

50 Merton Street - Alterations and Demolition of a Heritage Attribute to a Designated Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: January 29, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Toronto-St. Paul's

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the proposed alterations to the designated heritage property at 50 Merton Street and grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement for the property. This report also recommends approval of the proposed demolition of heritage attributes, being the removal of the three-storey rear wing and northern half of the front-wing's east elevation identified in the designation by-law.

The subject designated heritage property is located on the north side of Merton Street, east of Yonge Street, and contains a three-storey complex designed as the first permanent, purpose-built national headquarters for the Girl Guides of Canada. It was completed in 1962 to the design of Carmen Corneil, project architect for William J. McBain & Associates and extended in 1970-72 by the partnership of Elin and Carmen Corneil. The building is composed of a two-storey front wing set on a raised podium with an exterior terrace and a rear, three-storey back wing.

The proposed development has been submitted in connection with applications for amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law and involves the construction of a 45-storey mixed-use building at 50-64 Merton Street that partially retains the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters building. A substantial portion of the two-storey front wing is to be retained and rehabilitated. It is proposed to be temporarily relocated on-site during construction, returned to its original location, and integrated into the new development's podium as lobby and amenity space. The exterior terrace, along with several interior heritage attributes are proposed to be reinstated with alterations.

The proposed development is consistent with the existing policy framework and proposes an overall conservation strategy that conserves the significant heritage resource.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 50 Merton Street, in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 45-storey mixed-use building, with such alterations substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated November 23, 2023 prepared by Hariri Pontarini and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by GBCA, dated November 30, 2023, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

b. The demolition of a three-storey rear wing and northern half of the front-wing's east elevation of the designated heritage property at 50 Merton Street in accordance with Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 45-storey mixed-use building, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated November 23, 2023 prepared by Hariri Pontarini and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by GBCA, dated November 30, 2023, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 50 Merton Street, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and its consent to the demolition of a heritage attribute, being the rear wing of the designated heritage property at 50 Merton Street, under Part IV, Section 34(1)1 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following 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 property at 50 Merton Street substantially in accordance with the plans

and drawings dated November 23, 2023 prepared by Hariri Pontarini, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated November 30, 2023, prepared by GBCA, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.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 property at 50 Merton Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

c. That prior to final Site Plan approval for the proposal, for the property located at 50 Merton Street the owners shall:

1. Provide final Site Plan drawings substantially in accordance with the approved Conservation Plans required in Recommendation 2.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 property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its 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 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.

4. Provide a detailed landscape plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

d. That prior to the issuance of any permit for 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 building 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 2.b.1 for property at 50 Merton Street including registration on title of such agreement, to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Have provided a detailed Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2.

3. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plans required in Recommendation 2.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.

4. 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 2.d.4, 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.

3. City Council authorize the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owner of 50 Merton Street in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

4. 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 50 Merton Street.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

On July 22, 2022 Toronto City Council enacted By-law No. 944-2022 designating the property at 50 Merton Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2022/law0944.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Area Context

The Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters at 50 Merton Street is situated on the north side of Merton Street, east of Yonge Street. Between Yonge and Mount Pleasant Road, the context of the street is characterized by a mix of building types, heights and periods representing its evolution and history. Amidst the century-old mix is a collection of distinctively-designed, mid-century buildings constructed after the completion of the Yonge subway line which reflects a surge of development following the area's new accessibility. This resulted in the north side of Merton Street being characterized by a mix of primarily low-rise commercial buildings which provide a strong architectural character typical of the third quarter of the twentieth century. Along with the low-rise commercial buildings, were those constructed as purpose-built headquarters for social agencies including the Girl Guides, The War Amps and the Visiting Home-makers Association (50, 140 and 170 Merton Street, respectively). While Merton Street presents an architectural and typological mix representing its history, the post-war development following the advent of the subway and the increased presence of social agencies is one of its strongest defining features of its history. The Girl Guides' headquarters building at 50 Merton Street is an important contributor to that particular neighbourhood character.

