

DRAFT

LISTING “THE CHAMPLAIN OAKS” IN THE CITY OF OTTAWA HERITAGE REGISTER

REPORT TO: The Ottawa Built Heritage Advisory Committee and the Ottawa Forest and Greenspace Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY: The Champlain Park Community Association, the Westboro Beach Community Association, and the Island Park Community Association

DATE: March 1, 2012

SUBJECT: Updates to the City of Ottawa Heritage Register

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

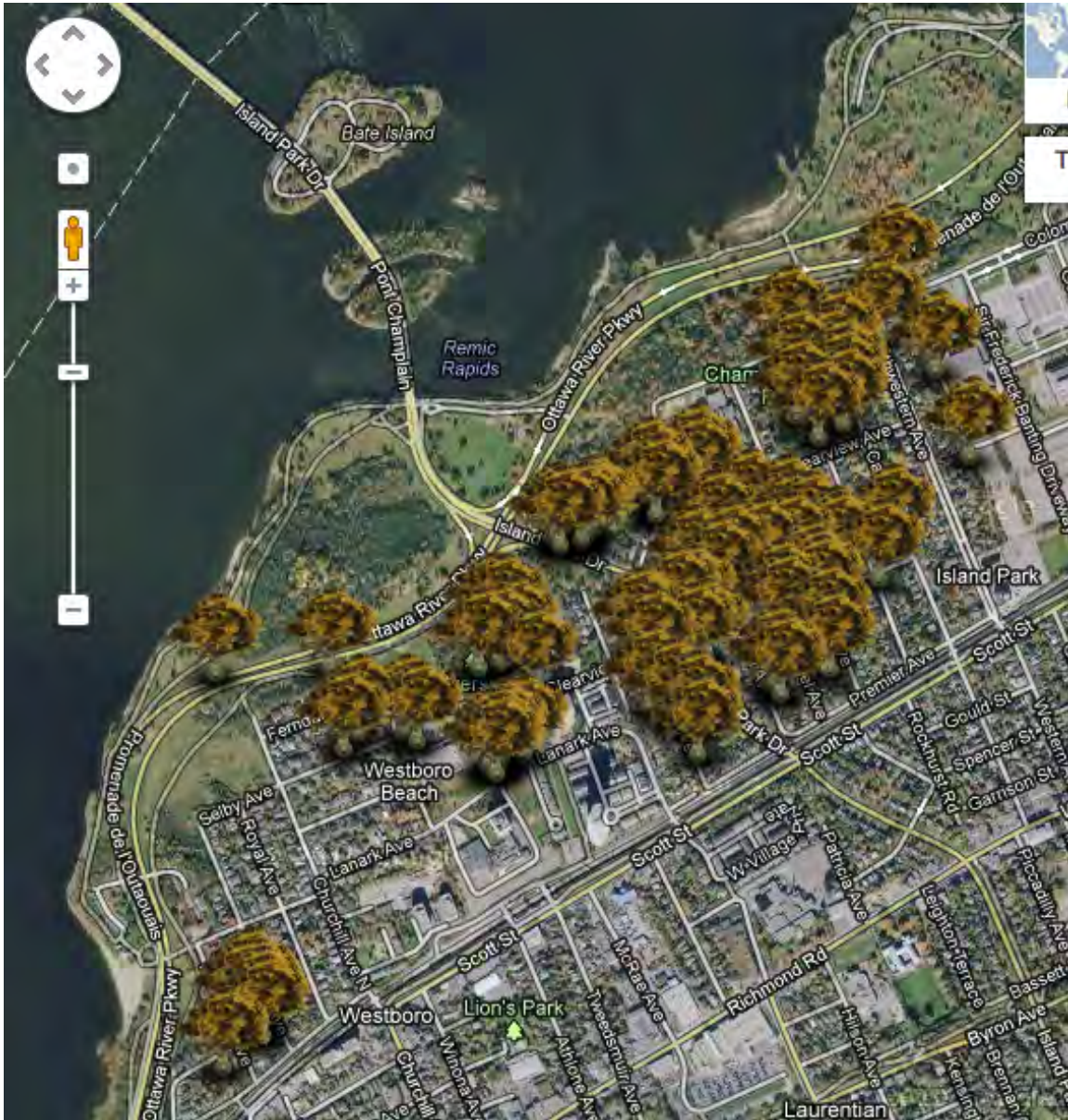
That the Ottawa Built Heritage Advisory Committee and the Ottawa Forest and Greenspace Advisory Committee recommend that Council add the properties listed in Schedule B and depicted on Map 1 to the City of Ottawa Heritage Register. The reasons for listing are set out in Schedule A, attached hereto and would form part of any listing.

