

## **90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street - Alterations to Designated Heritage Properties and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreements**

**Date:** October 16, 2023

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Toronto Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage properties at 90, 90A (formerly 90 Isabella Street), 92 and 94 Isabella Street which are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The subject properties are located on the north side of Isabella Street between Church Street and Jarvis Street. 90A and 92 Isabella Street contain a pair of three-storey semi-detached house-form buildings dating to 1888-1889 and 94 Isabella Street contains a two-and-a-half storey house-form building constructed c.1885. 90 Isabella Street contains a row of three-storey townhouses situated north of 90A and 92 Isabella Street, which were constructed in the mid-1970s and are not heritage resources.

The proposed development has been submitted in connection with applications for a Zoning By-law amendment and Site Plan Control and involves the construction of a 69-storey residential tower on the site with the in-situ retention of the street-facing (south) elevations and a portion of the east and west return walls and the dismantling and reconstruction of the entire west wall of 90A Isabella Street. Elements of the interior of 90A and 92 Isabella Street will be integrated into new, reconfigured interior spaces.

The proposed alterations are generally consistent with the existing policy framework. The heritage impacts of the development proposal are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the heritage properties at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to allow for the construction of a new 69-storey building on the lands known municipally as 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street, with such alterations substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated June 26, 2023, prepared by Diamond Schmitt, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated September 25, 2023, prepared by GBCA Architects, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and all subject to and in accordance with a Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to the following additional conditions:

a. That the related 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 City Council, the owner shall:

1. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the properties at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated June 26, 2023, prepared by Diamond Schmitt and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated September 25, 2023 prepared by GBCA Architects, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to and in accordance with the 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 the properties at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

3. Withdraw their objection to the designation of the property at 94 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

c. That prior to final Site Plan approval for the proposal, for the property located at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street the owners shall:

1. Provide final Site Plan drawings substantially in accordance with the approved Conservation Plans required in Recommendation 1.b. 2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describe how the exterior of the heritage properties will be sensitively illuminated to enhance their heritage character to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such a plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager Heritage Planning.
3. Provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the subject properties, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
4. Provide an Interpretation Plan for the subject properties, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

d. That prior to the issuance of any permit for the work described in the Site Plan application, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing heritage buildings as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City of Toronto required in Recommendation 1.b.1 for properties at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street, including registration on title of such agreements to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
2. Have provided a detailed Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.b.2.
3. Have withdrawn their objection to the designation of the property at 94 Isabella Street required in Recommendation 1.b.3.
4. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plans 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, Lighting and Interpretation plans.

e. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 1.d.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 and the required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the Conservation, Lighting 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 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella 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 properties at 90, 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On January 16, 1978, City Council enacted By-law No. 25-78 designating the property at 90 (now 90A) and 92 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

On March 29, 30 and 31, 2023, City Council passed By-law No. 276-2023 designating 94 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/nm/api/individual/notice/3990.do>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Heritage Value**

The pair of semi-detached houses at 90A and 92 Isabella Street were among the first houses built on the street and date to 1888-89. Large in architectural scale and dynamic in detail, it is a good example of the eclecticism of the period. Important features are the

distinctive wood ornamentation, the stained glass and the terra cotta panelling on the exterior, as well as the interior woodwork, stair spaces and the fine fireplaces.

Constructed in 1884-1885, the Helen E. McMaster House at 94 Isabella Street is an intact, representative example of a Queen Anne Revival-style residence. Key stylistic components of the subject property's design include the asymmetrical composition of its elevations, the irregular roofline featuring gables and corbelled brick chimneys, the varied textures of its material palette, oriel and bay windows, and details such as wood brackets and bargeboards.

The property demonstrates the work of Edmund Burke (1850-1919), of the architectural firm of Langley & Burke. Burke was a prolific and influential architect in Toronto, known for his versatility and application of new building technologies. Noted for its Queen Anne Revival-style design and precedential use of shingled cladding, the Helen E. McMaster House reflects Burke's approach to prominent residential commissions in the late nineteenth century.

All three properties are important in maintaining and supporting the character of the area along Isabella Street and continuing along Jarvis Street. They are characterized by fine architectural detailing and deeper landscaped setbacks and contribute to a layer of built fabric reflecting the area's early development for the residences of prominent Torontonians.

## **Heritage Planning Policy Framework**

### **The Planning Act**

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario. It 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" and 2(r) "to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place."

### **The Provincial Policy Statement (2020)**

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- the efficient use and management of land and infrastructure
- ensuring the sufficient provision of housing to meet changing needs including affordable housing
- ensuring opportunities for job creation
- ensuring the appropriate transportation, water, sewer and other infrastructure is available to accommodate current and future needs
- protecting people, property and community resources by directing development away from natural or human-made hazards
- conservation of cultural heritage and archaeology

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.6 of the PPS states that, "The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."

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, management and use 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 states 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."

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS and shall conform with Provincial Plans. All comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS and conform with Provincial Plans.

Provincial Plans are intended to be read in their entirety and relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.

### **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)**

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.

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 with the Growth Plan. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform with 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."

### **Toronto Official Plan**

This application 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. The following Official Plan policies apply to the proposed alterations:

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 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."

