

Alterations to a Heritage Property Designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act – 405 Sherbourne Street

Date: June 1, 2021
To: Toronto Preservation Board
Planning and Housing Committee
From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards: Toronto Centre - Ward 13

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the Part V designated heritage property at 405 Sherbourne Street in connection with a proposed development of the subject property.

The proposal is for a 26-storey mixed-use building that is part of the Housing Now Initiative. The new building will replace an existing surface parking lot. There are no heritage buildings on the site, but there are several heritage buildings adjacent to the site.

The impacts of the proposed development on the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District are appropriately mitigated through the compatible design of the new construction. In addition, the proposal will serve the public interest by providing 267 new rental housing units, of which between 33 - 50 percent will be new affordable rental housing units in accordance with the Housing Now Initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council approve the alterations to the heritage property at 405 Sherbourne Street, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to allow for the construction of a 26-storey mixed use building on the lands known municipally in the year 2021 as 405 Sherbourne Street, with such alterations substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated April 19, 2021, prepared by SvN Architects + Planners and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated March 9, 2021 and on file

with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to the following additional conditions:

a. That prior to final Site Plan Approval for the proposal, for the property located at 405 Sherbourne Street the owner shall:

1. Provide final site plan drawings to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Provide a detailed landscape plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
3. Provide an Interpretation Plan for the subject property, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

b. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 405 Sherbourne Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing parking lot as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Provide building permit drawings, including a description of materials and finishes, to be prepared by the project architect and a qualified heritage consultant to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

The City's Housing Now Initiative, starting with 11 Phase One sites, was launched in 2019. On May 28, 2020, City Council adopted CC21.3 Creating New Affordable Housing Opportunities through Phase Two of the Housing Now Initiative. The report recommended Council's approval of six additional sites to the Housing Now Initiative. The six new sites in Phase Two are estimated to create between 1,455 and 1,710 new residential units including an estimated 1,600 purpose-built rentals, of which an estimated 620 will be affordable rental units. The City Council decision can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC21.3>

On June 29 and 30, 2020, City Council adopted PH 14.3 Housing Now Initiative – Annual Progress Report. The Report provided Council with the first annual update on

the Housing Now Initiative including the early successes, lessons learned and latest status of the Phase One Sites. The report recommended enhancements to the Housing Now Initiative that will improve the lives of future residents of the sites. Some of these enhancements include limiting annual rent increases on market rental homes, maximizing the involvement of non-profit organizations to increase affordability, and through the market offering process, increasing the number of accessible homes with the incorporation of universal design features to create housing that is suitable for everyone.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH14.3>

BACKGROUND

Site and Context

The property at 405 Sherbourne Street is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. The site fronts onto both Sherbourne and Bleecker Streets, and is located between Wellesley Street East and Carlton Street. The property is currently a 110 space Green P parking lot operated by the Toronto Parking Authority.

Housing Now Overview

City Council initiated Housing Now in December 2018 to accelerate the development of affordable housing and mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities on 11 City-owned properties. The Housing Now Initiative is an approach to city-building whereby City-owned lands are used to build affordable housing within mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented communities.

Across the growing portfolio of sites identified and adopted by City Council for inclusion in the Housing Now Initiative, City-owned properties will be the location for a mix of affordable rental, market rental and ownership housing options to serve Toronto residents. The new affordable rental homes will remain affordable for 99 years, providing quality housing opportunities for future generations. Housing Now will provide access to affordable rental units for households earning up to approximately \$68,000 per year (based on 2021 average market rents).

The creation of new housing on City-owned lands will provide Toronto residents with opportunities to live affordably near transit hubs and close to places of work, education and services. Investment in these well-located sites will also contribute to the broader community by delivering new amenities, revitalized public spaces and improved access to transit.

The development of new housing through Toronto's Housing Now Initiative will be guided by the following principles adopted by City Council:

- Activate sites to achieve the highest possible public benefits;
- Maximize the development of market and affordable rental housing with a mix of unit types and sizes;

- Create energy efficient homes that are affordable for a diverse range of incomes, including deeply affordable homes;
- Appropriately address and accommodate existing City and other operations and uses which increasing city-building opportunities to create complete communities;
- Prioritize the public retention of sites, including long-term land leases;
- Support participation by the non-profit and co-op housing sectors and help build capacity in the sectors; and,
- Actively engage with City Councillors and local communities in the planning and development of each site.

Phase One and Two of the Housing Now Initiative

Phase One of the Housing Now Initiative was initially estimated to create approximately 10,000 new residential units with approximately 3,700 affordable rental units. In May 2020, City Council approved the second phase of Housing Now. The six sites in Phase Two will create between 1,455 and 1,710 new residential units including an estimated 1,600 purpose-built rental units, of which an estimated 800 will be affordable rental units. Based on work done to-date to advance the first four priority sites, Phase One and Phase Two sites are now estimated to create approximately 13,290 residential units including approximately 5,060 new affordable rental units. The sites are close to transit, as well as commercial and employment areas, and create opportunities to further develop complete communities, bringing benefits to existing and future residents.

