

Alterations to a Heritage Property Designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act – 575 Queen Street West

Date: June 17, 2022

To: Toronto Preservation Board

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: Spadina-Fort York - Ward 10

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the proposed alterations to the heritage property at 575 Queen Street West under Part V, Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the property as a mixed use commercial and residential building.

The subject property is categorized as a contributing building in the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District (QSWHCD) Plan and comprises a three-storey Italianate style commercial building constructed c. 1884-1892.

In connection with a minor variance application, the development proposal involves the addition of a fourth storey with partial fifth storey loft stepped back 4.6 metres above the existing three storey building. The addition will result in a total building height of approximately 17 metres, which is 1 metre above what is permitted in the QSWHCD Plan. The existing, non-original storefront will be replaced with a new storefront that is consistent with the QSWHCD Plan. The existing paint will be gently removed from the building's historic brick and historically appropriate wood windows will be installed. The proposal also involves several alterations which are not visible from the public realm along Queen Street West, and as such do not require permission under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Staff are supportive of the proposal to rehabilitate the property at 575 Queen Street West and are satisfied that the additional height is appropriately mitigated. The instatement of an improved storefront and historically appropriate wood windows, along with the restoration of the building's historic brick, will conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the on-site heritage resource and enhance the heritage character of the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council approve the exterior alterations to the heritage property at 575 Queen Street West, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, with such alterations substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated June 10, 2022, prepared by Battaglia Architect Inc. and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to the following additional conditions:

a. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 575 Queen Street West, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the property as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Provide building permit drawings, a description of materials and finishes including specifications of the products and techniques to be used to be prepared by the heritage architect 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

On May 4, 2022, Toronto East York Committee of Adjustment deferred minor variance application A0178/22TEY for 575 Queen Street West at the request of the applicant and Heritage Planning staff to review the application further and to pursue permission under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<http://app.toronto.ca/AIC/index.do?folderRsn=MMsRdDvoh0guz2a7Q8bYBA%3D%3D>

On July 19, 2007, City Council enacted By-law No. 929-2007, designating the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2007/law0979.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Area Context

The property at 575 Queen Street West is located within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District (QSWHCD), designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act through by-law 979-2007. The District extends along Queen Street West from University Avenue to Bathurst Street and includes all properties fronting onto Queen Street West along this section. It is defined by the historic nature of its buildings, its vibrant street life, and by its diverse retail and commercial environment. It is at once long-established and ever-changing. Queen Street West provides an important transition from the financial district and the core of downtown Toronto to the residential neighbourhoods. While Toronto has many mixed use commercial districts, the built and cultural heritage of Queen Street West is unique in its combination of historic architecture, pedestrian oriented retail, and appeal to local residents, other Torontonians, and tourists alike.

Subject Property

The subject site is located on the south side of Queen Street West, east of Portland Street. The property comprises a three-storey Italianate style commercial building that was constructed between 1884-1892. Though the building's brick has been painted and its original storefront has been replaced, many of the features that characterize its Italianate style remain intact, including its symmetrical façade with bays divided by brick pilasters, second and third storey window openings with brick surrounds, and its flat roof with elaborate cornice on paired brackets.

As per the QSWHCD Plan, the building at 575 Queen Street West is categorized as a "contributing" building, meaning that it contributes to the heritage character of the District.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The property is also adjacent to several heritage properties within the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District. The buildings on either side of the subject property at 573 and 577 Queen Street West are categorized as contributing buildings within the QSWHCD Plan. The property across the street at 500-504 Queen Street West is a contributing building within the District and is also individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act through By-law No. 810-85.

Development Proposal

The development proposal is to rehabilitate the property at 575 Queen Street West as a mixed use commercial and residential building. In addition to approval under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the proposal will also require variances to the Zoning By-law. Application No. A0178/22TEY has been submitted to the City of Toronto with respect to the minor variances.