3.1.6.6: "The adaptive re-use of properties on the Heritage Register is encouraged for new uses permitted in the applicable Official Plan land use designation, consistent with the "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada."

3.1.6.16: "Properties on the Heritage Register and publicly known archaeological sites and artifacts will be promoted through educational programs, museums, local celebrations and other programming opportunities."

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."

3.1.6.27: "Where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register, the conservation of whole or substantial portions of buildings, structures and landscapes on those properties is desirable and encouraged. The retention of façades alone is discouraged."

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

## **Standards and Guidelines**

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), the Standards for Rehabilitation (10-12), and the Standards for Restoration (13-14) 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>

## **Development Proposal and Conservation Strategy**

The proposed development has been submitted in connection with applications for a Zoning By-law amendment and Site Plan Control and involves the construction of a 69-storey residential tower on the site with 831 new units with lobby and building amenity space at grade. The site will be excavated below to accommodate three storeys of underground parking which will be accessed through the shared parking entrance and loading area off of Isabella Street.

The glazed base of the tower would step back 10 metres from the front walls of the face of the heritage buildings and then gradually step out over three levels. The entrance to the main lobby would be accessed through a new recessed entrance located between 92 and 94 Isabella Streets. The tower is proposed to be placed behind the intersection of the flat cross gable ridge of 90A-92 and behind the broad hip of 94 Isabella Street.

The south (Isabella Street) elevations of 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street and the east and west return walls are proposed to be retained in situ. The remaining entirety of the west wall of 90A Isabella Street is proposed to be dismantled and reconstructed to a depth of 13.08 metres. The east wall of 92 Isabella Street would be dismantled and reconstructed to a depth of 5.24 metres. The west and east walls of 94 Isabella Street are proposed to be dismantled and rebuilt to a depth of 3.35 metres and 11.3 metres respectively.

The interior arrangement of the buildings would be altered for new uses, however, the interior elements of 90A, 92 and 94 Isabella Street, namely the stairs, woodwork and fireplaces, would be integrated into reconfigured spaces. The ground floor levels will maintain the existing floor to ceiling heights but the second level floors are proposed to be removed to avoid headroom issues in the amenity spaces.

## **COMMENTS**

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The introduction of a substantial amount of massing on the subject heritage properties will have both a physical and visual impact on the heritage resources. The visual impact will be mitigated by setting the towers back from the primary and other visible elevations, as well as the roof forms of the heritage structures in a manner that provides a three-dimensional appearance of the heritage resources when viewed from the public realm. Additional measures have been incorporated into the design of the new



construction such as a gradual stepping out of the tower massing from the initial 10 metre step back, rather than a deep cantilever. Substantial consideration was given to the placement and stepping of the base of the tower and the side wall reconstruction to ensure the impacts to the views of the building from the public realm were sufficiently mitigated. The addition of clear glazing in the base of the tower from levels 1-7 provides a simple backdrop to the complex roof structure and highly ornamented heritage resources.

The dismantling and reconstruction of the side walls of the buildings are required to prepare the site for construction. The most visible side elevation (west wall of 90A Isabella Street) will be reconstructed to its full depth. The remaining side walls would be partially reconstructed. A new entrance to the development is proposed to be situated between 92 and 94 Isabella Street which limits the need for additional interventions to the primary facades.

Alterations are proposed to the interior spatial relationships and circulation patterns as being necessary to rehabilitate the buildings for new uses. While the original rooms will be removed, the interior attributes - namely the woodwork, stairs and fireplaces defined in the designation by-law for 90A-92 Isabella Street - would be carefully recorded, dismantled, stored, and reinstated within new front room volumes of the same dimensions as the originals. This work will also be detailed in the Conservation Plan.

In addition, the exterior of the buildings, including stone, brick, terra cotta, wood and roof elements, windows, leaded glass, and chimneys are proposed to be subject to restoration and rehabilitation strategies to be detailed in a Conservation Plan as a condition of approval.

### **Conservation Plan**

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the owner should be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Conservation Plan should detail the recommended interventions and conservation work, including the recommended restoration work. It should also include 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 be substantial, and it should communicate the cultural heritage value of the property.

### **Heritage Lighting Plan**

The Heritage Lighting Plan should provide details of how the building will be lit so that its unique heritage character is highlighted.

## **Landscape Plan**

Staff is recommending that the applicant be required to provide a final Landscape Plan that enhances the heritage character of the property to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning as a condition of Site Plan approval.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff support the proposed conservation strategy and alterations in the context of the proposed mitigation strategies and are of the opinion that the proposal conserves the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the subject heritage properties. As such, staff is satisfied the proposal meets the intent of the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan (2020), and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies in conjunction with the "Standards and Guidelines".

