

Demolition of a Structure within the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District and Approval of a Replacement Structure - 86 Highland Avenue

Date: January 25, 2023

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: University - Rosedale - Ward 11

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the demolition of an "Unrated" building within the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD), and approve the design of a replacement house located at 86 Highland Avenue in accordance with Section 42(1) 2 and 42 (1) 4 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

This property is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The NRHCD Plan allows for the demolition of an "Unrated" building provided that the replacement building design complies with the NRHCD Plan guidelines for new buildings and the applicable zoning by-laws. The proposed new two-storey detached house meets the general intent of the NRHCD Plan's guidelines and would not detract from nearby rated heritage buildings in the immediate context.

The subject application also requires approval under the Planning Act (Minor Variance). The recommendations contained within this report relate solely to approvals required under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the demolition of the heritage building at 86 Highland Avenue, an "Unrated" structure in the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District, in accordance with Section 42 (1) 4 of the Ontario Heritage Act and the erection of a

building in accordance with Section 42 (1) 2 of the Ontario Heritage Act subject to the following:

a. City Council approve the replacement structure for 86 Highland Avenue as shown in the plans and Heritage Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant and prepared by ERA Architects on December 14, 2022 and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and that the replacement structure be constructed substantially in accordance with the submitted plans.

b. That prior to the issuance of any heritage permit for the property at 86 Highland Avenue including a demolition permit, but excluding permits for interior work, repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing "Unrated" building as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the applicant provide the following to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning:

1. Photo documentation of the existing structure at 86 Highland Avenue.
2. Final building permit drawings for the replacement structure and a landscape plan consistent with the plans and Heritage Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant and prepared by ERA Architects on December 14, 2022 and the NRHCD Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

Council adopted the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD) on May 3, 2004 (By-law 749-2004) and was enacted by September 30, 2004:

https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/9536-CityPlanning_North-Rosedale-HCD.pdf

There have been no previous reports to Council regarding the property at 86 Highland Avenue.

BACKGROUND

Proposal

The property at 86 Highland Avenue is located within the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD). The existing two and a half storey detached house-form building on this property is "Unrated" within the NRHCD Plan. The proposal is to

demolish the existing house and construct a new two-storey single family house. Permission is required under Section 42 (1) 4 of the Ontario Heritage Act to demolish a building on a property within a heritage conservation district and under Section 42 (1) 2 of the said Act to erect a building or structure on a property in a heritage conservation district.

Heritage Policy Framework

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. The following Official Plan policy applies to heritage conservation districts and proposed new construction:

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.

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. The General Standards (1-9) and Standards for Rehabilitation (10-12) apply to this project.

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

North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD) Plan

On May 3, 2004, Toronto City Council adopted the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD) under Part V, Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, enacted by September 30, 2004 under By-law 749-2004.

The subject property at 86 Highland Avenue is located within the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD) Plan. At the time the NRHCD Study was undertaken, this property was assigned an "Unrated" rating meaning that the building is "...not of national, provincial, citywide or contextual heritage significance, do not contribute to the heritage character of the HCD or are too recent to be accurately evaluated".

The NRHCD Plan's section 7.4: Guidelines for Demolition states: Guidelines in this section are for all buildings in the district. In general, demolition is to be discouraged but it is acknowledged that the impact of demolition may vary depending upon the heritage evaluation category of the building in question.

It also states that "Demolition of an unrated building will generally be permissible if the replacement building, as shown in the building permit application, contributes to the heritage character of the district and is acceptable under these guidelines and the zoning by-law".

Section 7.3: Guidelines for New Buildings, Alterations and Additions to Unrated Buildings, states that new buildings "should be designed to be compatible with the heritage buildings in terms of scale, massing, height, setback, entry level materials and fenestration" and that the "roof profile and location of the eaves lines or the roof parapet should be designed so that the apparent height is compatible with that of the streetscape".

Section 7.5 notes that the "preservation of existing landscape, trees and mature vegetation, in both the public and private realm, is encouraged" and that planting of species characteristic to the district "is encouraged, especially when replacing dying specimens."

