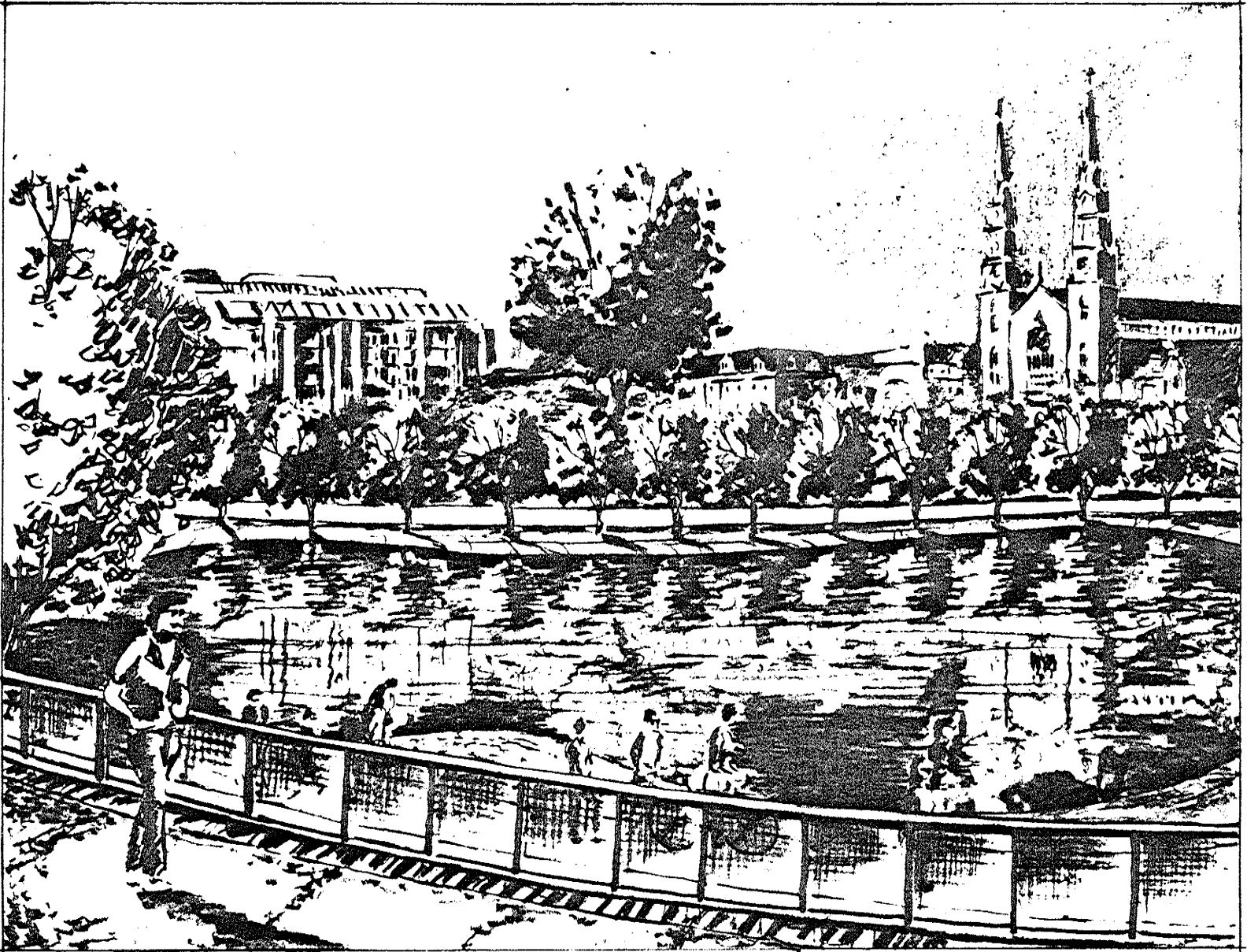


Figure 6.16: A reflective pond in Major's Hill Park

may be provided.

### Sappers' Bridge Stones

The two weathered limestone blocks remain as token reminders of ByTown's first bridge; they symbolize the work of the Royal Engineers and the past joining of both Lower Town and Centre Town, which make them very important historically. Recognizing this, they will be situated in a small enclave in front of the north belvedere, off the main path leading south to the By fountain. It will be surrounded by benches for quiet sitting and a profusion of lush plant material to complete the composition. A re-creation of the arms of the Royal Engineers and the outline of a shield (as originally found on the stones) will complement the artifact. A new limestone base will support the stones, showing a marked contrast between the same material over time.

### Sir Edmund Walker Head Plaque

The Sir Edmund Walker Head Plaque will be incorporated into the tea terrace setting thus addressing the importance of Head and his wife to Major's Hill Park: her sketches were said to be partly responsible for influencing Queen Victoria to choose Ottawa as the future nation's capital in 1856.

Beyond the manipulation of physical elements, there are other opportunities by which to interpret or reference the heritage of Major's Hill Park. Through literary and visual allusion (along the lines of Henry Hoare's Stourhead or Finlay's Stonypath) events and persona not appropriately considered or indicated can be honoured.

In particular, some important aspects which will be treated in this fashion will include the following.

There is an opportunity to animate the park's most tumultuous and controversial period by way of interpretative plaques or references which speak to the Surtees/Dwyre affair during the park's first decade. The conservatory will house this exhibition, informing visitors of an important time in the history of Major's Hill Park. Quotations, useful to this end, would include:

... the bark will have peeled off, and thereby render it useless for ornamental purposes; also by his allowing the stone work at the outlet for the proposed lake to remain uncovered and exposed crumbling away by the action of the weather, and, as shown, many other acts of negligence which are patent to the eye of an experienced person. (Daily Citizen, 11 September 1876, 3)

It is too bad that one of the most beautiful spots on the surface of the earth should be permitted to be disfigured through the incompetency of

our City Engineer. (Daily Citizen, 7 May 1877, 4)

In providing these references, visitors to the park will be provided with an interesting perspective of the past.

When the transfer of ownership and responsibility of the park was passed to the federal government in 1885, the transaction was duly noted in the City of Ottawa Council's Minutes:

That the park known as the MAJOR'S HILL PARK shall hereafter be under the control of the said Government of Canada, and that the said Government of Canada will resume possession of same. (Ottawa Council, 18 June 1885, 283)

The pressing need for strong entry signage will make use of these words: large limestone slabs will mark these points, with the words MAJOR'S HILL PARK boldly emblazoned on the surface of the stone; this title will dominate the lightly-inscribed words which accompany it (Figure 6.21).

A number of flattering quotations have been noted regarding the juxtaposition of the Gothic Parliament Buildings and the picturesque promontory upon which they are set, as seen from Major's Hill Park.

The English novelist Anthony Trollope spoke of this scene in 1861:

The noblest architecture in North America. The glory of Ottawa will be — and indeed already is — the set of public buildings which is now being erected on the rock which guards the town from the river ... I know no modern Gothic purer of its kind, and I know no site for such a set of buildings so happy as regards both beauty and grandeur. (Gwyn, 1986, 38-39)

Edmund Bacon in Design of Cities remarked that the group of Parliament Buildings illustrated one of the finest examples of Victorian exuberance in the world. Although many will certainly come to these conclusions unassisted by the eloquence of others, it is believed that appropriate quotes can be blended into the scheme in some manner or fashion, again, to complement and enrich the visitor's experience.

Other contextual structures ripe for descriptive references include the Connaught Building, Chateau Laurier Hotel, Basilica Notre Dame, National Museums of Fine Arts and Civilization and Nepean Point. The Rideau Canal and the scenery of the Ottawa River and the Gatineau Hills beyond Hull are also points of interest which can be included in such a way.

Beyond the simple effect of providing beauty and respite within the busy urban fabric,

there is a tremendous opportunity available to educate the public, not only about the history and the biophysical aspects of Major's Hill Park, and the City of Ottawa, but also about the process of historical preservation and how it applies to the built environment: "historical landscapes offer many opportunities to learn about historical and environmental topics". (O'Donnell, 1987, 60) Guided tours around the park describing its history, and the history of its neighbours will be of the utmost importance in clarifying the references and allusions made to past events, persons, etc., which may otherwise be less obvious. Thus visitors will become more aware of their environments and the rich stories which they hold within.

### 6.3 Passive Nature/Attractiveness

Major's Hill Park will continue to be a passive use park; interviews and observations reinforce this use. It is not a "play" park, (Interview, Fardin, 1987) nor is it a "picnic" area (Interview, Rochon, 1987). The results of interviews and observations reinforce the notion that Major's Hill Park is appreciated for its scenic pastoral qualities: an oasis of respite within the city. The NCC's Federal Land Use Plan (see Appendix 9.1) envisions a change to a more active use park, but most signals (personal feelings and observations) beg otherwise. This study endeavours to preserve those qualities which currently lend Major's Hill Park an air of dignity and quietude. The concern today, however, is how to reinforce this image and maintain its pleasant passivity, while at the same time ameliorating the pressing issues and concerns.

#### Visual Attractiveness

There is ample opportunity to visually reinforce certain aspects and points of interest within the park. Structured views within its confines will focus on the By fountain, By statue, Sharpshooters' Monument, tea terrace building, pedestrian footbridge from Nepean Point, and Noon-Day Gun. The Champlain monument atop Nepean Point will also demand important consideration in structuring views and vistas.

Reflected views about the park's proposed pond will naturally benefit from the placement of the new museum, Basilica Notre Dame, and conservatory, which will abut the pond. These views will be captured from varying points of view and levels.

Preserving the cherished sweeps of greenswards and the mature trees, which edge and complement them so elegantly, is of primary concern and has played a significant role in the final development plan. A substantial portion of the property, along the Mackenzie Avenue side, has been maintained in this vocabulary.

#### Aural Attractiveness

As well as views, sounds are an important consideration in striving for a holistic experience. Oftentimes sounds are ill-considered in the design process, if at all. An opportunity exists to incorporate the melodious tones emanating from the Peace Tower and its carillons into the adaptive rehabilitation plan for Major's Hill Park. Major's Hill Park is

a place where one can fully experience the aural splendor of the Peace Tower carillons (sounded regularly at noon hour and in the evenings), not to mention the quarter hour tolling of the clock's chimes. In contemplating the picturesque setting of Parliament Hill, the cadence offers a splendid addition to the visitor's time spent in the park. The development of the belvedere edge and the tea terrace will offer venues from which to fully appreciate these sounds.

The bells of Basilica Notre Dame can also be appreciated, although to a slightly lesser degree, because of the noise generated by intervening vehicular traffic. The firing of the Noon-Day Gun is also a momentary shudder in the peace of the park setting, which many wish to behold.

#### 6.4 Geomorphology

The base upon which Ottawa grew was carved by rivers and streams over nine millenia; the legacy consists of picturesque limestone escarpments, the likes of which are displayed in the settings of Parliament Hill, Nepean Point and Major's Hill Park. The adaptive rehabilitation proposal for the park is decidedly biased towards anthropocentric occurrences, but does not preclude references to the action of the earth's natural systems over time. To this end, the park site's bedrock will be expressed by selectively defrocking it of its sodded cloak (especially near the pond), and where necessary and desirable, more intricately cut (along the belvedere edge). The intervention will more boldly introduce the visitor to the land upon which the park — and the city — found its home, as well as to illustrate the base from which the building blocks of the Rideau Canal and much of the capital's architecture were taken. It will offer the opportunity for the user to better appreciate his or her origins, i.e. the primeval landscape from whence the country grew and prospered; of particular importance will be the opportunity to touch and to feel the limestone at various points, the tactile connection thus being more vividly remembered. In this way, limestone acts as the connective tissue between past and present.