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

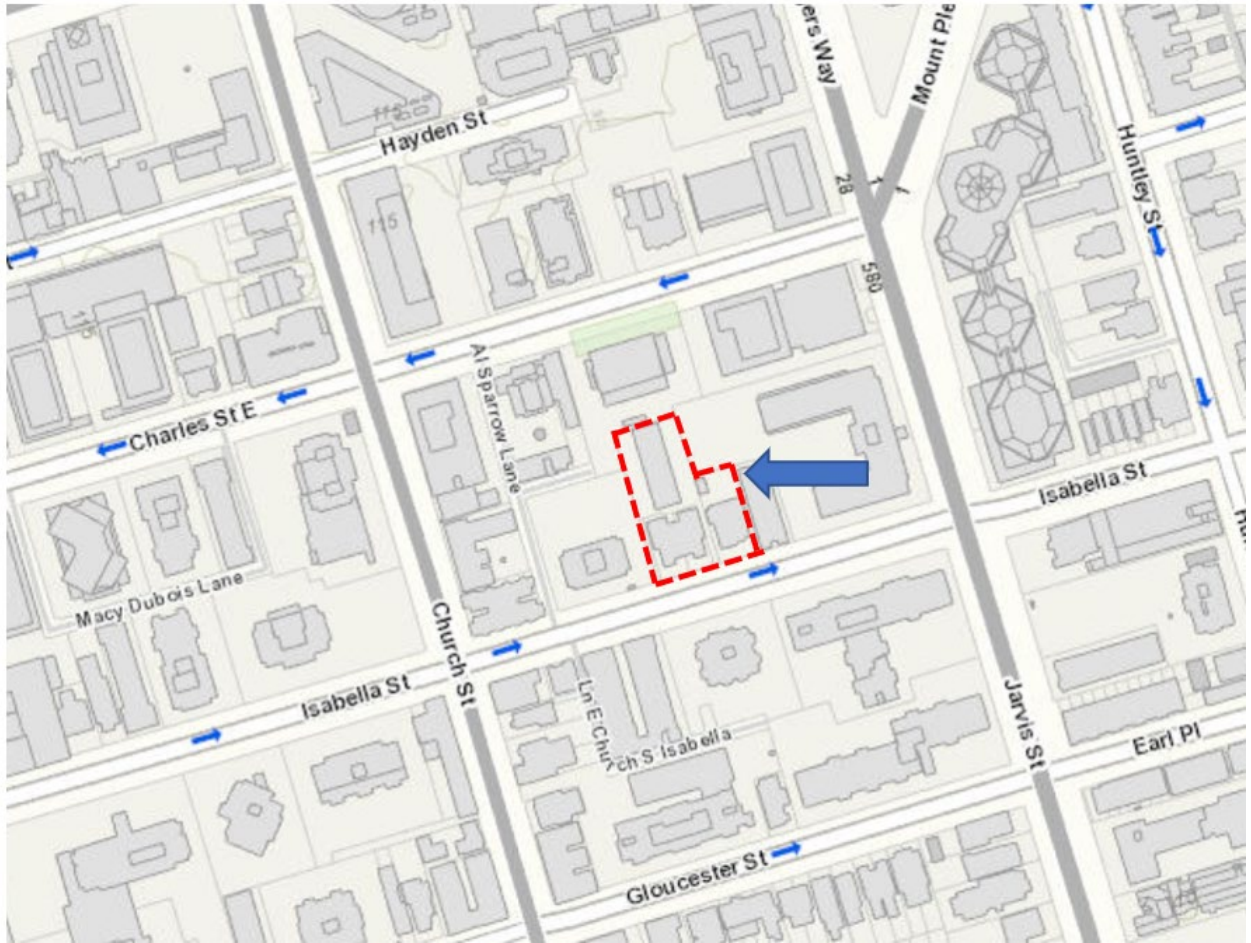
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Attachment 1 - Location Map  
Attachment 2 - Aerial Photograph  
Attachment 3 - Photographs  
Attachment 4 - Proposal Rendering & Axonometric View  
Attachment 5 - Selected Plans & Drawings

**LOCATION MAP**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**90, 90A, 92 & 94 Isabella Street**



**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH**  
**90, 90A, 92 & 94 Isabella Street**

**ATTACHMENT 2**



View of site looking north-east

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**90, 90A, 92 & 94 Isabella Street**



90A Isabella Street (left) Source: Bob Krawczyk/Architectural Conservancy of Ontario



