



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

226 Queen Street West - Demolition and Replacement of a Structure within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District

Date:	March 8, 2010
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Acting Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Toronto – Spadina – Ward 20
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends approval of the demolition of the two storey non-contributory commercial building at 226 Queen Street West (north side of the street). The proposed project would then construct a new five storey mixed-use replacement building. The demolition approval is conditional upon the applicant removing the fifth storey of the proposed replacement building.

The property at 226 Queen Street West is included within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District (QSWHCD), which extends from University Avenue to Bathurst Street. The subject site is located at the northwest corner of Queen Street West and McCaul Street (Attachment 1). The site has prominence as a corner location within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District.

The replacement structure as proposed would have an overall height of five stories or 19.5 metres (with a large rooftop penthouse further extending the height.) The proposed height is contrary to both the Zoning By-law provisions and the Heritage Conservation District Plan which permits structures to an absolute 16 metre height maximum.

The design of the project façades along both street frontages generally respects architectural characteristics of the district. However, further modification of various design elements would result in the project further complementing the fine-grain character that is expected in such heritage districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the proposed replacement building for the property at 226 Queen Street West, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings prepared by Robert Chang Architect Inc., dated March 3, 2010; subject to the following conditions:

- a. Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the replacement structure located at 226 Queen Street West, including a permit for the demolition, excavation, and/or shoring of the subject property, the owner shall:

Eliminate the fifth storey, or that portion of the occupied floor area that is above 16 metres, to comply with both the Zoning By-law and Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Continue to work with Heritage Preservation Services regarding refinement of the final façade design along both street frontages, including, but not limited to, providing building permit drawings incorporating the following design elements:

Redesign and visually break the multi-level window and steel wall systems (contained within the individual building bays) to further define individual floor levels and be suitably compatible with exterior materials and traditional window openings (smaller, vertical proportioned windows “punched” into walls) that characterize the district;

Provide horizontal articulation or architectural detailing, such as a belt course, cornice or canopy to distinguish the ground level from the upper levels of the proposed structure, in order to frame the pedestrian space of the sidewalk, at the Queen Street West frontage;

Provide horizontal articulation or architectural detailing, such as cornice or sunshades, etc., at top of street wall façades to emphasize the street wall height and further frame the pedestrian zone;

Provide satisfactory exterior materials with compatible details and finishes (i.e. masonry clad spandrels instead of proposed recessed steel);

Provide storefront and entry elevations with materials and details notated;

Include architectural detail, such as vertical mullions to break large window surfaces, minimally 2” wide at ground level storefront and more prominent at upper levels. Butt-jointed storefront and window systems to be prohibited;

Include a water table or masonry base element to the storefront (below storefront framing).

- b. All drawings and information provided shall be satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
2. City Council approve the issuance of a demolition permit for the building at 226 Queen Street West within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District subject to the applicant obtaining a building a building permit for the replacement structure.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District (QSWHCD) was approved by City Council in 2007 under By-law #979-2007.

The property, located at 226 Queen Street West, is considered as a Non-Contributory building within the Queen Street West HCD. Section 5 of the QSWHCD Guidelines does not prohibit demolition of non-contributory buildings within the district.

The Committee of Adjustments held a public meeting on September 10, 2008 and subsequently issued a Notice of Decision that approved with conditions eight variances for the project. Notably, two of the variances pertained to height aspects of the project.

The above Committee of Adjustment decision was subject to the following condition:

“Prior to issuance of a building permit, the owner/applicant shall submit architectural drawings, including plans, elevations and details of exterior work to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Prior to and following the September 10, 2008 Committee of Adjustment hearing, until the most recent March 3, 2010 plan submittal, the applicant has held several meetings with Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) staff. HPS staff has maintained that the requirements of the Queen Street West HCD Plan must be met. Though some modifications to the design have been made, the applicant does not desire to further change the project design scheme.

A Heritage Impact Assessment, dated June 12, 2009, was prepared by Nexus Architects. The report reviewed the proposed development at 226 Queen Street with regards to its compliance with the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Heritage Impact Consultant Conclusions

In their report, Nexus Architects stated they, “supported the intent of the guidelines and policies in the Queen West Heritage Conservation District Plan, with the possible exception of the universal 16 metre height limit, which is neither historic, nor appropriate for all future development.”

The consultant concludes that, “The impact of this proposed development on the site and the surrounding HCD will be generally positive, to improve the vitality of this corner. The proposal does not comply with all of the guidelines for the HCD, but with some adjustments to the building design and mitigation in the form of streetscape treatment, the project should be considered as an appropriate contribution to the HCD.”

