

## **Alterations to a Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement - 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street**

**Date:** April 26, 2022

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the property known as St. Luke's United Church at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street, designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, in connection with an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application on the subject property, and that Council grant authority for the City to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the owner.

The subject property is located within the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and contains the St. Luke's United Church complex. The property is identified in the HCD Plan as a significant building that contributes to the heritage character of the primarily residential district.

The church, designed by Canadian architects Langley and Burke in 1887 as the Sherbourne Street Methodist Church, has undergone a series of alterations and additions over the years. In 1912, a Sunday school, also designed by Langley and Burke, was added to the northeast corner. A narthex, designed by Toronto architects Wickson and Gregg, was added to the front of the church in 1929 and a gymnasium was constructed in 1962 in the south portion of the site to the design of Toronto architects Parrott, Tambling and Witmer.

The development application is comprised of the construction of a twelve-storey mixed-use building on the property that includes the rehabilitation of the 1887 church and the 1912 Sunday school, and the removal of the narthex and gymnasium additions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the designated heritage property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, for the construction of a new 12-storey mixed use building with alterations to the designated property consistent with the plans and drawings dated February 18, 2022 prepared by KPMB Architects and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated March 17, 2022 prepared by ERA Architects Inc., all subject to and in accordance with a Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to the following conditions:

a. That the related site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment permitting the proposed alterations has been enacted by City Council and has come into full force and effect in a form and with content acceptable to City Council, as determined by the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning

b. That prior to the introduction of the bills for such Zoning By-law Amendment by Council, the owner shall:

1. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated February 18, 2022 prepared by KPMB Architects and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated March 17, 2022 prepared by ERA Architects Inc., subject to and in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.b.2, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Provide a detailed Conservation Plan prepared by a qualified heritage consultant that is substantially in accordance with the conservation strategy set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment for 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated March 17, 2022, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

c. That prior to Final Site Plan approval in connection with the Zoning By-law Amendment for the property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street the owner shall:

1. Provide final site plan drawings including drawings related to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.b.2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. 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.
3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the heritage property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager Heritage Planning.
4. Submit a Signage Plan for the proposed development to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
5. Provide a detailed landscape plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

d. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing heritage building as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City required in Recommendation 1.b.1.
2. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.b.2 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.
3. Provide a Letter of Credit, including provision for upwards indexing in a form and amount and from a bank satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning to secure all work included in the approved Conservation Plan, Heritage Lighting Plan and Interpretation Plan.

e. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 1.d.3 above, the owner shall:

1. Provide a letter of substantial completion prepared and signed by a qualified heritage consultant confirming that the required conservation work, required heritage lighting work, and the required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the Conservation Plan, Lighting

Plan and Interpretation Plan and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

2. Provide replacement Heritage Easement Agreement photographs to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

2. City Council authorize the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owner of 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary Bill in Council authorizing the entering into of a heritage easement agreement for the property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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### **Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District**

At its meeting of December 13, 2007, Toronto City Council adopted the recommendation to designate the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan dated August 2007. The property at 355 Sherbourne Street is identified as a contributing heritage property in the HCD.

On April 29, 2008, City Council enacted By-law No. 325-2008 designating the Cabbagetown Northwest area as a heritage conservation district.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2008/law0325.pdf>

A preliminary report on the planning application was considered by Toronto and East York Community Council in November 2021.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-172723.pdf>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Cabbagetown Northwest HCD**

The HCD's heritage character statement states that "the history, form and arrangement of the physical components of Cabbagetown combine to form a context which helps define the quality of life which it provides." The cultural heritage value of the district is described as its Victorian character which is expressed through the unbroken and relatively unchanged streetscapes, small scale row housing, single-family residences and landscape elements.

In addition to the residential buildings in the HCD, there are a number of religious, institutional and other significant buildings that are specifically noted in the HCD Plan as relating and contributing to the heritage character of the District, including St. Luke's United Church at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street.

### **Site/Heritage Property**

The property at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street is located in the Cabbagetown Northwest HCD at the south-east corner of Sherbourne and Carlton Streets. The property contains a church building designed by Canadian architects, Langley and Burke and built in 1887 as the Sherbourne Street Methodist Church, with subsequent alterations and additions constructed over the years; In 1912, a Sunday School, also designed by Langley and Burke, was added to the northeast corner; A prominent narthex designed by Toronto architects Wickson and Gregg was added to the front of the church in 1929; and a gymnasium was constructed in 1962 in the south portion of the site to the design of Toronto architects Parrott, Tambling and Witmer.

### **Proposal/Conservation Strategy**

The applicant is proposing to redevelop the site by constructing a twelve-storey (plus mechanical penthouse) mixed use building containing affordable residential units, community services and commercial uses at grade. The complete Zoning By-Law amendment application can be viewed on the Application Information Centre website at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/application-information-centre/>

Planning Application Number: 21 175955 STE 13 OZ

The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) dated March 17, 2022 prepared by ERA Architects Inc. describes the goals of the proposed development as delivering "long-term financial sustainability to the congregation by providing on-site rental opportunities with a high-degree of affordability in order to continue the broader mission of the United Church." The applicant has undertaken two stages of community consultation as well as providing a project website, a virtual open-house and other initiatives to gain community feedback.

The proposal includes a new building constructed in a U-shaped plan situated on the north, east and south portions of the property, including a cantilevered portion over the

Carlton Street elevation of the church and Sunday school. In addition, the proposal involves the removal of the 1929 narthex, the 1962 gymnasium and the rear lane-facing portion of the 1912 Sunday school.

The 1887 church building will be retained in situ in its entirety and rehabilitated. The removal of the narthex will reveal the lower levels of the church building's primary elevation which is proposed to be replaced with a new front entrance with barrier-free access and a semi-public open space facing Sherbourne Street. The detailed design of the rehabilitated entrance will be determined at the Conservation Plan stage although staff have encouraged the applicant to restore original elements of the church to the greatest extent possible once the narthex is removed and the state of the masonry is revealed. Similarly, the removal of the gymnasium for new construction will reveal the south elevation of the church building which is proposed to be restored as part of an interior pedestrian promenade.

