



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Demolition of a Designated Heritage Property Within the Union Station Heritage Conservation District and Construction of a Replacement Structure – 20 York Street / 151 Front Street West

Date:	January 28, 2013
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster B\PLN\HPS\TEYCC\February 26 2013\teHPS06

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the proposed demolition of the SkyWalk and construction of a replacement structure to facilitate the associated new development proposal within the Union Station Heritage Conservation District (USHCD). The current approval is a revision to the previously approved development to accommodate the new Pearson Air Rail Link within the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the proposed demolition of the heritage property at 20 York Street and construction of a replacement structure under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Prior to revised final site plan approval, the applicant shall provide a revised Conservation Plan that includes revisions to the conservation strategy substantially in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement, dated December 12, 2012 prepared by Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects;

- b. prior to the release of any heritage permit related to the demolition of the SkyWalk, the applicant shall provide as-built drawings and photographs to fully document the original SkyWalk construction to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services.

Financial Impact

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

DECISION HISTORY

The property at 20 York Street is part of the Union Station Heritage Conservation District designated by City Council under By-law 634-2006 on July 27, 2006.

http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/hcd_union_station.htm

The current application is a revision to the previously approved development to accommodate the new Pearson Air Rail Link, adopted by Council on November 19, 20, 2007.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-11-19-cc14-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Policy Framework

Official Plan

Section 3.1.5 of the City of Toronto Official Plan directs that significant heritage resources will be conserved by listing properties of architectural and/or historic interest on the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties; designating properties; entering into conservation agreements with owners of heritage properties; and designating areas with a concentration of heritage resources as heritage conservation districts. The Plan directs the adoption of guidelines to maintain and improve the character of such districts.

Ontario Heritage Act

Under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, an owner must obtain a permit from the municipality to demolish or erect a property within a Heritage Conservation District. If Council refuses the application the owner may appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Union Station Heritage Conservation District Plan (USHCD Plan)

The USHCD study was a component of the broader Union Station District Urban Design Study, which was initiated by the City Planning Division as a part of the Union Station Master Plan.

The USHCD Plan was adopted by City Council July 27, 2006 as By-Law 634-2006 and includes an examination of the heritage character of the area and district guidelines. It is used by the City and property owners as a tool to strengthen and protect the significant heritage character of the Union Station Precinct.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

On March 3, 4 and 5, 2008, Council adopted Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Standards and Guidelines)* as the document guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City.

Proposal

The proposal by Sweeney Sterling Finlayson & Co. Architects Inc. replaces the existing semi-circular structure with a higher, more voluminous space that features a butt glass curtain wall set off with struts from vertical steel columns, making it open and highly transparent to Station Street on the north. This wall system is echoed to the south, where clerestory windows will bring additional south light in below its roof and above the roof of the new Airport Rail Link (ARL). A Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) was submitted by Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architect, dated December 12, 2012 to accompany the revised Site Plan application.

COMMENTS

The SkyWalk opened in 1989 and connects Union Station to the Convention Centre, The John Street Roundhouse and the Rogers Centre (SkyDome). Designed in the Post-modern style, the SkyWalk is a large glazed passage way/arcade enclosed by a semi-circular roof that is reminiscent of early century European pedestrian areas. The strength of the 1989 design was in creating a bright open connection within a structure that was aesthetically interesting while establishing a sense of enclosure. The original SkyWalk design creates an introverted architectural spatial experience and connection between Union Station and the original SkyDome. The exterior is modest and relatively featureless. The SkyWalk is identified as a contributing building within Appendix 1 of the USHCD Plan (Attachments No. 3 and 4).

Although the Heritage Impact Statement and project description suggest that the SkyWalk embodies merely a route, it is in fact a designated structure of material substance, the alteration/demolition of which requires Council approval. Revisions to the HIS have been requested to reflect this status.

Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) is responsible for reviewing all proposed alterations to listed and designated properties to assess the impact on the heritage character of the property. Council approval for this revised application is required as the impact of the alteration is beyond delegated staff authority to approve. The application also requires revised Site Plan Approval

The September 24, 2007 staff report, "151 Front Street, 20 York Street, 7 Station Street in the Union Station Heritage Conservation District, Requesting Approval of Alterations" recommended and received approval for a development proposal that would demolish the western portion of the SkyWalk and leave the eastern portion intact.