The western flank of the park is to be respected and not compromised; the strong edge will be cleaned of scrub vegetation to emphasize it further (Figure 6.17). The refined stone surface and balustrade of the belvedere's lower level will sit in marked contrast next to this 'natural' edge.

Distinct elevational changes between the two park's two plateaux offer the possibility to make some interesting design statements: exposing the limestone will present a wall which will offer a strong side to the proposed pond in the northeast corner of the park. Moving northwards from the By fountain, the path ends overlooking the pond — and Museum of Fine Arts beyond — atop this defrocked limestone face. Seating will be provided to prolong the pleasurable experience from this vantage point.

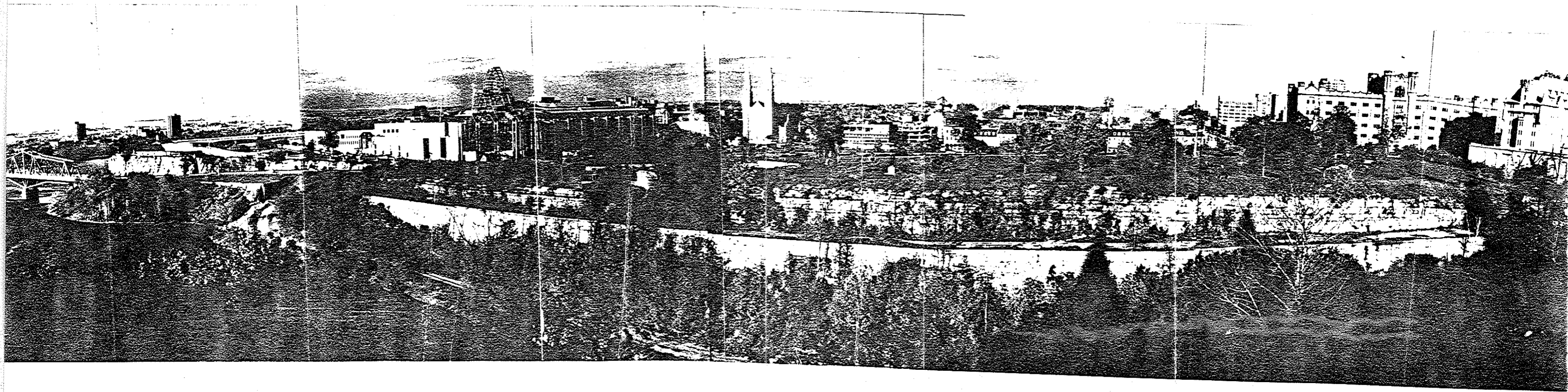


Figure 6.17: The limestone cliffs and terrace on the western flank of the park



## 6.5 Context

The question that inevitably arises when treating a site within a rich context is how it will appropriately relate to its environment. In the case of Major's Hill Park this is an especially germane issue. The park as belvedere will act as catalyst and consolidator, ameliorating peripheral difficulties to result in one finely-tuned whole, as compared to the area's presently disjointed nature. The context has provided clues in terms of language of form and materials, eg. the colour from the roofs of the Chateau Laurier Hotel and Parliament Hill, the stone from these and other structures, etc. The adaptive rehabilitation development scheme will respect and address each of these, and other, contextual elements in turn.

### Sussex Drive / Lower Town / By Ward Market

Physical and visual connections are the important aspects to consider in relating Major's Hill Park to the Mile of History a block away. Its attractive Georgian style buildings (and contained functions) may be of interest to the park user, hence the visual tie from the park is essential.

In addressing the neighbourhood of Lower Town or the bustling activity of the By Ward Market beyond, it is crucial to consider the pedestrian connections to and from them. A number of junctures must be addressed, namely desire lines from York, Clarence and Murray Streets; expediting access from York Street will be an essential first step in improving the relationship between the park and the market. Access via St. Patrick Street will be aided by the development of a banner court called "Canada Place" at the north end of the existing NCC lot (proposed building volume).

### Basilica Notre Dame

The form of Basilica Notre Dame is quite prominent from Major's Hill Park, especially its twin tin spires. As well as considering its visual connection to the park environment, many people enjoy strolling through the park after Sunday morning church services; therefore, pedestrian connections will be improved, especially as they relate to the National Museum of Fine Arts.

### National Museum of Fine Arts

The impending completion of the National Museum of Fine Arts has offered a new north edge to the park. Its dominant southwest tower (acknowledging the Parliamentary Library) provides a strong visual point of interest for the park user; its internal illumination at night will offer a pleasant addition to the skyline in which it has found a home. The anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic will be alleviated with the reintroduction of a bridge which will move pedestrians above the approach to the Alexandra Bridge between Major's Hill Park and the Museum of Fine Arts and Nepean Point; improved at grade crossings across the Alexandra Bridge will be instituted, although not emphasized.

The landscape design that has been prepared for Moshe Safdie's building by Cornelia

Oberlander boasts plant material within a boreal forest setting, echoing the work of the Group of Seven. Although the vocabulary of plant material will not be replicated across St. Patrick Street in the park, the pond will exist in sympathetic counterpoint to Mrs. Oberlander's efforts.

#### Nepean Point

Nepean Point Park was originally united to Major's Hill Park via an iron footbridge which traversed the roadway. In its absence, access has become a risky venture; the return of the bridge will certainly ameliorate the situation. As noted previously, an opportunity exists to frame the view to the Champlain monument (atop the Point) from within the park's context, and from along the redeveloped railway terrace. It will be possible to catch glimpses of it periodically from the terrace, making for added interest.

#### Alexandra Bridge

Although recreational connections to the park are quite good at this time, the former rail trestle (Figure 3.15) will be reintroduced between the Alexandra Bridge and the railway terrace along the park's western edge. The trestle will not be constructed of the original material but fashioned in the vein of that which will be used in the belvedere structure and conservatory. Since the first phase of Confederation Boulevard is also continuing along this stretch, it will be important to address its configuration as well.

#### National Museum of Civilization

The sinuous forms of Douglas Cardinal's National Museum of Civilization are most pleasing to the eye. From the park plateau — especially from the pedestrian bridge and the tea terrace — it will be a formidable view. Strengthened connections via the Alexandra Bridge will also allow easier access to the edifice.

#### Parliament Hill

The primary considerations regarding the Canadian seat of government are views, and there are a myriad of opportunities to see the Hill from many points within the park. A description has already been given of the belvedere expression along the park's western flank accommodating these visual desire lines. Alexander's concept of the 'zen view', i.e. periodic glimpses, will be entertained for greatest impact from the eastern edge of the park, assisted by controlled plantings and path configurations. Physical connections from Wellington Street along the Chateau Laurier terrace will be accorded with the implementation of a bridge to carry pedestrians between the hotel terrace and the park.

#### Rideau Canal

Views and access are of utmost import in considering the canal. Its physical configuration and accompanying buildings, especially the Commissariat, offer strong visual counterpoint to the picturesque slopes of Parliament Hill. The concerns which had been raised regarding accessing it from the higher situation of the park, have been quelled

with the regrading of the roadway from the north end of the park. A proposal for a system of staircases from the park to the canal at two distinct places, also serves to oblige pedestrians.

### Railroad Terrace

Despite the fine views available from this vantage point towards Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal, and the Museum of Civilization across the Ottawa River in Hull, they (the views) generally go unappreciated. A real opportunity, then, exists to take advantage of these stunning views.

Integration of the terrace with the Major's Hill plateau has been addressed with the provision of stairs leading to the belvedere on the park's edge: vertical access will be handled at three key points, continuing down to the canal, and to the riverside and the NCC's proposed docking facility (Figure 6.2). It will be linked to Confederation Boulevard with a trestle bridge, thus accommodating cyclists as well as pedestrians. Integration with the proposed National Museum of Photography (which will occupy the Chateau Laurier tunnel) is also an important consideration. The former function of the terrace may be emphasized by way of paving patterns, and artifacts placed along its length. It will also be complemented with shade tree plantings and seating (Figure 6.18).

The craggy limestone cliff will be exposed and open for all to see: its history of providing the building blocks for the Rideau Canal make it an important storyteller in the area; interpretative information to this end will assist in the effort.

A currently attractive aspect of the walk along this terrace is the growth of wildflowers along its periphery, and such subtleties should not be ignored in detailed design work.

### Chateau Laurier Hotel

The concern with the Chateau Laurier Hotel is to emphasize its chateau spires while de-emphasizing the bulk of its parking garage immediately adjacent to the park's south end. There is also a need to alleviate the concerns which people have regarding the prostitution which creates a negative atmosphere at the juncture between the park and the hotel. The movement north of the park's main entry point will assist in relieving these fears, as will the increased planting in the corner and the introduction of the Confederation Boulevard promenade. The desire line along the Chateau's western terrace to accommodate pedestrian movement to and from Wellington Street has already been spoken to.

### Connaught Building

The importance of the Connaught Building to the park is both in its turreted form and the employees who frequent the park to enjoy their lunch. Its upper reaches will be highlighted by increased planting in the southeast corner of the park so to have it 'float' above the greenery. Pedestrian circulation across Mackenzie Avenue will be improved by providing better signage and a more distinct crosswalk, which shall also oblige those pedestrians moving into the park zone from the ByWard Market (along the York Street



Figure 6.18: A stroll along the redeveloped railway terrace

desire line).

#### NCC Parking Lot

The lot north of the Connaught Building has had many functions over time, boasting residential fabric to the turn of the century, housing temporary buildings to alleviate space concerns since World War II, and most recently, existing as an NCC-controlled parking lot. Because of its proximity to Major's Hill Park, it is imperative to consider it as part of the design development for the park. There have been proposals in the more recent past, the most topical being the development of the American Embassy there. Since the rejection of the site for this purpose, its next function has been as of yet undefined, although it will likely remain architectural (Interview, Padolsky, 1987).

The building volume proposed in this scheme will present a hard edge to both Sussex Drive and Mackenzie Avenue supporting mixed commercial/public use. Because the property has been built up for much of Ottawa's history, this intervention would be considered appropriate; underground parking will also be included. The development of cafés, shops and the like, would enliven what is otherwise a dead area in the evening (despite the activity of the By Ward Market nearby); it will function as a viable intermediary between the market and the park. As well, pedestrian desire lines from the By Ward Market into Major's Hill Park through this zone will be addressed and ameliorated.

#### Confederation Boulevard

Confederation Boulevard will remain unaffected by the park's redevelopment, except where it skirts the pond. Here, respecting the pond's amorphous configuration, the promenade will gently move with the form. The double row of maple trees which characterize the planting along the route, will provide an appropriately strong architectonic edge to the property. Occasional breaks along the esplanade will provide emphasis and access into Major's Hill Park and shall be accommodated in the internal restructuring of the park.