As sites advance through the re-zoning process, City Planning staff, in collaboration with the Housing Secretariat and CreateTO continue to seek opportunities to increase the potential yield of new affordable housing units at each location, in accordance with the objectives of the Official Plan, and being informed by Toronto's evolving development context. For example, through the preparation of the development concept and proposed Zoning By-law at 405 Sherbourne Street, City Planning and CreateTO have been able to exceed the initial target of 200 by 67 units while still meeting in-force policies of the Official Plan and Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. In addition to new residential units, City Planning has worked with different City Divisions and CreateTO to bring forward development concepts that include new child care facilities, expansions to public parks, community space, employment opportunities, improved public realm and new public streets. The 405 Sherbourne Street development concept includes community agency space and the enhancement of the important midblock connection being provided by the existing Green P parking lot through the creation of a generous midblock connection supporting hard and soft landscaping.

Development Proposal

A City-initiated Zoning By-law amendment for 405 Sherbourne Street was submitted on January 8, 2021 through CreateTO. The submission, including the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated March 9, 2020, can be viewed on the Application Information Centre:

<http://app.toronto.ca/AIC/index.do?folderRsn=s69SCfA9zTcilS7%2F7J1rgA%3D%3D>

405 Sherbourne Street is one of six sites approved by City Council in May 2020 for inclusion in Phase 2 of the Housing Now Initiative. The proposed 26-storey mixed-use building is anticipated to yield approximately 267 new rental housing units, of which between 33 - 50 percent of units will be offered as new affordable rental housing units in accordance with the Housing Now Initiative.

The development concept also provides a minimum of 168 square metres of community space for a not-for-profit organization and enhancements to the public realm through the creation of a landscaped mid-block connection between Sherbourne and Bleecker Streets.

The base building has been designed to be compatible with the surrounding Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District and with the adjacent heritage properties. The base building references the heights, horizontal datum lines and the rhythm of vertical elements of adjacent heritage properties on both street frontages.

The site will remain as City property and will be leased to a non-profit housing provider for a term of 99 years. The partner will be responsible for detailed design and submission of a Site Plan Control application based on technical work that has been undertaken by CreateTO and City Divisions to support the proposed development concept in addition to other obligations of the Ground Lease related to the provision of new affordable housing.

Heritage Planning Framework

Provincial Policy Statement and Planning Act

The *Planning Act* and the associated Provincial Policy Statement guide development in the Province. The Act states that municipalities must have regard for matters of provincial interest. Section 2(d) specifically refers to "the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest."

The Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS) issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act* provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. Key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and protecting public health and safety. The *Planning Act* requires that City Council's decisions affecting land use planning matters "be consistent with" the Provincial Policy Statement.

Policy 2.6.1 of the PPS directs that "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved." Properties included on the City's Heritage Register are considered to be significant in this context. "Conserved" is defined in the PPS as "the identification, protection, use and/or management of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the *Ontario Heritage Act*."

Policy 2.6.3 of the PPS directs that "planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property except where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been

demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved."

Growth Plan

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) (the "Growth Plan (2020)") came into effect on May 16, 2019 and was amended through an Order in Council that came into effect on August 28, 2020. This plan replaces the previous Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Growth Plan (2020) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City forms an integral part.

The Growth Plan (2020) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2020) take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

City of Toronto Official Plan

This City-initiated Zoning By-law amendment has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan. The Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. Relevant policies include the following.

3.1.5.4 Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and as adopted by Council.

3.1.5.5 Proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City. Where a Heritage Impact Assessment is required in Schedule 3 of the Official Plan, it will describe and assess the potential impacts and mitigation strategies for the proposed alteration, development or public work.

3.1.5.26 New construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and to mitigate visual and physical impact on it.

Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Standards and Guidelines) is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto.

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

COMMENTS

Heritage Planning staff has reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted in support of the proposal prepared by ERA Architects Inc. for conformity with the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan and the City's Official Plan heritage policies.

The proposed 26-storey mixed-use building with a four-storey base is part of the Housing Now Initiative and will provide affordable rental housing. The new development will replace a surface parking lot; there are no existing buildings on the site.

At this stage in the approvals process, the City has initiated the re-zoning of the site to secure approval for the proposed scale, form and massing of the building. Following approval of the proposal to amend the Zoning By-law, a development partner will be selected through a competitive market offering process to take over the project and work with City staff and the community to finalize the details of the design through the Site Plan Control process.

Scale, Form and Massing

The proposed development is subject to the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan and in particular the guidelines for new building construction (6.5). These guidelines provide direction that has shaped the scale, form and massing of the proposed building. The Plan provides guidance on height, width, proportion, relationship to the street, and roofs.