92 Isabella Street (right) Source: Bob Krawczyk/Architectural Conservancy of Ontario



94 Isabella Street

Source: Bob Krawczyk/Architectural Conservancy of Ontario



92 Isabella St - interior entrance stair and woodwork



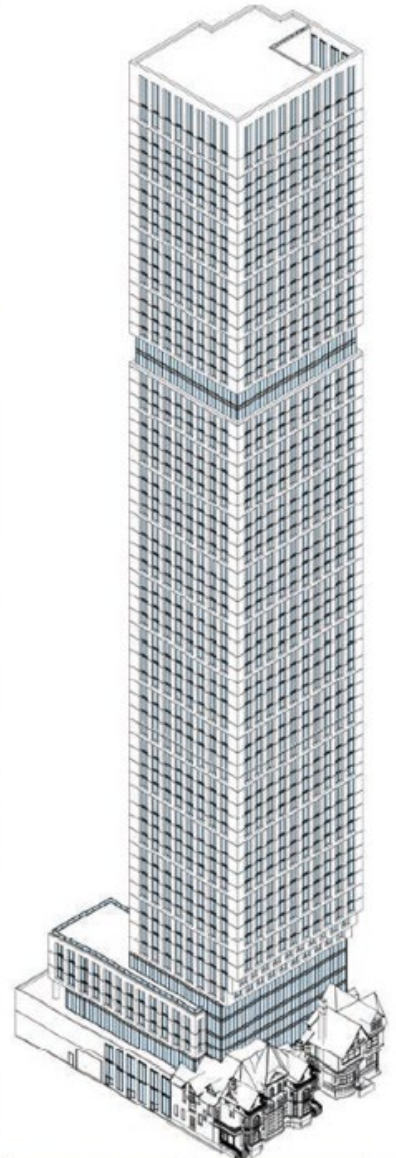
92 Isabella - fireplace and mantle

Source - GBCA Heritage Impact Assessment

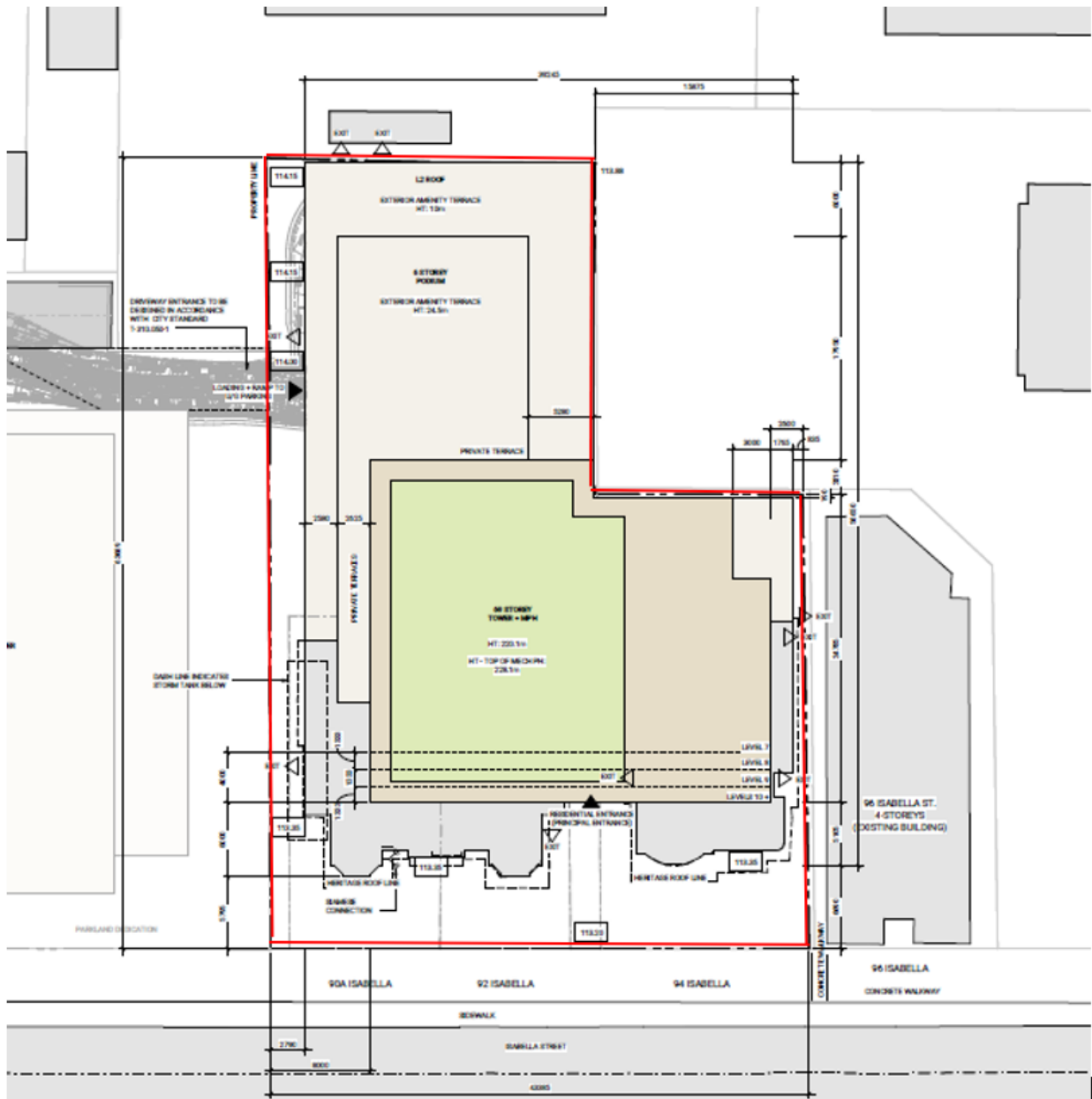


**PROPOSAL RENDERING & AXONOMETRIC VIEW**  