BACKGROUND: Trees can be designated as properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV, Section 34.5 and Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990. There are a number of cases in Ontario of designation under the act for individual trees, hedgerows, and groves, usually by municipal by-law. In Ottawa, various Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) make specific references to tree conservation, including the Clemow Estates East HCD, New Edinburgh HCD, the Village of Rockcliffe Part, Lorne Avenue HCD, Lower Town West HCD, and Sandy Hill West HCD. The treed property at 300-310 Des Pere Blancs (Richelieu Park) Vanier has also been added to the City of Ottawa Heritage Register in recognition of its natural heritage character.

Section 27 (1.2) of the Act also gives municipalities the ability to list non-designated properties (including trees) of cultural heritage value or interest. The implication of listing “The Champlain Oaks” is that the owner of the property cannot damage or remove the trees without at least 60 days notice in writing. This provision extends the waiting period beyond what is currently required under the City of Ottawa’s Urban Tree Conservation By-law No. 2009 – 200. The waiting period would also apply to “The Champlain Oaks” on City and other public property. As a result, more time and greater public scrutiny would be required to authorize the removal or damage of listed trees. In addition, listing would raise public awareness of natural features in Ottawa of heritage value and deepen appreciation for the historical character of urban forests. What is unique about “The Champlain Oaks” is that the remaining trees are a direct link to the original oak forest on this stretch of the Ottawa River. With historical connections to an Algonquin village, early French exploration of Canada, early settlement of Nepean and Ottawa, and recent

community history, “The Champlain Oaks” are a significant expression of the interaction between nature and human settlement in this area.

MAP 1: Location of “The Champlain Oaks”



Schedule A – Statement of value

“The Champlain Oaks” are Bur Oaks. Bur Oaks (*Quercus macrocarpa*) are a species of oak native to eastern and midwestern North America. Also known as Burr Oak and the Mossycup White Oak, the plant commonly lives 250 years, and may live up to 400 years. Ottawa is on the northern edge of the species range in eastern North America, giving the plant genetic resources here particular design value.

What is unique about the remaining Bur Oaks (Map 1) is that the trees are a direct link to the original oak forest located on both sides of the Ottawa River between Chaudière Falls and Deschênes Rapids. This specific forest was first noted in the historical record by the French Captain Pierre Chevalier de Troyes, in 1686. At that time, all oaks were considered the property of the King of France due to their preference of oak as a shipbuilding material, and were duly noted in journals. The journal entry reads:

“Ensuite je me rendis au portage des chesnes, ainsi nommé à cause de la quantité de ces arbres qui sont en cet endroit, qui est à environ une lieue et demie du saut de la chaudière. Je monté dans cette route plusieurs rapides qui se rencontrent entre deux, et fis un portage qui est a une lieue ou environ de celuy de la chaudière qui a un quart de lieue de long ainsi que celuy des chesnes.” Pierre Chevalier de Troyes, 1686

“Then I returned to the oak portage, so called because of the number of these trees which are in the area, which is about a league and a half from the plunge of the Chaudière Falls. I climbed the many rapids which are encountered between the two on this road, and made the portage which is at nearly a league from that of the Chaudière, which is a quarter of a league as long as that of the oaks”. Pierre Chevalier de Troyes, 1686

Bur Oaks were also important to the Algonquin people that originally inhabited the area. The Algonquin relied on the trees for their edible nuts, leather tanning properties, medicine, wood, and the game that it attracted. An Algonquin village named “Miciming,” which in Algonquin means “where the oaks grow” was located at the present day Deschênes Rapids (which means “some oaks” in French). It seems likely that Bur Oaks, a species well-adapted to the riparian (riverside) ecosystem, were the dominant oak species in this forest.

While many changes occurred to the shoreline of the Ottawa River following European settlement, part of the area where “The Champlain Oaks” are currently located was still unsettled land in 1879. Map 2 shows parcels of land owned by the logging magnate James Skead and the early settler Horace Pinhey, between Mechanics Ville in the City of Ottawa and Skead’s Sawmill in Nepean. This area was later used to graze cattle, and for cottage settlement. The Bur Oak is a fire-tolerant tree, making it able to adapt to a shift from dense to open forest as properties along the river were converted to a combination of cattle grazing (at Tunney’s Pasture)

and cottage development along the shoreline at the beginning of the 20th century. An aerial photograph taken in 1946 shows several significant remnants of forest (Map 3), including areas currently occupied by the oldest of the Bur Oaks in the neighbourhood. Residential development began in earnest in Champlain Park during the late 1940s, and somewhat earlier in Westboro Beach. According to the first residents, large Bur Oaks were accommodated during construction of the new homes, mainly in backyards where they remain to this day.