- **6.5.2 New building height** - The height guidelines state that the "Building height of new structures should maintain the building height of adjacent properties." The tower portion of the proposal exceeds the height of adjacent properties; however, the four-storey base building maintains the height of adjacent properties. The base building will form the streetwall as the tower has significant stepbacks above the base. The proposed zoning by-law for the site includes tower stepbacks of 7.5 metres at the Sherbourne Street elevation and 13.4 metres at the Bleecker Street elevation. As Bleecker Street is narrower than Sherbourne Street and has a more fine-grained heritage character, the larger east stepback helps to reinforce the heritage character of Bleecker Street.
- **6.5.3 Width** - New infill development within the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District "should maintain the building width and side yard spaces of adjacent properties and the immediate streetscape" (6.5.3). The width of the proposed building is much larger than that of the adjacent heritage buildings. To mitigate this impact, the base building has been designed to reference the narrow vertical rhythm of adjacent buildings through vertical articulation and the reinterpretation of historic bays along the Bleecker Street elevation. The base building's Bleecker Street frontage will read as townhouses.
- **6.5.4 Proportion** - This guideline is about conserving the width relative to the height of adjacent buildings. For the reasons discussed, the proposal respects the width

and height of adjacent properties, both along Sherbourne and Bleecker Streets. The proposal will have an impact on the historic proportions of the area but this impact is appropriately mitigated through the lower height and compatible design of the base building.

- **6.5.5 Relationship to the street** - The Heritage Conservation District Plan directs, "New residential infill should maintain the existing setbacks of adjacent properties." Consistent with this guideline, the proposal involves a setback along Sherbourne Street as well as along Bleecker Street. The Sherbourne Street setback will have street trees and low plantings in front of the building. The Bleecker Street setback will have ornamental landscaping that complements the front yards and gardens to the north of the site.
- **6.5.6 Roofs on new buildings** - The proposed tower and base building have flat roofs with a mechanical penthouse on top of the tower. The proposed flat roofs are appropriate for the tower typology but diverge from the Heritage Conservation Plan guidelines, which were intended for house form buildings. The Plan says, "Flat or shallow pitch roofs are to be avoided in new construction." In the context of the overall proposal, the proposed roof forms are acceptable.

Detailed Design

Should City Council approve the recommended zoning by-law amendment to allow the proposal, the building envelope will be defined through the detailed design to be determined at the Site Plan Control stage. Heritage Planning staff will be engaged in the Site Plan Control process to ensure that the final building design conserves the cultural heritage value of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District and is consistent with the policy framework, all substantially in accordance with the conditions contained within this report. To confirm this direction, the Zoning By-law amendment submission package includes a Design Brief that provides requirements for detailed design. Furthermore, the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Committee and other stakeholders have provided comments on the project and will have the opportunity to provide additional feedback at the Site Plan Control stage.

In addition, Heritage Planning staff will review the final design for consistency with the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan's guidelines for windows and entrances and exterior cladding.

- **6.5.7 Windows and entrances on new buildings** - The Heritage Conservation District Plan encourages new development to have a solid-to-void ratio that complements adjacent heritage properties with vertically oriented, rectangular windows and prominent recessed entrances. Large amounts of glazing are discouraged. The base building will be designed to conform to these guidelines.

- **6.5.8 Exterior cladding: materials and colours** - The exterior cladding of the building will be compatible with the heritage character of the surrounding area. Brick, stucco and wood cladding are identified as appropriate cladding types in the Heritage Conservation District Plan. Brick is the predominant historic cladding material in the immediate vicinity of the site and is the preferred material for the base building.

Design Brief

The re-zoning submission includes reference concepts that were prepared to test the zoning envelope and confirm the ability of the site to accommodate key design elements, such as locations for public realm expansions or community facilities. The submission package for Housing Now proposals also includes the preparation of a Design Brief. The Design Brief is a document prepared for the re-zoning submission, providing enhanced direction on built form, landscape treatments, materiality, and other factors related to the future application for Site Plan Control.

Section 2 of the Design Brief is dedicated to heritage considerations. Key policies from the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan are excerpted and the HIA is referenced. The Design Brief guidelines require the base building design to complement the horizontal datum lines and recessed entrances of adjacent heritage properties along Sherbourne and Bleecker Streets. Along Bleecker Street, the new townhouses in the base building should reference the rhythm of double front doors and bay windows of the historic row houses to the north of the site.

Heritage Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan Approval for the proposed development, the applicant will be required to submit a Heritage Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The interpretation strategy will focus on the historic evolution of the site as described in the HIA.