Area Context

The subject site contains a two-and-a-half storey residential building. Located in the southwestern end of the City of Toronto's North Rosedale neighbourhood, 86 Highland Avenue is situated on the north side of Highland Avenue between Roxborough Drive and Bin-Scarth Rd. The subject site is also located in the "Ravine Lands" Zone, which is characterized by its steep slopes and dense vegetation. The houses in this zone are defined by an "abundance of thick brick and stone masonry (red brick predominates) and punctuated windows."

Contextually, Highland Avenue is characterized by a collection of masonry buildings constructed between 1910 and 1924 with a mix of Victorian and Edwardian architecture along with a few fine Arts and Crafts style houses. Due to the pattern of curvilinear streets that characterize the district, Highland Avenue has a mix of regular and irregular lot frontages. Properties are set back from the street with a mix of front and side-yard driveways.

Both directly adjacent properties, 84 Highland Avenue and 4 Bin-Scarth Road, on the same side of the street as 86 Highland Avenue to the north have a "C" rating. Directly across the street from the subject property is 85, 87 and 89 Highland Avenue, which are all located on the south side of Highland Avenue and rated "C". A visual reference and comparison to neighbouring properties that was submitted by the applicant is included in Attachment 4.

According to the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., the existing two and a half storey house at 86 Highland Avenue was constructed between 1909 and 1910. It is an unrated building which categorizes this dwelling as a building of no national, provincial, citywide or contextual heritage significance and does not contribute to the heritage character of North Rosedale.

Proposed Development

The proposal seeks permission under the Ontario Heritage Act to demolish an existing "Unrated" building within the NRHCD and to construct a new building.

In accordance with NRHCD Plan guidelines:

1. 7.3 (B) – The proposed development is designed to be compatible with adjacent heritage properties in scale, massing, height, setback, entry level, materials and fenestration.

2. 7.3 (C) – The roof profile of the proposed development is designed to meet the eaves lines and parapet of adjacent properties. The scale, massing, height and roofscape does not visually overwhelm neighbouring buildings.

The proposed new house retains a similar front yard setback to that of the existing which aligns with the immediately adjacent neighbour to the east. It is two storeys high with a front gable set above a two-storey bay window. Its height is similar to that of the existing dwelling, only 0.18m higher to accommodate the steep slope design. It remains slightly taller than the respective peak of the building to the west and slightly lower than the peak of the building to the east, similar to the existing condition. The new house proposes to use red-orange brick and a black granite base with dark grey trim and standard grey zinc detailing for the fascia, standing-seam roof and shingles.

COMMENTS

The NRHCD Plan says that the "demolition of an "Unrated" building will generally be permissible if the proposed replacement building "contributes to the heritage character of the district and is acceptable under these guidelines and the zoning by-law."

The design of the proposed new house includes compatible materiality, height, scale, setback, entry level, fenestration, eaves lines and architectural features such as a prominent front gable and bay windows that relate to 84 Highland Avenue and 4 Bin-Scarth Road, respectively. The roof profile has a height and form that is compatible to the eaves lines of the houses on either side and closely resembles the current condition.

The overall height and massing of the proposed house is similar to that of other houses in this part of North Rosedale and "Ravine Lands" zone. As shown in the HIA submitted by ERA Architects, dated December 14, 2022, the new dwelling proposes to use materials and colours similar to those found in the area and that are harmonious with the guidelines outlined in the NRHCD Plan. As such, it is considered to comply with the NRHCD Plan guidelines for new buildings and to be able to contribute to the "heritage character" of North Rosedale.

The proposal has a primary elevation that is consistent with its immediate neighbors to the east and west, in terms of wall to window ratio. It has a relatively similar window opening ratio, sitting at 23% compared to 84 Highland Avenue and 4 Bin-Scarth Rd which have 30% and 32% window openings, respectively. The proposal includes prominent front box bays with leaded glass detailing in the windows, similar to patterns found on other buildings within the district. A visual reference and comparison to neighbouring properties that was submitted by the applicant is included in Attachment 4.