Heritage Property

The development site includes the property 50 Merton Street, which is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-law 944-2022 enacted July 22, 2022. The full statement of significance and list of heritage attributes can be found here.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2022/law0944.pdf>

The Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters at 50 Merton Street was the first permanent and purpose-built national headquarters for the organization since its founding in Canada in 1910. It is a three-storey complex completed in 1962 to the design of Carmen Corneil, project architect for William J. McBain & Associates and extended in 1970-72 by the partnership of Elin and Carmen Corneil. The complex has been recognized as a significant and innovative work of Post-War Modern architecture and particularly represents the globally influential leadership of the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. It has also been lauded on its own terms for its innovation which was based in a meaningful interpretation of site and program and fulfilled in exceptionally fine details and selection of materials.

Development Proposal

The application proposes to permit a 45-storey mixed-use building at 50-64 Merton Street. The application proposes to remove the existing rear three-storey administrative wing and partially retain the heritage building at 50 Merton Street within the new development. The portion to be retained is proposed to be temporarily relocated on-site during construction, returned to its original location, and integrated into the new development's podium as lobby and amenity space.

The current proposal has evolved from an original submission in November 2021, which proposed to demolish the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters at 50 Merton Street in its entirety. Through the application review process, the proposal has evolved to include partial retention of the Girl Guides Building, along with reinstatement of its raised terrace and interior heritage attributes.

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."

3.1.6.29: Heritage buildings and/or structures located on properties on the Heritage Register should be conserved on their original location. However, where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register a heritage building may be relocated within its property or development site where:

a) the heritage building or structure is not attached to or adjoining another building or structure;

b) the location, orientation, situation or view of the heritage building is not identified in the Official Plan or as a cultural heritage value or attribute of the property, and/or the proposed relocation will not negatively affect the cultural heritage values or attributes of the property;

c) the portion of the heritage building or structure that contains the identified cultural heritage values and attributes is being conserved in its entirety and will not be demolished, disassembled and/or reconstructed;

d) the relocation on site does not conflict with any applicable Heritage Conservation District plans;

e) a Heritage Property Conservation Plan is submitted that demonstrates that the removal and relocation of the building or structure within its existing property will not pose any physical risk to the heritage building and/or structure, its cultural heritage values and attributes, to the satisfaction of the City; and

f) these and any other related conditions are secured in a Heritage Easement Agreement prior to removal and relocation on site.

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>

COMMENTS

Conservation Strategy

Heritage Planning staff reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the proposal prepared by GBCA, dated November 30, 2023 and are supportive of the proposed conservation strategy for the building at 50 Merton Street.

The Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters building is composed of a two-storey front wing set on a raised concrete podium with a terrace on its south and west sides, and a rear, three-storey administrative wing. There are several interior heritage attributes identified, including the second-storey boardroom, main entrance, staircase, and lobby.

Rear Three-Storey Administrative Wing

The rear, three-storey administrative wing that is identified as a heritage attribute in the designation by-law is proposed to be demolished for the new construction. The designation by-law notes that the rear-wing includes a footprint with stepped massing at its south-west corner, framing the raised terrace on the west side of the building. It is also noted that the cladding of the rear wing combines sections of curtain wall glazing with banded cladding to indicate the floor levels. The loss of this rear wing is partially mitigated by incorporating references to its original massing and design in the new construction that will replace it along the reinstated terrace. A stepped south-west corner wall condition is proposed to frame the reinstated terrace and a combination of curtain wall glazing and banded cladding is proposed to demarcate the floor levels.