**90, 90A, 92 & 94 Isabella Street**

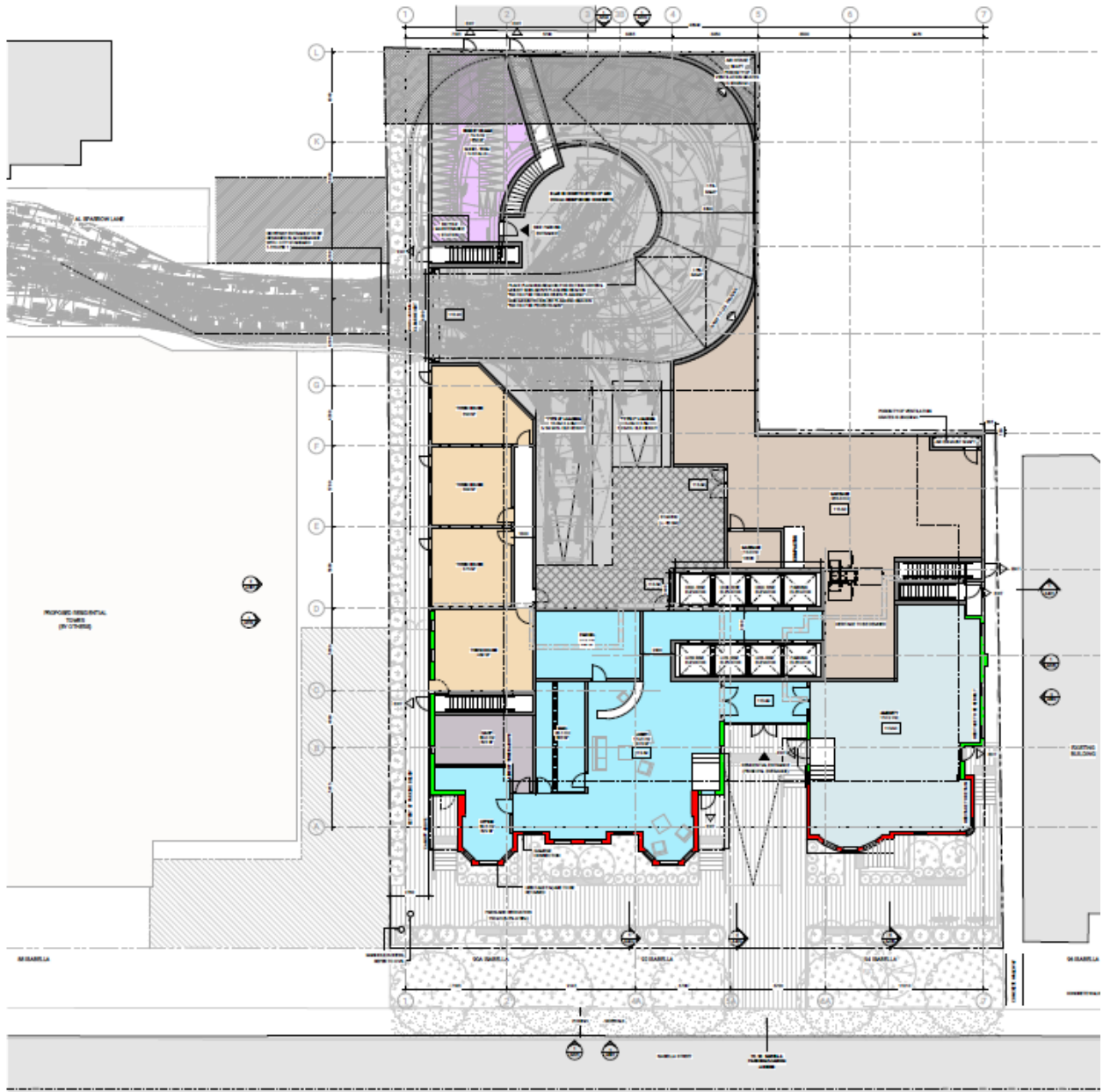
**ATTACHMENT 4**



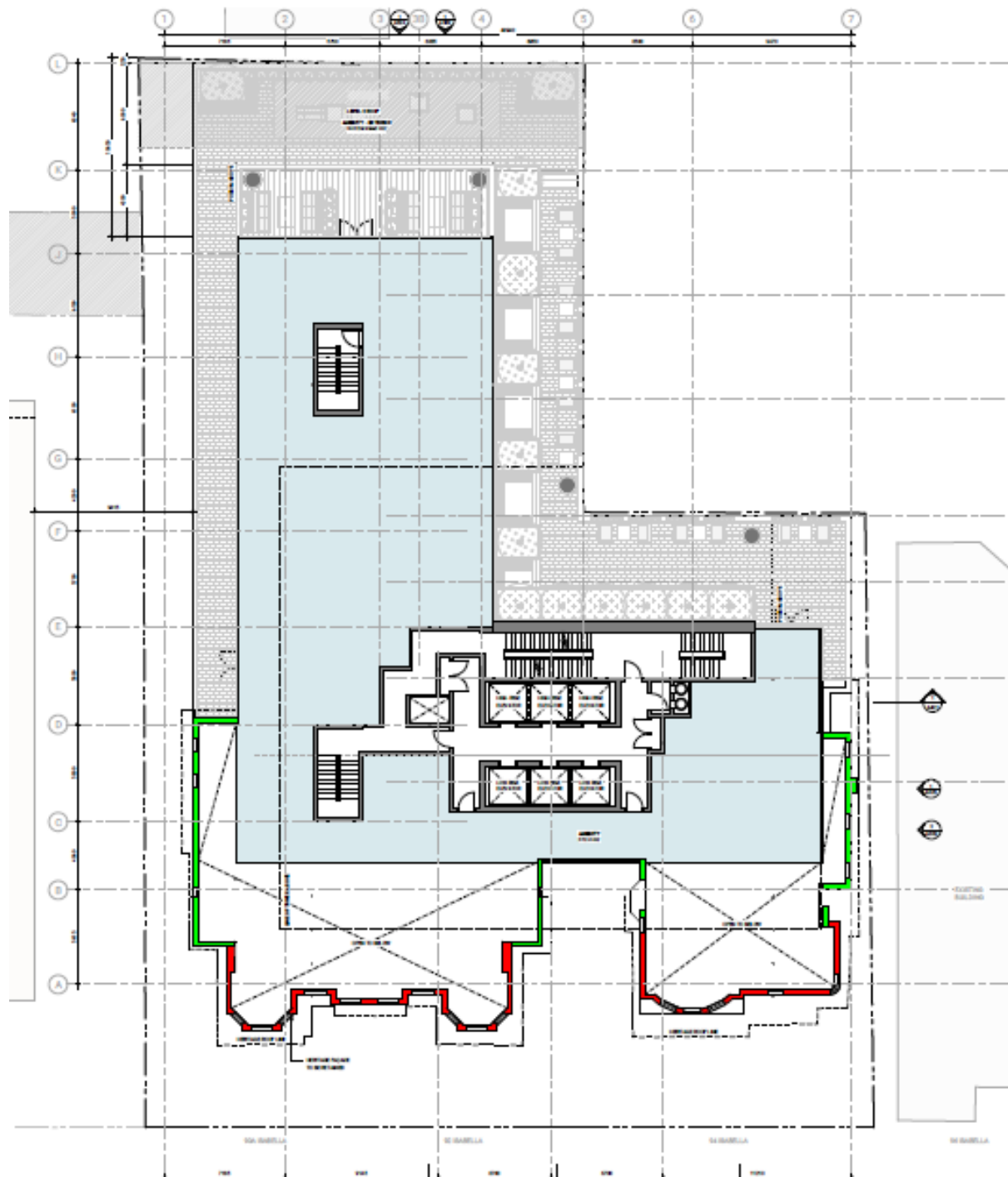
90, 90A, 92 & 94 Isabella Street



Site Plan



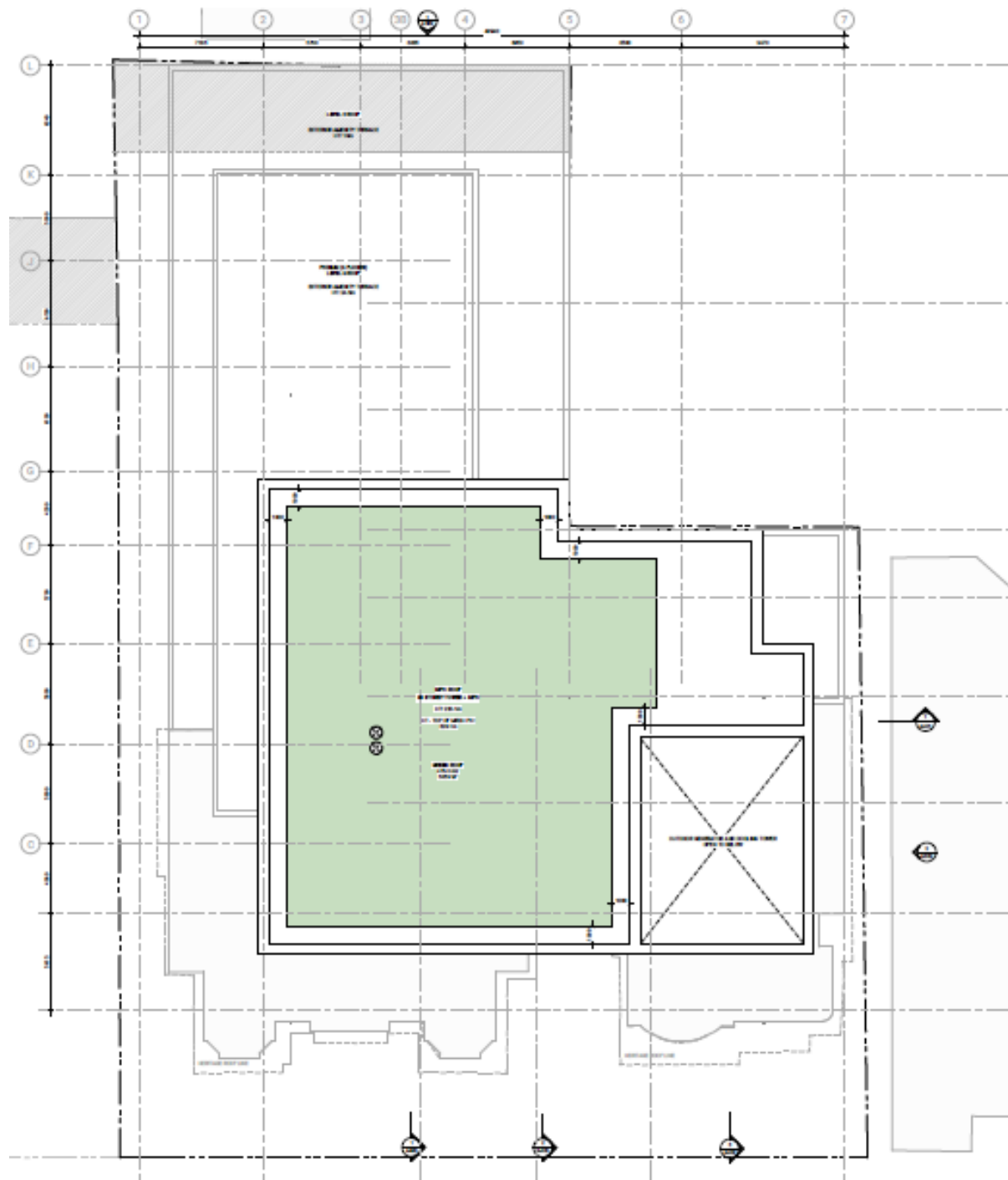