### 6.6 Pragmatic Issues

There are a number of pragmatic issues which must be addressed in the adaptive rehabilitation scheme for Major's Hill Park. Although they receive less priority in the hierarchy of this study, their resolution is no less important.

#### Circulation

Entry into Major's Hill Park is eased greatly with the introduction of two elements and also with the improvement of existing access points. The re-introduction of a pedestrian bridge across St. Patrick Street will alleviate many of the tensions and anxieties experienced currently by those wishing to move into the park from either Nepean Point or from the National Museum of Fine Arts site; access can still be gained at grade, although this

opportunity will be downplayed.

At the park's opposite end, in the southwest corner more specifically, a bridge will connect the Chateau Laurier Hotel terrace to the park. This timely intervention shall accommodate the glaring desire line which has existed for too long between Wellington Street and Major's Hill Park but which has left people confused and frustrated.

At grade access is possible at the newly-developed Mackenzie entrance, which also obliges a desire line from the ByWard Market. Proper street signage and the implementation of a different surface treatment for the corridor will assist in making it more visible to Mackenzie Avenue vehicular traffic. At the northeast corner, traffic lights will provide the regulating device required at this busy intersection; the promise of increased pedestrian flows to and from the Museum of Fine Arts and the park — and into the By Ward Market — necessitate this arrangement. Again, paving patterns and colourings shall distinguish these corridors.

Once within the confines of the park, circulation between points is much easier and more logical (Figure 6.19). The new lines of travel now oblige the points of access and the redevelopment of areas such as the pond, tea terrace, ornamental fountain, and most importantly, belvedere. Depending on their importance, the paths range in width from 2.0 to 4.0 metres, are composed of hexagonal bituminous asphalt pavers, and are edged by limestone setts.

Metal benches with wooden seats and backrests shall offer opportunity for respite for the visitor; the form shall reference the elegant benches which originally adorned the park without being direct copies (Figure 6.20). Appropriately-scaled (unobtrusive) wastebaskets shall complement these benches.

A previous concern regarded access to the railway terrace level. A major upgrading of the gravel roadway from canal to park level will more suitably accommodate pedestrian traffic. Beyond this 'ramp', two pavilions shall provide vertical access under their roofs. Since an intermediate terrace has been developed in concert with the belvedere system, the initial movement from Major's Hill Park begins with a 3.0 metre descent to this level, contained within each pavilion. At the primary pavilions, exit is then made onto a semi-circular cut limestone terrace from which a staircase winding down along its face leads to the railway terrace level; another system of stairs, then, ultimately takes one down to canal level (Figure 6.2).

### Security

Philip Gabriel, a lighting consultant in Ottawa, has described Major's Hill Park as "a place for public events and pastoral recreation" and as such "must appear safe and comfortable at night and throughout the year". (Gabriel, 1985, III, C.5.c) The negative impressions which seem to abound regarding Major's Hill Park and some of its patrons are not without ground, and have a marked effect on use during the evenings. Better management and increased security patrols would assist in alleviating some of the concerns which people harbour.

People beget people. One obvious difficulty with the idea of security in the park is that

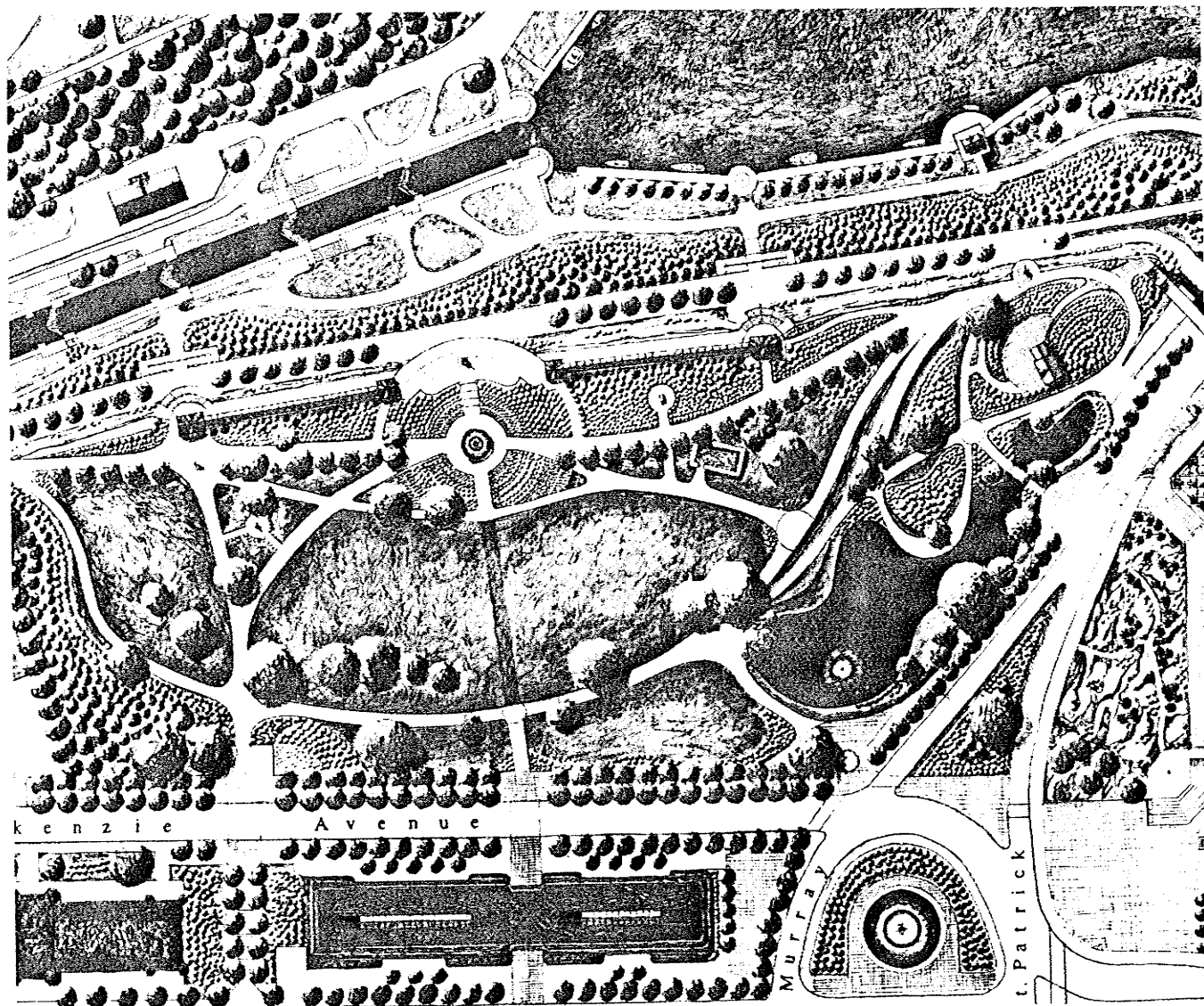


Figure 6.19: Major's Hill Park ... an adaptive rehabilitation

visitors are less willing to enter into areas that are devoid of either people or of lighting. The adaptive rehabilitation scheme developed for Major's Hill Park presupposes one idea to this end: its improved lines of access and of circulation, adequate lighting and overall interest will attract visitors; their presence will function as a catalyst, impelling others to visit the same. Therefore, there will always be a healthy change of friendly bodies within the park's confines.

Lynn Baxter, President of the LowerTown West Citizens' Group spoke of "landscaped crime prevention" — the intelligent use of planting or of removals — as another opportunity available to reduce the effect of discomfort and concern (fear) in using the park (Interview, Baxter, 1987). The planting plan developed for the park has taken this concept into consideration, offering unobstructed view lines for park users and security patrols.

### Lighting

A sensitive and intelligent use of night lighting in Major's Hill Park will also help in creating a perceptually more secure and attractive park. As well, lighting will also give order to the spaces — offering clarity in the night — and emphasize important elements.

The design of light standards placed throughout the park will respond to the original light standards which were evident in the park through to the first half of this century. Important elements and zones in the landscape such as the By statue, the pavilions, and the tea terrace, will be softly lit for emphasis; they will complement, yet not overshadow, the beauty of the night lighting on Parliament Hill, the Chateau Laurier Hotel, the National Museum of Fine Arts, etc. When seen from Parliament Hill, Nepean Point or any other nearby vantage point in the evening, Major's Hill Park will appear as a warmly lit, friendly and safe venue in the downtown core.

### Signage

Signage in Major's Hill Park will be primarily relegated to the five major points of egress, so as not to clutter the park unnecessarily. The four entrances (from the Chateau Laurier terrace, Mackenzie, Mackenzie and St. Patrick, and St. Patrick) will be marked by slabs of limestone sufficiently sized to signal to the pedestrian a special point of entry (Figure 6.21). On each, the name "Major's Hill Park" will be inscribed to proclaim the property's title. Subordinate to the name will also be the name of the artery of location from which the visitor came, be it Mackenzie Avenue, St. Patrick Street, etc.

For those pedestrians arriving at the park via the footbridge (from Nepean Point/Museum of Fine Arts), the name of the park will be cast on an iron plate which will be affixed to the bridge's metal balustrade; a plate announcing Nepean Point and the museum (gallery) will be attached at the opposite point of egress.

### Planting

In its heyday, Major's Hill Park boasted many flower beds and rich plantings of American elms; over time these have both been minimized. Ideally, the splendor associated with more densely planted parks will be balanced with the need for more secure confines.





Figure 6.20: Seating areas, benches and dense tree plantings along western edge, c.1915  
(City of Ottawa Archives, CA#2984)



Figure 6.21: Limestone signage at Mackenzie Avenue entrance

Every effort has been made to retain the larger plant material within the park; smaller caliper trees which are easily moved did not restrict design opportunities. In the scheme, only two mature trees were removed to accommodate new elements.

Plant material is used in a number of ways to complete the adaptive rehabilitation scheme, and, as has already been described, attempts in every way to reference that which was once in the park. Trees are used architectonically to define edges, and the most obvious example are the plantings along Confederation Boulevard.

Plant material is also used to complement and to enrich settings. Beds about the By water fountain, for example, embrace and emphasize it; rose beds will dominate the periphery of the tea terrace to lend it an elegant ambience. The reintroduced pond shall be capped off by cluster plantings about its edge: cues will be taken from the existing willow which has been retained on the north side of the pond.

As are many structures in Ottawa, planting will be arranged to have the buildings about Major's Hill Park 'float above'. The Chateau Laurier Hotel (Figure 6.8), Connaught Building, Museum of Fine Arts, and even Parliament Hill, will be viewed as sitting gently upon a bed of green; this effect will emphasize the most enduring aesthetic qualities of these places but will also aid in de-emphasizing undesirable elements such as vehicular traffic.

#### Public Amenities

Accommodating every desired element would have a detrimental effect on the passive ambience of Major's Hill Park. In response to a cited need for washroom facilities and concessions, these will be accommodated within the tea terrace zone which will be designed about the existing NCC maintenance building (former potting shed). An expressed interest in ornamental water fountains has already been addressed.

Despite an interest in play structures for the young, observations *in situ* illustrated that children are quite flexible in this regard. It is understood that these amenities are desired by some individuals and would decidedly alleviate some pressing concerns, but since Bingham Park nearby boasts a good amount of play structures, these will not be provided in Major's Hill Park.