The portion of the Sunday school facing Carlton Street will be retained in situ to the extent of the east-facing gable with the lane-facing portions removed and replaced with new construction and in-kind material to reflect the scale, form and materiality of the existing building.

## **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.

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.

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.

## **Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District**

The Cabbagetown Northwest HCD Plan defines the special architectural, historical, contextual and landscape characteristics of the area and is intended to manage change in a way that protects and enhances its heritage character.

The Plan includes heritage conservation principles and guidelines that manage change by setting out appropriate treatments of heritage resources. The HCD Plan is intended to "foster and encourage a public sense of interest in the preservation of the area's heritage resources" without prohibiting change.

The cultural heritage value of the district is described as its Victorian character as expressed through the unbroken and relatively unchanged streetscapes, small scale row housing, single-family residences and landscape elements. In addition to the residential buildings in the HCD, there are a number of religious, institutional and other significant buildings that are specifically noted in the HCD Plan as relating and contributing to the heritage character of the District, including the church complex at 353-355 Sherbourne Street and 157 Carlton Street.

The Heritage Principles presented in the HCD Plan discourage the demolition of heritage buildings and the destruction or removal of historic fabric or distinguishing features. Moreover, the principle that heritage buildings should be protected and enhanced also figures prominently in the HCD Plan.

Guidelines in the HCD Plan for new building height recommend that, "Building height of new structures should maintain the building height of adjacent properties and the immediate streetscape and should be neither noticeably higher nor lower. In areas of varied building height new development must respect adjacent buildings by being neither excessively higher nor lower."

Additions to heritage properties should be constructed in a way that is "compatible with, but subtly distinguishable from, the original historic building fabric and ensures the continued protection of distinguishing architectural features and does not radically change, damage, obscure, destroy or detract from such features."

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

The Parks 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

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The rehabilitation strategy proposed within the HIA is generally consistent with the intent of the HCD Plan and the City's Official Plan, although the HCD Plan discourages the removal of historic fabric or distinguishing features of heritage buildings which, in this case, are the church narthex, gymnasium and portions of the Sunday school. In addition, the HCD Plan guidelines state that additions to heritage buildings should not be out of scale with neighbouring buildings. Neighboring buildings to the east of the church complex are characteristic of the low-scale Victorian residential character of the district and in areas of varied building height new development are therefore intended to respect adjacent buildings by being neither excessively higher nor lower.

Throughout the application process, heritage staff worked with the applicant to conserve as much of the historic fabric of the church complex as possible, to consider retention of distinguishable features and to mitigate the visual and physical impact of the new massing in accordance with the relevant heritage policies. The importance of maintaining the three-dimensional integrity of the conserved heritage resource was also emphasized. As a result, the massing that hovered over the church in the original proposal is now set back behind the ridge of the Sunday school roof and away from the church tower to ensure the tower remains visually prominent. The cantilever has also been reduced. Although the overall size and design of the project is substantially higher than the adjacent heritage properties to the east, and the addition is not visually subordinate to the church when viewed at a distance, the proposed addition is distinguishable from the church complex in its detailing and cladding and allows the retained portions of the church to remain visually prominent as experienced at the pedestrian level. The church building continues to frame Carlton and Sherbourne streets and the north east corner of Allan Gardens as it has for the past 135 years.

Some of the church's later additions will be removed including the architecturally significant and prominent church entrance on Sherbourne Street. The demolition of the 1929 narthex represents the removal of a distinguishing feature of this significant property although, as the HIA notes, the existing front entrance is not an original feature of the building and its removal will provide an opportunity to provide universal access to the church and to improve the public realm along Sherbourne Street through a landscaped forecourt that is consistent with the original design and configuration of the site, and which will be designated a privately owned publicly accessible space (POPS).

Since the Sherbourne Street façade of the church was considerably altered to accommodate the narthex, heritage staff have requested that the applicant undertake further investigation of the elevation to determine the condition of the masonry and to inform a rehabilitation strategy that complements the scale, architectural style and materiality of the church building while restoring original fabric where possible. The HIA reflects this direction and staff will continue to work with the applicant's heritage consultant as part of the required Conservation Plan to secure an appropriate and sensitive design for the rehabilitated universal access entrance informed by site findings of original features, archival evidence, and the church's Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style. The new entrance must also be compatible with, but subtly distinguishable from, the original historic building fabric and should ensure the

continued protection of distinguishing architectural features and does not radically change, damage, obscure, destroy or detract from such features, as required by the HCD Plan.

The gymnasium, which was constructed in 1962, is also a distinguishing feature of the property. It is proposed to be replaced with a multi-storey mixed-use building. Heritage staff accept that, within the context of this development proposal, removal of the gymnasium addition allows the base of the new construction to occur on the least sensitive portion of the property insofar as priority is being given to the earlier phases of church construction. The loss of the gymnasium will be partially mitigated by the restoration of the newly revealed original south elevation of the church building including its stained glass windows. The south elevation of the church will be fully retained within a new internal pedestrian promenade. The HIA indicates that the proposed development has been designed to limit new net shadows on the adjacent Allan Gardens.

The north elevation and portions of the east and south elevations of the Sunday school addition are proposed to be retained in situ with the only alteration being the creation of a new entrance from an existing window opening on the Carlton Street elevation. The proposal retains the finely detailed, articulated and most visible portions of the Sunday school while the plain brick wall facing the lane will be removed, relocated further back to accommodate lane widening and will be replaced with in-kind brick to reflect the scale, form and materiality of the original wall which will assist in the transition to the residential properties to the east.

Although the original project design has been considerably improved since the beginning of the application process, staff will continue to work with the applicant on an improved Conservation Plan and Site Plan application that refines the design of the new construction to continue to make it more compatible and subordinate to the historic church.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The proposed redevelopment results in the retention, in situ, of a significant building that contributes to the heritage character of the district. Aspects of this project's conservation strategy represent positive approaches to the rehabilitation of the church and the introduction of new uses, while some heritage impacts are significant. However, the review of this redevelopment has been undertaken within a framework that considers a number of city and area priorities, including the provision of affordable housing, improvements to the public realm, a high degree of building performance under the Toronto Green Standard and, importantly, the continuation of the church's current uses and its vital community outreach role with an expanded community space.