Landscape Plan

Staff is recommending that the applicant be required to provide a final Landscape Plan that enhances the character of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning as a condition of Site Plan approval. The Landscape Plan submitted with the City-initiated Zoning By-law amendment shows that there will be a landscaped pedestrian mid-block connection to the north of the new building. Along Sherbourne Street, there will be new street trees and along Bleecker Street, the front yards will have ornamental plantings.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning staff has reviewed the proposed development for the heritage property at 405 Sherbourne Street and is satisfied the proposal meets the intent of the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), the Growth Plan (2020) and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies. Overall, staff support the development proposal and conclude that it meets the intent of Policy 3.1.5.26 of the Official Plan. The proposed alterations are appropriate within the context of the proposal and will create new affordable rental housing, while conserving the cultural heritage value of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

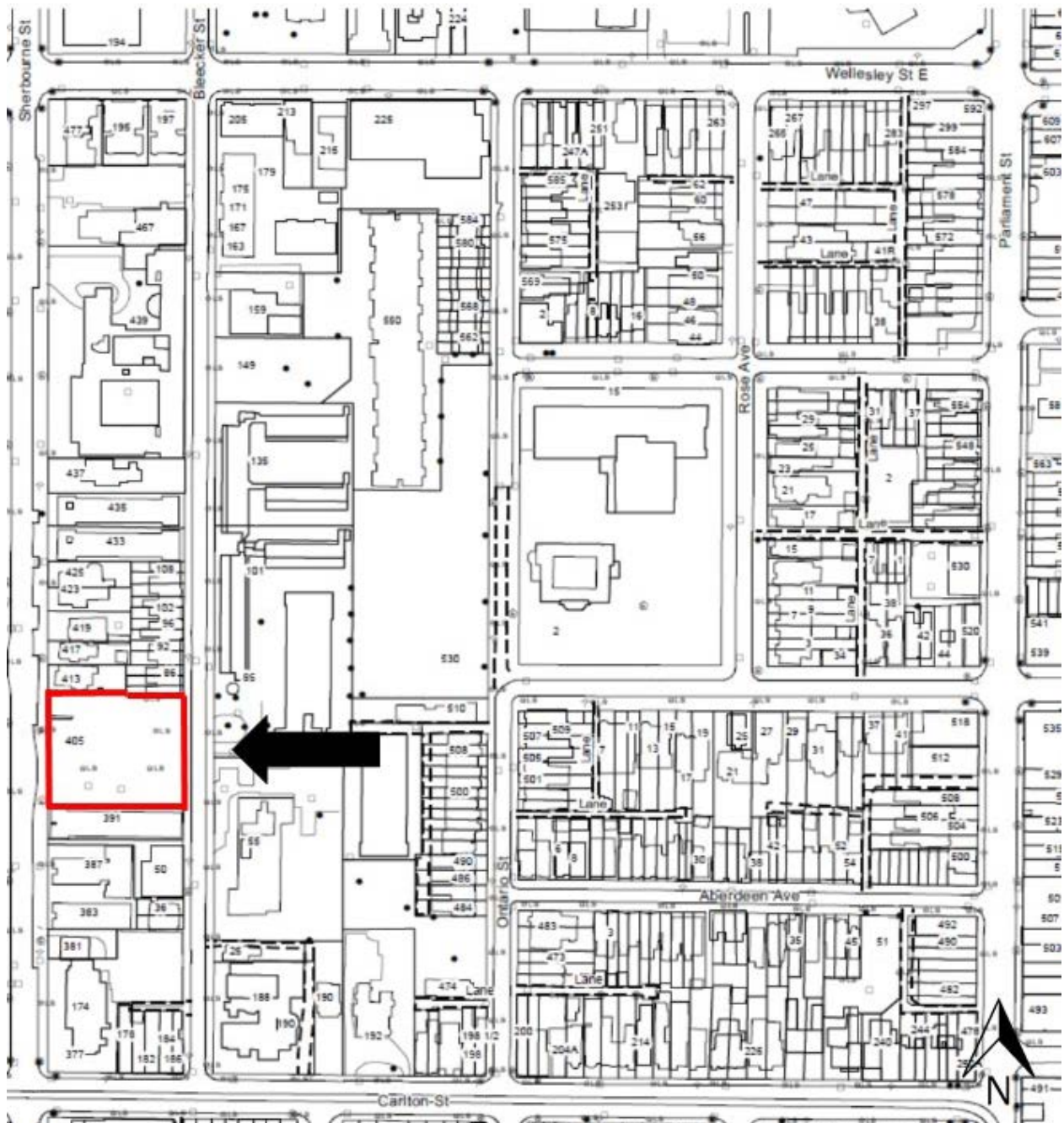
Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 2 - Selected Drawings

