

Planning committee to consider 17-storey 'addition' to ByWard Market's Andaz hotel

Claridge Homes CEO says if approved, project could be completed within 2 years

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A daytime and nighttime rendering of Claridge's proposed 'addition' to the Andaz Ottawa ByWard Market. The company's CEO says if approved, the 17-storey expansion could open within two years. (Claridge Homes)

City staff are recommending Ottawa's planning and housing committee approve a proposal by Claridge Homes to build a 17-storey "addition" beside the Andaz hotel in the ByWard Market.

The committee will consider rezoning the vacant lot at 116 York St. on Wednesday.

"It makes sense to develop upwards," said Rideau-Vanier Coun. Stéphanie Plante, whose ward includes the property in question.

Plante noted the ward is already densely built, as well as a lack of existing hotel space in the area.

"I was trying to book something for my family this weekend for Winterlude, and everything downtown was all booked up," she said on Tuesday.

Plante said adding more hotel rooms and conference space to the city's downtown will give visitors an alternative to short-term rentals.

"Frankly, I'm really happy it's not just another Airbnb," she said.

Heritage approvals granted

The hotel expansion would add 154 rooms on 14 floors, plus another three levels of event space.

Claridge Homes, which owns the Andaz Ottawa ByWard Market and the adjacent property, first brought its application to the city's built heritage committee on Feb. 10 because of the hotel's location within the market's heritage conservation district.

The committee approved the heritage permits, but before construction can begin Claridge must seek approval for the building's materials and colour scheme, as well as a planned art installation.

Claridge Homes CEO Neil Malhotra called the heritage review process "straightforward," and said the company doesn't expect to hit any barriers moving forward.

"We're just hoping we get the final approvals and continue expanding the project down there," he said.

Malhotra said the hotel addition has been in Claridge's plans for a long time, and has evolved as the company bought the adjacent lot. If approved, he said construction could wrap up relatively quickly.

"It should be open in two years," Malhotra said.

Once approved by the planning committee, the proposal will still require the OK of full city council.