Staff will continue to work with the applicant within the Conservation Plan to soften the visual impact of the new construction to make it more complementary to the historic church complex and to this part of the Cabbagetown Northwest HCD. The design of the rehabilitated entrance will also be developed within the Conservation Plan and staff

have encouraged the applicant to restore original elements of the church to the greatest extent possible once the narthex is removed and the state of the masonry is revealed. Similarly, the removal of the gymnasium for new construction will reveal the south elevation of the church building which is proposed to be restored as part of an interior pedestrian promenade. While the HCD Plan encourages rather than prohibits change, the magnitude of change contained within this proposal was difficult to reconcile with the generally lower scale, Victorian residential scale of Northwest Cabbagetown. However, within the context of broader community needs, and with the possibility for further improvements to be made as the project evolves, in this instance, staff find the proposal acceptable and support City Council approval of the application.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP  
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning  
Urban Design, City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

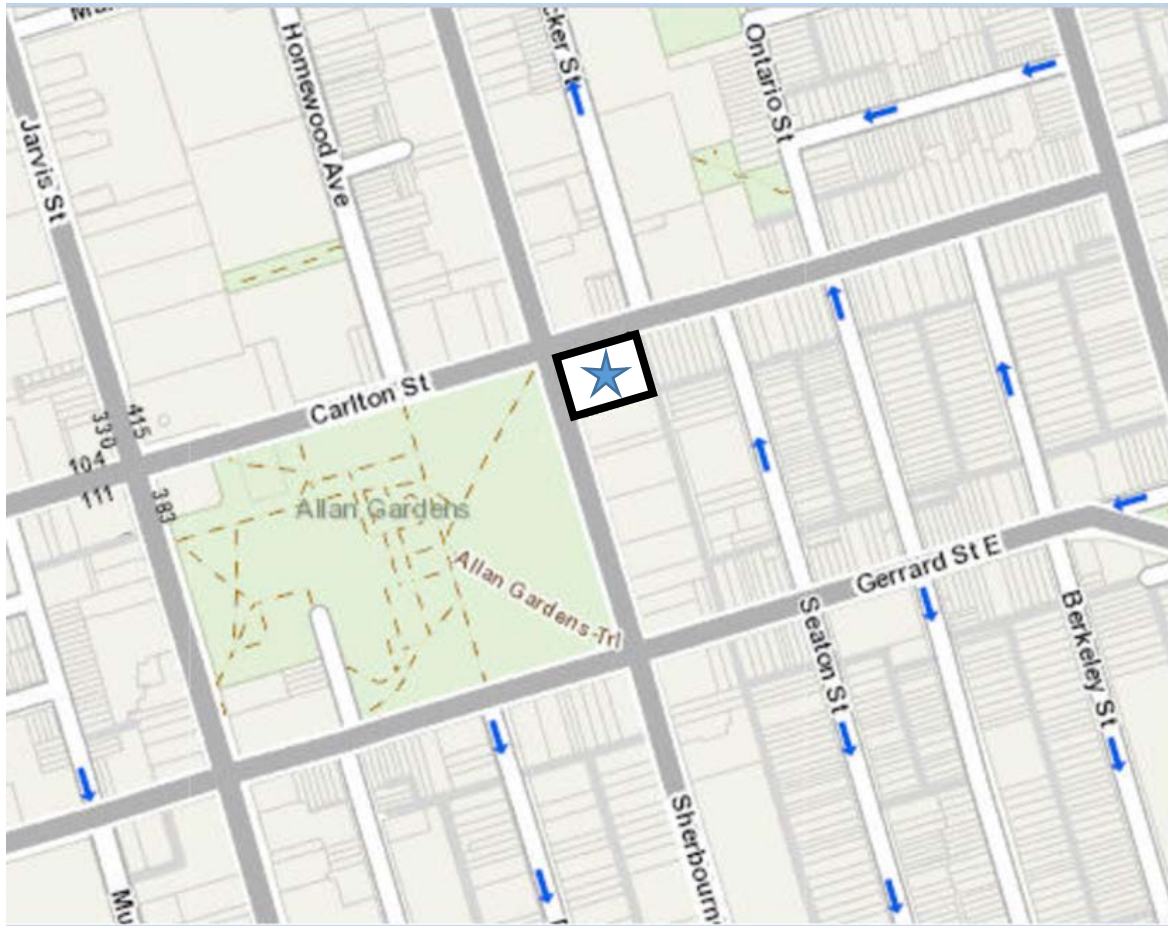
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Attachment 1 - Site plan  
Attachment 2 - Photographs  
Attachment 3 - Plans and drawings  
Attachment 4 - Project renderings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