The above interpretation of the historical record posits a living link between the remaining Bur Oaks, a period of mixed land use, the era of Samuel de Champlain, and the original Algonquin inhabitants of this section of the Ottawa River. This link, and the name of the neighbourhood where most are located (Champlain Park), are the reasons residents now call the trees “The Champlain Oaks”. The fact that these large trees were not planted by humans but rather left in place during construction distinguishes the Bur Oaks from other mature trees and species currently in the neighbourhood.

“The Champlain Oaks” today refers to 106 Bur Oaks between 50 cm and 118 cm in diameter-at-breast-height (DBH) in the defined geographic area located on the south side of the Ottawa River between Tunney’s Pasture and Westboro Beach (Schedule A). Of these, 36 are on public land (Municipal and National Capital Commission property) and the remainder on private lands. The minimum size of 50 cm DBH proposed for listing as “The Champlain Oaks” refers also to the minimum size required to be considered a “distinctive tree” under the City of Ottawa’s Urban Tree Conservation By-law No. 2009 – 200. The average size of the Bur Oaks in the proposed listing is 76 cm DBH. There are 10 individual trees greater than 100 cm DBH. Bur Oaks of this size are estimated to be at least 160 years old. By comparison, the oldest Bur Oak in Canada’s national arboretum (at the Experimental Farm) is a mere 116 years old (planted in 1896). While individual Bur Oaks have reached a considerable size and age in other parts of the City, “The Champlain Oaks” are the largest and oldest collection of native Bur Oaks within the boundary of the current City of Ottawa. They are consequently a unique urban forest of both design and historical heritage value.

“The Champlain Oaks” also have cultural heritage value. They are prominent landmarks in the community today and a defining feature of three connected neighbourhoods: Champlain Park, Island Park, and Westboro Beach. While most tower in backyards, a number of the large Bur Oaks dominate the streetscape at gateways into Ottawa from the Champlain Bridge and in the two neighborhoods on either side of Island Park Drive. For example, a mature Bur Oak on Patricia Avenue is the gathering place for an annual street party. The intersections of Island Park Drive and Sunnymede Avenue, Sunnymede Avenue and Keyworth Avenue and Island Park and the eastern section of Clearview Avenue are also dominated by several majestic Bur Oaks. One of the largest Bur Oaks in the area graces the front yard of a home on Cowley Avenue facing the City of Ottawa’s Champlain Park. Three large Bur Oaks are also located in the park. A home on Island Park Drive was

constructed in a way that embraces a very large Bur Oak on the back of the property. A residential development in Westboro Beach is called “The Oaks” in recognition of a collection of Bur Oaks near the property. A sapling from a mature Bur Oak on Lanark Avenue in Westboro Beach is growing across the street in Mahoney Park. This is in addition to Bur Oaks on NCC lands at the entrance to the neighbourhood and on Bate Island.

The presence of a significant collection of mature Bur Oaks in the community prompted the Ottawa Forest and Greenspace Advisory Committee and The Champlain Park Community Association to co-host a Heritage Tree walk during the summer of 2011. The loss in 2011 of the third largest of the mature Bur Oaks, located on Northwestern Avenue, also prompted significant community protest and calls for protection and celebration of these trees. The protest is one of “Six Moments in the History of an Urban Forest” documented in an exhibit at the Bytowne Museum by Carleton University history professor Joanna Dean and graduate student Will Knight. The three community associations have since developed a comprehensive inventory of Bur Oaks and other mature trees in the neighborhood, and joined together to recognize the cultural heritage value of these trees.

With historical connections to an Algonquin village, early French exploration of Canada, early settlement of Nepean and Ottawa, and recent community history, “The Champlain Oaks” are a significant expression of the interaction between nature and human settlement in this area.

Map 2: Nepean, 1879. One oak icon shows the approximate location of the present-day “Champlain Oaks”, and the other the location of Deschênes Rapids.



Map 3: Aerial photo of the defined area, 1946. Significant remnants of the original oak forest are clearly visible just prior to post-war residential development.