The proposal's transition from grade to the landing includes a similar number of steps as its adjacent heritage properties. Its entry level of height is set directly in between the entry level heights of its immediate neighbours to the east and west. This allows the proposal to appear visually compatible to its surrounding context. A visual reference and comparison to neighbouring properties that was submitted by the applicant is included in Attachment 4.

The proposal would also retain the existing front yard trees with additional plantings being provided. The proposal seeks to shift the proposed walkway to be integrated with the rear-yard driveway which allows for increased planting and vegetation along the street frontage. The proposal will not include front yard parking which is discouraged in North Rosedale. As such, when viewed from the public realm, the proposal will make a positive contribution to the landscape character of the subject property and will support and maintain the characteristic of its dense vegetation in the "Ravine Lands" zone.

Heritage Planning staff are therefore of the opinion that the proposed demolition of the existing "Unrated" building at 86 Highland Avenue, and the proposed replacement structure, are consistent with the guidelines outlined in the NRHCD Plan and other applicable policies and guidelines. It is recommended that City Council approve the application under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The proposal also requires approval under the Planning Act (Minor Variance) and the recommendations in this report relate solely to approvals required under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. Staff will continue to provide comment within the planning process, including citing heritage conditions as necessary.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Location Map

Attachment 2: Photographs

Attachment 3: Drawings of proposed replacement dwelling

Attachment 4: Scale, massing, setback, entry level and window ratio analysis

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

86 Highland Avenue



Location Map showing 86 Highland Avenue in regards to its surrounding context. This location map is for information purposes only and is oriented with North at the top. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown (Source - iView2 Toronto)



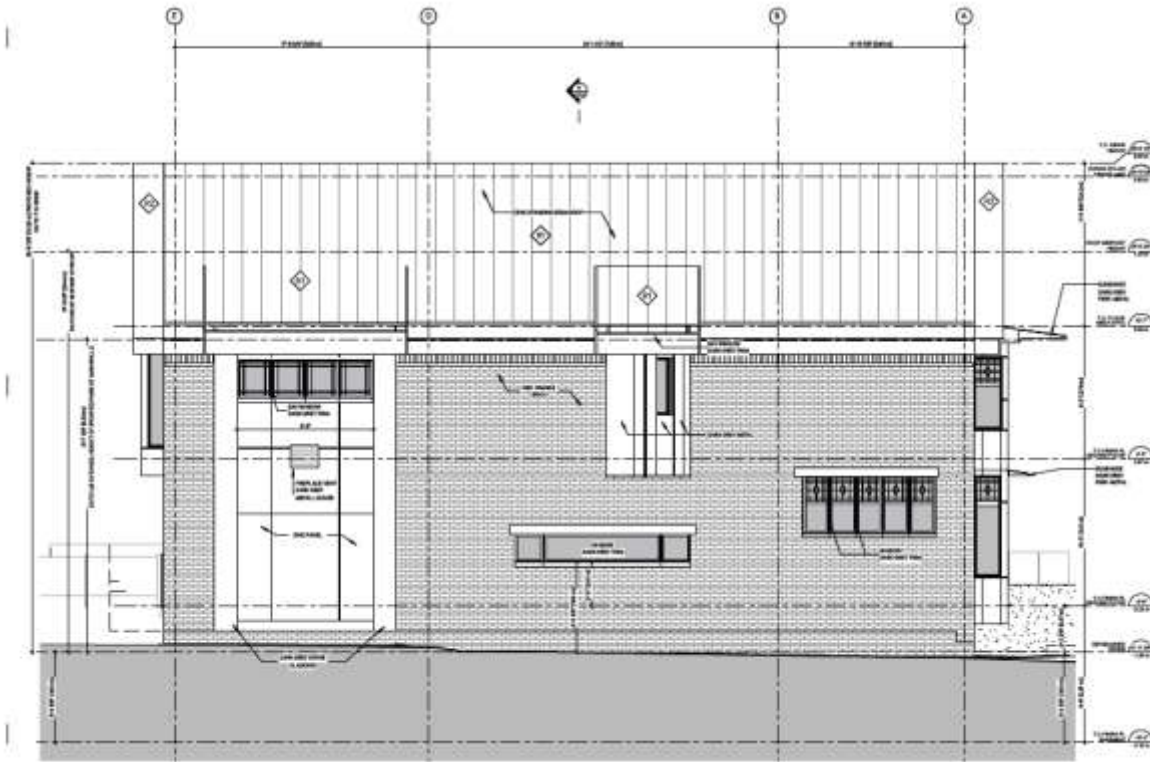
Photograph of the south elevation (front) of the existing house 86 Highland Avenue (Source – ERA Architects, 2022)