Two-storey Front Wing

A substantial portion of the two-storey front wing is proposed to be retained to a depth of approximately 8.6 metres on the east and west elevations. This portion of the heritage building will be temporarily relocated to the northern edge of the development site. The north half of the east elevation will be demolished, which includes an opening for two windows and is a heritage attribute. The remainder of the west elevation and 2.2m of the north (rear) elevation will be retained; however, given that these walls would be left structurally vulnerable after the demolition of the rear portion of the building, the masonry portions of the wall are proposed to be panelized and temporarily stored on site. While the panelization of walls is undesirable, staff are satisfied that this approach is appropriate for this portion of the west and north elevation in the context of the overall conservation strategy. After the completion of the excavation and creation of new foundations and concrete podium, these portions of the two-storey front wing will be returned to their original location on the property. The raised terrace and entrance stairs will be reconstructed.

The exterior of the two-storey front wing is proposed to be subject to restoration and rehabilitation strategies. The steel columns with wood cladding are to be retained. The roof of the two-storey front wing is proposed to be retained and no amenity space is proposed above this portion. The existing, non-original aluminum glazing on all elevations would be replaced to match the original glazing proportions, and currently proposes a brown aluminum material to reference what would have originally been wood. The wood fins (previously removed) along the south, east and west elevations' windows would be reinstated in a materiality yet to be determined. These details and their materials will be further refined and secured in a Conservation Plan.

The existing projecting glass portion of the vestibule that leads to the entrance on the west elevation is non-original and will be replaced with a simplified rectangular glass entry to the vestibule. The details of this alteration will be further refined and secured in a Conservation Plan. The original, double wood-panelled entrance doors with glazed transoms will be temporarily stored during construction and reinstated, along with their original ironmongery door pulls.

Interior Heritage Attributes

The existing second floor boardroom with its coved ceiling, clerestory window, exposed metal roof decking and wooden rafters is a heritage attribute and will be retained within the temporarily relocated front-wing. A small part of the ceiling will be impacted to connect to the new construction to the north; however, this will not impact the attributes identified within the boardroom.

The existing lobby's interior spatial relationships and circulation patterns will be changed to reuse the space for its new use and connect to the new construction. Interior heritage attributes will be carefully dismantled, stored, and selectively reinstated in the new development with alterations. This work will also be detailed in the Conservation Plan. As proposed, the lobby staircase is to be reinstated in the lobby in a manner that meets code requirements and adjustments for revised floor heights. It will be reoriented from its north-south configuration, to be accessed from the west to connect to the mezzanine level above. The second-floor handrail will continue to the proposed mezzanine level, with modifications to account for building code requirements.

All existing lobby materials, including the slate floor, concrete block wall, and few remaining wood ceiling slats are to be carefully removed and stored for selective reinstatement within the new lobby, as specified through the Conservation Plan.

New Construction

The new 45-storey mixed-use building is comprised of two distinct volumes: the 4 to 7-storey podium which connects to the heritage building and the tower that is set behind the retained portion of the heritage building. The new construction has been designed to conserve the character and cultural heritage value of the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters building and to be compatible with its Post-War Modern architecture. The podium design, which features brick banding and glazing, establishes a visual datum and relationship with the materiality and proportions of the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters building.

The podium features a visual buffer around the retained heritage building, with approximately 3m of glazed reveal above it and 1.9m of glazed reveal beside the heritage building's east elevation. The podium steps back approximately 6.3m from the front face of the heritage building for the height of the reveal and then cantilevers out to approximately 3.6m from the front face of the heritage building. These step backs and the 6.3m step back from the west elevation conserve its scale, form, and massing, and allows the new construction to read as subordinate.

The portion of the new podium on the west side of the heritage building incorporates references to three-storey rear wing that will be demolished. The massing and design feature a similar stepped south-west corner wall condition to frame the reinstated terrace and a combination of curtain wall glazing and brick banded cladding is proposed to demarcate the floor levels.

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 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 will be required to submit an Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Landscape Plan

Staff is recommending that the applicant be required to provide a final Landscape Plan to address the reinstatement of the terrace on the raised podium on the heritage building's south and west sides.