The project involves the addition of a fourth storey with a partial fifth storey loft stepped back 4.6 metres above the existing three storey building. The addition will result in a total building height of approximately 17 metres, which is 1 metre above what is permitted in the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan. The existing, non-original storefront will be replaced with an improved storefront that is consistent with the QSWHCD Plan. The existing paint will be gently removed from the building's historic brick and historically appropriate wood windows will be installed. A fourth storey balcony is proposed at the front of the building, concealed from the public view, behind the existing parapet without the need for a guardrail. The proposal also involves the construction of rear second, third and fourth storey additions which are not visible from the public realm along Queen Street West, and as such do not require permission under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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 (the "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") 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.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform to the Growth Plan. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform to the Growth Plan.

Policy 4.2.7.1 of the Growth Plan states that "Cultural Heritage Resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas."

City of Toronto Official Plan

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan (the "Official Plan"). The Official Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. Relevant policies include the following:

Policy 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.

Policy 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.

Policy 3.1.5.32: Impacts of site alterations, developments, municipal improvements, and/or public works within or adjacent to Heritage Conservation Districts will be assessed to ensure that the integrity of the districts' heritage values, attributes, and character are conserved. This assessment will be achieved through a Heritage Impact Assessment, consistent with Schedule 3 of the Official Plan, to the satisfaction of the City.

Policy 3.1.5.33: Heritage Conservation Districts should be managed and conserved by approving only those alterations, additions, new development, demolitions, removals and public works in accordance with respective Heritage Conservation District plans. The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

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

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards and Guidelines") is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and the conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto. The General Standards (1-9) and the Standards for Rehabilitation (10-12) apply to this project.

The Standards and Guidelines can be accessed here:
<http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District

The Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan (the "QSWHCD Plan") contains guidelines for alterations and new construction, which apply only to the parts of the building that can be seen from the street, using "must" and "should" language. The QSWHCD Plan can be accessed here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-5172.pdf>

The objectives of the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan are to:

- Maintain and enhance the unique heritage character of Queen Street West
- Preserve significant buildings and building features, and ensure new designs contribute to the Queen Street West heritage character
- Ensure that changes to Contributing Buildings enhance the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District
- Maintain Queen Street West's identity as both a neighbourhood Main Street and a city-wide destination
- Support pedestrian amenities by maintaining human-scaled development, connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, and a welcoming, interesting sidewalk environment
- Encourage the redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized sites to enhance Queen Street West's heritage character
- Involve area residents, property and business owners, and interested individuals in the ongoing evolution of the District

COMMENTS

Heritage Planning has reviewed the proposed alterations that will be visible from the public realm for consistency with Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Proposed Addition

The application proposes a fourth storey addition with a partial fifth storey loft within a sloped roof. A tall arched window projecting from the roof will allow light to enter the loft. The Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan permits a maximum height of 16 metres with a step back at 13 metres along a 45 degree angular plane, which reinforces the street wall and allows sunlight to reach the north side of Queen Street West (QSWHCD, 5.4). The proposed addition results in a total building height of approximately 17 metres with a step back at approximately 12 metres within a 45 degree angular plane. The height from grade at the front of the building will be 16.6 metres. This deviation from the QSWHCD Plan is minor and the proposed 4.6 metre step back of the addition, combined with its sloped roof, significantly reduce the impact

on the existing heritage building, the adjacent heritage buildings, and the north side of Queen Street West.

The addition will read as contemporary and distinct from the heritage building while being sympathetic to the District's heritage attributes (QSWHCD, 5.1). In accordance with the QSWHCD Plan, the addition incorporates symmetry, design features and high quality materials that add visual interest and texture (QSWHCD, 5.5). It is proposed to be clad in composite hardie board metal cladding, organized to reference the building's applied pilasters, and topped with a metal roof. The arched window, though large, is vertically oriented with mullions to break up the glazing. As it is anticipated that the proposal will not require site plan approval, should Council approve the proposal, staff will review the building permit drawings and description of materials and finishes prior the issuance of a heritage permit.

Alterations to Building Façade

The application proposes to instate a new storefront. The existing aluminum and tile storefront is non-original and contains paired doors flush with the storefront, which does not contribute to the heritage character of the District. Archival documentation of the building's original storefront could not be found. The proposed storefront is sympathetic to the heritage character of District, respecting the narrow rhythm and width of facades (QSWHCD, 5.3) and instating two recessed entrances, which are strongly encouraged in the District (QSWHCD, 5.2). The storefront incorporates a high level of transparency and high quality materials, proposed to be clad in limestone (QSWHCD, 5.5). Staff will review the building permit drawings and description of materials and finishes prior the issuance of a heritage permit.