#### 6.7 Users

The adaptive rehabilitation plan developed for Major's Hill Park has reconciled many of the concerns which have concerned it in the past. The question may arise still, as to how interested groups and individuals will benefit. The following attempts to clarify this aspect.

#### Festivals

Some of the festivals may be disappointed in the actual reduction of available space within Major's Hill Park for their needs and requirements; a stage which once dominated the lower plateau in the northeast corner can no longer exist with the implementation of the pond. Nevertheless, ample opportunity is still afforded with the revision of open greensward in the rest of the park. The adaptive rehabilitation scheme for this important

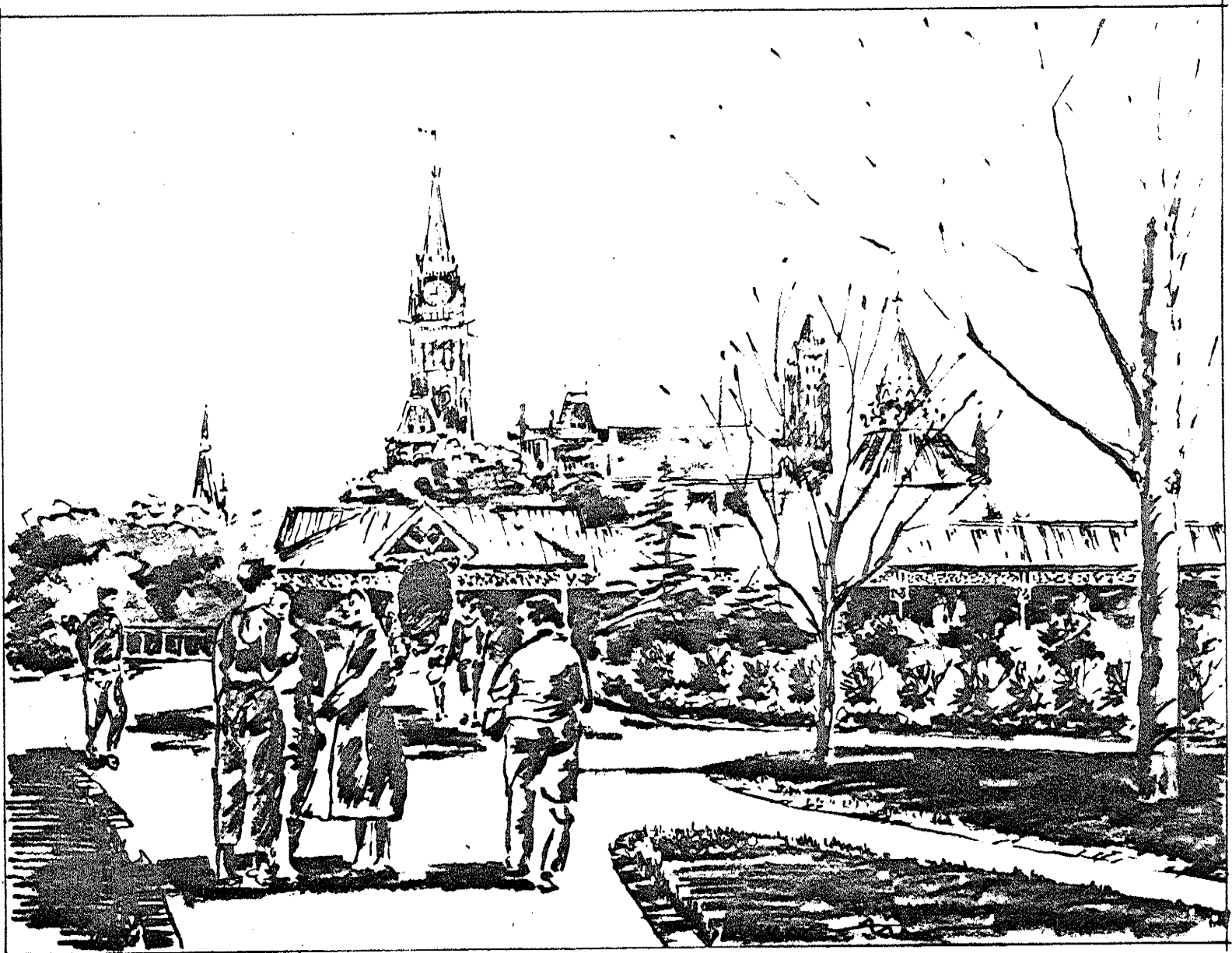


Figure 6.22: View of belvedere and Peace Tower beyond after entering park from Mackenzie Avenue

link in the festival network does not preclude the possibility of intense usage over short periods of time, yet it has never succumbed to the whims and fancies of these organizations.

The improvement of access desire lines will only create better pedestrian flows into and about the park, thus easing earlier concerns of organizers. Those festivals which had previously debated the importance of Major's Hill Park because of its hidden nature, may realize the potential which will exist under the redevelopment.

Canada Day celebrations should be especially vibrant with the redesign of the park, and particularly so with the western flank's development as a formal overlook and belvedere: the fireworks display capping off our nation's birthday will be vividly captured and remembered from this most prestigious of viewing platforms.

#### Lower Town Neighbourhood

The redevelopment of Major's Hill Park should provide, rather return, a welcome alternative to the area's only other significant greenspace, Bingham Park. Increased attention over the Major's Hill will merit a healthy attitudinal change regarding its nature and what it has to offer. The park will become the positive amenity which residents might once have remembered, and will become for them a place to frequent without fear or anxiety.

#### City of Ottawa and National Capital Region

The revitalized Major's Hill Park will be seen as a welcome 'addition' to the wonderful amenities of the capital. The amelioration of some pressing circulation concerns, expediting the progress of both cyclists and pedestrians alike, shall place the park in a new position of importance. As the conciliatory element of its context, Major's Hill Park will act as a true catalyst in helping to alleviate many concerns and problems, while fitting comfortably within the 'whole cloth' that is the National Capital Region.

For visitors to the capital and public alike, the park will provide a rich, living, breathing history of the area in its renewed configuration, at any time of the year.

#### Conclusion

The preceding elaboration of the design development phase for Major's Hill Park illustrates the importance of the historical nature and elements of this property. The park as belvedere has been strengthened even further by the melding together of various integral components — or transparencies — resulting in a responsible, holistic solution. The soul of the Ottawa community, as Haig contended, will only be improved by this adaptive rehabilitation scheme.



**Chapter Seven:  
CONCLUSIONS**

In examining the evolution of an urban park , one confronts the question of how a particular piece of land was preserved as open space within the context of urban growth and development, and how it was adapted, formally and functionally, to the changing conditions of urban life.

(Bartels, 1982, 143)

For over a century Major's Hill Park has maintained its place and its integrity within the changing face of Ottawa, continually affected by ever-infringing contextual elements. It has proven to be a most interesting study site, because of its historic legacy and because of the issues and concerns which face it today. This practicum has worked towards achieving a fine balance between the needs and desires of the present with the expressed desire to retain something of the past in the process.

The initial design goal of preparing a definitive solution based upon historical, social and contemporary evidence has been achieved and is recounted in detail in the design development section. Major's Hill Park has always offered many of the best views in the city, such that it could now be considered, both figuratively and literally, as a belvedere. Hence, the decision to actually structure it as a belvedere.

Many other factors required resolution as well: the retention of the passive nature and attractiveness of the park, the enhancement of its geomorphology, the attention to the context (both visually and physically), and the resolution of pragmatic concerns such as lighting, safety and security, etc. Each of these 'layers' required individual resolution, while respecting the amicable, holistic relationship in which they were all involved.

The complex yet cohesive entirety conclusively highlights the important aspects of the park's patrimony while ameliorating pressing issues and concerns. The interpretation soundly respects the park's past and in so doing, preserves and offers one aspect of the region's rich cultural heritage for future generations to enjoy. The legacy, however, is made stronger and more relevant in that the design, as much as it addresses the past, is not simply a regurgitation of elements or styles peculiar to another age, but is, rather, a reflection of another time in the creation of a statement about today. Historically then, the 1980s will offer something to future park visitors.

The adaptive rehabilitation proposal for Major's Hill Park preserves and enhances the magnificent views from the park, its passive ambience and its overall attractiveness. The fear that the park might be turned into an active use play park did not materialize as opportunities elsewhere serve that end. Festivals may still find a place in the park for their purposes, and the public will cherish it as a living source of history.

The study of Major's Hill Park exemplifies an ever-growing trend towards treating historic landscapes as living, evolving entities versus staid museum pieces. The exercise, which addressed the past, the present and the future, serves to illustrate the need for our generation to register our statement on the land, however, with tact, honesty and modesty, as James Marston Fitch would offer. As the preservation ethic comes to occupy a permanent place in their psyches, many more designers will take the initiative and accept the challenge to develop stimulating and successful environments.



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- Manson, Gloria. Executive Office, Chateau Laurier Hotel.
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## APPENDIX 9.1: City of Ottawa

## 9.1.1 History

In late winter of 1800, a United Empire Loyalist from Massachusetts, Philemon Wright (1760-1839) led a small group of followers to settle in what is now Hull, Quebec (across from present-day Ottawa) near the Chaudiere Falls; the agricultural settlement, was named Wrightsville. Efforts were quickly mobilized to clear land, demarcate property boundaries, and commence agricultural production. Existence was difficult but viable, and the tiny community began to grow. Activity on the opposite shore of the river would proceed slowly until late the following decade.

The War of 1812-15 was rendered all the more difficult by the fact that the troops and the stores had to be sent to upper Canada from Montreal through the rapids and falls of the St. Lawrence. As soon as peace was restored the question of a water route between the two provinces occupied the Imperial authorities. (Billings, 1909, 82)

The War of 1812 had shown all too vividly that British North America was open to American invasion; she had survived the American onslaught yet definitive action had to be taken to reduce the possibility of further active threats, especially in the wake of the St. Lawrence River's vulnerability in troop and supply transport. Also, the British government was spurred on by the desire to open up communication and trade routes to the interior. Under the authorization of the Duke of Wellington, Britain initiated a five year project which would bypass the sensitive St. Lawrence, and join Montreal and Lake Ontario by an alternate interior route, allowing uninterrupted navigation, beginning in the newly settled Hull Township. The Rideau Canal was born.

Completion of the canal made little Bytown an important transfer point for both military and commercial communication and transportation. (deVolpi, 1964, forward)

The Governor-in-Chief, Lord Dalhousie purchased 400 acres of land along the high bluffs abutting the Ottawa in 1823 in anticipation of canal construction. In 1824 the authority for construction was formally granted and by 24 September of that year Lieutenant-Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers was present to choose the point of origin; Dalhousie joined By soon afterwards and together they agreed upon the natural valley of Sleigh Bay (today Entrance Bay) as the place at which to begin construction. Work would proceed along old watercourse channels to Dow's Swamp (today Dow's Lake), a relatively easy route, and the first stone was officially laid in August of 1827. The general area was given the name "Rideau and Ottawa Canal District", previously Richmond Landing. By was also empowered to survey a townsite and it was deemed Bytown in

honour of its enterprising founder, at a dinner given for the Earl of Dalhousie in March 1827.