Heritage Lighting Plan

The Heritage Lighting Plan should provide details of how the heritage features of the building at 50 Merton Street will be lit so that its unique heritage character is highlighted.

Heritage Easement Agreement

Staff are recommending that the owner enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to secure the long-term protection of 50 Merton Street included in the development site.

CONCLUSION

Staff are supportive of the proposal to alter the property at 50 Merton Street and to remove its three-storey rear wing and northern half of the front-wing's east elevation to allow for the development of a new 45-storey mixed use building at 50-64 Merton Street. Staff support the proposed alterations and removal under Sections 33 and 34 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 the proposed conservation strategy outlined in the revised

proposed development 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.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 2 - Photographs
Attachment 3 - Statement of Significance
Attachment 4 - Plans and Drawings

LOCATION MAP
50 Merton Street

ATTACHMENT 1



Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 50 Merton Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

PHOTOGRAPHS
50 Merton Street

ATTACHMENT 2



Principal (south) and west elevations of 50 Merton Street (Heritage Planning).



Principal (south) and east elevations of 50 Merton Street (Heritage Planning).



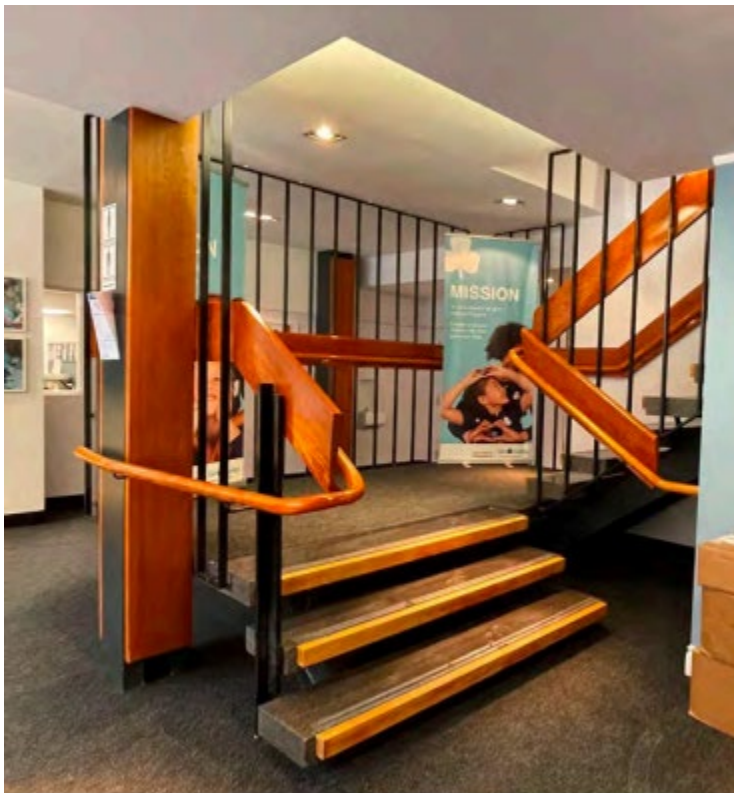
View of the west elevation with entrance, terrace and three-storey rear wing (Heritage Planning).



View of the north elevation showing the three-storey rear wing (Heritage Planning).



View of the wood-paneled doors with ironmongery door pulls (Heritage Planning).



View of the interior lobby staircase and handrail (Heritage Planning).



View of the second-storey boardroom (Heritage Planning).



Alternate view of the second-storey boardroom (Heritage Planning).

50 Merton Street**Reasons for Designation**

The property at 50 Merton Street (Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters) is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under all three categories of design, associative and contextual value

Description

The property at 50 Merton Street contains the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters, a three-storey complex completed in 1962 to the design of Carmen Corneil, project architect for William J. McBain & Associates and extended in 1970-72 by the partnership of Elin and Carmen Corneil.

