

Alterations to a Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement - 551 Mount Pleasant Road (Regent Theatre)

Date: June 23, 2023

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Don Valley West - Ward 15

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road (including the active entrances at 549, 553 and 555 Mount Pleasant Road) under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act in connection with a Site Plan application on the subject property, and that Council grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

The property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road contains a three-storey theatre constructed in 1927. The property is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under all three categories of design and physical, historical and associative and contextual values. The building was added to the City of Toronto's Heritage Register by City Council on May 28, 1984 and recommended for designation by City Council on September 28, 2022.

The proposed Site Plan Control and Heritage Permit applications include the retention of the western (primary) elevation of the theatre along Mount Pleasant Road, conserving the building's two-storey massing and Edwardian Classical three-bay façade. To accommodate a new live theatre space, the existing third storey is proposed to be expanded with a contemporary addition that steps back from and projects above the principal elevation. The building will extend toward the rear property line on Hadley Road, creating a rehearsal/community space, back of house facilities, a mechanical room, an electrical room and a loading zone.

A Heritage Impact Assessment describing proposed conservation and mitigation measures designed to reduce the impact of the proposed addition was prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated November 2, 2022, revised January 30, 2023. On June 15, 2023, the applicant prepared an addendum to the HIA which confirms the treatment of the subject property's heritage attributes.

The proposed development also requires approval from the Committee of Adjustment to permit the expansion of a legal non-conforming use as a theatre/entertainment/place of assembly use is not permitted in the Residential zone that applies to the east half of the site, and to permit variances from the Commercial Retail zoning standards that apply on the west half of the site. On May 25, 2023, application A0195/23NY was heard by the Committee of Adjustment, North York Panel. The application was deferred by the Panel. The application was considered by the Committee of Adjustment, North York Panel, on June 22, 2023, and was again deferred.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, for the reasons stated in the report, dated June 23, 2023, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, with such alterations to be substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated January 30, 2023, prepared by Hariri Pontarini Architects and NORR Architects and Engineering Ltd. and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated November 2, 2022, revised January 30, 2023, with an addendum dated June 15, 2023 on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with an approved Conservation Plan and drawings satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the following conditions:

a. That prior to final Site Plan approval for the property located at 551 Mount Pleasant Road, the owner shall:

1. Provide final Site Plan drawings substantially in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.b.2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage attributes 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 detailed Landscape Plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
4. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

5. 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 551 Mount Pleasant Road, 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. Provide evidence of conformity with the City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

2. Provide a Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant substantially in accordance with the conservation strategy set out in approved Heritage Impact Assessment for 551 Mount Pleasant Road prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated November 2, 2022, revised January 30, 2023, with an addendum dated June 15, 2023, with the following revisions to be incorporated to the conservation strategy and related drawings, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning as follows:

i. Conserve the stone detailing on the extant piers, including the 'teardrop' forms on the capitals and the stone detailing of the concentric planes on the north entrance surround.

ii. Conserve the original plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars, flowers, and astrological symbols in the entrance lobby in their current locations, generally.

3. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan and revised drawings required in Recommendation 1.b.2, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning including registration of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Provide full documentation of the existing heritage property, including two (2) printed sets of archival quality 8" x 10" colour photographs with borders in a glossy or semi-gloss finish and one (1) digital set on a CD in tiff format and 600 dpi resolution keyed to a location map, elevations and measured drawings, and copies of all existing interior floor plans and original drawings as may be available, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

c. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 1.b.5, the owner shall:

1. Provide a letter of substantial completion prepared and signed by a qualified heritage consultant confirming that the required conservation work, exterior lighting and signage and the required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the approved Conservation, Lighting, Signage and Interpretation Plans, 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 551 Mount Pleasant Road 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 551 Mount Pleasant Road.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

The property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road was included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on May 28, 1984.

On May 2, 2017, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted item TE24.91, recommending the Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, to report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the possibility of designating The

Regent Theatre at 551 Mount Pleasant Road under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.TE24.91>

On October 2, 2017, City Council adopted the recommendation to list over 250 properties within the Midtown in Focus study area on the City's Heritage Register, including properties along the east side of Mount Pleasant Road.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG22.5>

On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted, with amendments, the Midtown in Focus: Final Report recommending the adoption, with amendments, of Official Plan Amendment 405, including Schedule III, the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan. At this meeting, Council also recommended the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to undertake a study of the Glebe Manor Estates from Yonge Street to Bayview and from Millwood Road to Manor Road as a potential Heritage Conservation District under Section 40.(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act (Recommendation 10).
<http://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.PG31.7>

On September 28, 2022, 551 Mount Pleasant Road was approved for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by Toronto City Council. On October 3, 2022, the City of Toronto issued a Notice of Intention to Designate. Designation By-law 8-2023, enacted November 24, 2022
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.CC50.7>

On May 25, 2023, Committee of Adjustment application A0195/23NY, requesting to permit the expansion of a legal non-conforming use and variances to the zoning by-law was heard by the Committee of Adjustment, North York Panel. The application was deferred by the Panel. The application was considered by the Committee of Adjustment, North York Panel, on June 22, 2023, and was again deferred.
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/87f5-CommitteeofAdjustment-NorthYork-Hearing-Agenda-June-22-2023.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Property

The subject property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road is situated in Toronto's Mount Pleasant Village neighbourhood, on the east side of Mount Pleasant Road between Belsize Drive and Manor Road East, in an area consisting primarily of fine grained 2-3 storey buildings with commercial storefronts dating back to the late 1920s and early 1930s. Both sides of Mount Pleasant Road between Belsize Drive and Manor Road East have continuous streetwalls with zero-lot-line conditions.