COMMENTS

Background

The site identified as 226 Queen Street West is located at the northwest corner of McCaul Street and extends for 11.6 metres along the Queen Street West frontage and 36.8 metres along the McCaul Street frontage. The site currently contains a non-contributory two-storey brick commercial structure.

Proposal

A new mixed-use development is proposed at the site that currently contains the non-contributory building. The new structure proposes retail uses at the first two stories, office use at the third and fourth stories and one residential unit at the fifth storey. City Planning has determined that Site Plan Control does not apply to this project.

Replacement Building Height:

The height of the new structure at the Queen Street West frontage would be 12.8 metres, or three stories, in compliance with Queen Street West HCD Guidelines. The street wall height maximum set out in the guidelines intends to maintain the low scale historic street wall condition that exists along much of Queen Street West.

The additional two stories, comprising the fourth and fifth floors, are stepped back and contained within the 45 degree angular plane as provided in the HCD guidelines. However, the overall proposed height is contrary to both the Zoning By-law provisions and the HCD Plan which permits structures only to an absolute 16 metre height maximum.

With regard to the 16 metre height maximum, staff does not have discretion to allow this exception to the HCD guidelines and is concerned that allowing this height exception would establish a negative precedent for future development in the QSWHCD.

Replacement Building Design:

The proposed replacement building is well designed by most architectural and urban design principles and does comply with many provisions of the Queen Street West HCD Guidelines. However, as the relatively large site is a prominent one, the specific design modifications requested by staff are paramount to ensure that the development is both appropriate to and compatible with the massing, rhythm of solids and voids, significant design features, and materials that prevail along Queen Street West.

As discussed, the overall project height and scale does not comply with applicable controls. The proposed façade massing along both street frontages has been articulated into vertical elements with bays separated by brick clad piers. This design element maintains the built form of the district by respecting the narrow rhythm of lots and façades.

At the design detail level, the new building would not respond to the traditional built pattern that exists in the district. The project employs multi-level window with recessed steel spandrel wall systems (contained within the individual bays) which is not suitably compatible with the rhythm of solid to void pattern (smaller, vertical proportioned windows “punched” into walls) or visual transition between floors (i.e. masonry spandrels, architectural projections, etc) that characterizes the district.

Section 5 of the Queen Street West HCD Plan sets out the guidelines for new buildings. It is staff’s opinion that the proposed replacement building, complies with the following specific guidelines for new buildings contained within Section 5 of the QSWHCD Plan:

- New buildings must maintain and enhance the continuity of the street edge by building out to the front property line
- New buildings must build the full extent of the property width fronting Queen Street West
- Recessed entries in new buildings are strongly encouraged
- New buildings must be sympathetic to heritage character of the built form by respecting the narrow rhythm of façades
- The bays of storefronts should ideally be 4.5 metres wide and must be no more than 7 metres wide

HPS staff believes that the current project scheme does not comply with the following specific guidelines for new buildings contained within Section 5 of the QSWHCD Plan

- New buildings must be designed to be sympathetic to the district heritage attributes, through massing, rhythm of solids and voids, significant design features, and high quality materials

- New and renovated buildings must enhance the character of the street through the use of high quality materials such as brick, stone and slate (not steel). Detailing should add visual interest and texture.
- Up to 80% glazing is appropriate at-grade
- The horizontal rhythm and visual transitions between floors must be articulated in façade designs.
- New and renovated buildings must be characterized by one storey commercial façades. Storefronts that have a 2-level or greater presence on the street should be avoided.

Refinement of Façade Design: Fenestration, Materials and Detailing

So that the design of the façade meets QSWHCD guidelines providing for high quality materials and consistency with heritage attributes of the adjacent contributory buildings, HPS recommends that the fifth storey, or that portion of the occupied floor area that is above 16 metres, be eliminated. In addition, HPS staff recommends that the applicant continue to refine the façade design with particular attention to fenestration, cladding material and details. The applicant shall be required to submit drawings securing these materials and details to the satisfaction the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