The applicant is proposing to remove the orange paint from the building's brick using a gentle alkaline chemical paint remover. The restoration of the building's historic brick will greatly improve the appearance of the existing building and enhance the character of the District. Staff will review the specifications of the products and techniques to be used prior to the issuance of a heritage permit to ensure best practice is followed.

The applicant is also proposing to replace the windows on the second and third storey of the primary elevation with new wood windows consistent with the type, configuration, proportion and profile of the original window pattern (QSWHCD, 5.5). Several of these windows have previously been replaced with new windows and the original windows that remain are in poor condition. Staff will review the specifications of the new wood windows prior to the issuance of a heritage permit.

CONCLUSION

Staff are supportive of the proposal to rehabilitate the property at 575 Queen Street West as a mixed use commercial and residential building. While the proposed new building height of approximately 17 metres is 1 metre above what is permitted in the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District Plan, staff is satisfied that this minor deviance in height is appropriately mitigated through the massing and design of the addition. The instatement of an improved storefront and historically appropriate wood windows, along with the restoration of the building's historic brick will conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the on-site heritage resource at 575 Queen Street West and enhance the character of the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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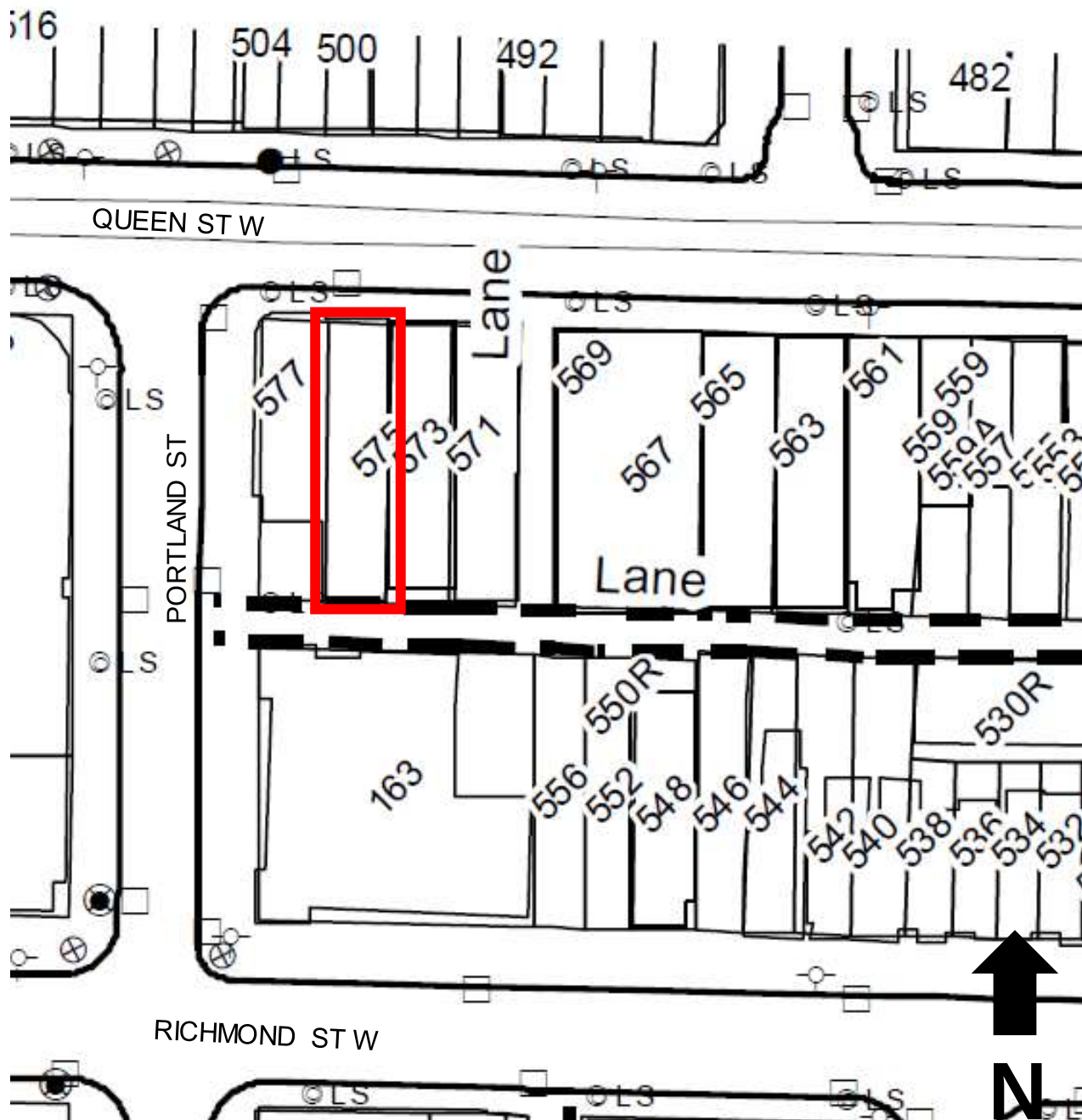
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 3 - Photographs
Attachment 2 - Selected Drawings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