The subject property contains the three-storey Regent Theatre, a fine and surviving example of a purpose-built neighbourhood theatre from the interwar era. Constructed in 1927 according to the plans of Murray Brown, the subject property has cultural heritage value as a once common but increasingly rare example of an early 20th-century neighbourhood theatre. Originally named the Belsize Theatre (1927-1950), the theatre opened as part of the Famous Players chain and was designed to host both vaudeville

and film entertainment. It is also valued as the premises of the renowned Crest Theatre (1954-1966), a repertory theatre company that helped to spotlight and establish the careers in the performing arts for a generation of Canadian talent. With the neighbouring heritage properties along Mount Pleasant Road, the subject property contributes to the historic main street character of the block between Belsize Drive to the south and Manor Road East to the north, and is a local landmark.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The development site is adjacent to the following heritage properties, located within the Midtown in Focus planning study area. The properties were added to the Heritage Register by the City of Toronto on October 2, 2017.

535-545 Mount Pleasant Road

To the south of the development site is 535-545 Mount Pleasant Road, identified as a row of five two-storey commercial buildings dating to 1928. The properties are recognized for being historically, visually and physically linked to their setting anchoring the northeast corner of Belsize Drive at the south end of a contiguous row of commercial buildings with a shared setback in the extended block between Belsize Drive and Manor Road East, and for adjoining the Regent Theatre.

557-559 Mount Pleasant Road

To the north of the development site is 557-559 Mount Pleasant Road, identified as a pair of two-storey commercial buildings dating to 1929. The properties are recognized for being historically, visually and physically linked to their setting on the east side of the street as part of a contiguous row of commercial buildings with a shared setback in the extended block between Belsize Drive and Manor Road East, and for adjoining the Regent Theatre.

552-560 Mount Pleasant Road

Across from the development site is 552-560 Mount Pleasant Road, identified as a row of five two-story commercial buildings dating to 1929. The properties are recognized for being historically, visually and physically linked to their setting on the west side of the street as part of the contiguous row of commercial buildings with a shared setback in the block between Belsize Drive and Penrose Road.

Midtown in Focus

Midtown in Focus was an inter-divisional initiative led by City Planning in response to the intensification and change underway in parts of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan area. The review informed the development of up-to-date planning policies and identified key capital upgrades needed to improve the area's parks, public realm and other local infrastructure. On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted, with amendments, the Midtown in Focus: Final Report recommending the adoption, with amendments, of Official Plan Amendment 405, including Schedule III, the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan. The Official Plan Amendment, as modified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, is now in force.

Proposal

The applications for Site Plan Control and Heritage Permit approval for the subject property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road proposes the renovation of the theatre by substantially replacing the existing lobby, auditorium, and stage to create a live theatre and performance venue. Construction plans also include a new roof and a full/new excavated basement.

The proposal would add an approximate 230-square metre third-storey addition, comprising a lobby and balcony seating area that steps back and projects above the principal (west) elevation fronting Mount Pleasant Road. The two-storey massing and Edwardian Classical three-bay façade on the primary (west) elevation is proposed to be retained and conserved. The new third-storey addition is flush with the north and south elevations and is stepped back from the front façade by 1.5 metres to conserve the historic roof profile, with further progressive step backs of 7.8 metres and 13.9 metres to accommodate the expanded auditorium.

The proposal would also add a three-storey, 1,078-square metre addition to the rear of the building that will contain back-of-house uses, mechanical spaces, a community rehearsal space, and a new loading area. The north and south (side) walls and east (rear) wall are proposed to be replaced as the proposal extends the building's footprint toward the rear property line. The rear extension is designed with a pitched roofline and glazing at the ground floor on the south and east elevations. Entrances are located on the south elevation. No parking spaces are proposed.

Heritage Planning Framework

Cultural heritage resources are protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

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)") 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 for Site Plan Control 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:

3.1.6.4 - 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.

3.1.6.5 - 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.

3.1.6.26 - 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.

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

Conservation Strategy

Heritage Planning has reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment (the "HIA") prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated November 2, 2022, revised January 30, 2023, as well as the addendum to the HIA, dated June 15, 2023, submitted in support of the application. The HIA concludes that the proposed development conserves the cultural heritage value of the extant theatre building located at 551 Mount Pleasant Road, and that it will not have a significant impact on the cultural heritage value of the adjacent heritage properties. Overall, staff concur with this assessment and are supportive of the proposal. However, staff remain dissatisfied with certain outstanding conservation details (as shown in Figure 1 below) and have requested that revisions be made to the conservation strategy as conditions of approval to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

To accommodate the new design of the ground floor, the application proposes the removal of the extant north entrance/exit and two associated heritage attributes, with a new exit to be instated at the same location in a more contemporary design. At this time, Heritage Planning staff see no rationale to support the removal of the heritage attributes and the applicant has not proposed or considered any alternatives. The limestone elements are understood to be in generally good condition and staff are of the opinion that these elements should not be removed if the stone is in repairable condition and the proposed design be revised in a manner that is compatible with the building's style, era and character and does not obscure, damage or destroy character-defining elements. Heritage Planning staff are therefore recommending that the stone detailing on the extant piers, and the stone detailing of the concentric planes on the north entrance surround be conserved as a condition of approval.