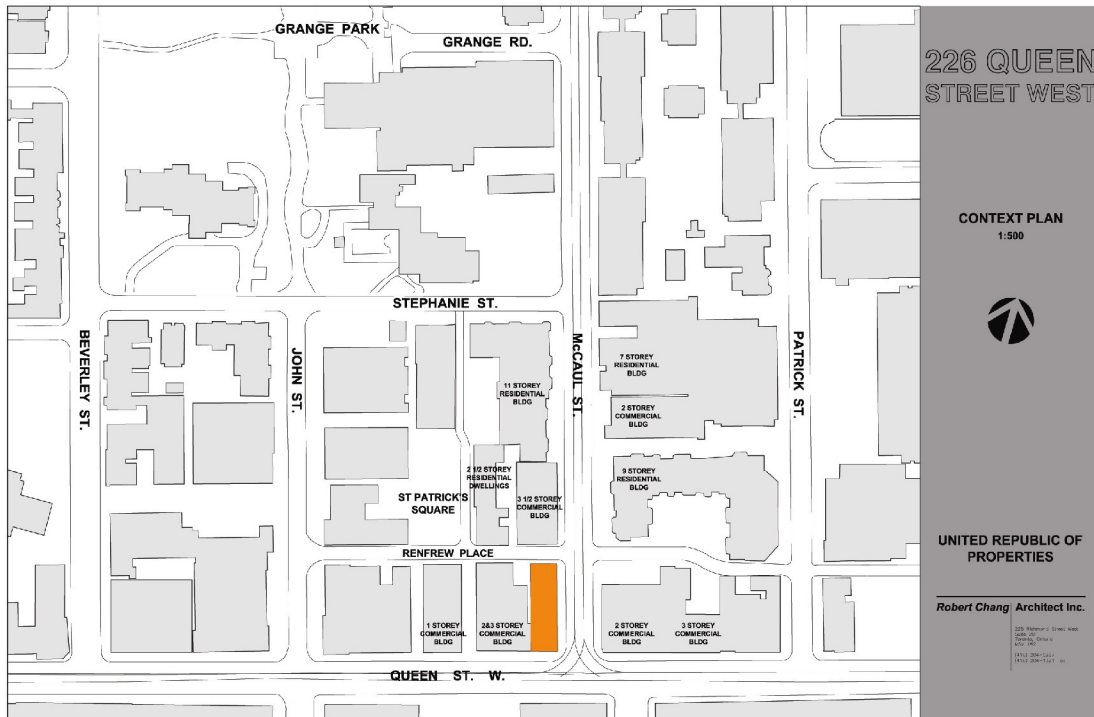
Kerri Voumvakis
Acting Director, Policy and Research
City Planning Division

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
Attachment No. 2 – Photos of Existing Structure
Attachment No. 3 – Proposed Rendering of the Project
Attachment No. 4 – Proposed Queen Street West Elevation
Attachment No. 5 – Proposed McCaul Street Elevation
Attachment No. 6A and B – Floor Plans
Attachment No. 7 – Wall Sections

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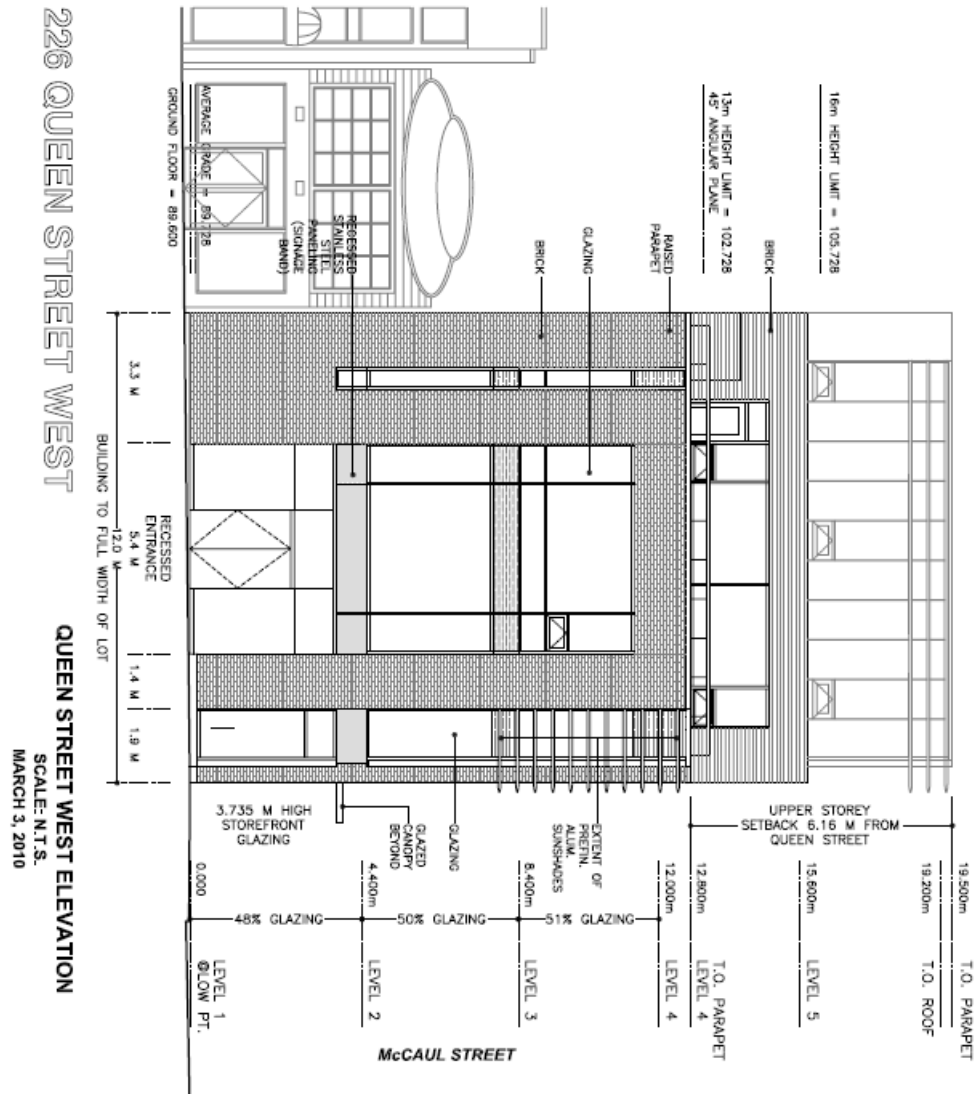