Level 1 Plan



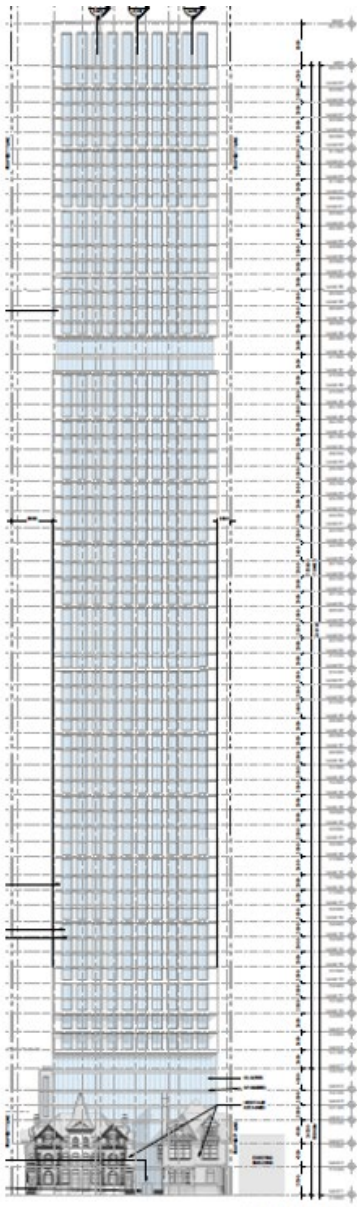
Level 3 Floorplan

Red: elevations retained in situ

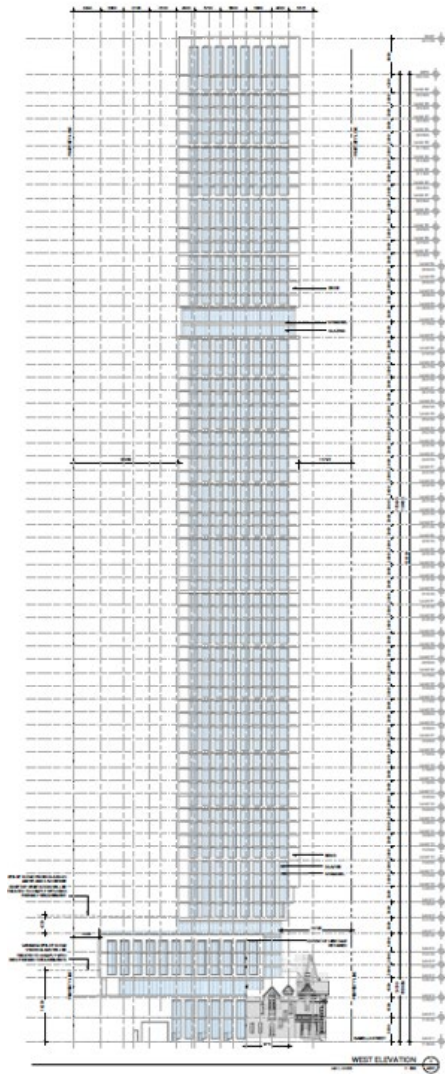
Green: elevations dismantled and reconstructed