To accommodate technical live-performance height requirements in the auditorium and the new design of the ground floor lobby, the plaster ceiling in the original lobby is proposed to be removed, following its documentation through photographs and lidar scanning. The ceiling is proposed to be recast with six original astrological medallions salvaged and reinstalled on a newly constructed upper floor. Heritage Planning staff see no rationale to support the removal of the original lobby ceiling and good heritage conservation practice does not support relocating heritage attributes when their location

is part of their heritage value. The proposed design should be revised to conserve the original lobby ceiling and details as a part of the new lobby sequence in its original location relative to the entrance. Heritage Planning staff are therefore recommending that the original plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars, flowers, and astrological symbols in the entrance lobby be conserved as a condition of approval.

Figure 1

Heritage Attribute (from Designation By-law No. 8-2023)	Proposed Action	Heritage Planning Staff Response
"The stone detailing on the extant piers including the 'teardrop' forms on the capitals"	Demolition - as part of the redesign of the ground floor of the front elevation, the extant piers are proposed to be removed	Heritage Planning staff recommend that the stone detailing on the extant piers, and the stone detailing of the concentric planes on the north entrance surround will be conserved in their current locations to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.
"The stone detailing of the concentric planes on the north entrance surround"	Demolition - as part of the redesign of the ground floor on the front elevation, the concentric planes on the north entrance surround are proposed to be removed.	

Heritage Attribute (from Designation By-law No. 8-2023)	Proposed Action	Heritage Planning Staff Response
"The plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars, flowers, and astrological symbols in the original lobby"	Demolition - the original lobby ceiling is proposed to be removed as part of a reconfiguration of floor levels within the theatre, and the ceiling will no longer be appropriately scaled to the new ground-floor lobby once the interior retail units are removed. To mitigate the impact of its removal, the plaster ceiling is proposed to be recast within the publicly accessible second-storey lounge outside the auditorium.	Heritage Planning staff recommend the original plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars, flowers, and astrological symbols in the entrance lobby will be conserved in their current locations to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.
"The astrological symbols in the plasterwork of the original lobby ceiling, which also featured in Brown's work for the Bedford Theatre"	Alteration - the six intact astrological medallions within the original lobby ceiling (Capricorn, Sagittarius, Pisces, Taurus, Aquarius and Leo) will be salvaged and reinstalled. The five damaged medallions and one missing medallion will be replaced with new artist-designed medallions.	

Despite the concerns noted above, staff are of the opinion that the balance of the conservation strategy supports and maintains the 20th-century main street character of Mount Pleasant Road by conserving and rehabilitating the two-storey massing and composition of the Edwardian Classical three-bay façade of the existing theatre building. The expanded third storey addition is proposed to be glazed (glass curtainwall) above the principal façade and stepped back to allow it to be subordinate. While the chimney is proposed for removal, the new design retains in-situ the gabled roof and projecting central bay on the principal façade, along with the tile, red brick and smooth stone decorative detailing, the original fenestration openings, and the three round arched openings in the central bay above the theatre entrance. By setting back the massing of the contemporary addition above the retained heritage façade, the existing form, scale and massing of the heritage building will be conserved as viewed from the public realm.

The impact of new construction on the existing heritage building will be further mitigated by the use of complementary materials and the retention of the gabled roof and projecting central bay on the principal façade. Also conserved is the existing building's balanced fenestration pattern that restores the multi-light glazing to match the original design in all upper-storey windows, including the central trio of arched windows with divided lights and fanlights. Second storey windows on the principal elevation are proposed to be framed in dark bronze.

The Regent Theatre entrance has undergone numerous renovations over the years and has historically evolved to reflect design standards of the day. The 1950s angular front entryway, entrance vestibule and two storefronts at the ground floor are proposed to be removed and replaced with a contemporary expanded entryway, designed to reference the three-part design of the integrated storefronts flanking the central entryway. To maintain the legibility of the Regent Theatre as an early 20th-century theatre, the proposal will conserve the arrangement of a central entrance flanked by two storefronts with large glass display windows. The new layout incorporates the two flanking interior retail units into a large foyer that includes a lobby, box office, concessions area, and banquette seating. The delineated bays are still articulated through the new design while the recessed storefront entrances have been reconfigured to incorporate the retail units behind them into the larger theatre lobby, animated with banquette seating behind. Proposed theatre signage on the glazing would further support their identification as typological storefronts.

On the primary elevation, there are two rectangular marquees (one over each of the smaller canopies) with a curving span of corrugated sheet metal connecting the two across the central canopy. The proposal replaces the existing canopy and marquee with a reconstruction of the Crest Theatre-era circular canopy with Hollywood lights. Due to suspected condition issues and subject to further investigation, the canopy above the first storey is proposed to be reconstructed in-situ and in kind. It will continue to mark the building as a typological main street theatre and convey the subject property's mid-century association with the significant Crest Theatre era. The perpendicular Regent Theatre Marquee is mounted at the peak of the gable with back lit signage facing north and south and bulbs along the perimeter. A new contemporary projecting vertical sign is proposed to be installed on the front elevation with a new colour and lighting scheme. The vertical signage is continuing the presence and placement of a projecting sign on

the front elevation to mark the subject property as a landmark and a typological main street theatre; however, it is positioned in a new location to the north of the front entrance. The proposed sign placement would no longer obstruct heritage attributes including the original Belsize Theatre crest and nameplate. The projecting sign is not a heritage attribute, and therefore the revised location of the new sign will not impact existing heritage attributes. Additionally, the new sign will be equally prominent and visible in views along Mount Pleasant Road. Staff are supportive of the approach to the new sign design but will continue to work with the applicant as part of the Conservation Plan and Signage Plan to situate it in an appropriate location on the façade (as staff have preference for the sign to be installed at the historic location of projecting signage).