LOCATION MAP
405 SHRBOURNE STREET

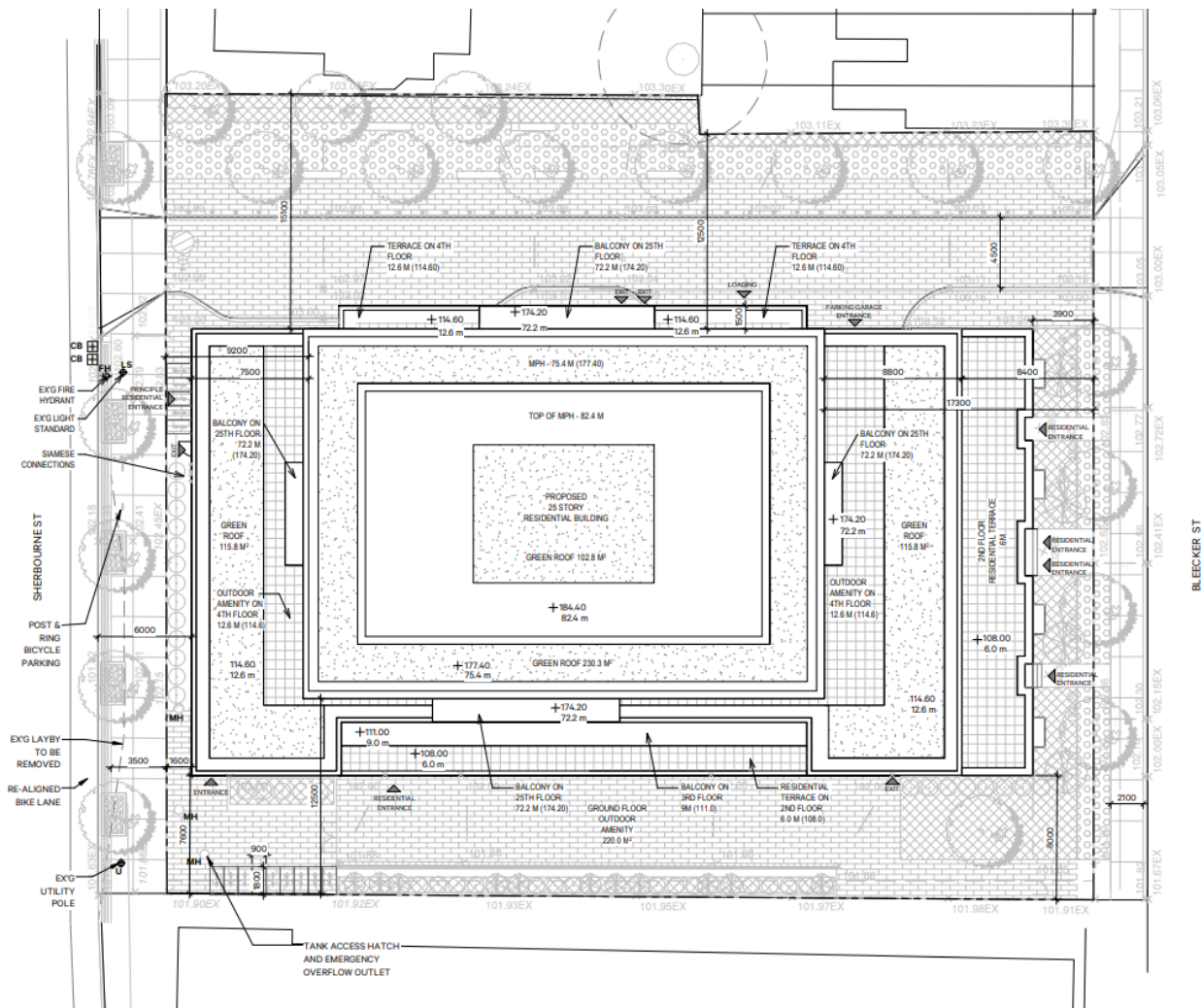
ATTACHMENT 1



Location Map, showing the property at 405 Sherbourne Street, indicated by the arrow. The property boundaries are approximate. (Property Data Map, City of Toronto)