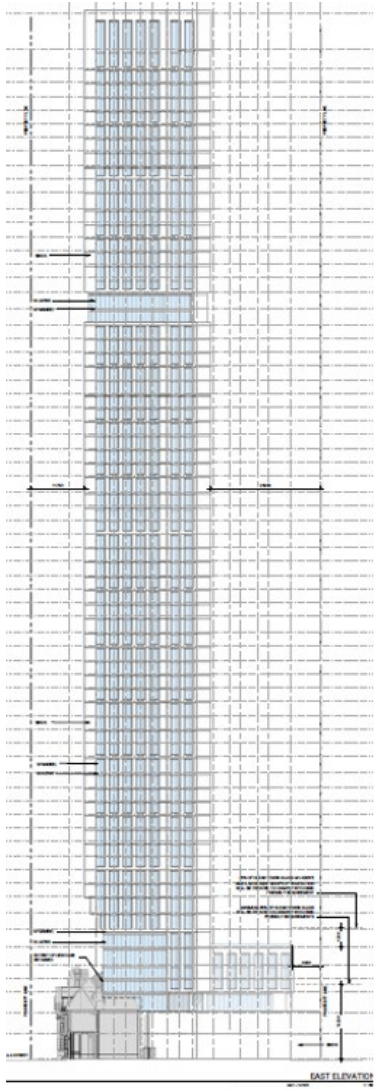
Roof Plan



Proposed south elevation

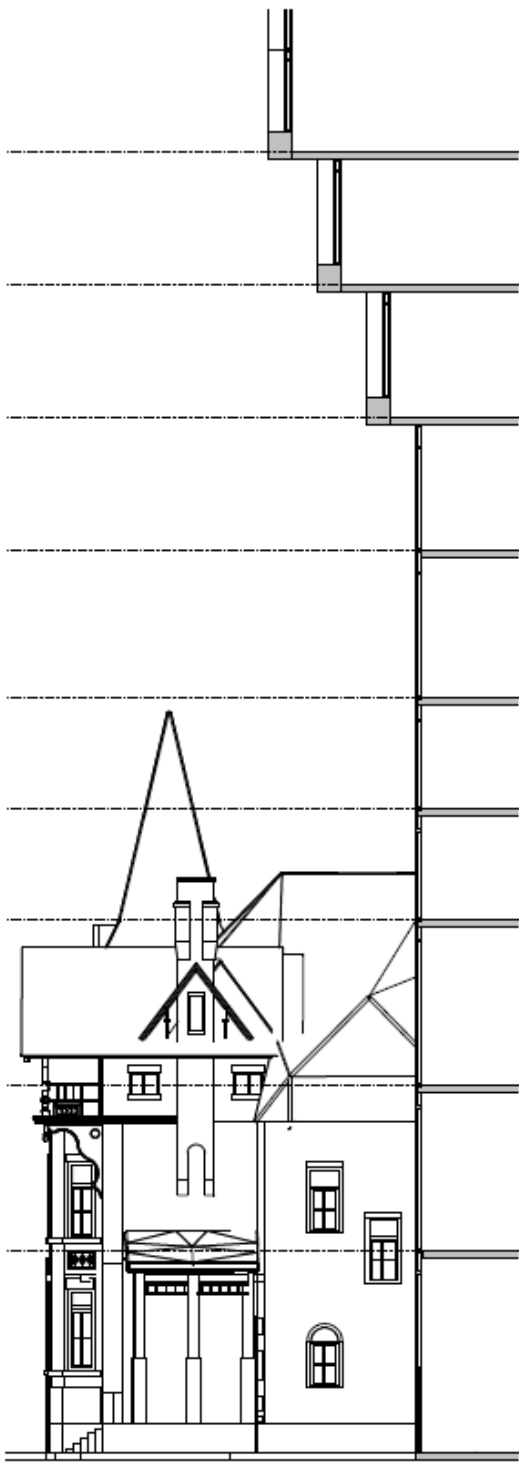


Proposed west elevation

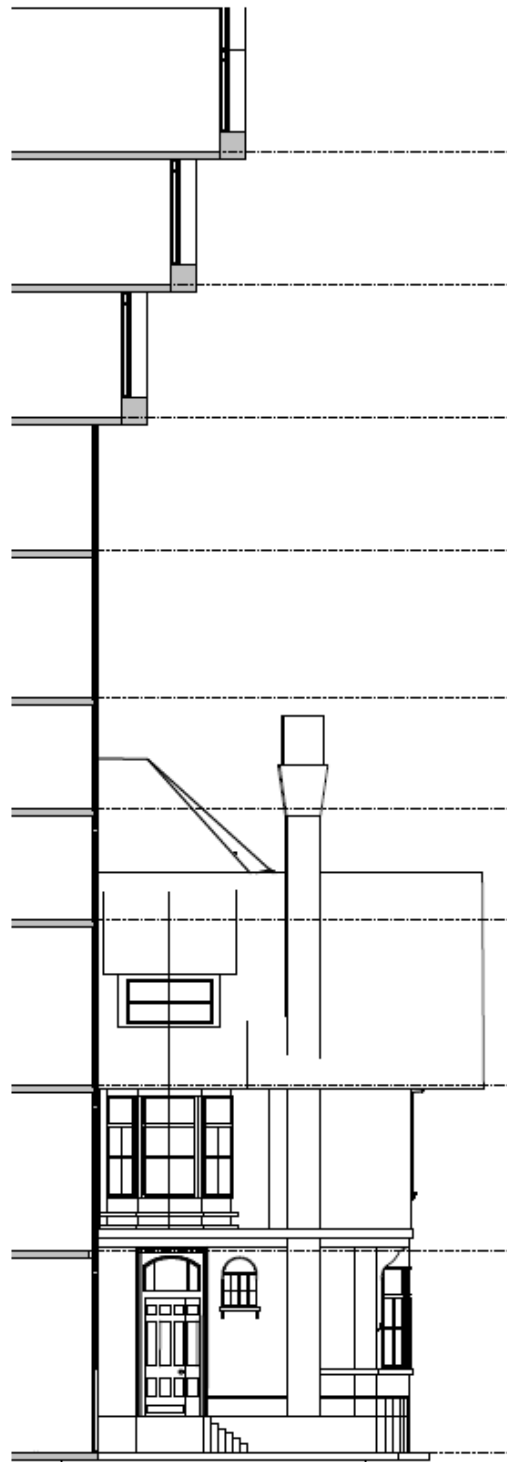


Proposed east elevation





92 Isabella St (east)



94 Isabella St (west)

Diagram showing the extent of conserved and reconstructed side elevations facing the new main entrance between buildings