All interior elements of the heritage building, including interior partition walls and interior floors, are proposed to be removed to reconfigure the theatre's layout to accommodate the spatial and technological program needs of a contemporary live theatre venue. The auditorium's existing rectangular layout was constructed for cinema audiences and will be replaced with a live theatre stage, orchestra pit and three tiers of seating. The auditorium is equipped for live theatre and to screen film. The interior heritage attributes proposed to be removed include the vaulted ceiling in the clear-span auditorium, the inscription above the proscenium that reflects the original décor scheme, which reads "On with the dance let joy be unconfined" and linear, ornamental plaster detailing arranged in a grid pattern. The proposed design involves a new auditorium with clear span ceiling and catwalks for contemporary programming. The design of the auditorium will interpret the historic character and prior theatrical history of the subject property, with details to be confirmed in a future Interpretation Plan. A total of six (6) pieces of the ornamental plaster grid pattern detailing in the ceiling, representing the two patterns present, are proposed to be cut and salvaged, to contribute to an assortment of diversely scaled available pieces to be reused in the interior wayfinding strategy. The Lord Byron quote is proposed to be re-inscribed within the new building as a component of the interpretation strategy.

A comprehensive salvage and reuse strategy is proposed to mitigate the impact of the auditorium's removal. Pending further study of condition, advancement of the interior design, and subject to a Conservation Plan, features original to the 1927 theatre are proposed to be salvaged and incorporated within the new theatre design, including the plasterwork and other architectural details that reflect the original décor scheme relating to theatrical history and traditional vaudeville theatre design (satyr masks, wall mural fragments, and ceiling grilles). The treatment of the interiors, including the future location of the salvaged architectural details and historic lobby ceiling, are subject to further design development as part of ongoing discussions with the applicant and a forthcoming Conservation Plan; however, a preliminary conservation strategy is shown in Figure 2 below. To ensure that the design sensibility reflected in the 1927 theatre is communicated throughout the interior of the contemporary building, nineteen (19) individual elements of plasterwork or other ornamentation are proposed to be cut and salvaged, the Frieze of Carmen and the two proscenium triptychs are proposed to be reinstated and displayed as art, and the two ceiling grilles are proposed to be reinstated within the contemporary auditorium ceiling.

Figure 2

Heritage Attribute (from Designation By-law No. 8-2023)	Proposed Action
"The extant plasterwork and other architectural details that reflect the original décor scheme relating to theatrical history and traditional vaudeville theatre design, including the satyr masks, wall mural fragments, and ceiling grilles in the auditorium"	The winged crest embedded in the balcony front and the satyr masks in the auditorium are proposed to be removed, given their disproportionate scale when mounted in a non-triple-height space as they were in the original auditorium.
	The Frieze of Carmen wall mural fragment is proposed to be salvaged and reinstated in the double-height space above the elevator bay in the new community/rehearsal space lobby. A second-storey interior window is proposed to provide eye-level views to the mural.
	Three (3) fragments each of the two (2) gold-painted decorative plaster bands at the top of the auditorium wall and the auditorium ceiling are proposed to be cut and salvaged (a total of six), to contribute to an assortment of diversely scaled available pieces to be reused in the interior wayfinding strategy.
	The two (2) matching plaster triptychs near the top of the proscenium, on either side of the stage, are proposed to be salvaged and reinstated as large-scale elements in the new ground-floor lobby, mirroring each other on the north and south walls. Located close to the building's west wall, they will be visible through the front facade's glazing.
	The two (2) pieces of plasterwork bordering the Lord Byron proscenium quote are proposed to be cut and salvaged, to contribute to an assortment of diversely scaled available pieces to be reused in the interior wayfinding strategy.

Heritage Attribute (from Designation By-law No. 8-2023)	Proposed Action
	The two (2) grilles in the auditorium ceiling are proposed to be salvaged and reinstated in the contemporary auditorium ceiling.
	The six (6) plaster nameplates mounted on the north and south auditorium walls (Hare, Shaw, Tree, Terry, Gwynne and [ruined]), and the four (4) plaster book crests mounted on the north and south auditorium walls are generally damaged and are not proposed to be salvaged.

The HIA asserts that the proposed development will not have an impact on the cultural heritage value of the adjacent properties listed on the City's Heritage Register. Staff concur with this assessment. By retaining the principal façade and designing an addition that steps back and is distinct from the historic structure, the new proposal conserves the contiguous row of buildings on the east side of Mount Pleasant and does not negatively impact the relationship between 535-545 Mount Pleasant Road and 557-559 Mount Pleasant Road to the Regent Theatre.

Conservation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of the first permit for the development, the owner should be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the Heritage Impact Assessment, including revisions to the conservation strategy as set out in the approval conditions, prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Conservation Plan should detail all of the recommended interventions and conservation work including any recommended restoration work, a detailed plan describing how the heritage building will be protected during construction, a schedule of short and long-term maintenance requirements and estimated costs for all conservation work.

Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan approval, the applicant should be required to submit an Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The interpretation plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the Regent Theatre building to users and visitors of the property.

Heritage Lighting Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of site plan approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to

submit a heritage lighting plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. This lighting plan should include details of how the Regent Theatre building will be lit to highlight its unique heritage character.

Signage Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of site plan approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager of Heritage Preservation Services.

Heritage Easement Agreement

Staff is recommending that the owner enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to secure the long-term protection of 551 Mount Pleasant Road.