355 Sherbourne Street



**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**355 Sherbourne Street**



West (Sherbourne Street) elevation

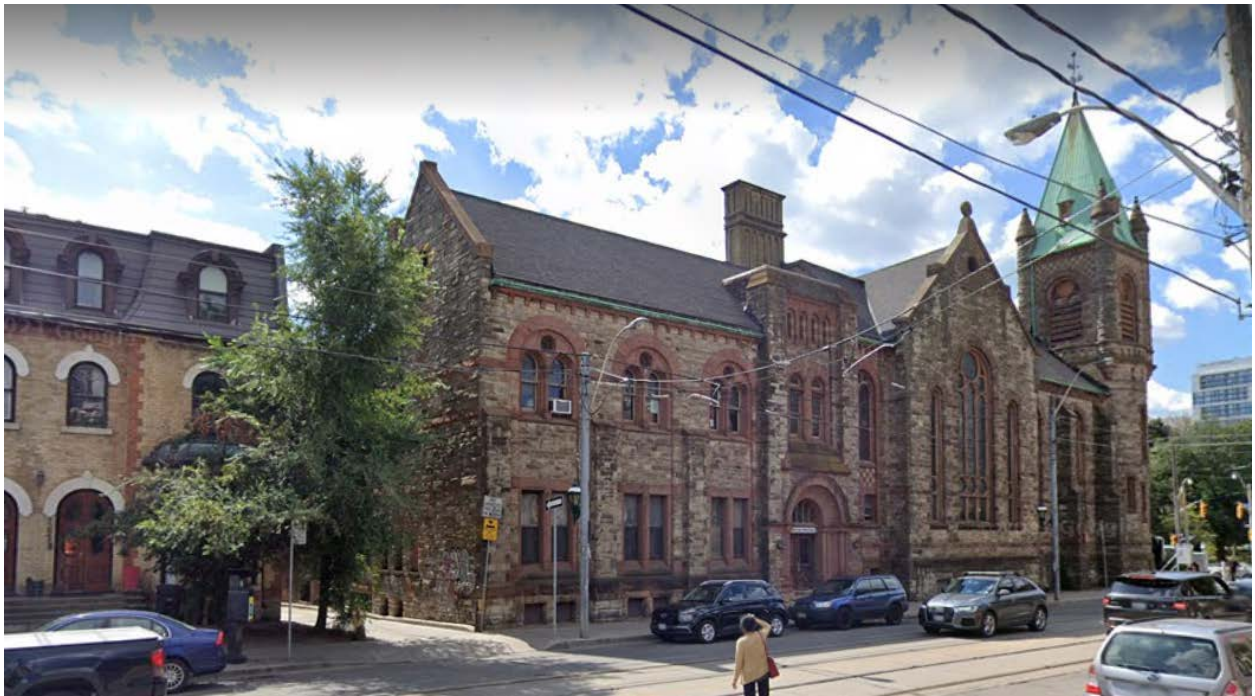
(source: ERA Architects)



View of the north and west elevations

(source: ERA Architects)





View of the north (Carlton Street) elevation

(Source: Google Maps)



View of the east and south elevations of the Sunday school (Source: ERA Architects)



Archival photo 1890's

(Source Toronto Public Library)

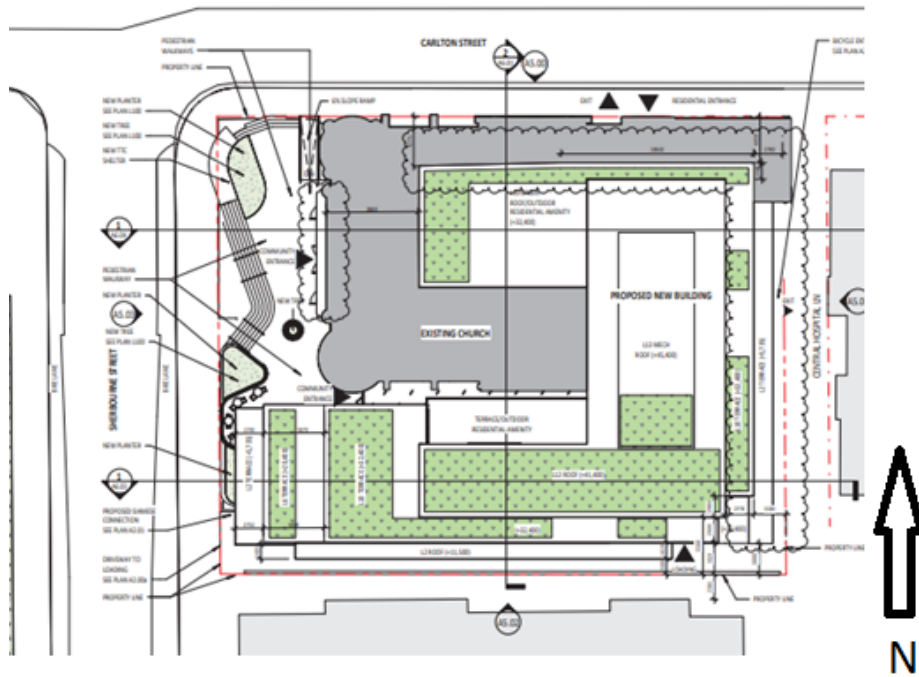


Aerial map showing the evolution of the site (Source Google Maps; annotated by ERA)