While the tubular space frame of the original SkyWalk truss construction defined a more dramatic interior space, it limits the volume needed to accommodate the new ARL. The dense SkyWalk structure would reduce visibility south (from Station Street) to the proposed ARL Station (which cantilevers into the space) and therefore, in order to accommodate the proposed approved development at 151 Front Street West, 7 Station Street and 20 York Street and allow for the additional benefits provided by the new Air Rail Link, the re-use of the original SkyWalk structure has been reconsidered to allow for a more open contemporary design.

Although the ideal conservation approach would have explored options to incorporate elements of the existing designated structure in order to make a more subordinate connection to 20 York Street, construction scheduling and programmatic requirements have eliminated the possibility of further design explorations.

The current proposal replaces the Skywalk with an ARL connection that has a strong architectural expression within a re-interpreted circulation system. Prior to its demolition it is recommended that the SkyWalk be fully documented.

CONCLUSION

While the SkyWalk has been an identifiable feature within this part of the USHCD since its construction in 1989, the structure is required to change due to the expanded programmatic requirements of the ARL. Staff therefore recommends that City Council approve the proposed demolition of the eastern portion of the designated heritage property at 20 York Street (SkyWalk) and approve the proposed replacement structure, recognizing that as part of the larger previously approved development the work will ultimately remove the original SkyWalk construction in its entirety.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

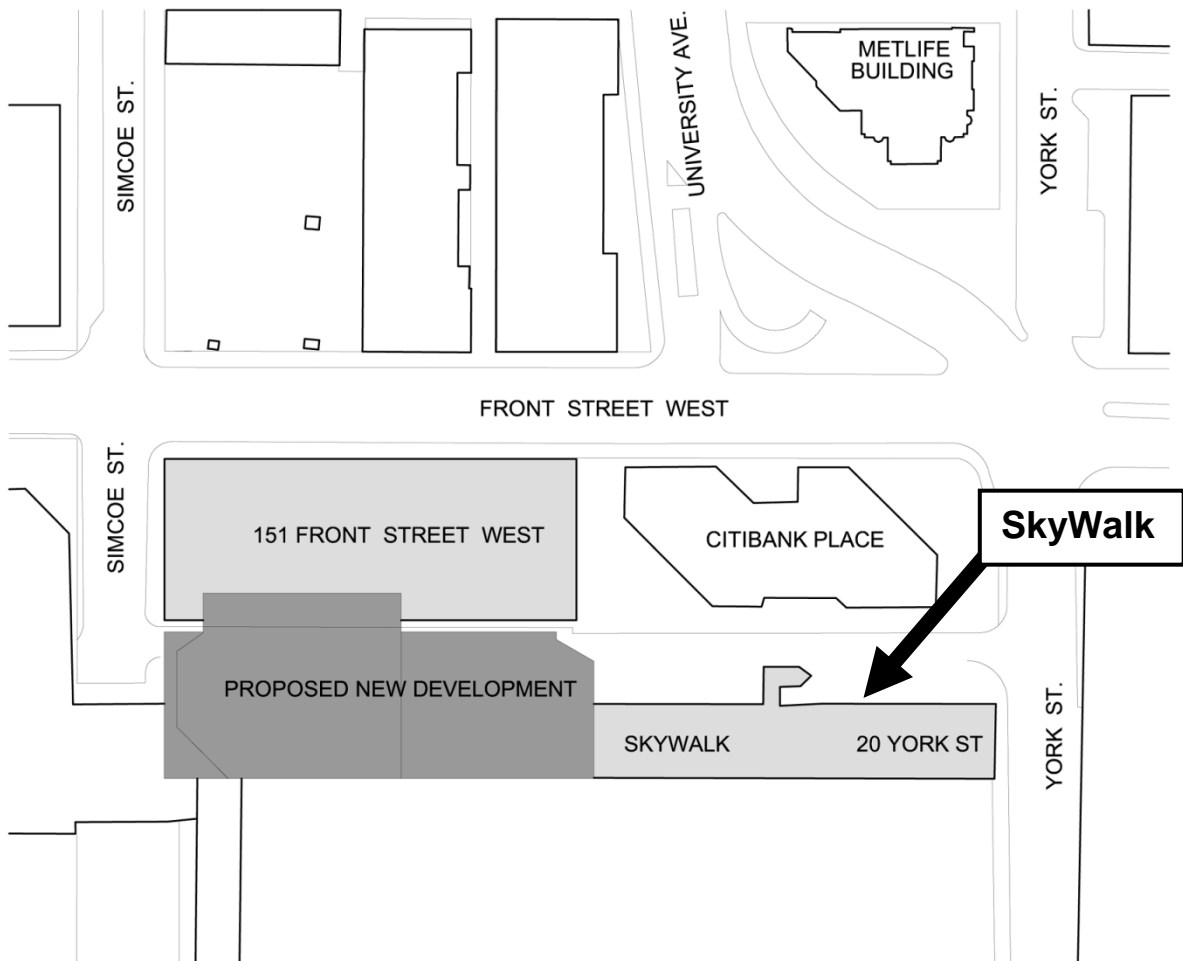
Robert Freedman
Director Urban Design
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