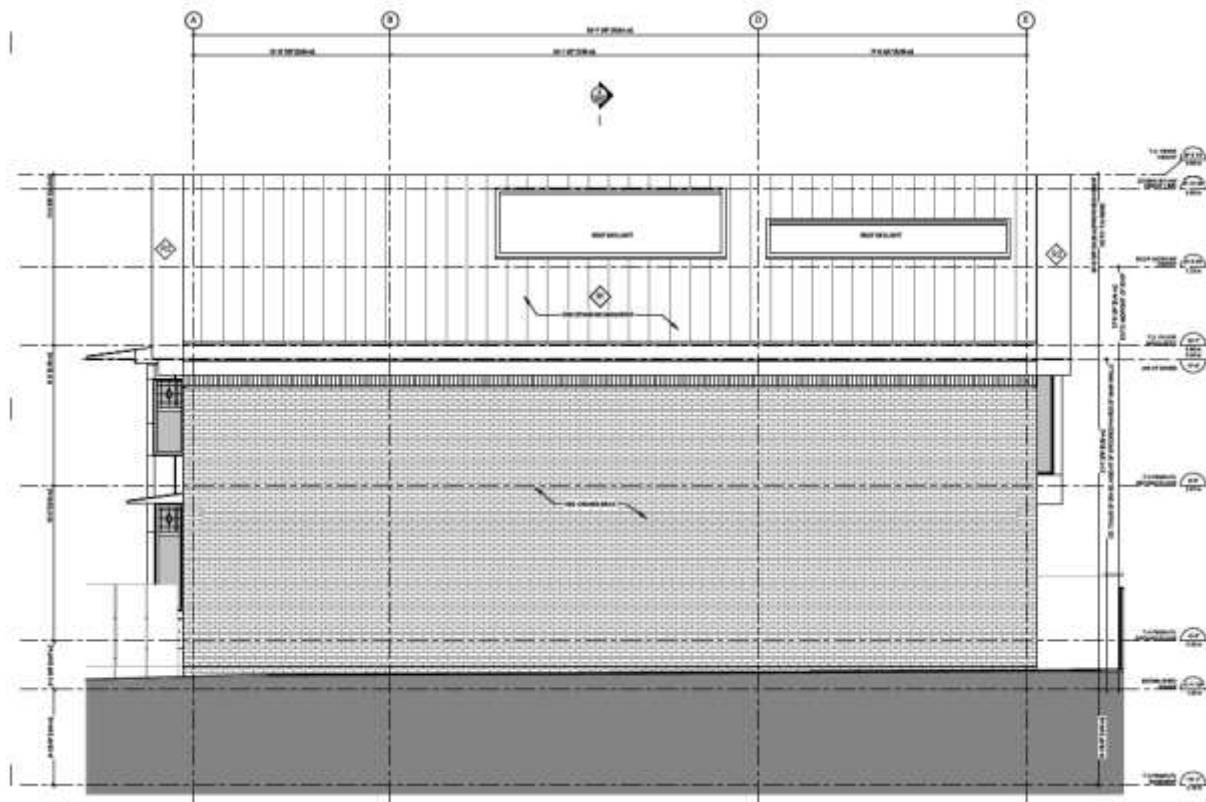
Photograph of context of 86 Highland Avenue and its immediate neighbours (Source - Google Maps, 2020)