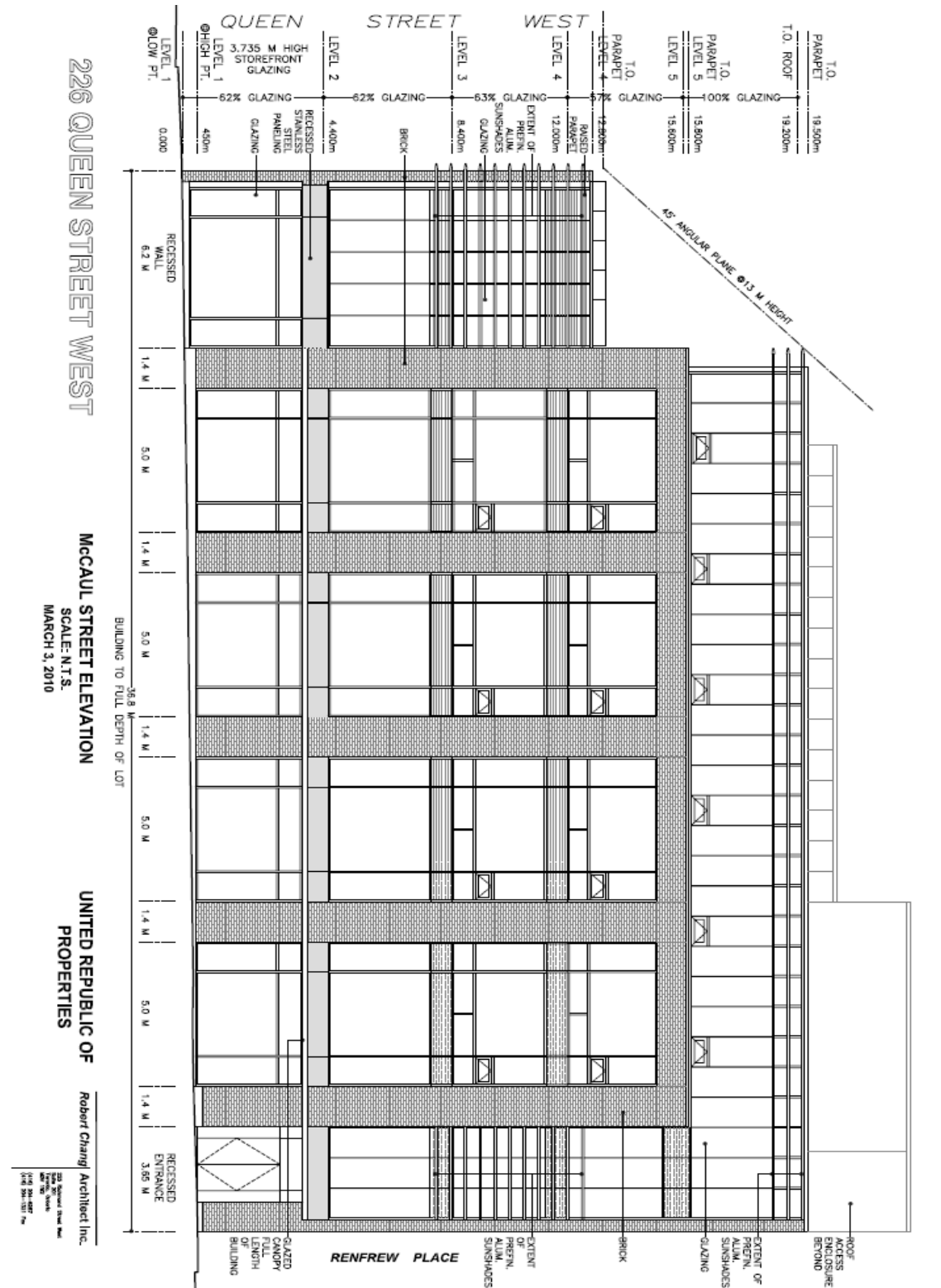
EXISTING PHOTOGRAPHS: 226 QUEEN STREET WEST
ATTACHMENT NO. 2





PROPOSED QUEEN STREET WEST ELEVATION
ATTACHMENT NO. 4

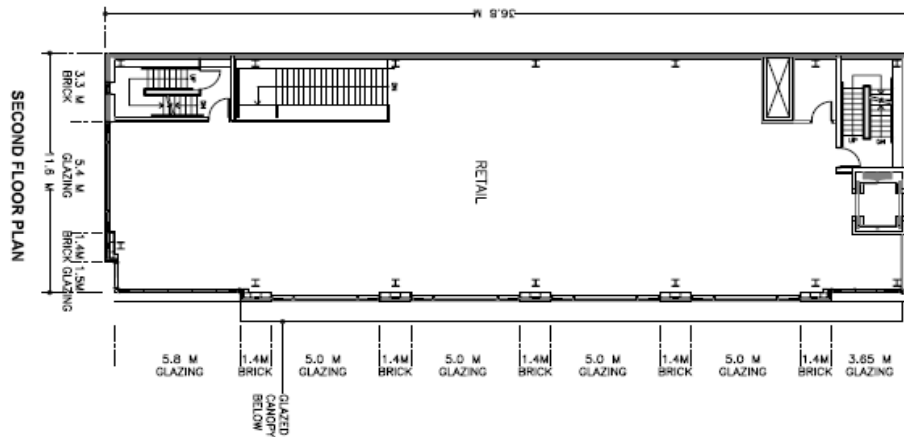