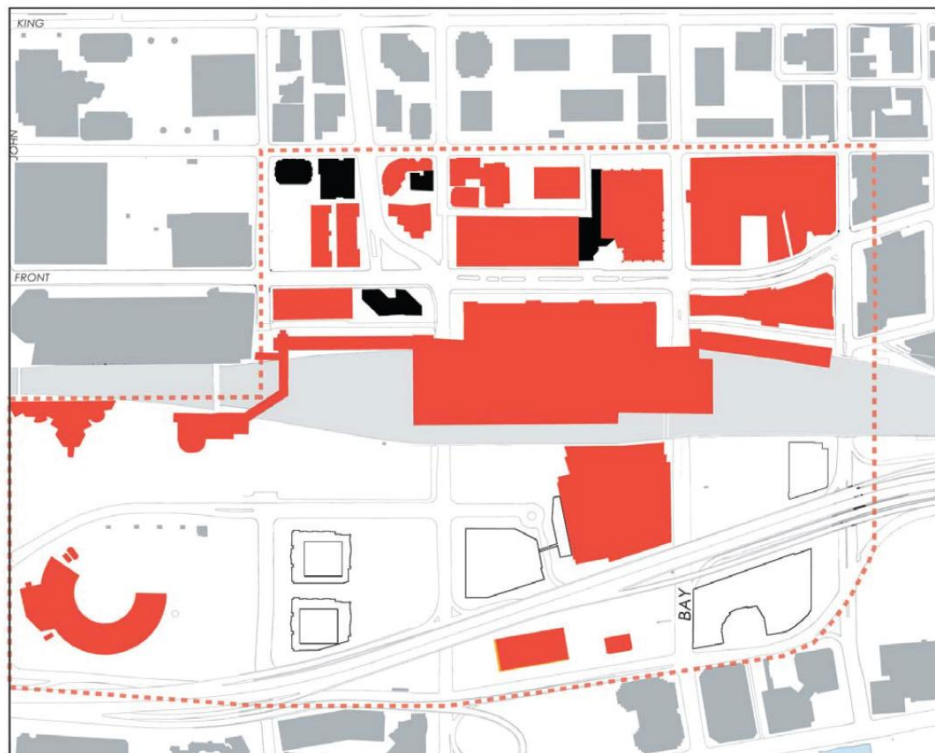
- Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
- Attachment No. 2 – USHCD Boundaries
- Attachment No. 3 – SkyWalk Designation Description
- Attachment No. 4 – SkyWalk Designation Description
- Attachment No. 5 – Context Photos
- Attachment No. 6 – Context Photos
- Attachment No. 7 – Proposal Phasing
- Attachment No. 8 – Proposal Phasing
- Attachment No. 9 – Phase 1 (ARL) Proposal Computer Rendering
- Attachment No. 10 – Full Development Proposal Computer Renderings

LOCATION MAP: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST

This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown.