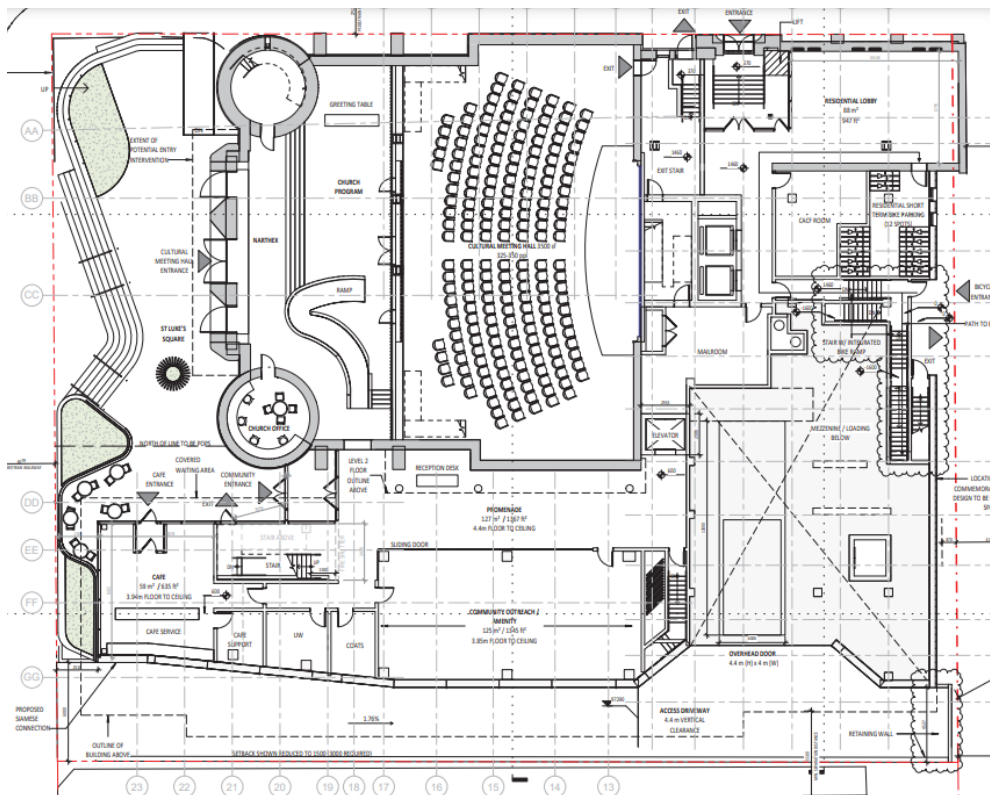


**PLANS AND DRAWINGS**  
**355 Sherbourne Street**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

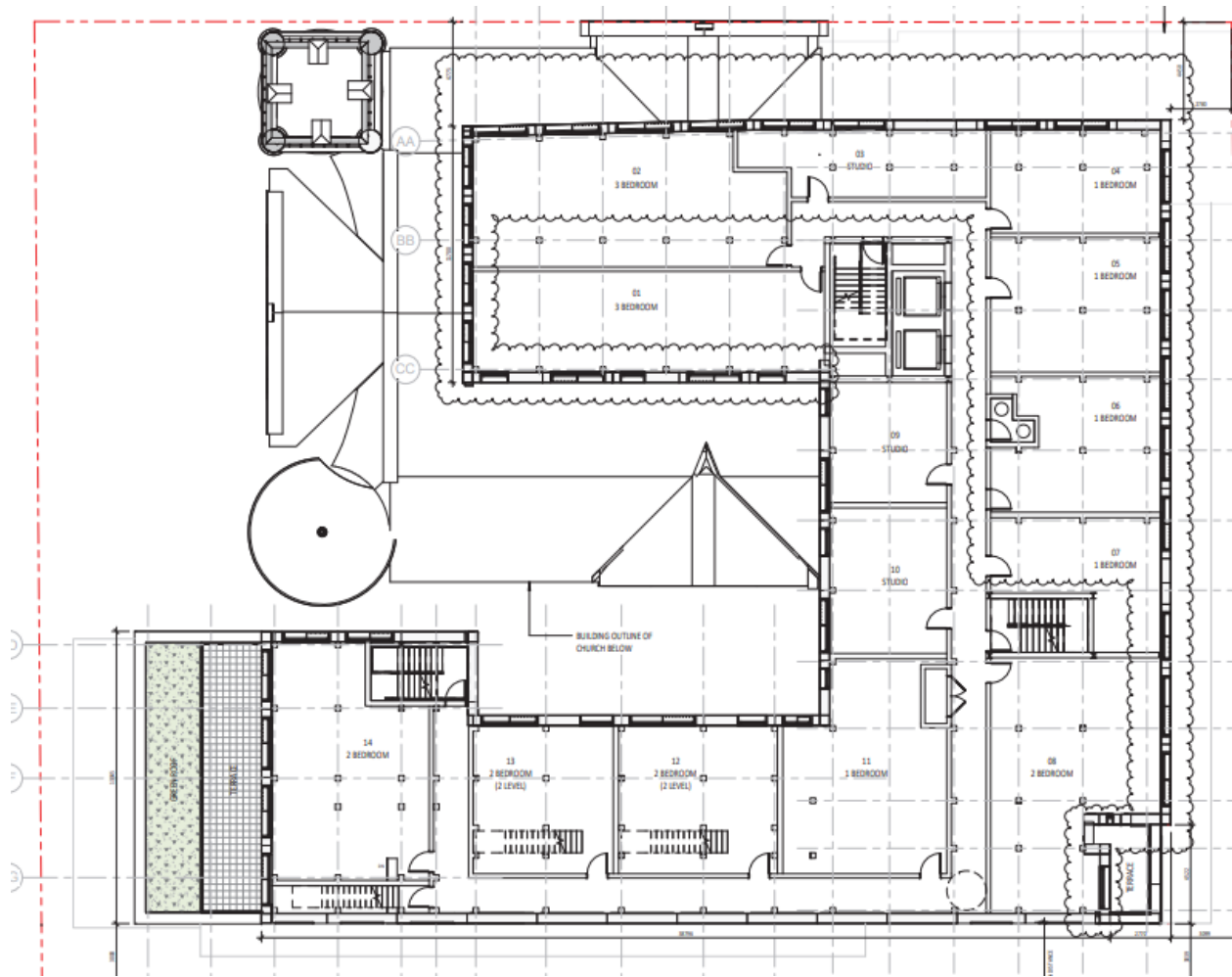