CONCLUSION

Staff are supportive of the proposal to alter the Part IV designated heritage property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road (including the active entrances at 549, 553 and 555 Mount Pleasant Road), in connection with applications for Site Plan Control and Heritage Permit Approval on the subject property, and recommend that Council approve the proposed alterations and grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement, subject to revisions to the plans and drawings to secure the conservation of the stone detailing on the extant piers including the 'teardrop' forms on the capitals, the stone detailing of the concentric planes on the north entrance surround, and the original plaster ceiling with details of the sun, stars, flowers, and astrological symbols in the entrance lobby, in their current locations, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 2 - Photographs

Attachment 3 - Plans and Drawings

Attachment 4 - Renderings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

551 Mount Pleasant Road

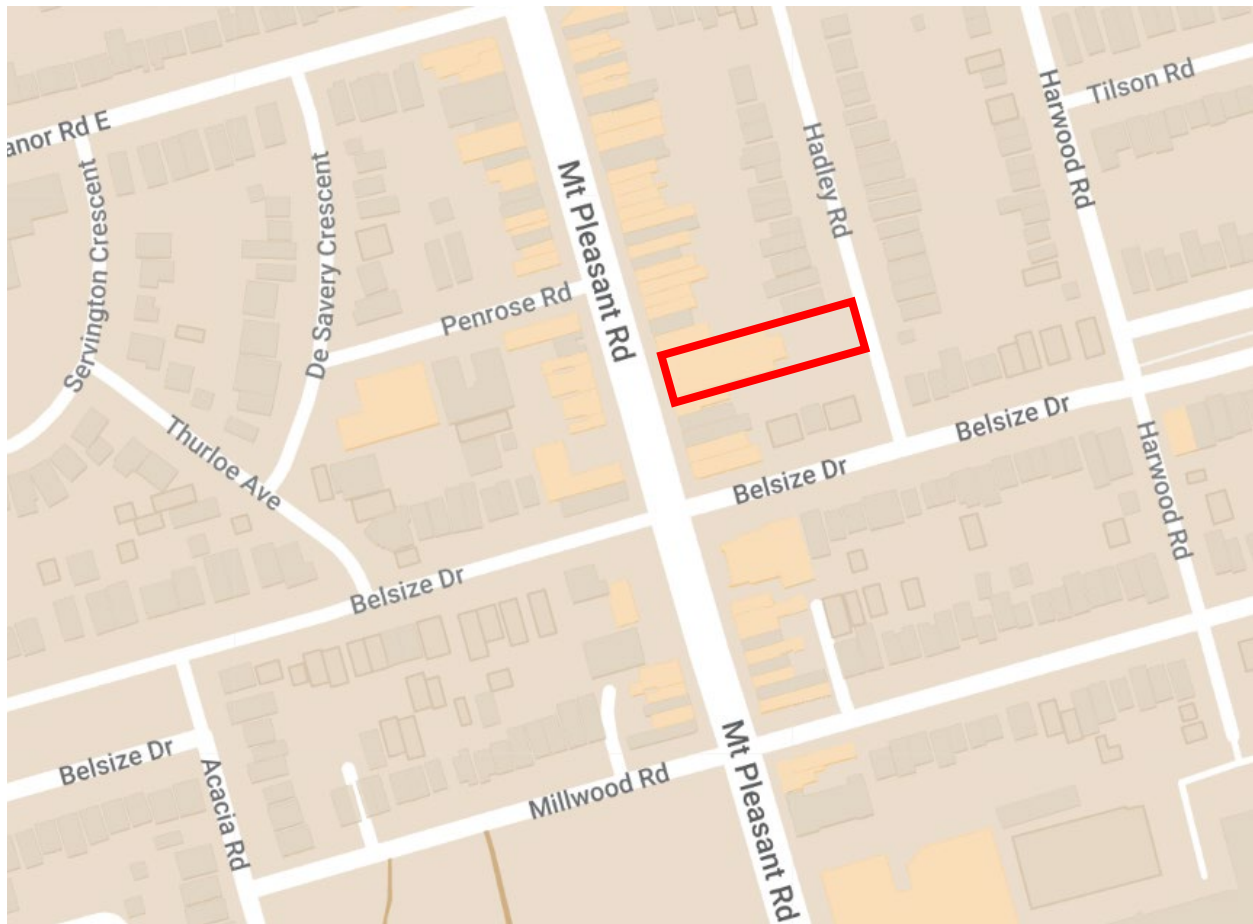


Figure 1. Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 551 Mount Pleasant Road on the east side of Mount Pleasant Road between Belsize Drive and Manor Road East. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 2. Aerial View (base image 2016) showing the location of the subject property spanning the block between Mount Pleasant Road and Hadley Road, north of Belsize Drive. The approximate boundary of the subject property is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).

551 Mount Pleasant Road



Figure 3. Principal (west) elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 4. North elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 5. East elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (Heritage Planning, 2022).