In the ever-present threat of war, Crown lands were reserved on either side of the canal for fortifications. On the west side of the canal, referred to as Barrack's Hill, stores, a hospital and three barrack blocks were erected; on the east side, the present-day Chateau Laurier site, an engineer yard with workshops was established; a wharf was established at the foot of the canal. Colonel By laid the cornerstone of Sappers' Bridge in 1827 (completed in December) providing access between Upper and Lower ByTown over the canal. It was also in this year that he constructed his house to the east of the canal, on the property today known as Major's Hill Park.

The canal was opened on schedule despite much hardship by 1832 and completed in 1834; in May of 1832 the first steamer, "The Pumper", traversed the 123 mile route from Bytown to Kingston, passing through forty-seven locks (each measuring 33 feet wide by 140 feet long).

Ottawa was at the same time French and English, Catholic and Protestant, lumberer and retailer, tradesman and bureaucrat, Tory and Reformer. But, unlike many places, no combination came to dominate: the balances were so even, and so deeply entrenched, there remained a continuing stand-off. (Taylor, 1986, 21)

The Rideau Canal dissected ByTown into two distinct socio-cultural sections: Lower ByTown, which was predominately Roman Catholic -French and Irish- and Upper ByTown, its cultural, economic and religious (Presbyterian and Church of England) antithesis mirroring English county society. (Bond, 1961, 39) LowerTown would come to be identified with the Reform movement, Upper Town with staunch Toryism.

A genteel, liberal professional, Protestant Upper Town, with rural and agricultural allies, was set against a noisy, pushing commercial, and Roman Catholic Lower Town, that lived or died on timber. (Taylor, 1986, 31)

The first buildings were set in LowerTown on the removal of cedars from the drained swamp there. York and George Streets were laid out by Colonel By based on the 66 foot surveyor's chain, with "a liberal width that will hereafter contribute to the convenience, salubrity, and elegance of this place." (Bond, 1961, 39) The town's biggest landlord was British Ordnance, the military arm of the British government in North America. As well as supervising the canal's operation, Ordnance was responsible for the construction and operation of ByTown; John By was its chief officer.

The two polarized areas continued to grow through the 1830s with the prosperous emergence of the lumber industry and immigrants arriving in vast numbers from the British

Isles. Eventually, the pressure to unite became too great to ignore, and on 1 January 1850 the town fathers amalgamated the upper and lower forces under the name of ByTown and created a common local government; under its first permanent charter fire protection and drinking water were addressed.

The Ottawa Valley boasted rich forests of red and white pine, forests whose riches became the object of desire of Americans and of Europeans. What Philemon Wright had originally envisioned as an agriculturally-based society was fast becoming seduced by the square-timber potential of the valley. As sawmill technology grew, so did local industry and economy, wood products leaving the area in droves along the Ottawa River to the St. Lawrence and subsequently Montreal and beyond. The 1854 Reciprocity Treaty with the United States witnessed an even greater flow of duty-free wood products into the south. In the midst of this prosperity, bytown served as "a provisioner, retailer and servicer to the timber trade". (Taylor, 1986, 25)

The resultant economic prosperity drew more settlers to the area and subsequently a greater social and governmental structure developed. The ensuing debate as to a permanent location for the wandering capital of the Province of Canada saw ByTown preening herself during the 1840s, and searching for a name that might better serve her dreams as the capital. Therefore, on the first of January 1855, the town was renamed the City of Ottawa, for the river which flowed on its flank and for the trading tribe that had moved down from the Lake Huron country to displace the Algonkians a century previous. Ottawa's rank and importance continued to rise, especially with the arrival in 1854 of the Bytown and Prescott Railway, connecting her to larger centers in Lower Canada and in the United States.

At this time the issue of a permanent seat of government for the growing Province of Canada was gaining more importance in the court of Queen Victoria. A number of suitable candidates were in the running for such a designation: Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, and Hamilton. Ottawa, which considered herself to be the capital of central Canada anyways, boasted many attributes: a central, defensible location (removed from immediate American military threat), abundant water power, magnificent grounds reserved for government buildings (Barracks Hill), mineral wealth, plentiful resources in terms of building stone and water, rail transportation to populated areas of the Province, a healthy atmosphere and natural beauty. (The famous Stony Monday Riot of 1849 was the result of a clash of opinions between the Reformers and the Tories; this event, which marked the end of the frontier stage in ByTown, was fought over the idea of it begin the capital. It also served as a good opportunity for each side to alleviate some of their latent hostilities towards each other.)

After much consideration Ottawa was chosen for this distinction; Sir Edmund Walker Head is said to have confirmed this for the Queen. The story is well told that it was the sketches by Head's wife of the picturesque headlands of Barrack's Hill (the future government seat) in 1857 from what is today Major's Hill Park, which convinced her to make the historical decision. In 1860 the Prince of Wales laid the cornerstone of the proposed Parliament Buildings. (see Section 4.1.8. Parliament Hill) Civil servants and parliamentarians from Quebec City began their descent upon the new capital in the early

1860s.

In 1864, Rideau Hall was purchased by the government to house the Queen's representative, the Governor-General; it had served as the home the stone-mason contractor, Thomas McKay, whose work was instrumental in the completion of the Rideau Canal. The first and only session of the Parliament of the Province of Canada opened 6 June 1866.

On 1 July 1867, the British North America Act came into effect, resulting in the Dominion of Canada with the confederation of four provinces, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; among its other merits, this arrangement was partly a response to the still-perceived threat of the American 'imperialist' neighbours. The resultant fanfare throughout the capital lasted for days.

The appearance of the capital began to improve in the 1870s as the debris of construction activity was cleared from Parliament Hill and parks began to appear, simultaneously with the much delayed services that a city should have had long before: pipes to carry water and bricked, subterranean vaults to carry away the sewage. (reference, ?)

Otherwise it was a "sea of mud when it rained and of dust when it didn't...". (Taylor, 1986, 66) The dichotomy between lumber and government began to grow; politics became the driving force of the community and its social relations, with civil servants and politicians usurping the lumber gentry as civic leaders.

In 1874, Ottawa's first formal park was designed and built. Dominion Park (eventually renamed Major's Hill Park) provided leisurely green space within the center of the city and provided musical entertainment on Sunday afternoons. The first city hall was opened in 1877.

The 1880s were something of Ottawa's golden age. Lansdowne Park had just been opened as an exhibition ground, and in 1879 the "Great Dominion Exhibition" commenced. Railway travel was booming and plans for a transcontinental line were implemented. In 1885, the Pontiac Pacific Junction Railway (more commonly known as the "Push, Pull and Jerk"), made its first scheduled stop in Ottawa. By the 1890s marked improvements had been made to the growing city, including new services: electricity, lighting, garbage collection and water (the latter especially important in the face of fire danger in the community.) The police force was well-established by this time (1866), as were health care facilities (1874) and the structuring of roads.

I would not wish to say anything disparaging of the Capital, but it is hard to say anything good of it. Ottawa is not a handsome city and does not appear to be destined to become one either. (NCCe, 1984, 12)

In 1899 in response to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier's dream to make Ottawa "the



centre of intellectual life" of the country and "the Washington of the North", the Ottawa Improvement Commission was created (Bond, 1961, 93) By 1902 the O.I.C had cleaned up the banks of the canal, built the Minto bridges over the Rideau River, and engaged an enterprising young landscape architect from Montreal, Frederick Todd, to attend to urban improvements; Strathcona, Rockcliffe and Nepean Point Parks were all the direct result of this vision.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Ottawa began to assume its contemporary and one-dimensional character as a government town. (Taylor, 1986, 119)

A tragic fire roared through the cities of Ottawa and Hull on 28 April 1900 consuming many businesses and causing great financial losses; the 'great fire' effectively diminished the stature of the timber industry in the region, with only Eddy and Bronson rebuilding their operations.

The following year the Alexandra (Interprovincial) Bridge was constructed to permit rail and vehicular traffic between the two provinces; it was named in honour of Queen Alexandra. In 1910, the Sappers' and Dufferin Bridges across the Rideau Canal were demolished in favour of a single bridge and an accompanying open space named 'Plaza Laurier' or Connaught Place. The period from 1896 to 1913 saw a plethora of buildings being erected in Ottawa, including the Public Archives on Sussex Street, the Royal Mint, and the Victoria Memorial Museum. The Canadian Northern and National Transcontinental Railways were amalgamated to form the Canadian National Railway (CNR) by 1923, which, with the streetcars, left the City of Ottawa in "a spider web of tracks". (Bond, 1961, 100) Sparks Street was known as the "Broadway" of Ottawa.

Worse, the railways encased the city in a girdle of steel, and congested its heart with lines, yards, and stations. ... In this way, a tangle of rail-lines, yards, and stations became one of the most prominent features of the urban landscape, overshadowed only by the Parliament Buildings, and the mills and lumberpiles of Chaudiere and Rideau Falls. The city was cut into pieces. (Taylor, 1986, 97)

In 1916 the Holt Report (Federal Plan Commission) set forth a list of proposals which would ensure a bright future for the capital. It recognized the core of Ottawa's difficulties as being the railways; it also recommended the establishment of a federal district, as well as the creation of Gatineau Park on the Quebec side. Although the federal government aimed to shape the capital as a national symbol, its lofty plans were never implemented because of the attendant concerns associated with both World War I and the Centre Block fire of 1916.

Leisure activities began to take on more importance in the growing government center: hockey, rugby, skating and other activities found great popularity amongst the Ottawa citizenry; Lansdowne Park as a venue and the Central Canada Exhibition as an event were

also important in the capital. The Canadian National Winter Carnival opened on 28 February 1922 for a week of snowshoe races, torchlight parades and fireworks.

Featuring the six days program was the slide-a-mile toboggan chute adjacent to the Chateau Laurier and an illuminated "Ice Castle" on Cartier Square. (Walker, 1953, 67)

For the intellectual set, music and the arts also found a home. The symphony, the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society, and the National History Society of Ottawa were thriving in the early decades of the century.

On 16 August 1945 the National Capital District was officially declared; it encompassed an area of 2331 km<sup>2</sup> (900 square miles). Throughout this decade the capital experienced unprecedented growth, especially in the expansion of the government, as the dominance of the lumber baron/industrialist was taken over by the middle-class bureaucrat. The 'business of government' spawned two forces which would directly affect the city's growth:

1. the sheer growth of government, its employees, its buildings, and its needs for services.
  2. the perceived need to create a national and international showpiece.
- (Taylor, 1986, 171)

Carleton College became Carleton University in 1957, and the first experiment of its type in Canada, the fully pedestrian Sparks Street Mall was officially opened in 1966. From World War II, the City of Ottawa had changed both qualitatively and quantitatively: its population had tripled and her landbase had increased fivefold.

By the 1960s government had also provided a very attractive place to live. Ottawa had become in many respects an archetypal post-industrial city: clean industry, low density and a pleasant life-style. It was, by 1980, almost the antithesis of the lumber town. (Taylor, 1986, 176)

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Liberal Prime Minister through the 1970s, had two objectives regarding the capital in his political mandate:

1. expansion of the capital into Hull, and,
2. development of the capital as symbol.

