

## **101 Mason Boulevard - Alterations to a Heritage Property and Demolition of a Building**

**Date:** June 17, 2024

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

North York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 8 - Eglinton-Lawrence

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage property at 101 Mason Boulevard under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act. It also recommends that the City approve the demolition of a small garage building at the rear of the property under Section 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act. These approvals are being sought in conjunction with Site Plan Approval Application (22178545NNY08SA), which proposes a large side addition to allow for the school to expand.

Located on the east side of Mason Boulevard south of Wilson Avenue and west of Yonge Street, the subject property contains Loretto Abbey, an institutional complex that was constructed in 1928. Additions were constructed to the north wing and the chapel in 1952. The subject property is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The development proposes a large addition to the north end of the heritage building. This would provide additional classroom and service uses to allow for the school to increase its capacity to 1,200 pupils. It has been designed to be visually compatible with, yet subordinate to, the existing built form and surrounding landscape. The existing E-shaped Abbey building will be retained in-situ. Some new windows are proposed while other window openings are proposed to be blocked in to accommodate the new addition. The scheme would include the removal of a small single storey room on the north side of the Abbey, the removal of the existing Infirmary and the demolition of a garage from the rear of the property. None of these are heritage attributes.

The proposed alterations and the demolition of the detached garage conserve the heritage values and attributes of the Loretto Abbey complex consistent with the existing policy framework and the impact of the new development is being appropriately mitigated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve

a. The alterations to the designated heritage property at 101 Mason Boulevard, under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of an addition to the north wing with the alterations to the designated property being substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated June 29, 2023, prepared by Moffet & Duncan Architects Inc. and Diamond Schmitt Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the Heritage Impact Assessment by ERA Architect Inc., dated July 6, 2022 on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum, dated June 8, 2023, prepared by ERA Architects Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan dated May 22, 2024 by ERA Architects Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to the conditions set out below.

b. The demolition of a garage building at the designated heritage property at 101 Mason Boulevard under Part IV, Section 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of an addition to the north wing with the alterations to the designated property being substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated June 29, 2023, prepared by Moffet & Duncan Architects Inc. and Diamond Schmitt Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the Heritage Impact Assessment by ERA Architect Inc., dated July 6, 2022 on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum, dated June 8, 2023, prepared by ERA Architects Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan dated May 22, 2024 by ERA Architects Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to the conditions set out below.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated property at 101 Mason Boulevard under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and its consent to the demolition of the garage building at 101 Mason Boulevard under Part IV, Section 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following conditions:

a. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 101 Mason Boulevard, 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 of the subject property shall:

1. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved

Conservation Plan 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.

2. 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.

b. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.a.2 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 has been completed in accordance with the Conservation Plan and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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City Planning confirms there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

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 March 9, 2010, the North York Community Council directed the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services to assess the building located at 101 Mason Boulevard, Loretto Abbey, and report to the Toronto Preservation Board and to North York Community Council, on whether the building is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2010.NY32.56>

At its meeting held on September 30, 2011, the Toronto Preservation Board recommended to the North York Community Council that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 101 Mason Boulevard (Loretto Abbey) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2011.PB6.2>

On September March 7, 2012, City Council adopted Bylaw 343-2012 to designate the property pursuant to Part IV, subsection 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2011.NY10.7>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Area Context**

The subject site located within the Cricket Club neighbourhood on the east side of Mason Boulevard south of Wilson Avenue and west of Yonge Street. The site contains Loretto Abbey, an institutional complex that was constructed in 1928, with the addition to the north wing and the chapel completed in 1952 and an Infirmary addition constructed in 1989. The property is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Infirmary addition is not a heritage attribute of the property. The property is currently known as Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School and is owned and operated by the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

### **Heritage Value**

The property at 101 Mason Boulevard is associated historically with the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loretto Sisters), a religious order founded in 17th-century Europe that arrived in Toronto in 1847 to provide young women with religious instruction in the Roman Catholic faith. As the first English-speaking nuns in Canada, for a century and a half the Loretto Sisters operated girls' schools in Toronto. In 1928, Loretto Abbey was relocated from downtown Toronto to North York where a purpose-built complex incorporated the convent and school and, in the early 1950s, a new chapel and accommodation for the novitiate.

Loretto Abbey is a rare example in Toronto of Neo-Gothic architecture (also known as Collegiate Gothic) applied to an institutional complex combining a convent and a girls' school. The Neo-Gothic style is exemplified at Loretto Abbey in the stone cladding and detailing, the landmark tower with a turret, the pointed-arched entrances, the medieval-inspired fenestration, buttresses and gabled frontispieces.