551 Mount Pleasant Road

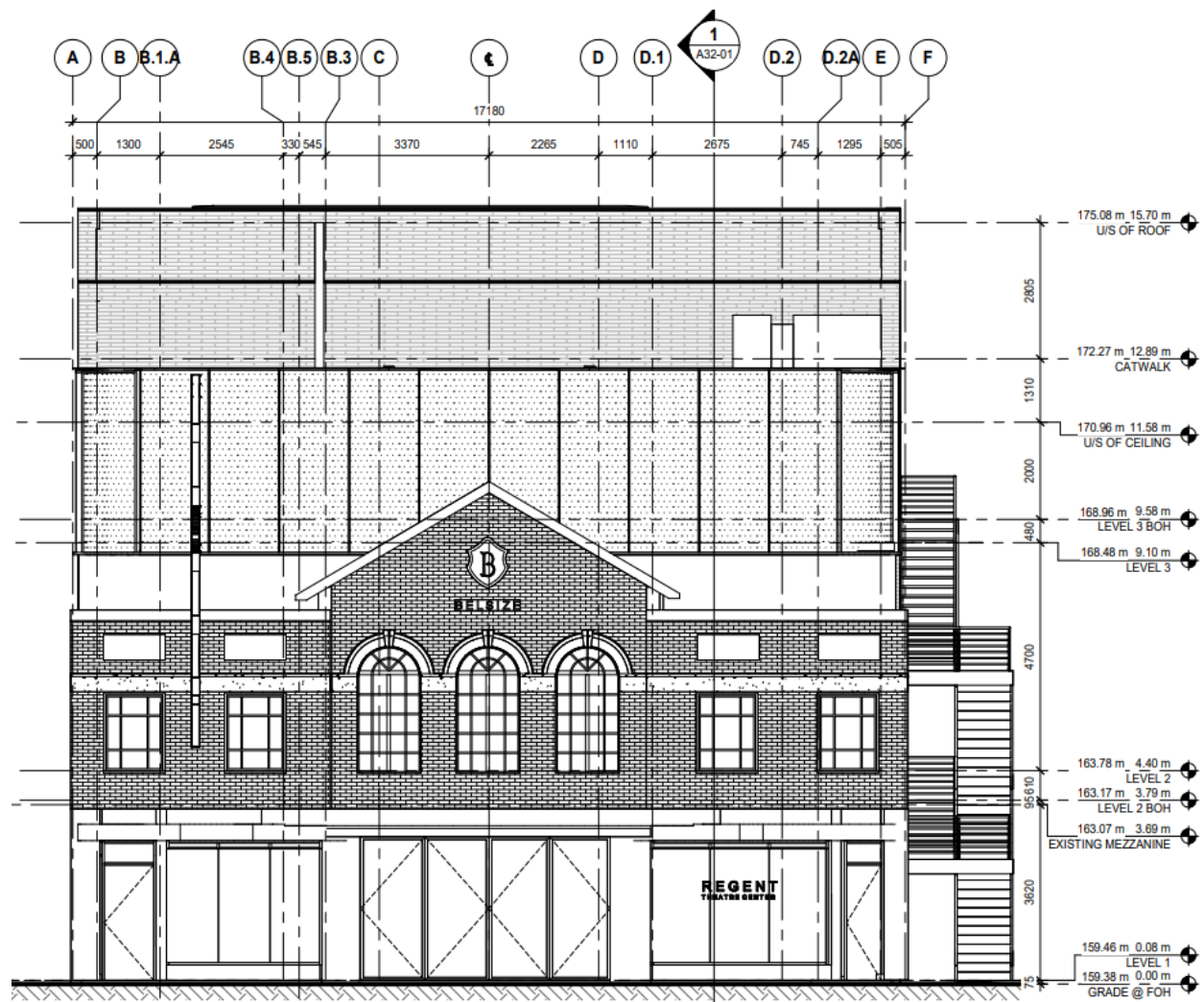


Figure 6. Proposed principal (west) elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