575 Queen Street West



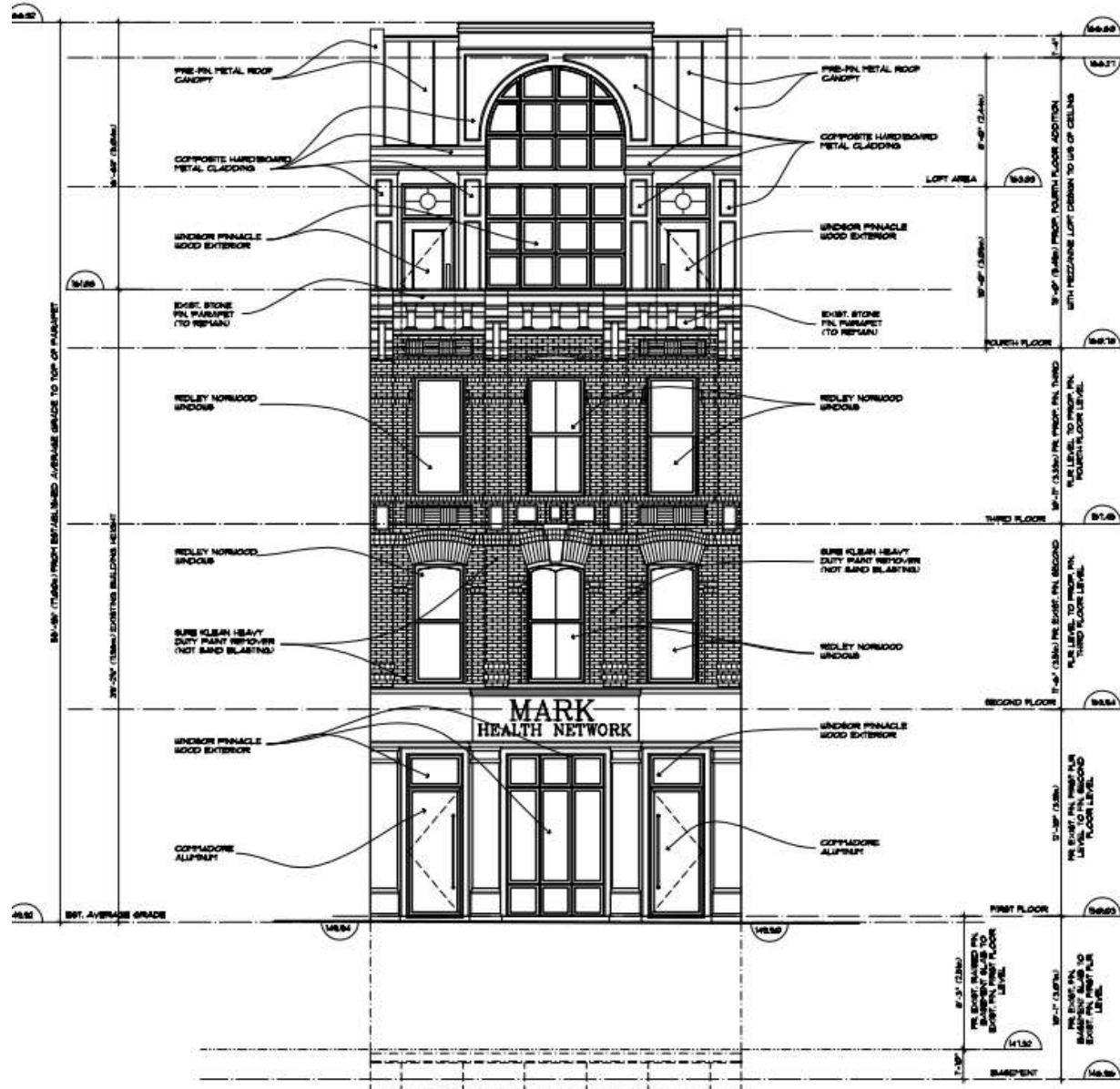
Location Map, showing the property at 575 Queen Street West, indicated by the red outline. The property boundaries are approximate. (Property Data Map, City of Toronto)