SELECTED DRAWINGS
405 SHERBOURNE STREET

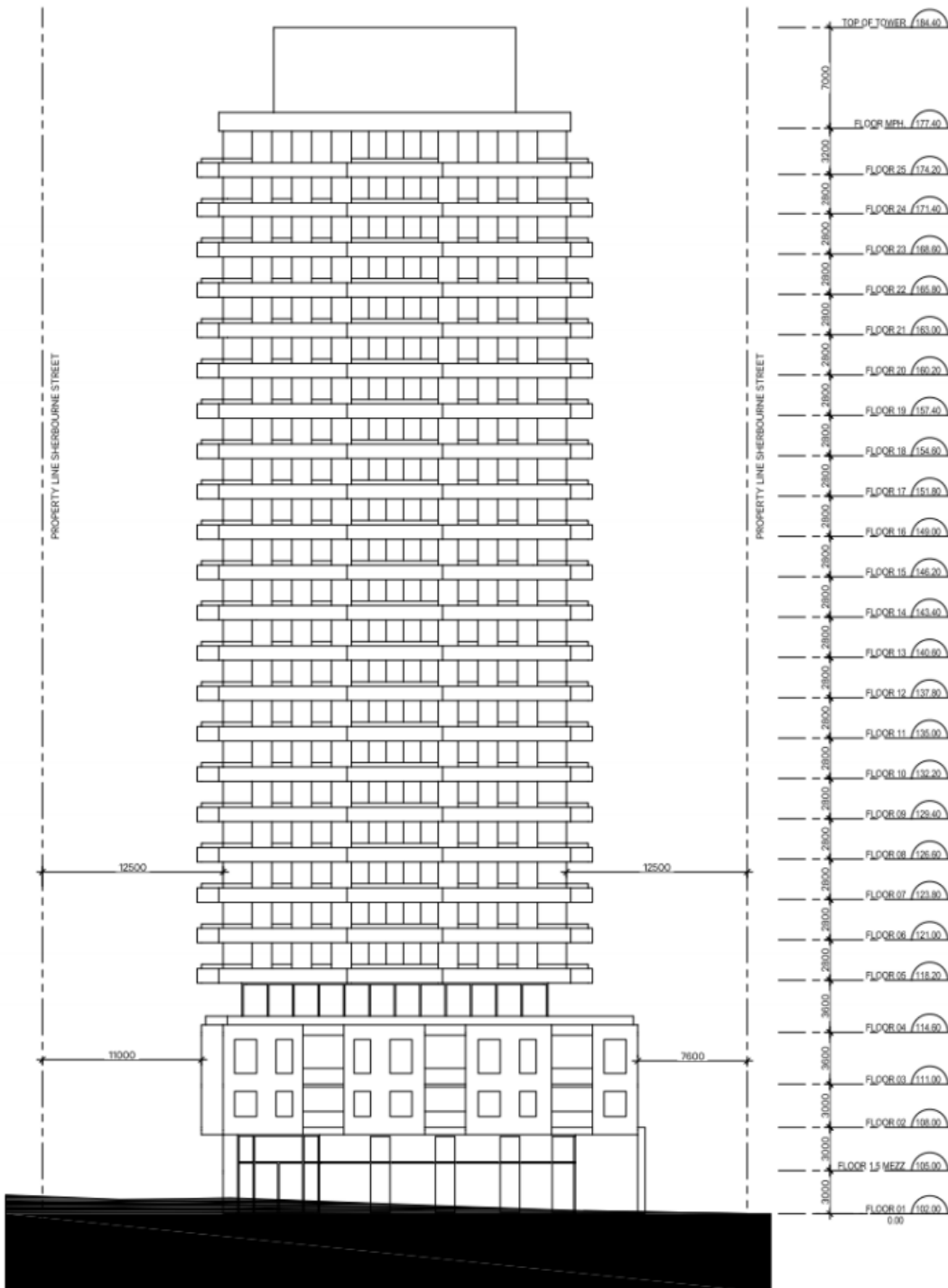
ATTACHMENT 2



Site plan drawing included for illustration purposes. For the complete drawing set, please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (SvN Architects + Planners, 2021)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