USHCD BOUNDARIES: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST



Contributing Buildings

Properties which contribute to the character of the Precinct and/or are historically, architecturally or culturally significant

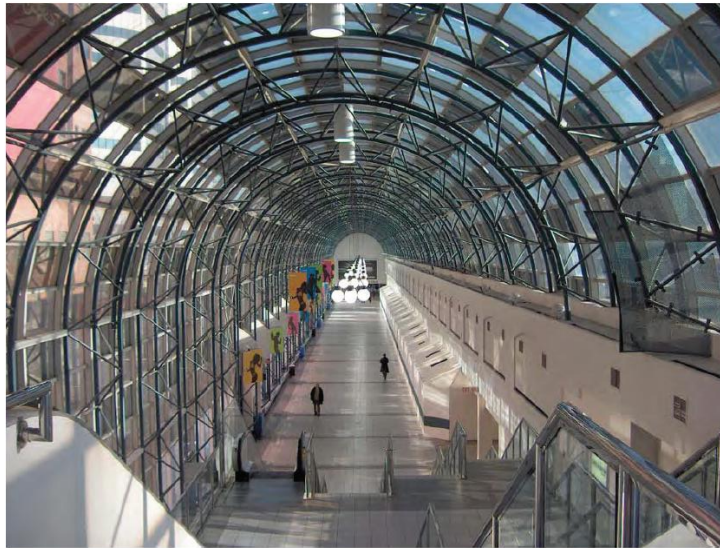
Non-Contributing Buildings

Properties which do not contribute to the character of the Precinct and/or are not historically, architecturally or culturally significant

Under Construction

Contributing Buildings

DESIGNATION DESCRIPTION: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST



Skywalk

Era: Post-War
Style: Post-Modern
Visible from Station forecourt: No
Connected to PATH system: Yes
Contributing: Yes

The completion of the Skydome (now Rogers Centre) marked a substantial milestone in the deindustrialization of Toronto's obsolete industrial lands south of Front Street. It was the first major investment within the railway lands since the CN Tower.

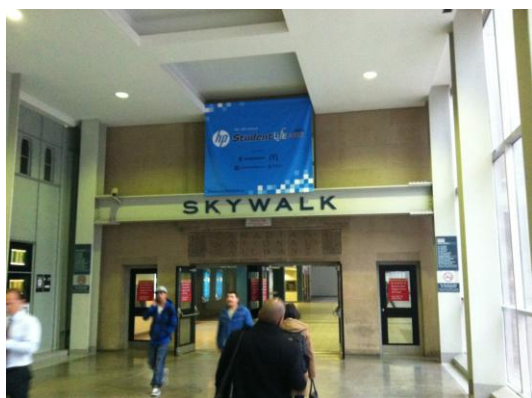
Opening in 1989, the Skywalk, designed by the IBI Group, was created as a means of facilitating and promoting pedestrian access to and from the stadium; reducing parking requirement and promoting use of public transit²². Skywalk connects the lands adjacent to the stadium with Union Station, the Metro Convention Centre and Toronto's PATH system. Easy and climate controlled access is facilitated from the City's core to the lands south of the railway.

22 B-A Consulting Group. SkyDome: Transportation Strategy and Operations Plan, 1988.

DESIGNATION DESCRIPTION: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST

The Skywalk was completed in 1989 to coincide with the completion of the Rogers Centre. Designed in the arcade style, the Skywalk consists of a large glazed passageway enclosed by a semi-circular arched roof reminiscent of early century European pedestrian areas. The Skywalk begins at the western most side of Union Station, passes through the second and third stories of the Canadian National Express building and crosses the Toronto rail viaduct at Simcoe Street. South of the railway the Skywalk traverses through the south end of the Metro Convention Centre and terminates in the plaza adjacent to the CN Tower, Roundhouse and Rogers Centre. The skywalk is a piece of urban infrastructure of growing importance; connecting the city to the increasingly developed rail lands. Furthermore, the skywalk offers unique views of Toronto's existing rail activity and provides a physical connection between to the district's two national historic sites: the Roundhouse and Union Station.