575 Queen Street West



North Elevation of 575 Queen Street West

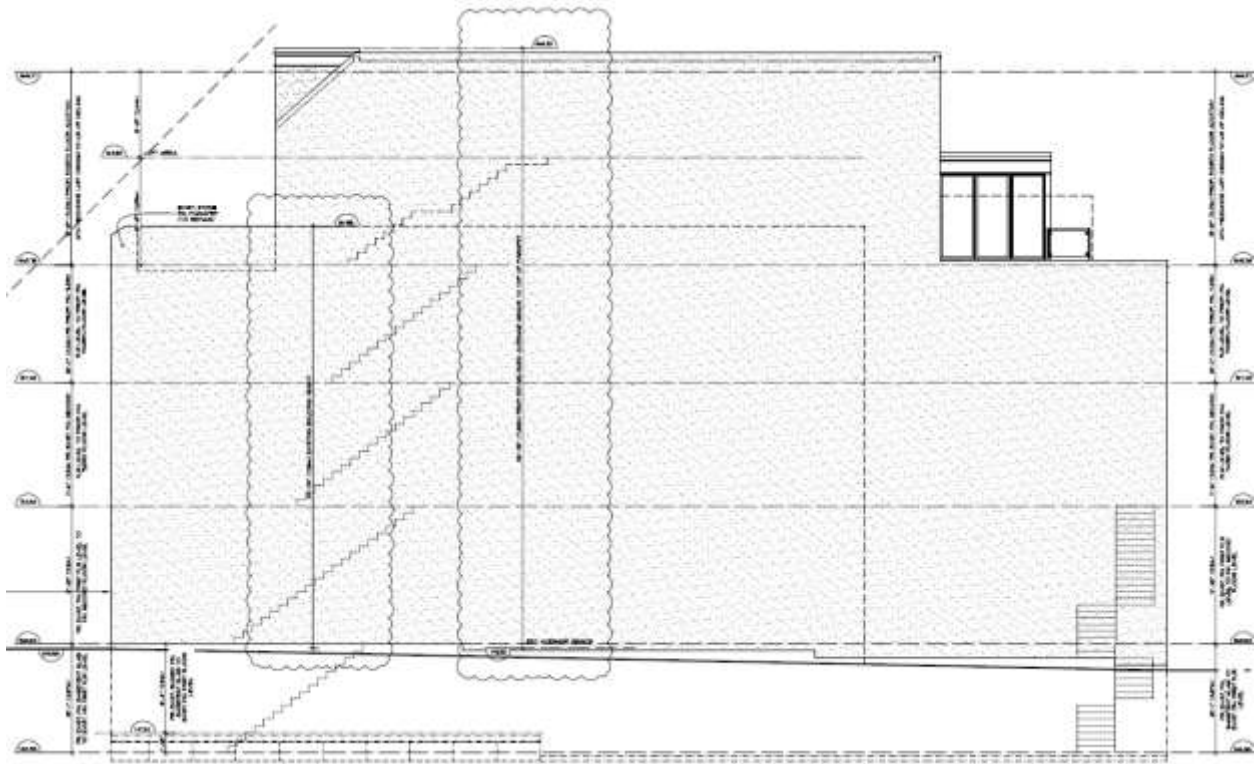
575 Queen Street West



Principal, north elevation of the proposed development.