Site Plan

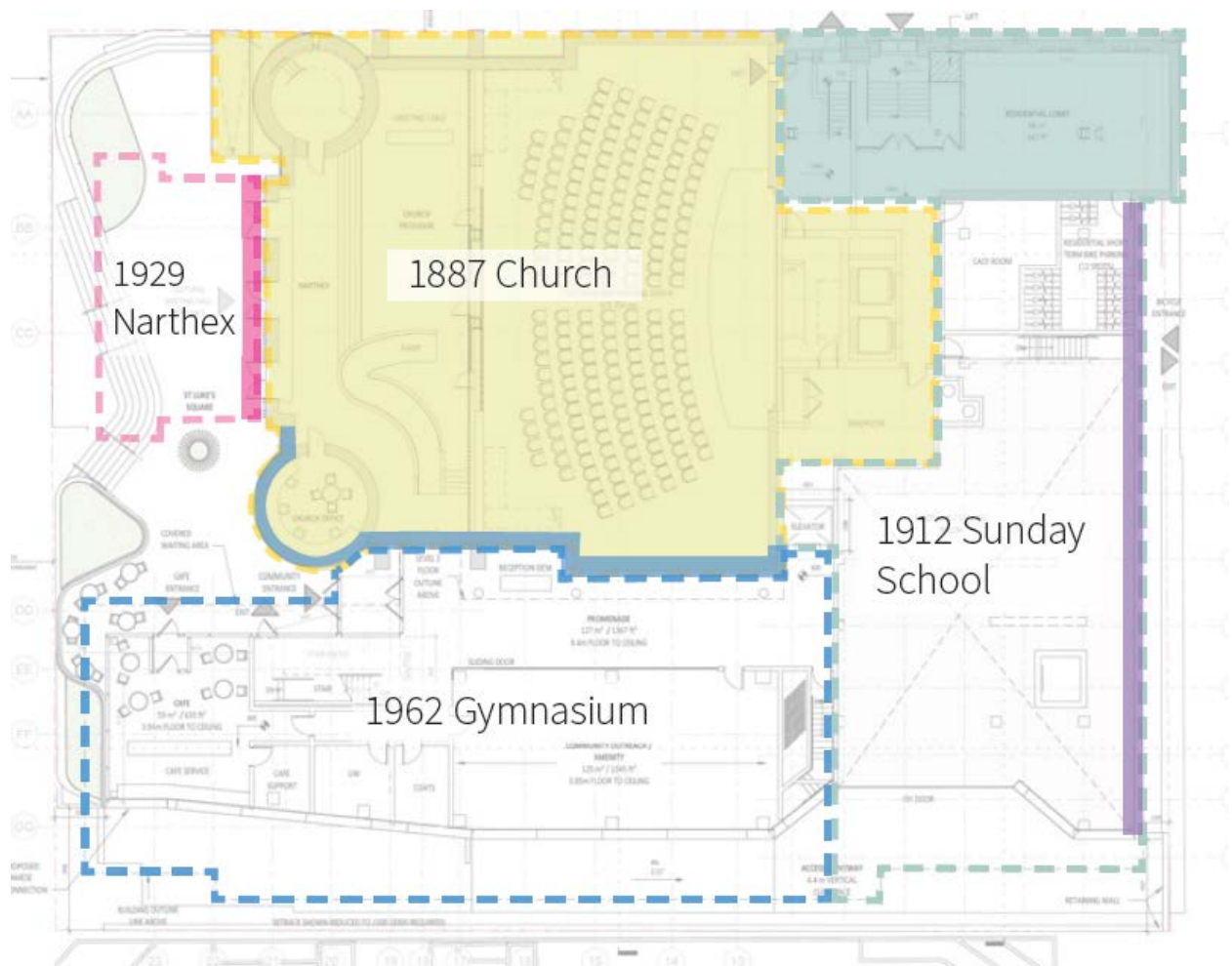


Ground floor plan

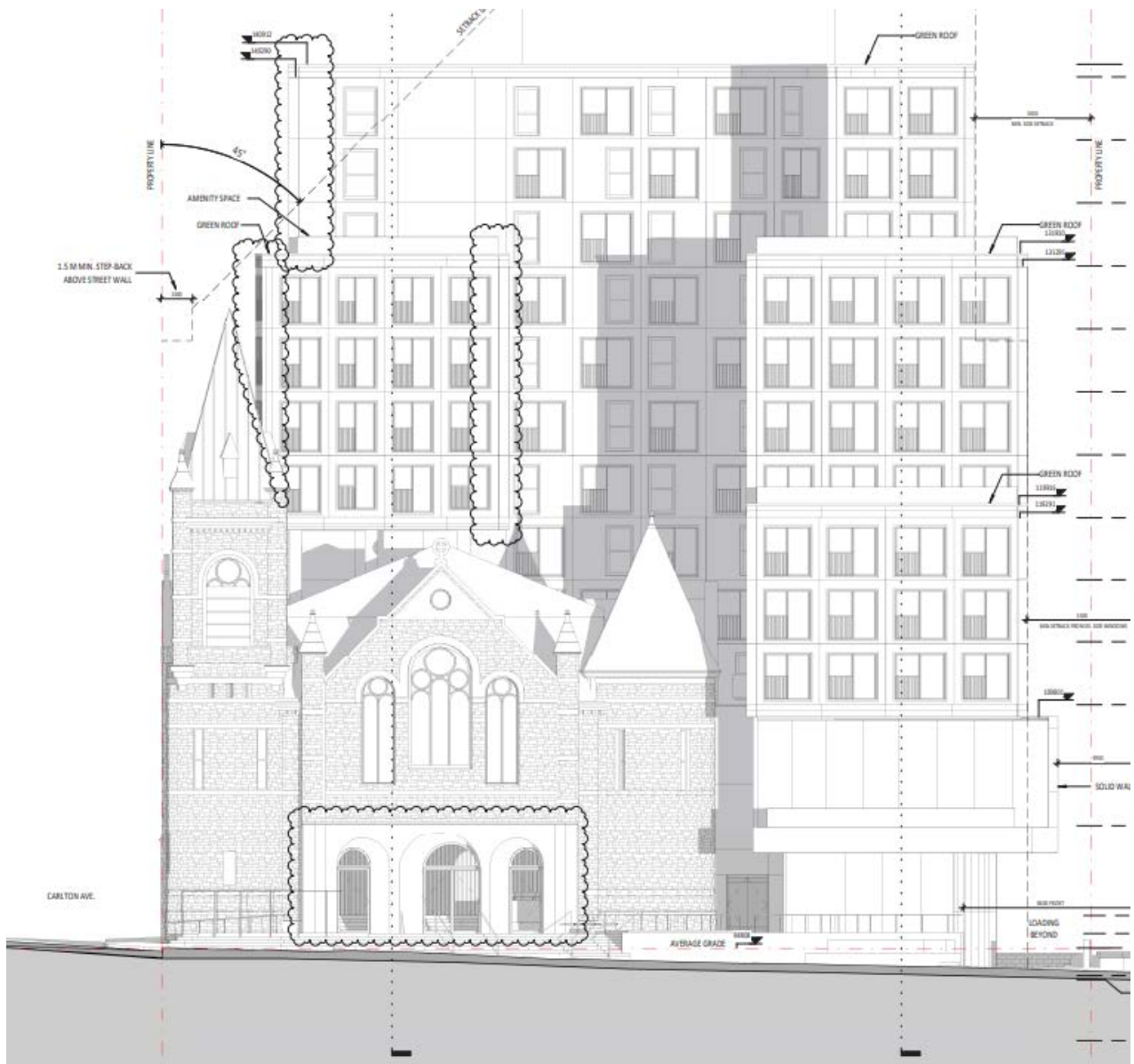




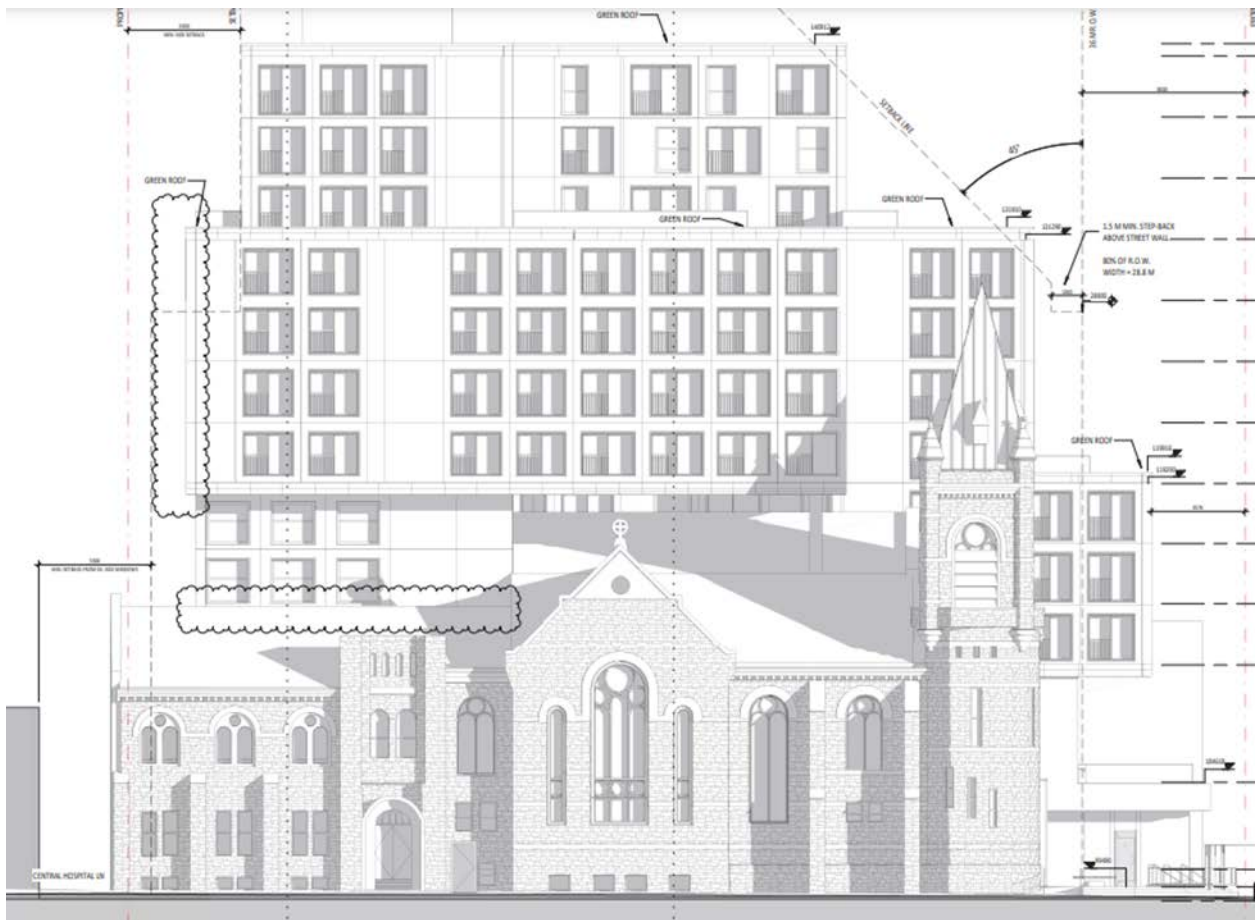