CONTEXT PHOTOS: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST



Entrance to SkyWalk from Union Station

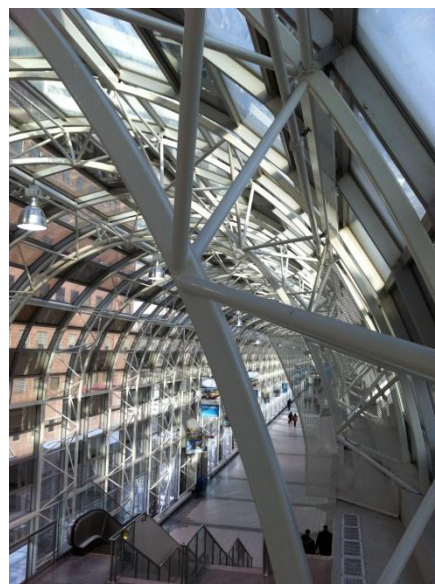
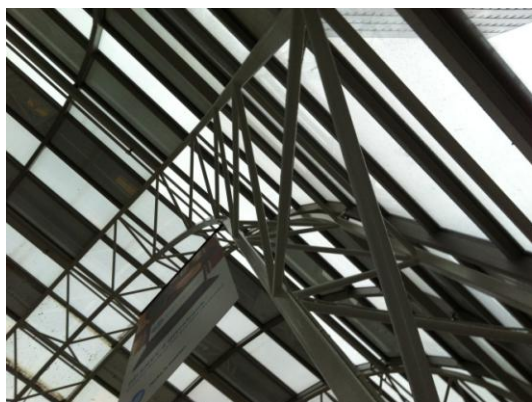


SkyWalk Connection to 20 York Street



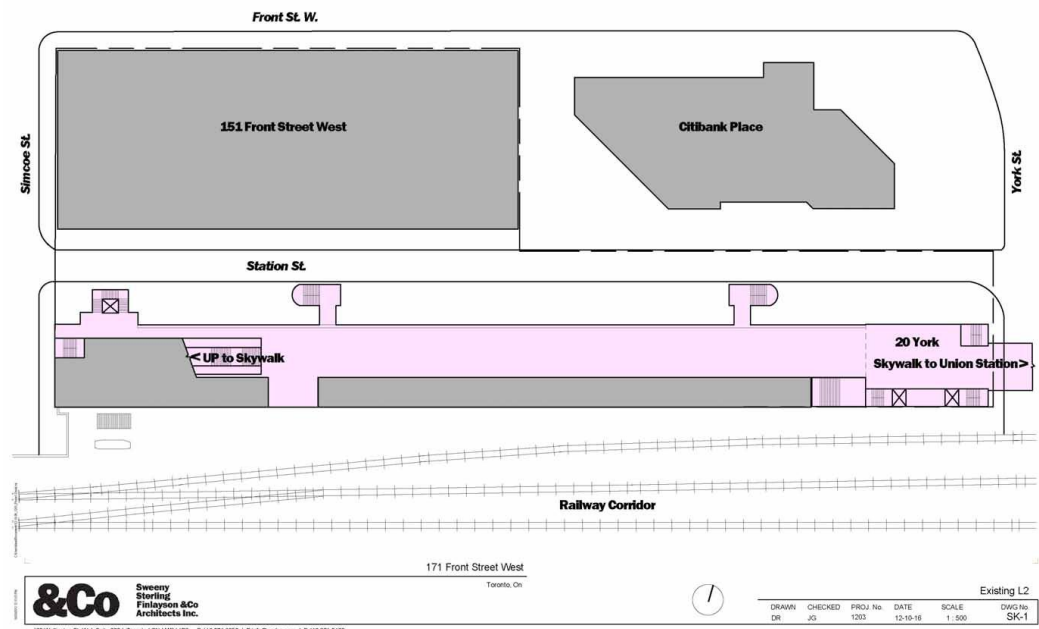
Context Looking East along Station Street from Simcoe Street