Shedule B: Listing of properties on which "The Champlain Oaks" are located							
ID	Street	Address	Land Tenure	Common Name	Species Name	Circumference (cm)	Diameter (cm)
1	Beechgrove	283	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
2	Champlain Park	City Park	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	175	55.7025
3	Champlain Park	City Park	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	225	71.6175
4	Champlain Park	City Park	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
5	Champlain Park	City Park	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	275	87.5325
6	Champlain Park	City Park	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	320	101.856
7	Churchill	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
8	Clearview	132	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	212	67.4796
9	Clearview	125	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	218	69.3894
10	Clearview	132	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	226	71.9358
11	Clearview	200	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	237	75.4371
12	Clearview	118	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	252	80.2116
13	Clearview	118	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	266	84.6678
14	Clearview	132	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	229	82.758
15	Clearview	132	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
16	Clearview	44	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	275	87.5325
17	Clearview	132	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	315	100.2645
18	Clearview	At roundabout	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	262	83.3946
19	Cowley	240	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	187	59.5221
20	Cowley	240	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	210	66.843
21	Cowley	154	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	290	92.307
22	Cowley	124	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	357	113.6331
23	Daniel	235	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	170	54.111
24	Daniel	200	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
25	Daniel	248	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	221	70.3443
26	Daniel	269	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	247	78.6201
27	Daniel	244	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	250	79.575
28	Daniel	261	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	256	81.4848

29	Daniel	243	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	259	82.4397
30	Daniel	203	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	284	90.3972
31	Daniel	217	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	284	90.3972
32	Daniel	211	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	365	116.1795
33	Daniel	239	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	371	118.0893
34	Daniel	214	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	257	81.8031
35	Island Park	250	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	198	63.0234
36	Island Park	250	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
37	Island Park	209	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	219	69.7077
38	Island Park	180	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	220	70.026
39	Island Park	209	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	230	73.209
40	Island Park	180	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	235	74.8005
41	Island Park	215	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	264	84.0312
42	Island Park	269	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	271	86.2593
43	Island Park	263	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	277	88.1691
44	Island Park	228	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	280	89.124
45	Island Park	209	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	242	77.0286
46	Island Park	219	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	284	90.3972
47	Keyworth	218	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	284	90.3972
48	Keyworth	218	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	284	90.3972
49	Keyworth	220	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	310	98.673
50	Keyworth	231	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	354	112.6782
51	Keyworth	215	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	286	91.0338
52	Keyworth	231	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	308	98.0364
53	Kirchoffer	312	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
54	Kirchoffer	315	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	220	70.026
55	Kirchoffer	312	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	240	76.392
56	Kirchoffer	311	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	250	79.575
57	Kirchoffer	315	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
58	Kirchoffer	307	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
59	Kirchoffer	315	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	270	85.941

60	Kirchoffer	307	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	275	87.5325
61	Lanark	319	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	206	65.5698
62	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	165	52.5195
63	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	170	54.111
64	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	171	54.4293
65	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
66	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
67	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	204	64.9332
68	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	208	66.2064
69	Lanark	250	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	255	81.1665
70	Lanark	281	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	280	89.124
71	Latchford	235	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	170	54.111
72	Latchford	231	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	300	95.49
73	Latchford	249	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	303	96.4449
74	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	160	50.928
75	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	162	51.5646
76	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
77	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
78	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	204	64.9332
79	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	213	67.7979
80	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	220	70.026
81	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	240	76.392
82	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
83	Latchford	North end	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
84	Northwestern	203	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	214	68.1162
85	Northwestern	157	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	335	106.6305
86	Northwestern	138	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	254	80.8482
87	Oak Park Private	15	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
88	Oak Park Private	2	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	262	83.3946
89	Oak Park Private	12	public/NCC	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	190	60.477
90	Patricia	185	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	239	76.0737

91	Patricia	203	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	250	79.575
92	Patricia	181	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	274	87.2142
93	Patricia	199	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	315	100.2645
94	Remic	249	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	170	54.111
95	Remic	276	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
96	Remic	276	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	220	70.026
97	Remic	249	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	260	82.758
98	Selby	304	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	158	50.2914
99	Selby	304	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	170	54.111
100	Selby	300	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
101	Sunnymede	46	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	180	57.294
102	Sunnymede	111	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	340	108.222
103	Sunnymede	73	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	210	66.843
104	Sunnymede	73	public/City	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	210	66.843
105	Workman	2143	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	200	63.66
106	Workman	2167	private	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa	320	101.856