The design of Loretto Abbey reflects the career of the Niagara Falls, Ontario, architectural firm of Findlay and Foulis, and remains an uncommon example of their work in Toronto.

Contextually, with its scale and prominent site on a hilltop overlooking York Mills, Loretto Abbey is a local landmark in the North York community and is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law No. 0343-2012).

### **Development Proposal**

The proposed development involves removing the Infirmary addition, a fire escape on the Convent (north) Wing and a small single storey room on the north side of the Abbey to allow for the construction of a two-story addition. This addition will connect to the Convent (north) Wing and provide additional classroom and other school uses to allow for an expansion of the school from its existing 480 pupil capacity to 1,200 pupil places. The proposed development also involves removing the detached garage at the southeast portion of the subject property.

The original E-shaped Abbey building will remain in situ with some new windows being proposed in its north end and the blocking of some windows within the north wing to allow for the new side addition. The Abbey's landscape setting, which is defined by its deep setback from Mason Boulevard, curved driveway and tree-lined boundary along Mason Boulevard will be maintained.

## **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, and
- 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. 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."

3.1.6.26: "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 Parks Canada 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>

## **COMMENTS**

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Heritage Planning staff have reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment and Conservation Plan submitted with the proposal and are supportive of the proposed conservation strategy for the building at 101 Mason Boulevard.

The proposal involves the construction of a two-storey addition at the north end of the Abbey, connecting to the Convent (north) Wing. The two-storey addition will accommodate an increase in instruction space, an athletic facility and gym, an entry area with drop-off, a cafeteria, additional parking, a grouping of specialty classrooms, and will allow for the relocation of the administration department.

The alterations to the heritage attributes of the Abbey complex are relatively minor. They involve some new windows within the north end of the complex and the blocking in of windows to allow for the construction of the new addition. Although blocking up windows on the north wall of the Convent Wing will alter the fenestration of the façade, these windows are primarily located on the second floor and will not be visible from the public realm. The new windows will be designed to match the original windows based on archival documentation.

The Abbey's landscape setting, which is defined by its deep setback from Mason Boulevard, curved driveway, relationship to the adjacent ravine and tree-lined boundary along Mason Boulevard will be maintained. The proposed addition will not encroach on the ravine and the landscaped screening along Mason Boulevard is proposed to be maintained and extended with the inclusion of a new sidewalk.

The proposed addition has a rectilinear plan and massing, with a compatible material palette of neutral brick, metal cladding with a strong horizontal orientation, and a glazed reveal. It has been designed in such a way that it is visually compatible with, yet subordinate to, the existing built form and surrounding landscape.

The Infirmary addition, a fire escape stair and a small one-storey service room in the Convent Wing (north) would be removed to enable connection to the addition is proposed. Additionally, the proposed development also involves removing the detached garage (constructed in 1928) at the southeast portion of the subject property. None of these are identified as heritage attributes. The Abbey's materials of stone and stone cladding are noted as attributes. As such the stone materials from the service room are proposed to be salvaged and re-used on site where possible.

Visual impacts to the north elevation of the building will be mitigated through the use of glazing on the proposed addition. The use of glazing will contribute to the overall visual cohesiveness of the building, while retaining the legibility of the Abbey's E-shaped plan. The addition will be screened behind the existing hedgerow of trees on Mason Boulevard and will have limited visibility from the public right of way. Parking will be located within the footprint of the 1989 Infirmary Building and immediately north of the addition.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff support the proposed alteration under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and the demolition under Section 34 (1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act in the context of the conservation and mitigation strategies proposed for the site. Staff are of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, and character of the heritage property. As such, staff are satisfied that the proposed conservation strategy meets the intent of the Planning Act, and the heritage policies in the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan (2020) and the City of Toronto's Official Plan in conjunction with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.



## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Anne Fisher, MCIP, RPP, MRTPI, CAHP  
Acting Senior Manager, Heritage Planning  
Urban Design, City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Location Plan  
Attachment 2 - Aerial View  
Attachment 3 - Photographs  
Attachment 4 - Proposal Renderings  
Attachment 5 - Proposal Plans and Drawings

## LOCATION PLAN

## ATTACHMENT 1

### 101 Mason Boulevard



Figure 1. Location Map showing the property at 101 Mason Boulevard outlined in red, located on the northeast corner of Mason Avenue and McGlashan Road, south of Wilson Avenue. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

## 101 Mason Boulevard



Figure 2. Aerial Map showing the property at 101 Mason Boulevard outlined in red, located on the northeast corner of Mason Avenue and McGlashan Road, south of Wilson Avenue. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



**101 Mason Boulevard**



Figure 4. Partial view of the primary (west) elevation of the building from Mason Avenue looking east (Google Maps, 2017).