The rapid growth of the high-tech industry, most notably in Kanata to the west ("Silicon Valley of the North") added an entirely new but compatible function to the 'white collar' city. De-centralized centres across the region alleviated the pressure on the downtown core; bi-lingualism was officially integrated into municipal workings (1970),

and divisions along racial and religious lines were less pronounced. The competition for two new museums in the capital region has brought a renewed vigor and sense of purpose to the capital region as it gears up for a great celebration on 1 July 1988. Also, the initial phase of Confederation Boulevard (Ceremonial Route) has started, linking both the two cities and the two founding cultures.

National ceremonies and processions take precedence over all other functions on the streets of the capital. (Taylor, 1986, 209)

There has been tremendous development since the 1950s, although the "capital's natural beauty has been enhanced, the grace of life there improved." (Bond, 1961, 134) Today with the revitalized ByWard Market -resplendent with boutiques, cafes, galleries, restaurants and fresh produce- and a renewed Sparks Street Mall, Ottawa has indeed become a true capital city, where the rivers meet.

#### 9.1.2 Civic Beautification

Although Colonel John By had begun laying out a network of streets for ByTown during the 1820's, the settlement's growth was by and large a happenstance affair. As the capital of Canada, government leaders understood the importance of establishing a body which would oversee the future planning of the city. Hence, in 1899, the Ottawa Improvement Commission was born as the first of a series of federal organizations "responsible for ensuring that the Nation's Capital serves the interests of all Canadians". (NCCh, 1987)

#### Ottawa Improvement Commission 1899-1927

Concerns with growth, with the amelioration of health, housing, and traffic problems, and with the development of Ottawa as a national capital, led to an especially heightened agitation for planning at the turn of the century. (Taylor, 1986, 146)

In August 1899, a regulatory body was established that would oversee the improvement and the beautification of Ottawa, especially in light of her position: Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier envisioned a grand capital which he saw as the "Washington of the North". The Ottawa Improvement Commission's first order of business was to clean up the banks of the Rideau Canal. The four commissioners appointed had as their mandate "the acquisition, maintenance and improvement of public parks, squares, streets, avenues, drives or thoroughfares, and the erection of public buildings in the said city or in the vicinity thereof...".(reference?) In return for the OIC's involvement, the City of Ottawa supplied free water and fire protection to government buildings, lands and premises.

Within her first two years, the Commission had retained the services of the eminent

landscape architect Frederick Todd of Montreal. Todd's Report of 1903 anticipated a great metropolis surrounded by grand stretches of greenspace, as well as a grand boulevard linking Rideau Hall with Parliament Hill; the driveways and parks which are admired today can, in a large part, be attributed to the foresight embodied in his comprehensive plan. In 1915, the Federal Plan Commission under Sir Herbert Holt, hired an American, E.H. Bennett, to develop a great plan for the city which he submitted in 1915, which included for the first time the recommendation of creating a federal district. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of World War I and the attendant disruption, including increased debt, the plan never reached the implementation stage.

A Canadian, Noulan Cauchon (1872-1935), developed a plan for the federal district which he unveiled in 1922. Cauchon's plan had at its core the reorganization of the jumbled network of steam railway lines which crossed the region, the development of super highways, and a segregated industrial area in the east end of the city. He also proposed a plan for the Parliamentary precinct and "advocated the "great Circle Parks", now the Greenbelt". (Taylor, 1986, 146) Cauchon's report and the work of the O. I. C in general were encouraged by the Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who had a deep concern for the development of the capital. King's active interest in his capital resulted in the assertion of the federal presence (over municipal), a situation that continues to the present day. Despite its best intentions, few of Cauchon's recommendations were implemented.

By 1927, the Ottawa Improvement Commission had successfully fulfilled its mandate: the lumbering village had become a prospering government center. The Commission was then reorganized, fitted with a new mandate and renamed the Federal District Commission, a title more befitting its greater scope.

#### Federal District Commission (1927-1959)

In April of 1927, the Federal District Commission replaced the O.I.C. and extended its mandate to include the City of Hull; Ottawa was losing her monopoly as the 'capital'. Ten commissioners now shared responsibility for the development of the region. Attention was now focused on the erection of bridges, and, except for a period after the Wall Street crash of 1929, much creative work was done in the development of driveways, squares, parks and major thoroughfares through this era.

The first phase of a long-standing relationship between the capital and the noted French beaux-arts town-planner Jacques Greber began in 1937; he had been invited to Ottawa by William Lyon Mackenzie King (whom he had met at the Paris Exposition of 1936) to develop a design for a central square and war memorial to act as the central ceremonial approach to Parliament Hill. Greber's analysis and subsequent recommendations led to the development of what is today Confederation Square. Following an interruption by World War II, Greber returned to Ottawa in 1945 as consultant to the National Capital Planning Committee, a relationship which resulted in the 1950 Master Plan for the National Capital Region. The main recommendations of this document included:

- railway relocation.
- extension of the parkway network.
- decentralization of federal office complexes.
- creation of a greenbelt.
- enlargement of Gatineau Park. (NCC, 1984, 24)

Railway relocation was one of the FDC's major tasks through the 1950s as the downtown area became increasingly crowded. Other FDC work consisted of the seventeen mile Queensway thoroughfare constructed upon the vacant CNR track bed crossing the city (1957-65) in anticipation of increased automobile traffic, and the enlargement of Gatineau Park with the purchase of additional land on the Quebec side. Its vigor and its expertise in planning for the Capital saw the FDC surpass the City of Ottawa in this realm.

#### National Capital Commission (6 February 1959 - present)

The National Capital Commission, a statutory Crown Corporation, came into being with the passing of the National Capital Act on 6 September 1958 (proclaimed in 1959); the Act formally recognized Ottawa-Hull as the National Capital Region.

the objects and purposes of the Commission are to prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance. (National Capital Act, 1958)

The National Capital Commission has since been actively involved with the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region, including the planning, control and coordination of both the Region's physical and cultural aspects. The NCC quickly set about to enlarge its base: it expanded to 4,660 square kilometres from its previous size of 2,330 square kilometres. (NCCe, 1984, 32)

Many major changes have taken place during the NCC's tenure, including the purchase of Lebreton Flats, the construction of the Macdonald - Cartier Bridge, and the opening of the western Ottawa River parkway and the National Arts Centre (1968). By the late 1960s the basic infrastructure of roads, bridges and parkways was in place; the National Capital Commission now controlled 14% of the National Capital Region, or 47,000 hectares. The Capital region's perennial love affair with cycling began in the early 1970s as many kilometres of recreational pathways were opened; on the Rideau Canal the world's longest skating rink was also developed.

As well as overseeing the planning and maintenance of the lands under her jurisdiction, the National Capital Commission also took on an activist role in urban research and planning for the Region; indeed a National Capital Planning committee was formally established in the Act and the NCC was charged with the coordination of all planning and

development of public lands in the National Capital Region, including veto power for the erection or extension of any building or structure on public land; an appended schedule gave a legal description of all included land. The reorganization of the Commission in 1958 has ensured a capital city for Canada which is at once inspiring and welcoming for all.

Recently, the NCC has come under fire for its unilateral directives; the issue of Confederation Boulevard and its impact on Major's Hill Park incited the wrath of enough individuals to force the Commission to re-evaluate their policies (see Section 5.3.2); if 1987 is any indication, public participation will be openly courted by Chairman Jean Pigott and her charges in the future.

In general terms, emphasis is now being placed on public programming, especially in the form of festivals and other special events; Canada Day, the Festival of Spring, Winterlude being but three of the numerous activities staged throughout the year. As Mrs. Pigott has remarked, the NCC exists to serve all Canadians as a "place of pride" and as a "window on the world". With a new mandate this federal agency is to:

1. make the Capital into Canada's meeting place by encouraging the active participation of Canadians in the evolution of their Capital;
2. use the Capital to communicate Canada to Canadians in order to assist in the development and highlighting of Canadian national identity; and,
3. safeguard and preserve the capital, for future generations. (NCCk, 1987, 2)

Thirty years hence, Jacques Greber's comprehensive plan for the National Capital Region has been all but exhausted. Therefore, this impetus has given the NCC the opportunity to develop a new planning policy document for the National Capital Region to serve for the next thirty years; this document is called the Plan for Canada's Capital: A Federal Land Use Plan.

### 9.1.3 Plan for Canada's Capital: A Federal Land Use Plan

*Plan for Canada's Capital: A Federal Land Use Plan* will provide direction for the use of all federal lands in the National Capital Region in both the short- and long-term and will clarify the interests of the Commission as the planner of federal lands in the area. Land use policies will be established to reflect the special functions of the Capital so as to enhance the Capital's image. (NCCk, 1987, 6)

The federal government plays the role of steward in governing its lands throughout the National Capital Region. Through a comprehensive plan, Parliament and the Government of Canada are able to achieve a number of objectives regarding the property. These include:

1. to provide sites, often acquired in advance of need, and to minimize cost to the federal taxpayer for Capital institutions, be they of a political, administrative or cultural nature;
2. to provide land for federal facilities and services, including departmental headquarters, airports, military and communications installations and research and development facilities;
3. to provide sites, often on a reciprocal basis, to meet the need for foreign diplomatic accommodation in the Capital, thereby furthering Canada's interests abroad; and,
4. to protect investments made on behalf of all Canadians in such areas as parkway development, the preservation of heritage buildings, historic sites, national monuments, official residences, and parklands or other environmental assets. (NCCk, 1987, 3,4)

Also, such a plan assists the government in requisitioning land to non-governmental agencies to locate national headquarters in the capital, as well as in accommodating the institutional needs of both provincial and municipal governments. Regular interaction occurs between the federal government and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton of Ontario, and the Outaouais Regional government in Quebec, who both had influence on the shaping of the land use plan; as well, the twenty-six municipalities of the region are also consulted to ensure a happy coexistence between the variant groups.

#### Capital Parks

The National Capital Region has always been recognized as set within a beautiful, prosperous landscape, exemplified by spectacular landforms even within the downtown core: Parliament Hill and Nepean Point being prime examples. Many of these features have been further developed over the last few decades for recreation as leisure activities have grown in importance amongst the citizenry of the area. Prime land has been identified by the National Capital Commission as crucial to this end and has been protected and safeguarded under its mandate. Also,

Their prominence, beauty, size and quality, as well as their historical and symbolic interest, also contribute to their importance. (NCCk, 1987, 65)

However, attractive parks are not the only open space requirements of the capital. The NCC believes that

parks must now act as stages and there must be a programme of events and activities enacted there to help visitors appreciate the unique qualities and attributes of the Canadian experience and to understand better what

being a Canadian means. (NCCk, 1987, 66)

The challenge to the Commission then is:

1. to build upon the legacy of parks created through previous planning efforts, and to modify the use and development of some existing parks; and,
2. to diversify the inventory of parklands in order to meet new challenges and demands arising within the life of the Plan. (NCCk, 1987, 66)

It promises to be a future of expanded programming and public participation in the national capital, all levels of government working in conjunction to anticipate and provide the parklands required.