Sixth floor plan



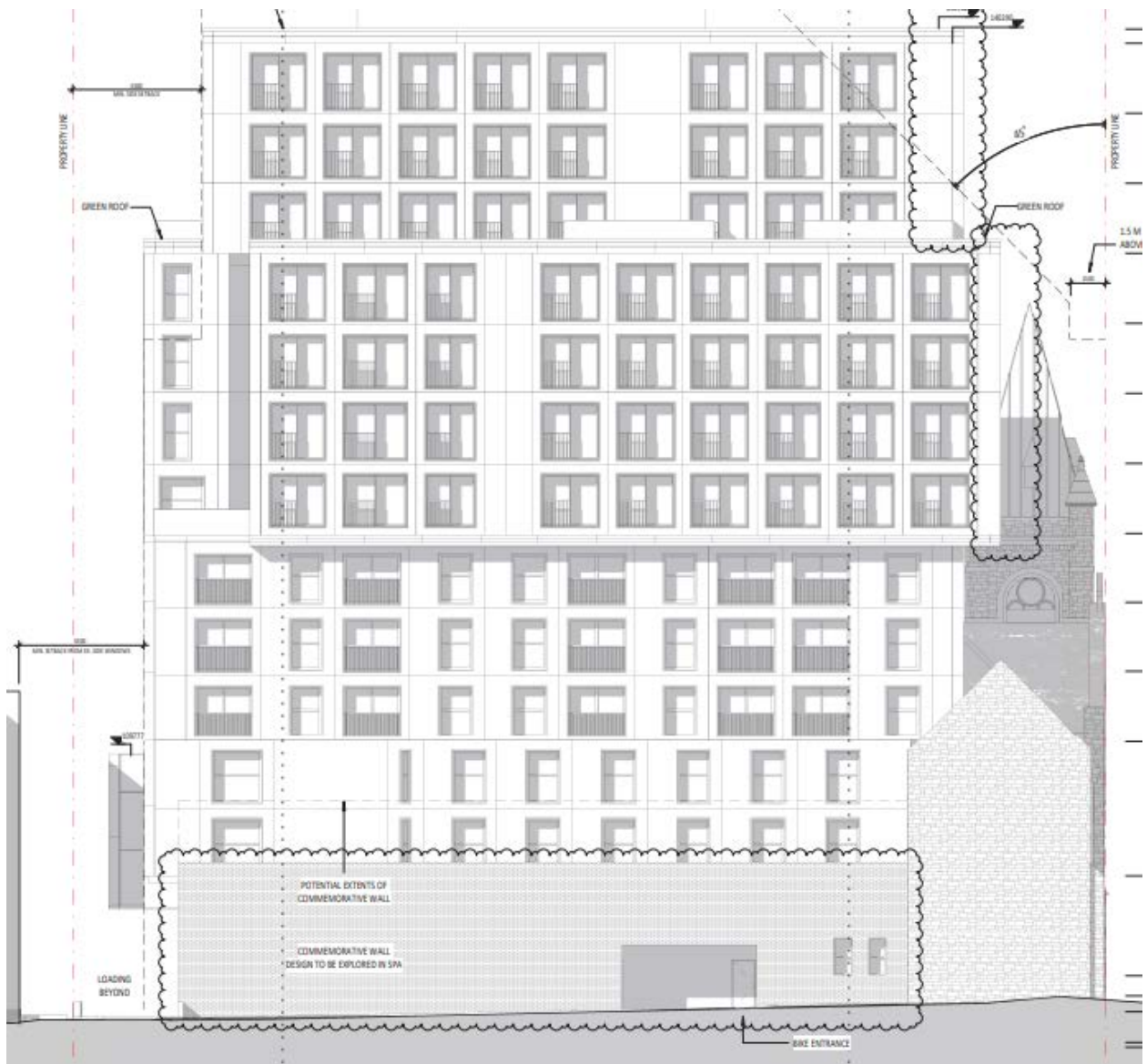
Plan showing extent of removals (narthex, gymnasium, Sunday school) and retention (church and portion of Sunday school)