In 2011, the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognized the national significance of the Girl Guides of Canada through its designation of the Girl Guide of Canada Movement in Canada a National Historic Event and installed a plaque at 50 Merton Street.

Both the Midtown in Focus Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (2016) and the City of Toronto OPA 405 identified the property as having potential cultural heritage value.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value - Girl Guides of Canada National Headquarters

The Girl Guides of Canada National Headquarters building, dating to 1961-2 with a 1970-72 extension is in its meticulous design an excellent representative of Post-War Modern architecture exhibiting in particular the influence of the great Finnish modernist, Alvar Aalto. It has also been acknowledged that on its completion the new headquarters was "a building of consequence... representing something new and other, a different kind of architecture"⁶⁷ in Toronto. The building design is significant for its response to context, for its interpretation of the functional programmatic requirements as an opportunity for symbolic design and for creating a sequence of indoor and outdoor spaces which enrich the use and experience of Guides' members of all ages. In its interpretation of the brief, orientation on the site, composition and massing of the various programmatic components, in the choice of materials and in the details from the window openings to the handrails, columns and door pulls the building exhibits a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit.

The property at 50 Merton Street has association with the Girl Guides of Canada and in turn with the International Guiding Movement which is one of the largest youth

movements in the world. The Guides were established in England in 1909 by Lord Baden-Powell and his sister Agnes Baden-Powell shortly after the founding of the Boy Scouts in 1907. Canadian branches followed in 1910, the first in St. Catharines, Ontario and then Toronto. The core values of the organization emphasized the outdoors, character building, good citizenship and self-reliance with the motto: "Be Prepared." Since 1923, the guides have been largely self-funded through the sales of their iconic, trefoil-shaped cookies. Completed in 1962, the building was designed to be the first permanent, purpose-built national headquarters for the Girl Guides. Girl Guides are located across Canada and celebrated their centenary in 2010. The National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognized the national significance of the organization through its designation of the Girl Guide of Canada Movement in Canada a National Historic Event.

The Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters has associative value as it reflects the work and ideas of Carmen Corneil, lead designer and project architect for William J. McBain & Associates who designed the original building in 1961-62 and the partnership of Elin and Carmen Corneil, for the addition undertaken in 1970-72. Throughout their 50+ years of practice, Elin and Carmen Corneil have been influential as teachers and practitioners from their home-bases in Norway and Canada. Their work, which has included both architecture and urban design, has been recognized with two Massey Medals, won an international competition and has been published and exhibited widely. First living and working together in Toronto in 1960, their projects introduced a strong Scandinavian formal and typological influence which was based in expressive programmatic form, tactile materials and details, a variety of sources for daylight and the integration of landscape and nature. As their ideas and work evolved, these initial principles would be extended to eschew the formal aesthetic concerns of Modernism for an architecture that was underpinned by familiar building typologies related to a variety of individual and collective social experiences, with a frank tectonic expression inherent in Dutch Structuralism and particularly the work of Herman Hertzberger. Throughout their careers a primary commitment to architecture's enhancement of human experience through meaningful and connected place-making has been at the heart of their practice.

Set on the north side of Merton Street in the first block east of Yonge Street, the Girl Guides Headquarters, maintains and supports the character of the area which is related to its transformation following the completion of the Yonge Street subway line in 1954 making it a prime location for institutional uses such as the Visiting Home Nursing Association, The War Amps, the Geneva Centre for Autism and to the north of Davisville Avenue, the School for the Deaf (demolished). Its distinctive Post-War Modern design, low-rise scale and public outdoor space is shared with these other institutional buildings. Other low-rise buildings representing commercial and residential uses, with distinctive mid-century modern style maintain this character of Merton Street which is under transformation.

Completed in 1962, the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as it represents the transformation of Merton Street and the Davisville community following the completion of the subway line in 1954 with an increased institutional use, transforming the street's early mixed character of industrial and residential properties with a sequence of low-rise, Post-War Modern properties.