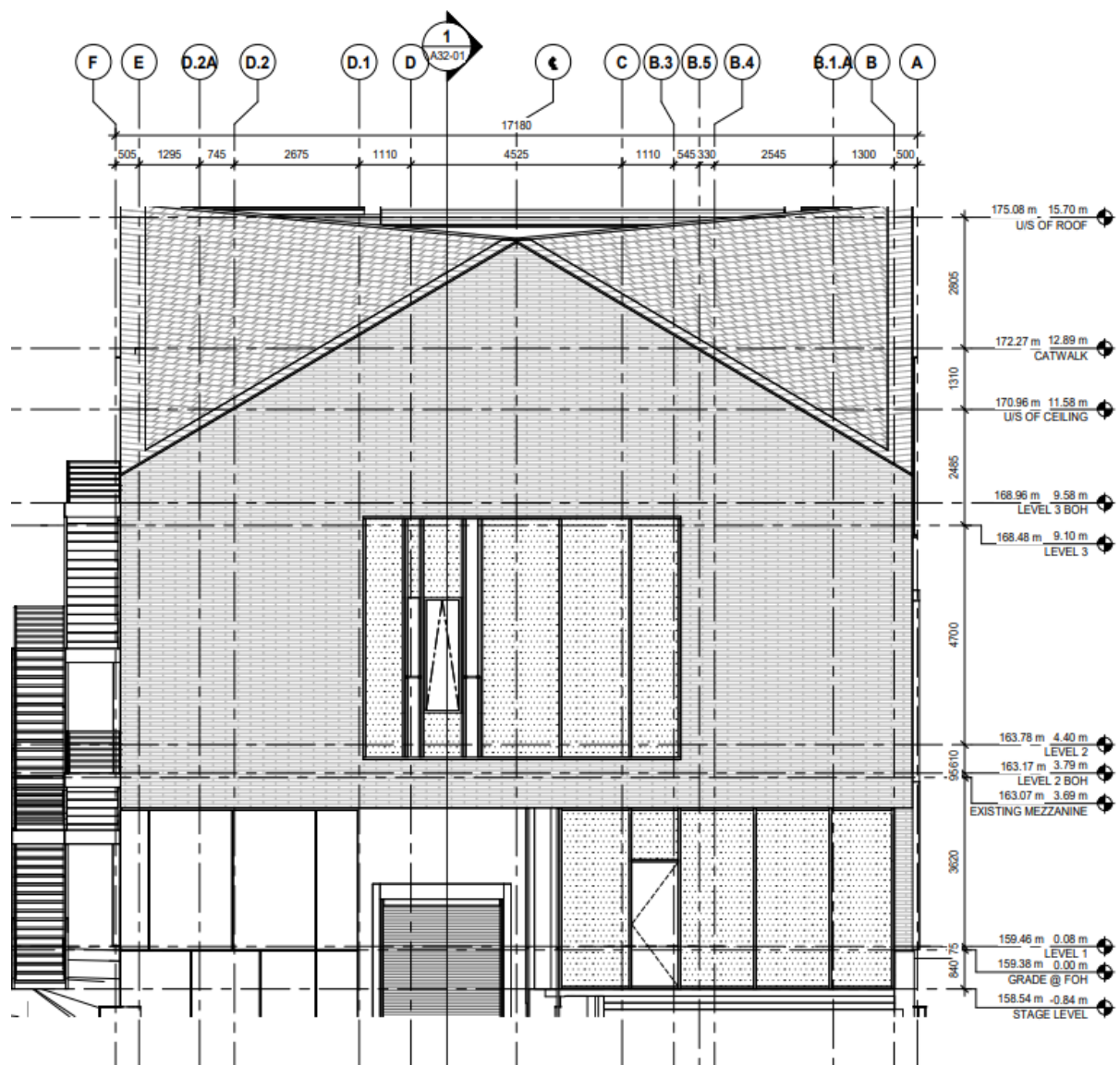


Figure 7. Proposed east elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

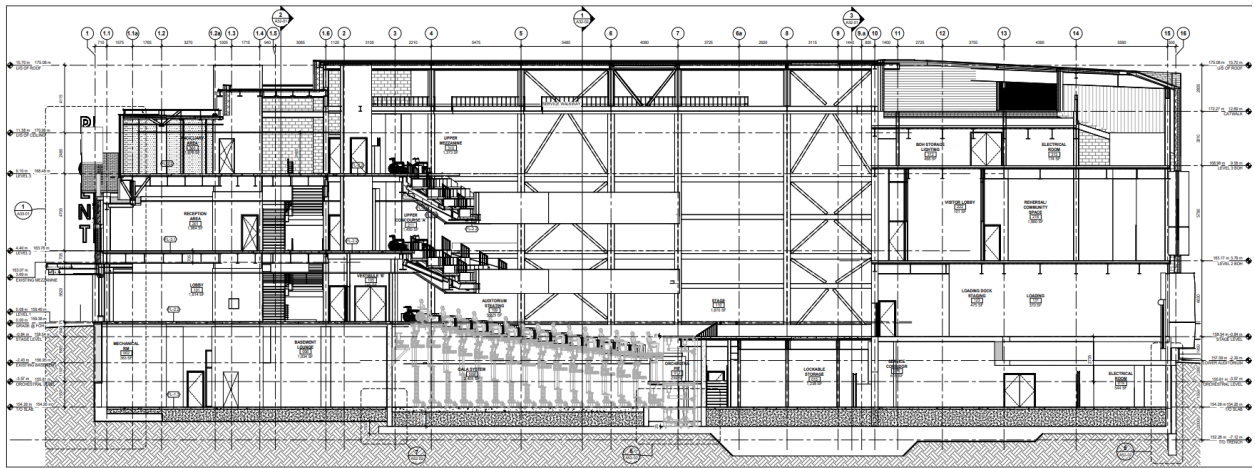


Figure 8. Proposed cross-section of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

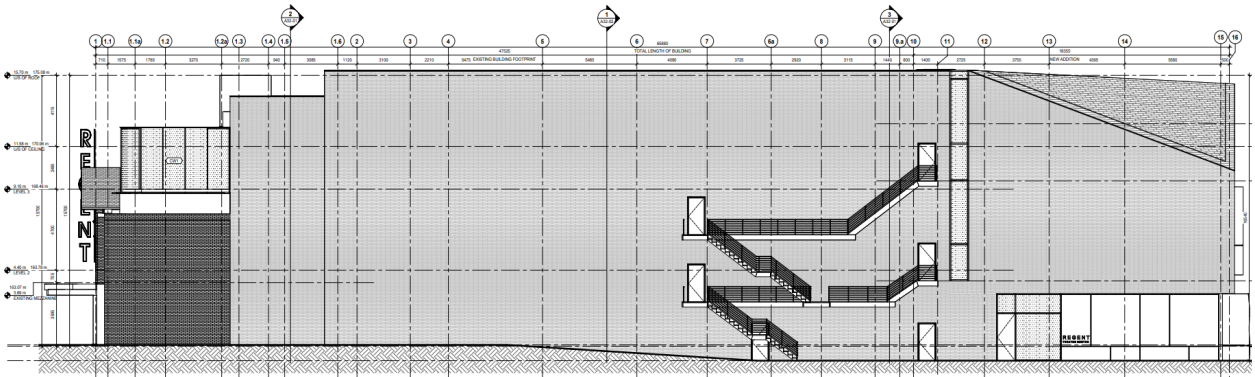


Figure 9. Proposed south elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

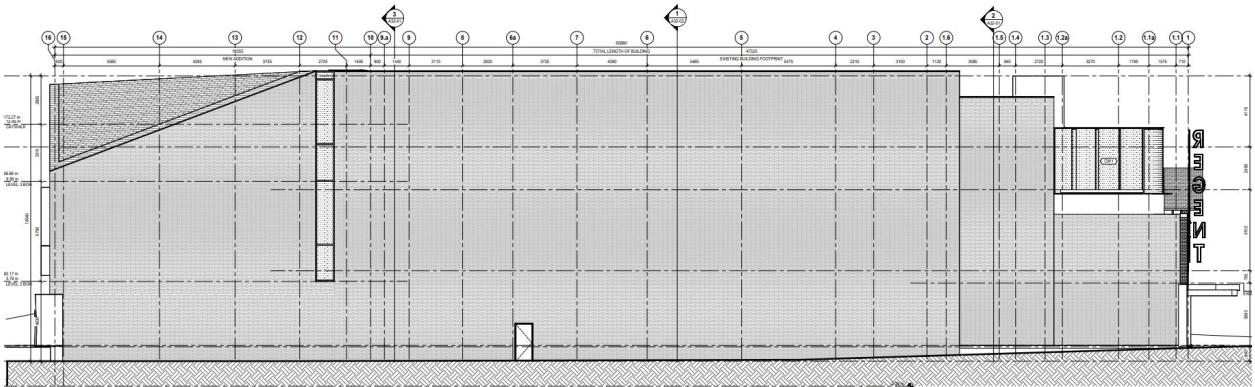


Figure 10. Proposed north elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