SELECTED DRAWINGS

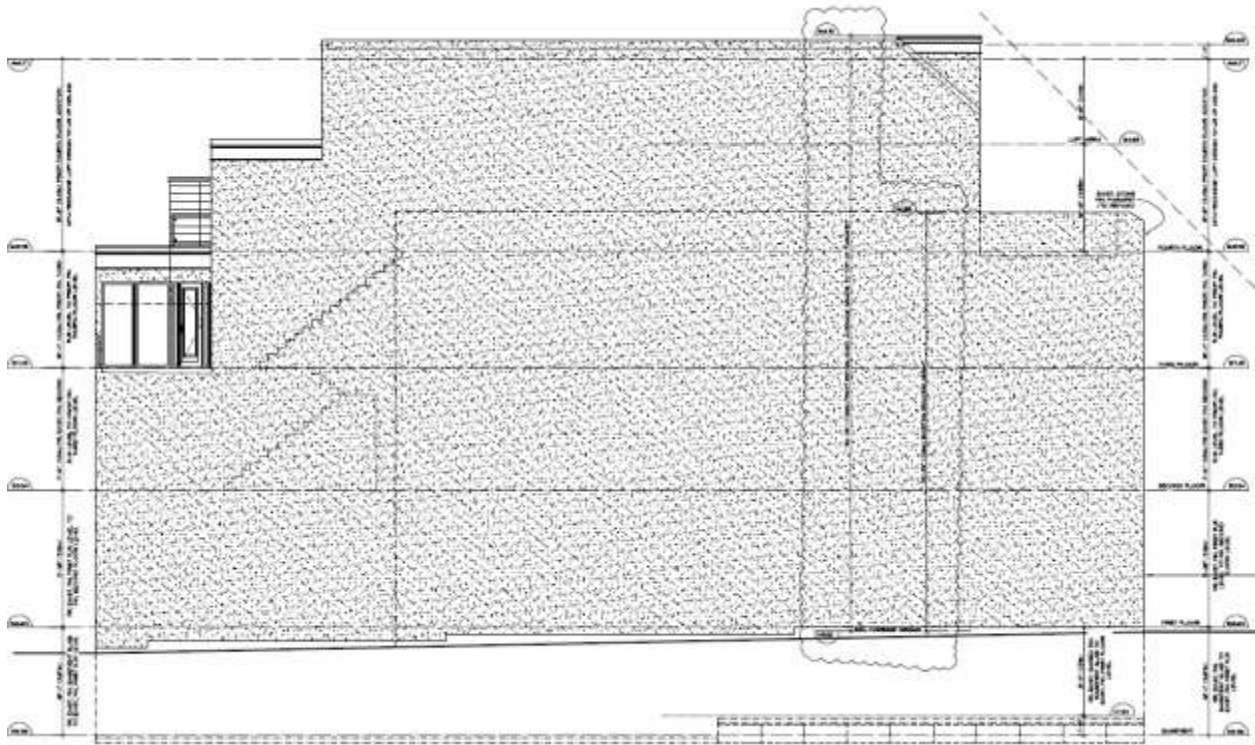
575 Queen Street West



West elevation of the proposed development.