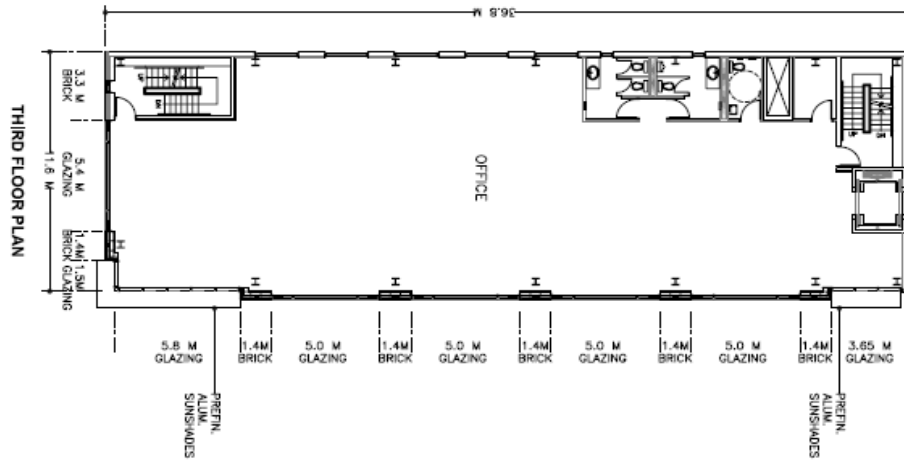




PROPOSED 1-3 FLOOR PLANS

ATTACHMENT NO. 6A

226 QUEEN STREET WEST



FLOOR PLANS
SCALE: N.T.S.
MARCH 3, 2010

UNITED REPUBLIC OF
PROPERTIES

Robert Chang Architect Inc.

QUEEN STREET WEST