CONTEXT PHOTOS: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST

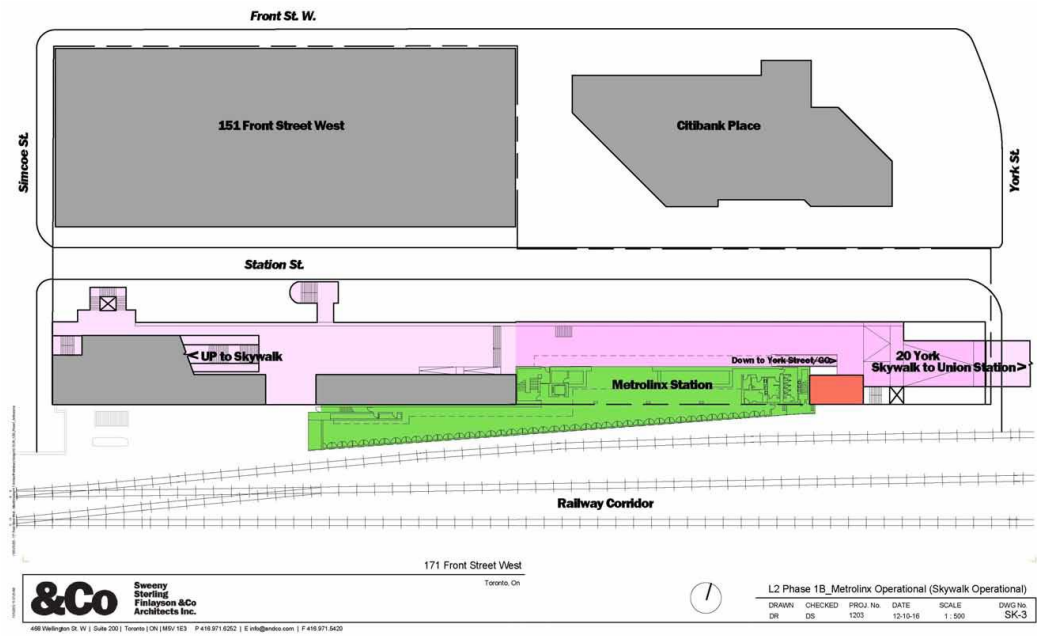


SkyWalk Interior

PROPOSAL PHASING: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST

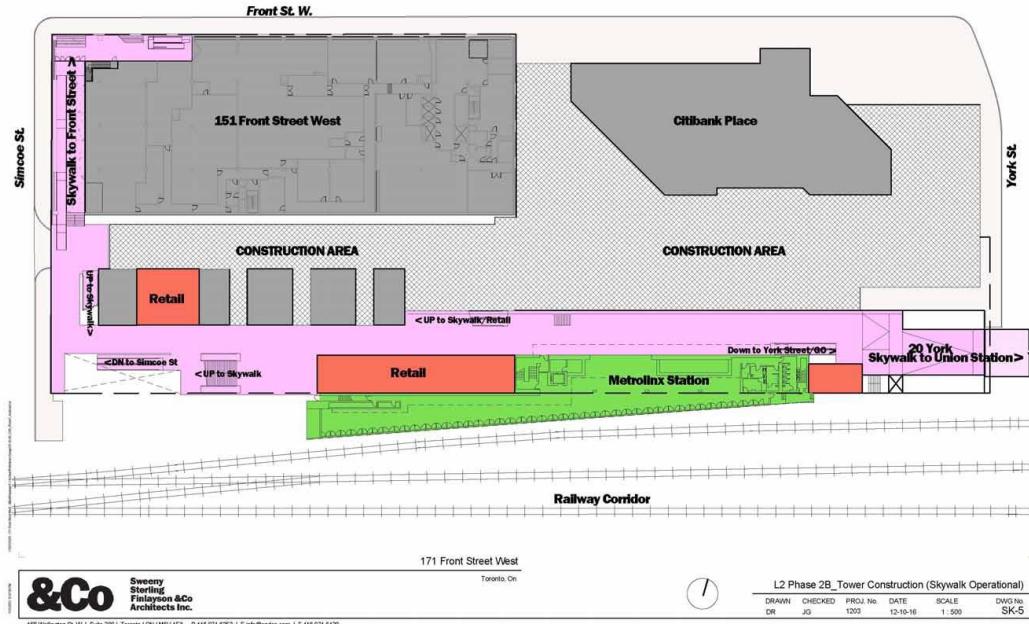


Existing Site Plan



ARL Site Plan

PROPOSAL PHASING: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST

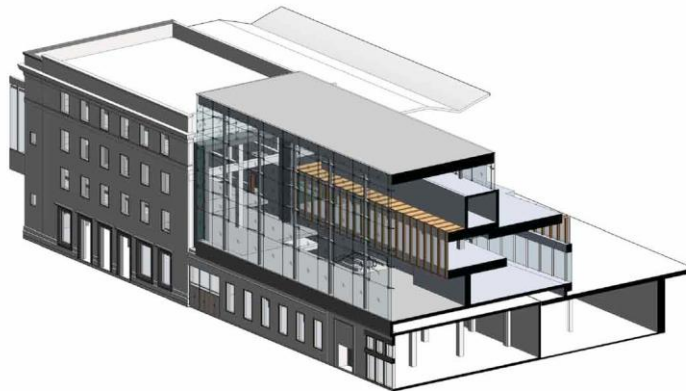