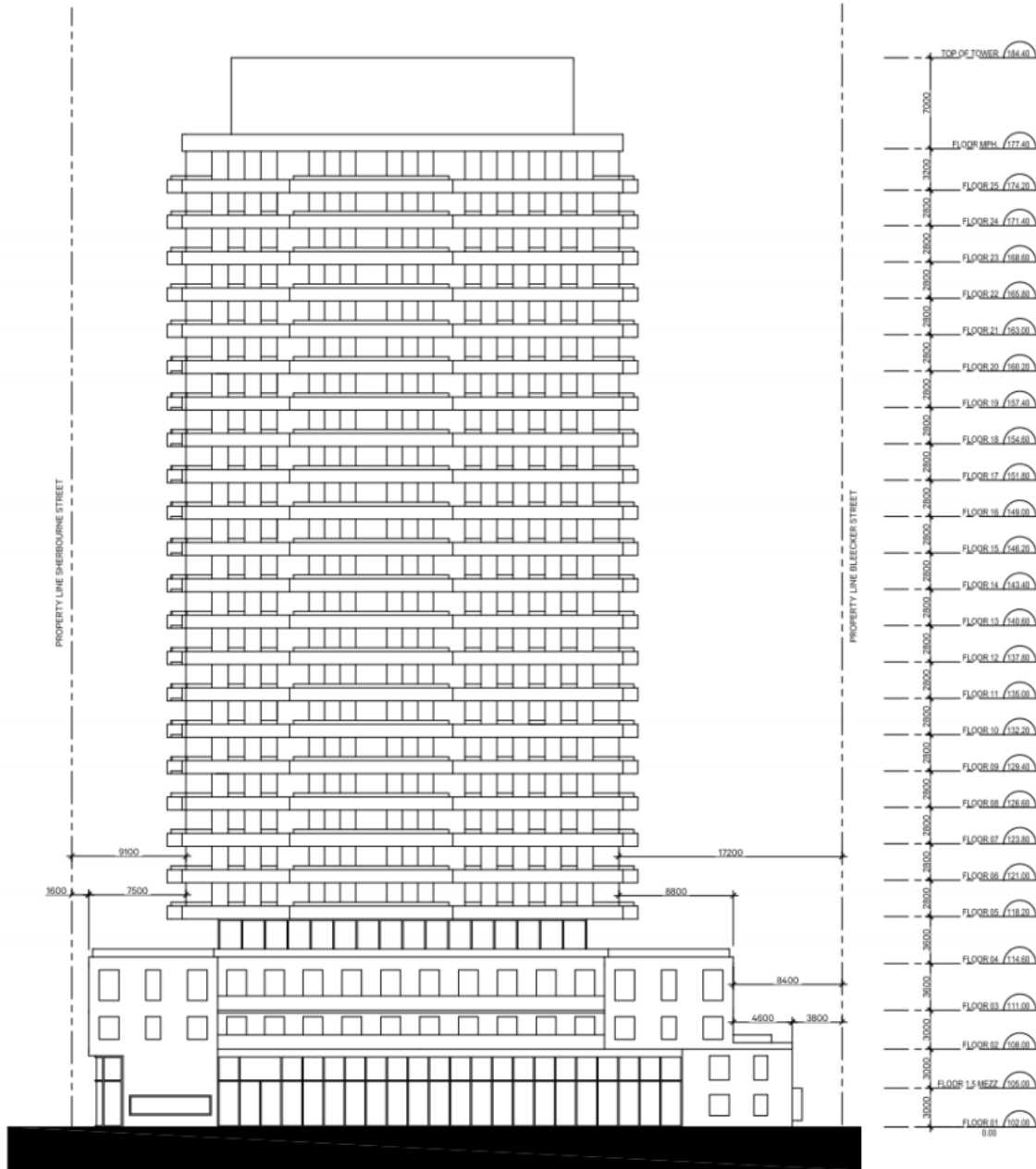
405 SHERBOURNE STREET



West elevation drawing (fronting Sherbourne Street) included for illustration purposes. For the complete drawing set, please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (SvN Architects + Planners, 2021)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

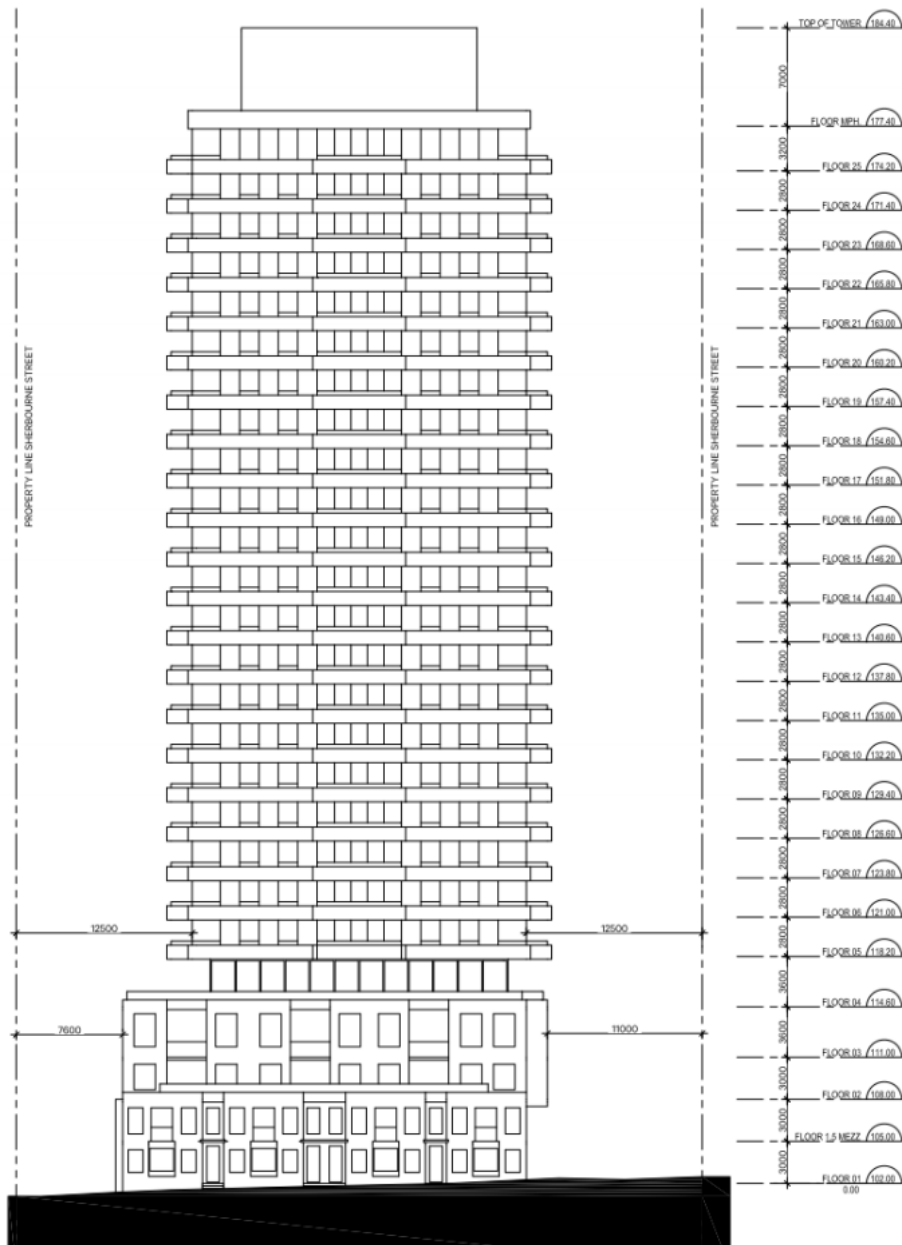
405 SHERBOURNE STREET



South elevation drawing included for illustration purposes. For the complete drawing set, please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (SvN Architects + Planners, 2021)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