Figure 5. Partial view of the east elevation of the building (showing the School Wing and Chapel) looking west (ERA Architects Inc., May 2022).





Figure 6. Partial view of the east elevation of the Convent (north) Wing, looking west, showing the one-storey connection with the infirmary (ERA Architects Inc., May 2022).



Figure 7. Partial view of the north elevation of the Convent (north) Wing, looking southwest, where the proposed addition is to be located (ERA Architects Inc., May 2022).



Figure 8. Partial view of the east elevation of the Convent (north) Wing, looking west, that shows the one-storey service component that is proposed to be demolished (ERA Architects Inc., May 2022).



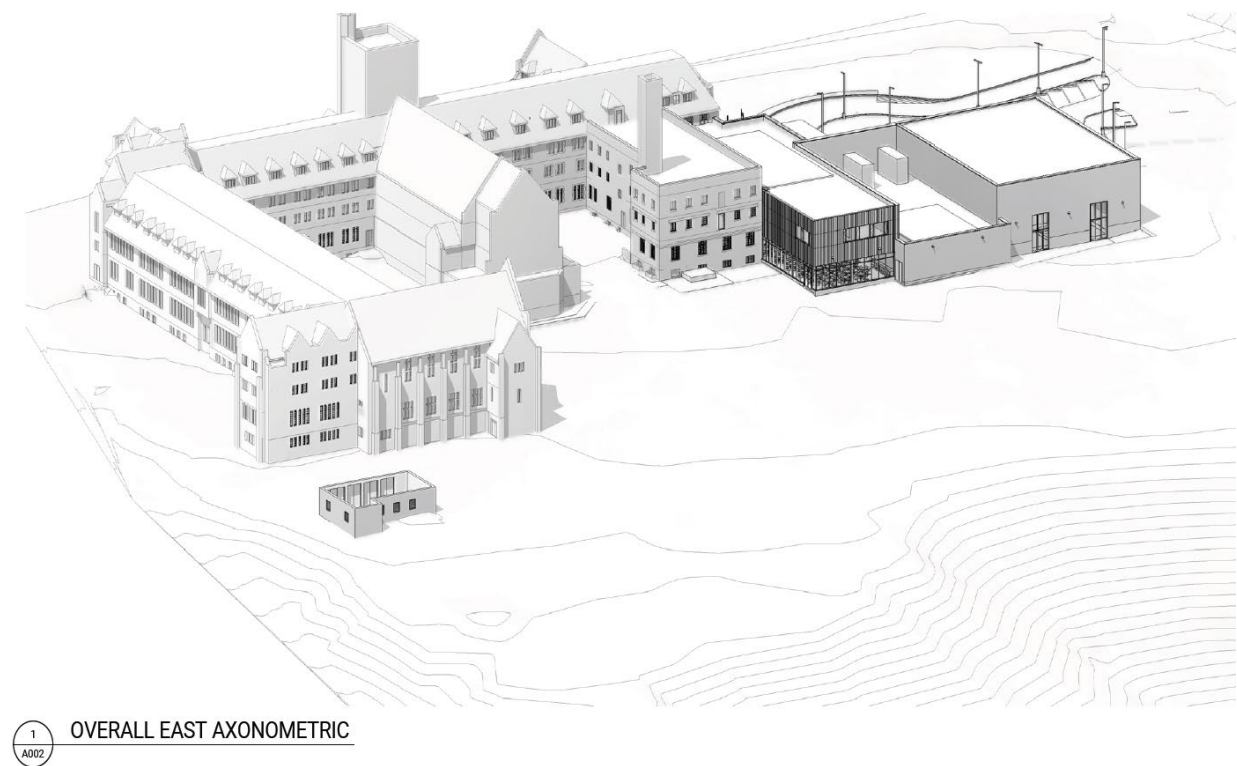
Figure 9. View of the rear (east) elevation of the Convent (north) Wing with fire escape (ERA Architects Inc., May 2022).

**PROPOSAL RENDERINGS**  
**101 Mason Boulevard**

**ATTACHMENT 4**



Proposed west axonometric view of the addition included for illustration purposes (Moffet & Duncan; Diamond Schmitt, June 2023).



Proposed east axonometric view of the addition included for illustration purposes (Moffet & Duncan; Diamond Schmitt, June 2023).



