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THE SITE

Early in 1964, the Department of External Affairs agreed to the site proposed for the new building in the City of Ottawa. This is an area of about 9.8 acres bounded on the west side by Sussex Drive, on the north by King Edward Avenue and elsewhere is contained by the approach ramp and roadway leading to the relatively new (1966) MacDonald-Cartier Bridge. From the Western end of King Edward Avenue this ramp arcs in a semi-circular curve behind the site, crosses over the rear entry to the property by way of an overpass structure and merges into the main approach road to the bridge. Just across Sussex Drive to the West is the old National Research Council Building. Some two hundred yards to the north on Green Island is the Ottawa City Hall, where the Rideau River empties into the Ottawa River at the spectacular Rideau Falls. Immediately south of the NRC Building and below the site of the External Affairs Building is Earnscliffe, the old Victorian home of Canada's first Prime Minister. Farther to the north and across Sussex Drive are the French Embassy and the residence of the Prime Minister of Canada. Across the Ottawa River is the City of Hull and beyond that the distant Gatineau Hills. The site in itself is a superb setting and admirably located on the processional route between Parliament Hill and Rideau Hall, the residence of the Governor General.

In planners' terms, the site is located in what was known as an R.O. Zoning area with a maximum site coverage factor of 2.5 and a height restriction of 150 feet (approximately 46 meters).