Proposed south (principal) elevation of 86 Highland Avenue. (Source – Dewson Architects, 2022)



Proposed west elevation of 86 Highland Avenue (Source - Dewson Architects, 2022)



Proposed east elevation of 86 Highland Avenue (Source - Dewson Architects, 2022)



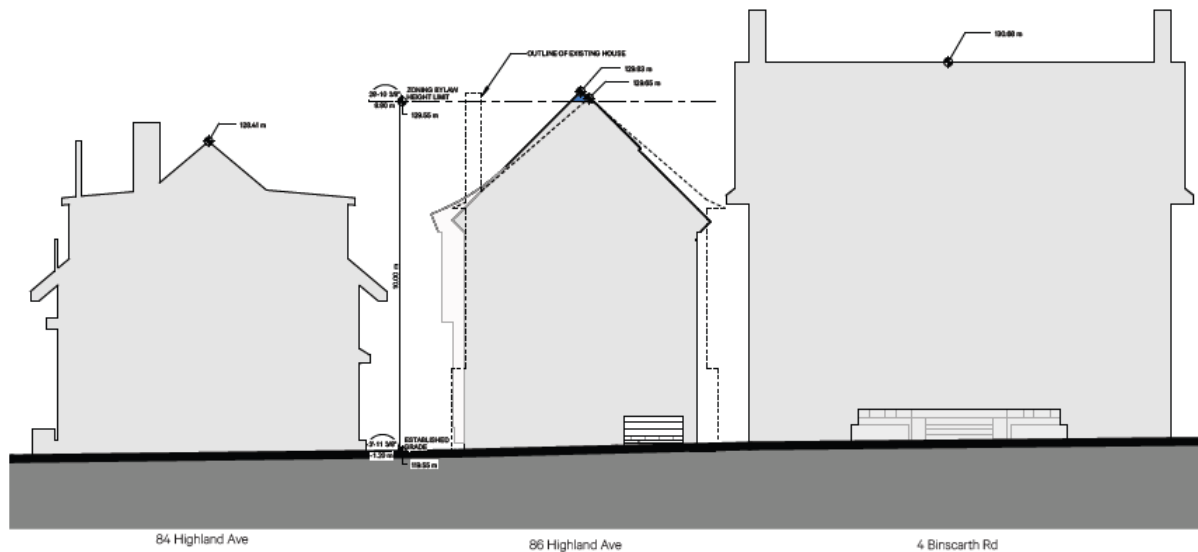
Rendering of south (principal) elevation of 86 Highland Avenue (Source - Dewson Architects, 2022)



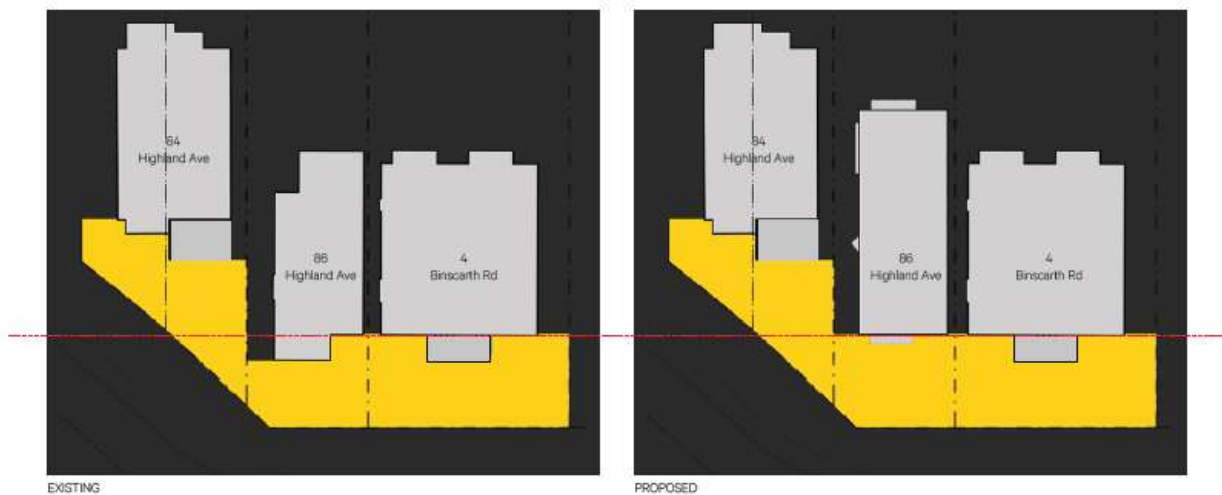
Contextual rendering of south and west elevations of 86 Highland Avenue (Source - Dewson Architects, 2022).