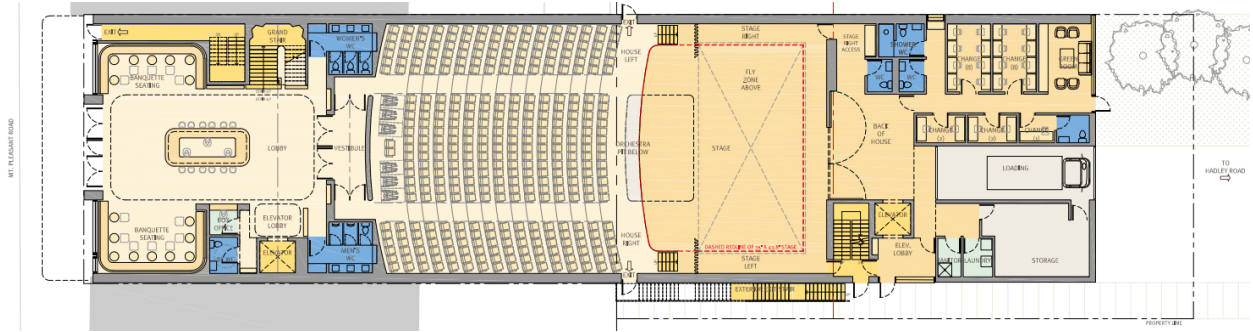


Figure 11. Proposed ground floor of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

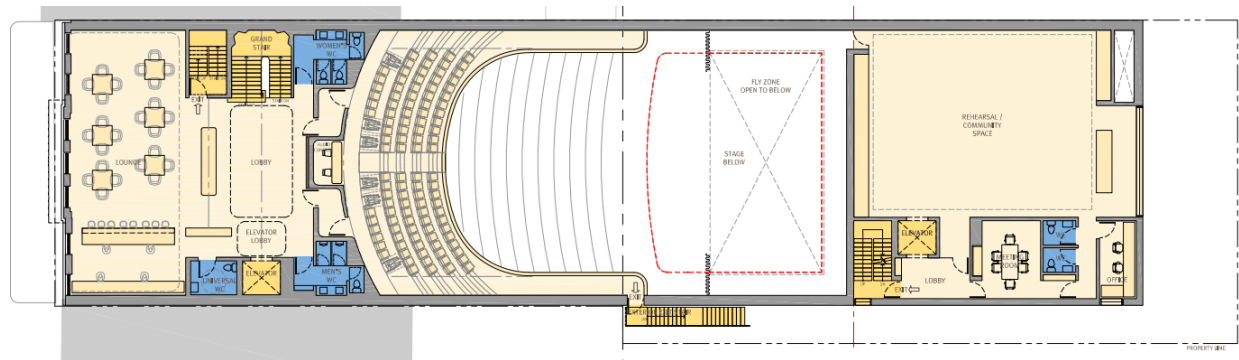


Figure 12. Proposed ground floor of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

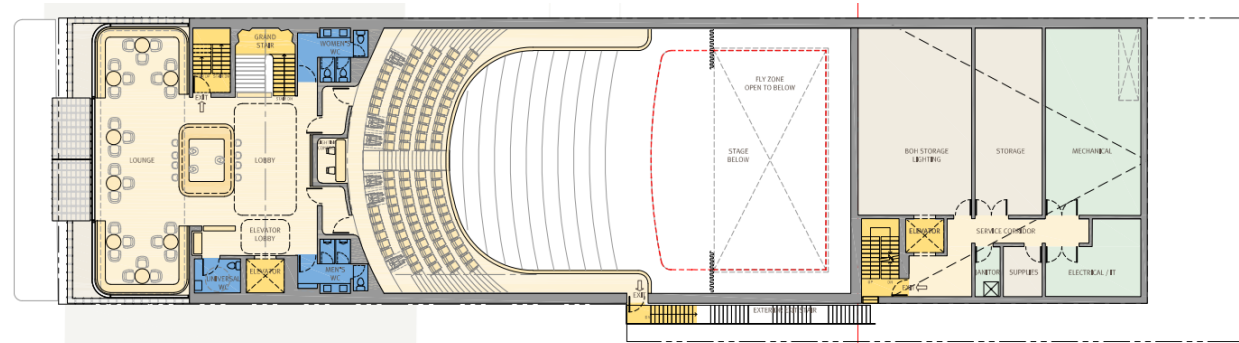


Figure 13. Proposed ground floor of 551 Mount Pleasant Road (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).

RENDERINGS

ATTACHMENT 4

551 Mount Pleasant Road



Figure 12. Proposed primary (west) elevation of 551 Mount Pleasant Road, rendering looking north-east (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).



Figure 13. Proposed second floor lounge of 551 Mount Pleasant Road, incorporating the historic lobby ceiling (ERA Architects Inc., 2023).