Heritage Attributes of the Girl Guides of Canada National Headquarters

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the Girl Guides Headquarters at 50 Merton Street as an excellent representative of Post-War Modern architecture exhibiting in particular the influence of the great Finnish modernist, Alvar Aalto and as an example of the work of the partnership of Elin and Carmen Corneil as it responded to the project program and its Toronto context:

Exterior

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on its property on the north side of Merton Street, east of Yonge Street
- The scale, form and massing of the flat-roofed, building composed of a two-storey front wing and a rear, three-storey back wing set on a raised podium with a terrace on its south and west sides.
- The massing of the front wing is modified by the higher roof for the clerestory and services and by the set-back of the first floor on the south, east and west sides, the staircase on the south side of the podium at the west end and on the east side where the podium has been set-back adjacent to the loading bay
- The massing of the rear, three-storey wing includes the stepped massing in plan at its south-west corner and the two-projecting fire-escape stairs
- The first floor level of the front wing of the building including the glazed south and west walls
- The brick cladding, on the second-floor of the front wing of the building and the staircase on the north side of the rear wing, which achieved its rugged texture through a special process of firing the bricks face to face and then splitting them apart to achieve the natural broken surface, and then set in a common bond pattern
- The concrete cladding of the podium and its parapet-balustrade
- The cladding of the rear second wing which combine sections of curtain wall glazing with pre-cast concrete panels and brick cladding with bands of concrete indicating the floor levels on the east and west elevations
- The composition and detailing of the fenestration of the front brick clad wing as follows:
 - second floor level, south elevation, long ribbon window stretching the full width of the elevation and originally containing wood fins to the architect's design
 - second floor, west elevation, single opening containing two windows separated by a pre-cast concrete fin with a clad steel beam above and originally wood fins as per the architect's design on the window to the north side of the fin
 - second floor, east elevation the opening for two windows with a precast concrete fin between and clad steel beam above and beneath them,
 - first floor level, east elevation, rectangular window opening.
- The steel columns with their wood cladding on two faces supporting the upper level of the front wing

Interior

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the interior of the building including the main entrance, lobby and staircase to the second floor lobby, and the second floor board room:

Main Entrance, Lobby and Staircase

- The main entrance vestibule which includes a projecting, glazed volume with glazed double doors, the double, wood-panelled entrance doors which open to the interior, flanked by, on the interior section facing the lobby, two screens, partially glazed with wood slats and corresponding with the height of the doors. Above the panelled doors and the screens are glazed transoms
- The wood-panelled, double-doors with unequal widths, and each has a narrow vertical glazed openings, vertical wood panel
- The ironmongery for the doors includes, on the exterior face two, large, metal door pulls composed of a series of vertical and horizontal elements, with horizontal bars set at different heights. A metal Guides' trefoil symbol is also included on the face of the north door at the entrance. On the interior face, the door pull on the northern door includes a cut-out trefoil
- The lobby materials include a slate floor in a random pattern, a concrete block wall on the east side of the staircase and wood slats fixed to the ceiling
- The lobby staircase includes a screen composed of vertical metal elements, stairs with an exposed structure with terrazzo treads and wood noggins, a continuous wood handrail combined of a cylindrical rail and a wood facing plate fixed to the metal screen or walls with a curvilinear profile. (Please note, originally this hand-rail continued along the face of the reception desk designed by the architect)
- At the second floor level the staircase handrail continues along a low block wall balustrade which is cut down to a lower height on its north end to include a low metal screen