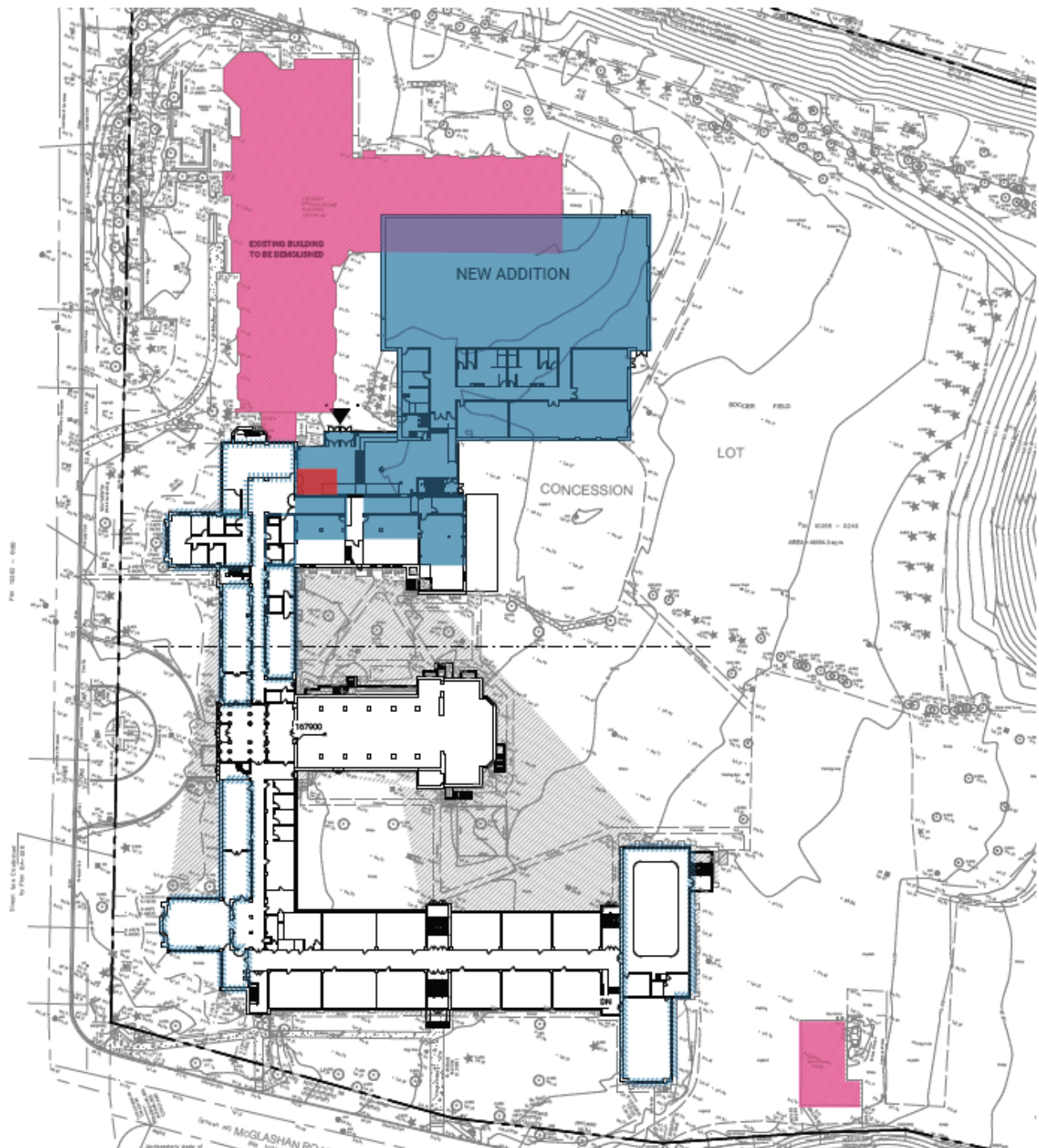


Rendering of the proposed addition showing the main entrance and the Convent Wing (Moffet & Duncan; Diamond Schmitt (June 2023).



Rendering of the proposed addition showing the view to cafeteria and science block (Moffet & Duncan; Diamond Schmitt (June 2023).

101 Mason Boulevard



Proposed Site Plan (DSAI & MD JV, annotated by ERA).

Proposed Site Plan showing location of new construction annotated in blue. The Infirmary that is to be demolished is shown in pink and the location of the one-storey service component that is also proposed to be demolished is shown in red (Moffet & Duncan and Diamond Schmitt, June 2023).