SELECTED DRAWINGS

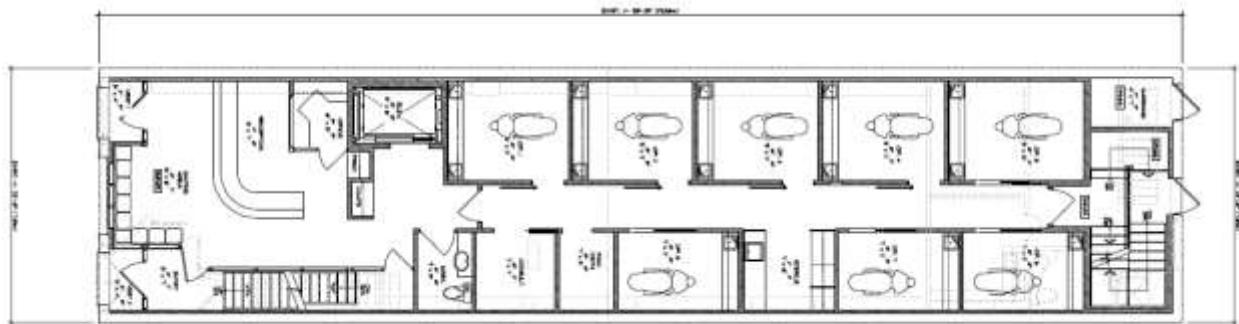
575 Queen Street West



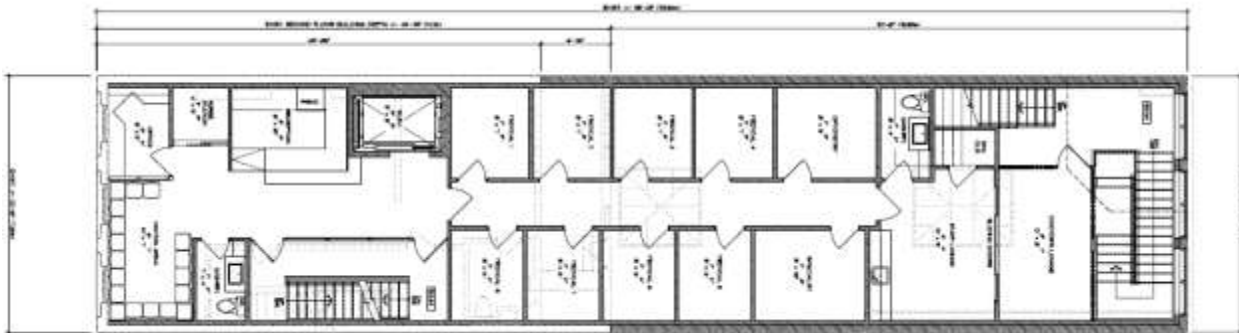
East elevation of the proposed development.

SELECTED DRAWINGS

575 Queen Street West



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



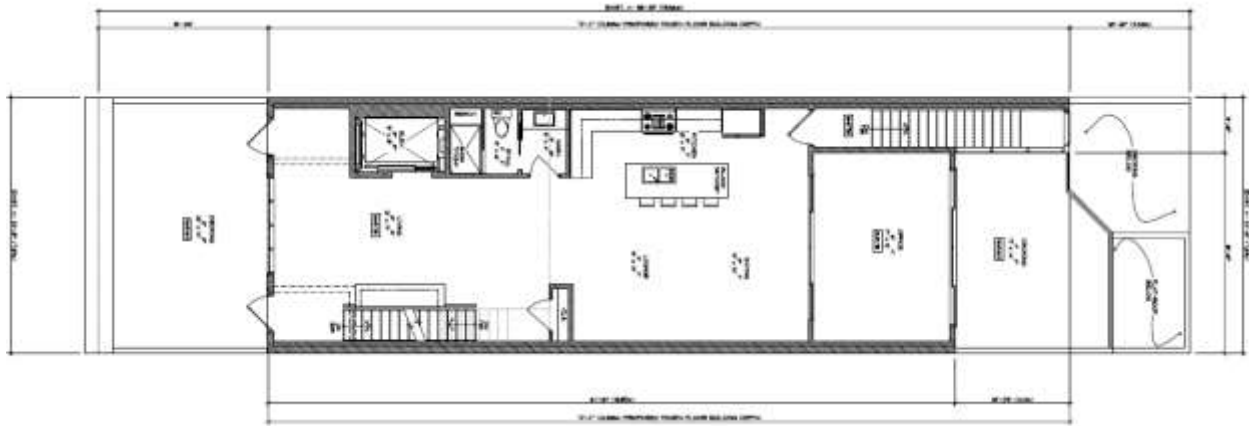
Proposed Second Floor Plan



Proposed Third Floor Plan

SELECTED DRAWINGS

575 Queen Street West



Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



Proposed Fifth Floor Plan