SCALE, MASSING, SETBACK, ENTRY LEVEL AND WINDOW RATIO STUDY

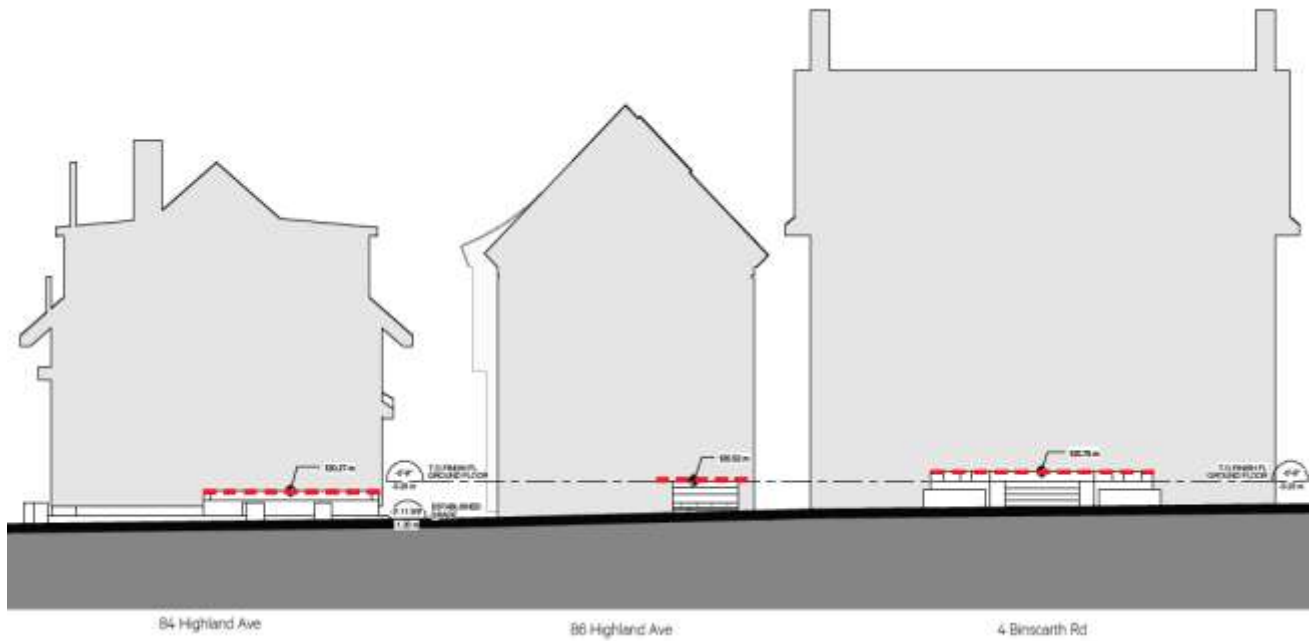
ATTACHMENT 4



Study of scale, massing, height and eave lines of proposed development and its neighbouring properties. (Source – Dewson Architects, 2022)



Setback study of proposed development and its neighbouring properties. (Source – Dewson Architects, 2022)



Entry level study of the proposed development and its neighbouring properties (Source – Dewson Architects, 2022)



Window ratio and fenestration study of the proposed development and its neighbouring properties (Source – Dewson Architects, 2022)