Site Plan Tower Construction

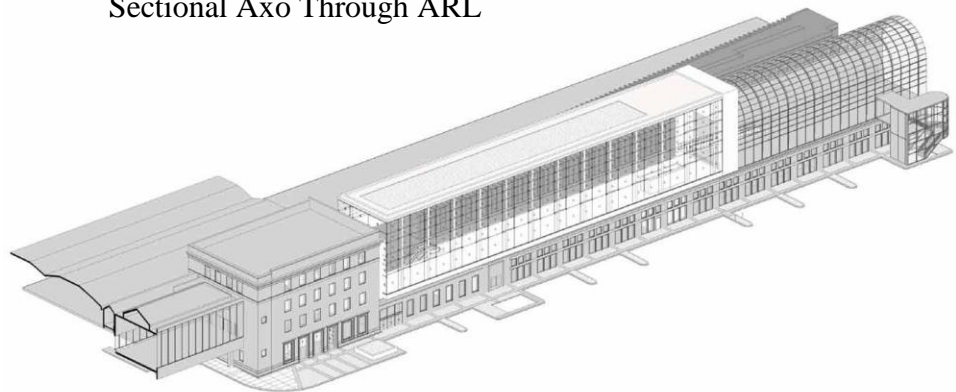
FULL PROPOSAL: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST



Computer Rendering of ARL Proposal



Sectional Axo Through ARL

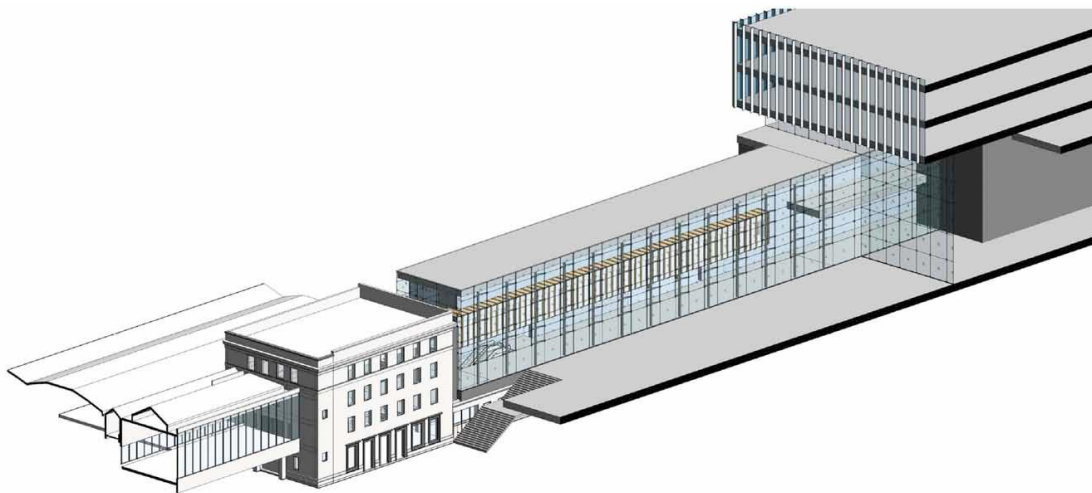


Computer Rendering of ARL Proposal

FULL PROPOSAL: 20 YORK STREET / 151 FRONT STREET WEST



Computer Rendering of Full Proposal



Computer Modeling of Full Proposal