A number of issues have been identified by the National Capital Commission with respect to the enhancement of Capital Parks; those particular to Major's Hill Park include:

- + Commission programmes are generating an increasing demand for specialized, serviced sites, many of which could be located on federal parklands. However, the existing parks inventory does not include sufficient lands of the type needed to support the intensive use generated by attractions and public events.
- + The function of existing parks has not been sufficiently clarified in order to guide future facility and events development.
- + Local and regional governments in the Capital rely heavily on federal parklands to meet their needs. However, as the number of visitors to the Capital rises and the local population increases, federal parklands will be under increasing pressure. (NCCk, 1987, 67)

Having thus identified the issues which are important to federal land in the capital area, the NCC then forwarded a goal and subsequent policy direction to guide future work in the capital.

**GOAL:** A Capital in which parks are developed as an integral part of its image, providing opportunities for active and passive recreation and the accommodation of Capital events and activities.

#### Policy Direction

It is proposed that the National Capital Commission:

- a) establish a system of Capital parks to meet future national demands created by events and activities;
- b) define Capital parks as those federal parklands tied to a significant natural or built feature, or historical event, which makes them a major contributor to the Capital's



- image (for example, the Rideau Canal or Jacques Cartier Park);
- c) consider Capital parks to be part of the concept of stages in the Capital that will serve as beautiful settings (natural or built) for events and activities;
  - d) pursue within Capital parks those uses that support the natural or built features or historical events which led to the establishment of the park (for example, display facilities, events orchestrated or supported by the Commission, floral displays, amphitheatres, active and passive recreation and supporting facilities and infrastructure);
  - e) prepare detailed sector plans that will provide each Capital park with a definitive role and programme function and that will also serve as the basis for detailed site development plans;
  - f) examine, in conjunction with the appropriate federal agencies and national sports organizations, the potential for national- and international-level sports facilities in the Capital, as well as the possibility of hosting associated events; and
  - g) encourage local and regional municipalities to reduce their dependency on Capital parks by developing local and regional park facilities on non-federal lands.
- (NCCk, 1987,68-69)

#### Major's Hill Park

Major's Hill Park is considered to be a Capital Park in the context of the National Capital Region, that is its function is to serve capital needs; it is a park of national significance especially in light of its context (Parliament Hill, Chateau Laurier Hotel, etc.).

The immediate concern that arises on understanding the NCC's newest policy outline is what is slated for the park? Can it be presupposed that the park will remain greenspace or is it possible that at sometime in the future it may be built upon? Confederation Park was originally slated to be a national museum site, but has remained a pleasant passive park. These questions may not see immediate answers, so for now it may be assumed that Major's Hill Park will remain as greenspace in the shadow of Parliament Hill.

Appendix 9.2: Foundations  
(Ottawa Citizen, 11 October 1972, 1)

Dig may have found Col. By's residence

By Richard Jackson  
Journal Parliamentary Staff

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Appendix 9.3: Noon-Day Gun  
(Ottawa Citizen, 28 April 1969, 3)

100th birthday

Major's Hill Park cannon celebrates with a bang

By Judy Barrie  
Citizen Staff Writer

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APPENDIX 9.2: Foundations  
(Ottawa Journal, 11 October 1972, 1)

# Dig may have found Col. By's residence

By RICHARD JACKSON  
Journal Parliamentary Staff  
There's an archaeological  
"dig" in progress in Major's  
Hill Park for Col. John By's  
residence.  
National Capital Commission  
Chairman Douglas Fullerton

says the "evidence is that we've  
found it."  
The evidence?  
"Bits of scorched glass,  
burned wood, nails, tools," and  
the research of NCC-historical  
archaeologist Dr. Mary Burns.  
She is working co-operatively  
on the "dig" with experts from

the national and historic parks  
branch of the Indian and north-  
ern affairs department and a  
group of students and a profes-  
sor from Carleton University's  
archaeological establishment.

Dr. Burns, through her study  
and research located the site,  
"under some lawn and rose  
bushes," reports Mr. Fullerton,  
near the Champlain statue.

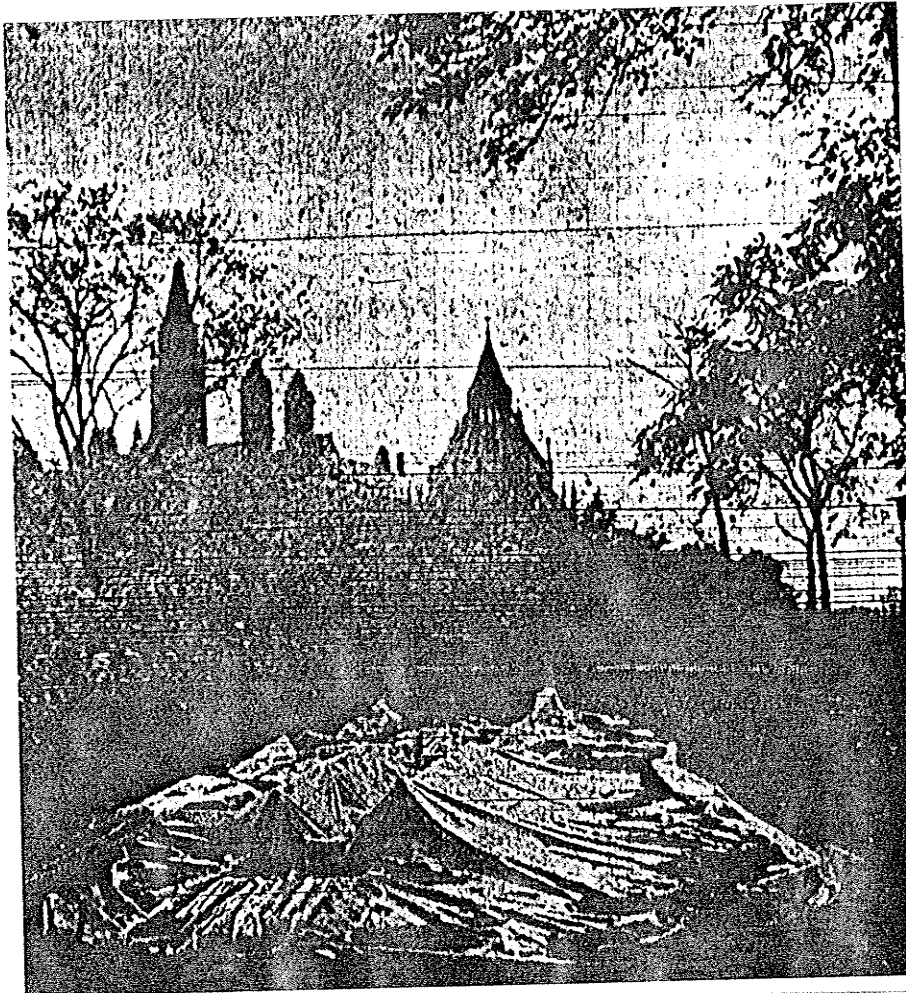
Mr. Fullerton isn't sure what  
is to be done with the site and  
what remains — perhaps the  
outline of the room plan of the  
By residence — when the "dig"  
is completed.

"We're looking for ideas," he  
says. "After all it was the home  
of the 'Father of Ottawa,' the  
builder of the Rideau Canal, and  
has significant regional, and  
even national historic value.

"We hope to come up with  
some artifacts, brass or iron fit-  
tings, furniture perhaps or parts  
of weapons, medals, anything  
that has been preserved under  
some two feet of soil for more  
than 100 years.

"Build a Col. By museum on  
the site? I don't know," ponders  
Mr. Fullerton, "at the moment  
we're looking for suggestions,  
studying plans and are quite a  
way from making any deci-  
sions."

The "dig" began last week, as  
unobtrusively as possible, for  
the NCC, the national and his-  
toric parks people and Carleton  
University alike have been wor-  
ried about the possible tres-  
passing of "amateur" archae-  
ologists or even vandals on the  
site.



**SITE OF COL. BY'S RESIDENCE?**

NCC archeologist Dr. Mary Burns thinks she may have located the site of Col. John By's residence in Major's Hill Park. The site is being excavated by Dr. Burns, assisted by experts from the national and historic parks branch of the department of Indian and northern affairs, and a professor and students from Carleton University.

(Journal Photo by The Canadian Press)

APPENDIX 9.3: Noon-Day Gun  
(Ottawa Citizen, 28 April 1969, 3)

# 100th birthday

## Major's Hill Park cannon celebrates with a bang

By Judy Barrie  
Citizen staff writer

The noon-day gun in Major's Hill Park celebrated its 100th birthday Saturday.

Officially, it shot off its 36,525th blast, but actually it was only the 36,519th firing since 1869.

Noted for their unfailing loyalty to the daily time check, gunkeepers have nevertheless missed discharging the famous cannon six times.

William J. Davis, who fired the gun for 30 years until his retirement in 1966, was felled by a faulty detonator on Aug. 1, 1963. Instead of misinforming the public, he left the cannon alone.

Two other times he arrived late or work, caught in noon-hour traffic.

Ernest Snowden, gun-keeper for more than 40 years before Mr. Davis missed his cue twice, was plagued, like his successor, by a temperamental detonator cap.

The last silence was noticed just three years ago, when the gun was spirited away by two University of Ottawa students, hoping to use the 162-year-old cannon in a winter parade. It was recovered the next day by RCMP officers on Henderson Avenue.

Only one near-tragedy has marked the historic firing. A 14-year-old Hull youth got too close in 1961 and was knocked to the ground by the blast. His clothing caught fire and the boy suffered a damaged ear drum.

Cast in an English arsenal in 1807, the three-ton weapon was intended for the Crimean War.

It was brought to Canada in Confederation year and installed behind the Parliamentary Library. After the fire of 1916, when the gun's vibrations were seriously hindering reconstruction, it was moved to Major's Hill Park.

It has come to be known as a time check for government workers but started out announcing the time of mail dispatch and letting MPs know when they could take their lunch.

When Mr. Davis retired, firing responsibility was taken over by the Corps of Commissionaires, while the federal department of public works is

still in charge of gun maintenance and safekeeping.

Gustave Auger, who works at the federal printing bureau in Hull, was assigned the historic honors with the Corps takeover.

He takes two hours off his job each day so he can get the gun properly filled and then cleaned after the blast.