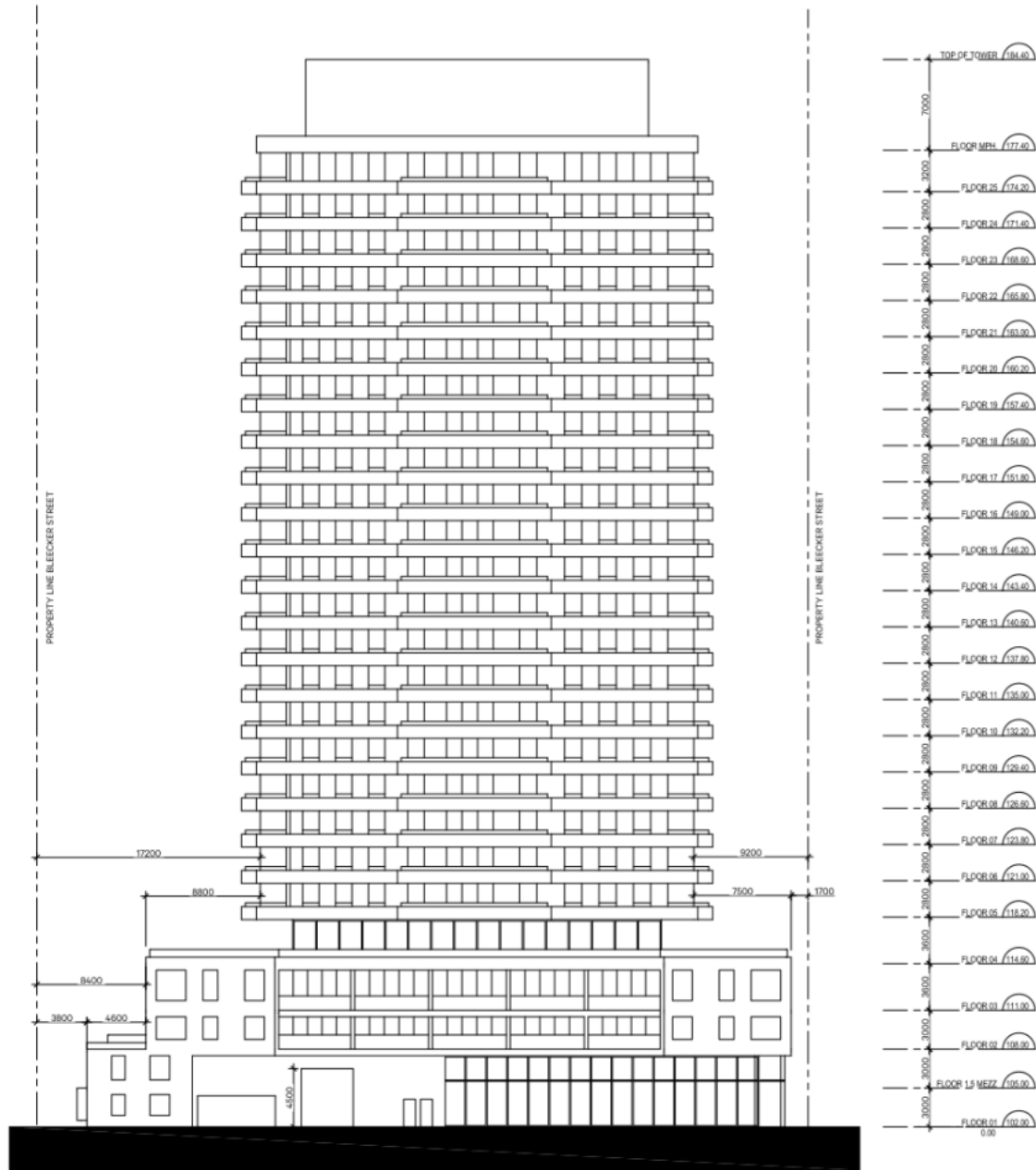
405 SHERBOURNE STREET



East elevation drawing (fronting Bleecker Street) included for illustration purposes. For the complete drawing set, please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (SvN Architects + Planners, 2021)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

405 SHERBOURNE STREET



North elevation drawing (fronting the new mid-block connection) included for illustration purposes. For the complete drawing set, please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (SvN Architects + Planners, 2021)