West (Sherbourne Street) elevation



North (Carlton Street) elevation

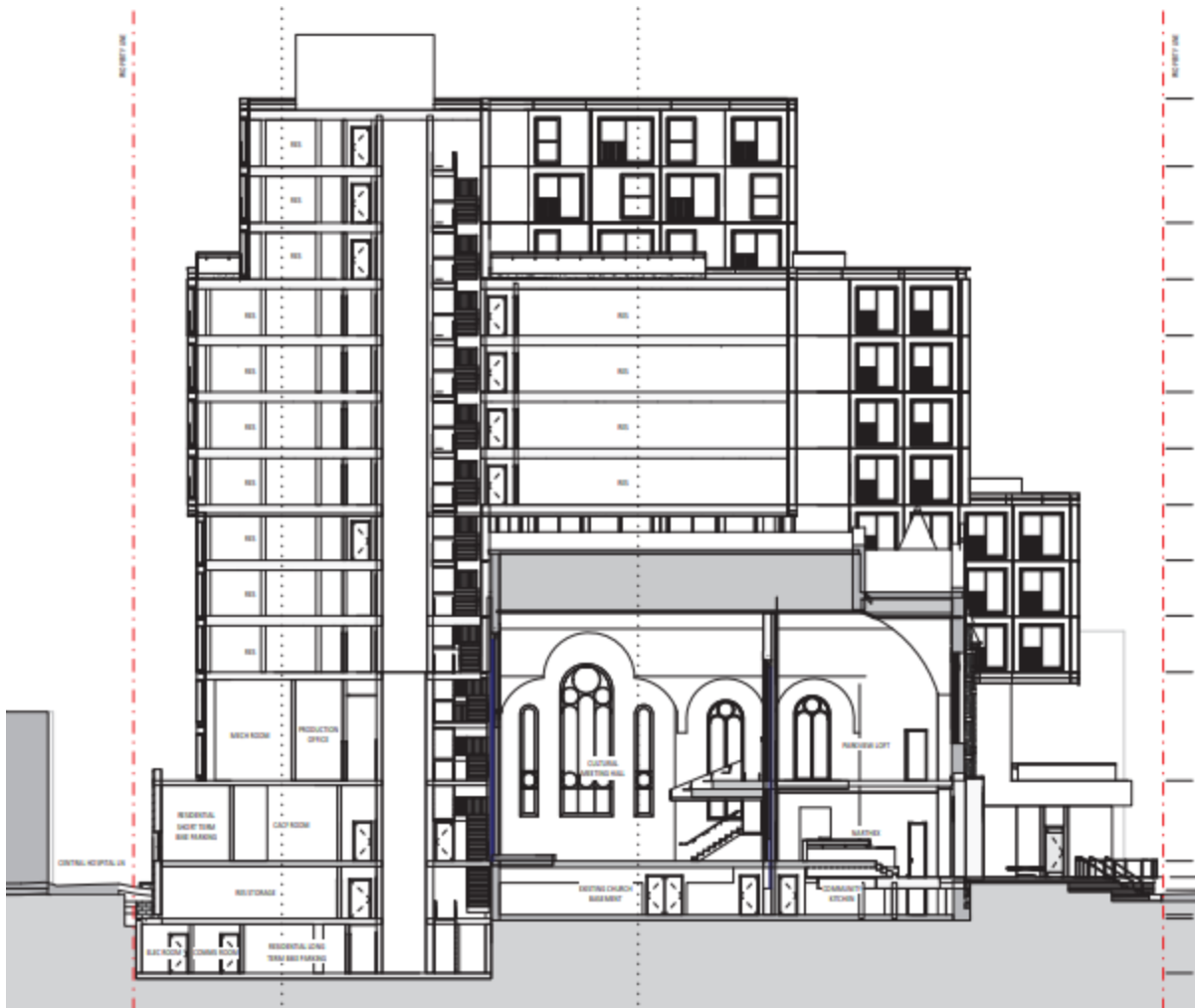


East (lane-facing) elevation



Conservation strategy for south elevation





East-west section

**PROPOSAL RENDERINGS**

**ATTACHMENT 4**

**355 Sherbourne Street**



View of west (Sherbourne Street) elevation





View of north and east elevations



View looking east along Carlton Street