## APPENDIX 9.4: User Survey Responses

## A. 1. HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THIS PARK?

a. less than two times :	44%
b. daily :	9
c. 3 - 5 / week :	7
d. 1 - 2 / week :	12
e. 1 - 2 / month :	14
f. 1 - 4 / year :	14
TOTAL :	100

## 2. HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL TO GET TO THIS PARK?

a. less than 1 km :	34
b. 1 - 2 km :	27
c. 3 - 5 km :	17
d. 6 - 10 km :	9
e. more than 10 km :	13
TOTAL :	100

## 3. HOW DID YOU GET TO THIS PARK?

a. walked :	63
b. biked :	14
c. drove car :	13
d. took bus :	10
TOTAL :	100

## 4. WHY DO YOU COME TO THIS PARK?

a. views :	16	(photography, sightseeing)
b. passing thru/fell into :	18	(Nepean Point, Parliament Hill, chance)
c. proximity :	12	(to Market, Hill, downtown, Canal)
d. festivals :	2	
e. beautiful park :	25	(nice, pretty, pleasant, green, nature, peaceful)
f. relaxation :	16	(quiet, peaceful)
g. to read :	7	
h. socialize :	6	(meet friends, lonely, watch others)
i. eat lunch :	8	
j. carillons :	2	
k. no reason given :	2	

## A. 5. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS PARK?

- a. peace, quiet : 33
- b. it's nice : 12
- c. natural aspects : 43 (scenery, greenery, beauty, trees, flowers, grass)
- d. views : 29
- e. cleanliness/maintenance 20
- f. location : 12
- g. size, space, uncrowded 13
- h. amenities : 8 (seating, fountain, litter bins, statues, monuments)
- i. history : 1
- j. well-designed : 2
- k. carillons nearby : 3
- l. climatic factors : 10 (breezes, sun, shade, fresh air)
- m. miscellaneous : 5 (festivals, safe for kids, nice for picnics, lots of people)
- n. no comment : 3

## 6. WHAT DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THIS PARK?

- a. it's fine as it is : 49
- b. liquor use/shady types : 14 (bums, itinerants, obnoxious derelicts)
- c. gay presence : 5
- d. difficult access : 4
- e. night activity : 8 (hustling, intimidation, 'action')
- f. poor lighting : 2
- g. traffic noise : 2
- h. warm drinking water : 3
- i. miscellaneous : 1 few flowers
- 1 not enough drinking fountains
- 1 not enough benches
- 1 not enough people
- 1 not enough vegetation
- 1 too much vegetation (overgrown: impedes views)
- 3 no picnic tables
- 1 no concessions/refreshments
- 1 too much open space
- 1 no washroom facilities
- 1 could be bigger
- 1 paths could be stonedust
- 1 distance from river
- j. no comment : 7

A. 7. COULD YOU SUGGEST ANY IMPROVEMENTS FOR THIS PARK?

a. none required :	33	
b. no comment :	12	
c. more flowers/colour :	9	
d. picnic tables :	7	
e. ornamental fountains :	9	
f. more drinking fns :	5	
g. colder drinking water :	5	
h. better security :	2	
i. better lighting :	4	
j. play area for children :	3	
k. concession stand :	2	
l. improved access :	2	
m. public washrooms :	4	
n. miscellaneous :	2	barbecue grills
	2	parking
	1	docking facility
	1	site map showing context
	2	wading pool
	1	more paths
	3	music / musicians
	1	entrance plaque/signage
	1	keep festivals out
	1	more seclusion
	1	better lawn
	2	prune trees and shrubs
	3	more trees and shrubs (screen traffic)

B. 1. DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS PARK IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD?

a. yes :	32
b. no :	68
TOTAL :	100

B. 2. IF YES, HOW DID YOU KNOW THIS?

a. lived here a long time :	8	
b. context :	3	
c. park elements :	12	(foundations, stones, cannons, plaques, trees)
d. word of mouth :	2	
e. know history :	8	
TOTAL :	32	



3. HOW COULD THE HISTORY OF THIS PARK BE BETTER ILLUSTRATED?

- |                            |    |   |
|----------------------------|----|---|
| a. plaques, signs :        | 40 |   |
| b. entrance sign :         | 11 | (cast bronze, carved wood)                          |
| c. more statues, monumts : | 15 |   |
| d. written literature :    | 8  | (pamphlets)   |
| e. birthday celebration :  | 4  | (period costumes, animators)                        |
| f. doesn't need anymore :  | 3  |   |
| g. no comment :            | 21 |   |
| h. better descriptions :   | 2  | (of elements)                                       |
| i. guides, tours :         | 5  |   |
| j. miscellaneous :         | 1  | Prime Ministerial busts                             |
|                            | 1  | light standards                                     |
|                            | 1  | trees   |
|                            | 1  | streetcar   |
|                            | 1  | CBO broadcast                                       |
|                            | 1  | floral arrangement                                  |
|                            | 2  | sculpture   |
|                            | 3  | information booth                                   |
|                            | 2  | NCC publicity                                       |
|                            | 1  | interpretive room (introduction, photos, artifacts) |

OTHER COMMENTS

- 2 "Keep clean and green".
- 3 "not too touristy".
- 8 "Having a beautiful park is fine but if you can't go into it..."; "Be careful if you go into the park at night.
- 11 solace, peace: if park wasn't here, many'd be without.
- 14 one with nature: birds chriping, squirrels scampering: nothing artificial that would destroy beauty; telescopes?
- 18 traffic can be loud.
- 22 changing views (different buildings); changes at night.
- 28 hard to park: crossing street; artillery monument: better description.
- 29 composing music in park.
- 49 businessmen: touch of nature during their day.
- 50 clean up upper edge of terrace... right down.
- 57 important to have parks in city: fast life.
- 63 nice place to play golf; gallop aoround park on horse.

- 65 square for museums: difficult to find a more beautiful and interesting area.  
70 not properly labelled on maps: confusing; "that park in behind the Chateau Laurier".
- 74 'barriers' to drown out cars.  
76 as two year old: shoulders of dad: fireworks.  
79 you'd hardly know it was here.  
85 kiosks; animation: music a la London.  
87 people know it's here (festivals, etc...); important amenity for any city: greenspace and trees: oasis from harsh city; F of Spring: bad time to beseige park (lawns...).
- 88 no problem crossing Mackenzie.  
91 "Why don't people use this park?"; sounds are lovely (church, Peace Tower).  
93 good place in which to study.  
94 ideal for festivals (crowd control/logistics); keep Festivals!; no skyscrapers or American embassy.  
97 should reconsider crafts move to Lansdowne Park.

## APPENDIX 9.5: RMOC Traffic Volume Statistics

### Approach to Alexandra Bridge: northbound

During the course of an average twenty-four hour weekday, traffic counts show that 10,383 vehicles enter Quebec via the Alexandra Bridge from Ottawa. During the peak period of 08h00 to 09h00 in the morning, an average of 851 vehicles traverse this route; between the hours of 16h00 and 17h00 in the afternoon peak, 957 vehicles follow it. (These volumes are the result of merging traffic from both northbound and southbound traffic along Sussex Drive).

### Approach to Alexandra Bridge: southbound

During the course of an average twenty-four hour weekday, traffic counts show that 10,856 vehicles travel southbound from the Alexandra Bridge either to proceed south along Mackenzie Avenue to Wellington Street, or to continue eastwards along St. Patrick Street into the heart of the ByWard Market. In the morning, 852 vehicles (average) take this route during the period between 08h00 and 09h00, whereas in the afternoon, 1010 (average) travel it between 16h00 and 17h00.

### Mackenzie Avenue: southbound

The single most influential traffic artery next to Major's Hill Park, Mackenzie Avenue has been called the "Mackenzie Speedway" with traffic travelling from the Sussex/St. Patrick node to Wellington Street (past the Connaught Building and the Chateau Laurier Hotel). The following statistics are compiled from traffic travelling north and south along Sussex Drive and west along St. Patrick Street.

General: over 14 hours (07h00-21h00)	12,397
Morning Peak: (07h45-0h845)	1518
Afternoon Peak: (15h45-16h45)	1060
Off Peak: (13h00-14h00)	811
Evening Peak: (20h00-21h00)	736

## APPENDIX 9.6: Musings

- 14 june:-many single males present: reading, sleeping, conversing, enjoying a sunny summer morning.  
 -beautiful scents of Japanese tree lilac, rugosa rose (pink blooms).  
 -admiring By statue overlooking canal; recollecting clang of pickaxe and saw to quarry limestone blocks.
- 16 june:-noisy traffic along Mackenzie.
- 20 june:-hacky-sack players, football; carillon's onerous tones.  
 -scavengers exploring receptacles; lazy Saturday afternoon: serene.  
 -romantic sharing of wine; much activity on locks.  
 -secluded Noon-Day Gun area ... too much so?
- 21 june:-parishioners walking into park; passive enjoyment.  
 -everyone pausing at some point to view Hill; overwhelming austerity.  
 -ascent to Nepean Point for views.
- 27 june:-preparations for Canada's birthday celebrations.  
 -busier activity: confectionery depots ... trucks rolling about.  
 -watching activity on Sussex Drive, Mackenzie, etc.  
 -visitors stay to edge, don't venture out too far from there (vulnerable?).  
 -camaraderie of park 'gang' (regulars).
- 29 june:-more birds than humans; squirrel activity.
- 30 june:-3 dozen workers (NCC, others) setting up for Canada Day.  
 -mother pointing out Parliament Buildings to her two children.  
 -paddleboard fences section off areas; portable toilets; main stage.  
 -tremendous riot of colour.  
 -guitarist playing solo beneath maple tree with Chateau Laurier in back.  
 -Ottawa Skyline Cablevision filming interview; skateboarders.
- 1 july: -jammed with people; food and entertainment of various ethnic groups.  
 -Beatles group plays after fireworks are over.
- 2 july: -"snow fall": heaps of garbage to be cleaned: fast and furious venture.  
 -seagull patrol in full force; large vacuum.  
 -children taking advantage of chunky statue; grass well worn.
- 4 july: -formal interviews begin.  
 -wedding party out for photos; rain: maple tree fair umbrella.  
 -sumacs near Chateau rustled by wind.  
 -many familiar faces.
- 5 july: -beer drinking at 10h00.
- 8 july: -12h20-12h40: Carillons from Peace Tower: "Swing Low Sweet Chariot".  
 -people photographed with Parliament Hill backdrop.  
 -confused tourists re: circulation to Wellington, McDonalds.  
 -sluggish day: everything in slow motion (heat, humidity).

- 10 july:-shared Licorice Schnapps with "dueling banjo" welfare recipients (talked at the same time!).
- 12h30: carillons; glue-sniffer encounter.
  - evening: pleasant atmosphere: romantic ambience (couples); Parliament Hill resplendent in her evening attire (lighting); Colonel By the same.
- 12 july:-another quiet Sunday: planes pass noiselessly overhead.
- cars on Mackenzie surprisingly non-disruptive.
  - focusing on Parliamentary Library and Peace Tower: patriotic feelings.
  - sleepers, chatters, sun-tanners; people either enjoy or avoid sun.
  - first ice-cream vendor seen in park to date: "sensing a good opportunity".
- 13 july:-lightning has struck down ash tree near foundations (79 years old).
- 17 july:-wine and beer in park; sketching.
- 18 july:-attraction of sculpture to children.
- it truly is a magical, majestic piece of property: a beautiful setting for beautiful architecture; bagpiper in distance, cicadas humming.
- 25 july:-reminiscing about park which I have come to love.
- greensward with Hill in background; sophisticated Indian man.
  - slowly strolling tourists admire Hill in its picturesque garb.
  - south wall of Gallery containing the park.
  - unorthodox climb from terrace; sun returns with vengeance.
- 2 aug: -evidence of Saturday night carousing.
- city of activity: tons to do: "Where else can so much be had in such comfortable proximity?"
  - seagulls gliding over wide expanse of Ottawa River.
  - from Nepean Point: spires of Chateau Laurier and upper reaches of Connaught Building emerge out of park's treescape.
- 4 aug: -small universe defined by MHP and Rideau St. fountain: melancholic feeling about this group of people and their existence.
- 5 aug: -last outing: mellowing out at base of By statue, basking in comforting sunshine, slight cool breeze and luxuriant green grass (for toes).
- dozen or so children count/sound off 12 chimes of Peace Tower at noon: marvellous interaction.
  - NOSTALGIA: ... already missing this place.