Second Floor Boardroom

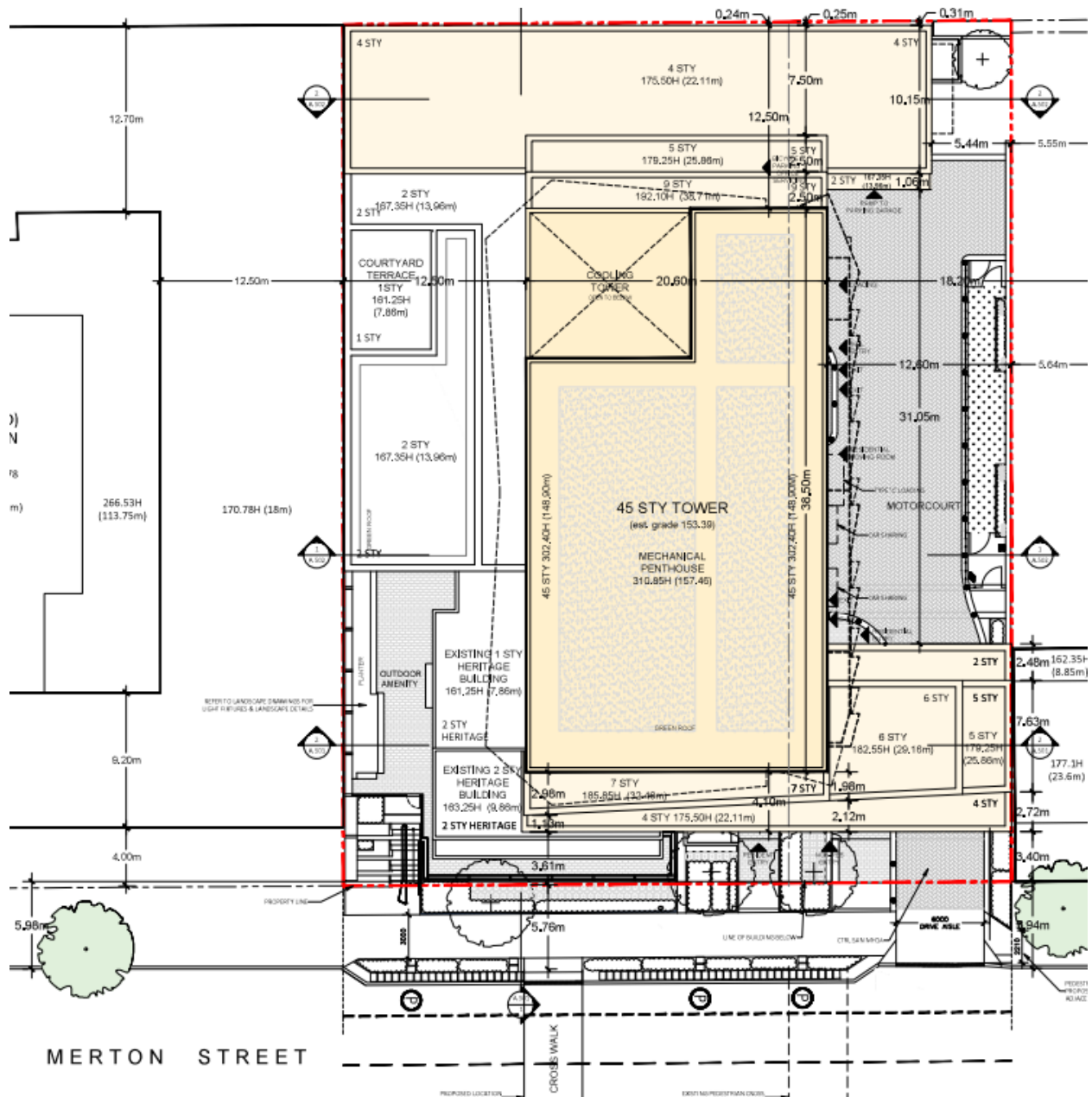
- The second floor boardroom ceiling which includes a glazed clerestory, exposed metal roof decking, pairs of wood rafters along the north side, a coved ceiling along the south side and a lower ceiling level parallel to the full-width ribbon window on the south elevation
- The plan of the second floor boardroom includes an entrance area on the north side with a lower ceiling and in the third bay at the east end, a longer bay which extends north

Contextual Value

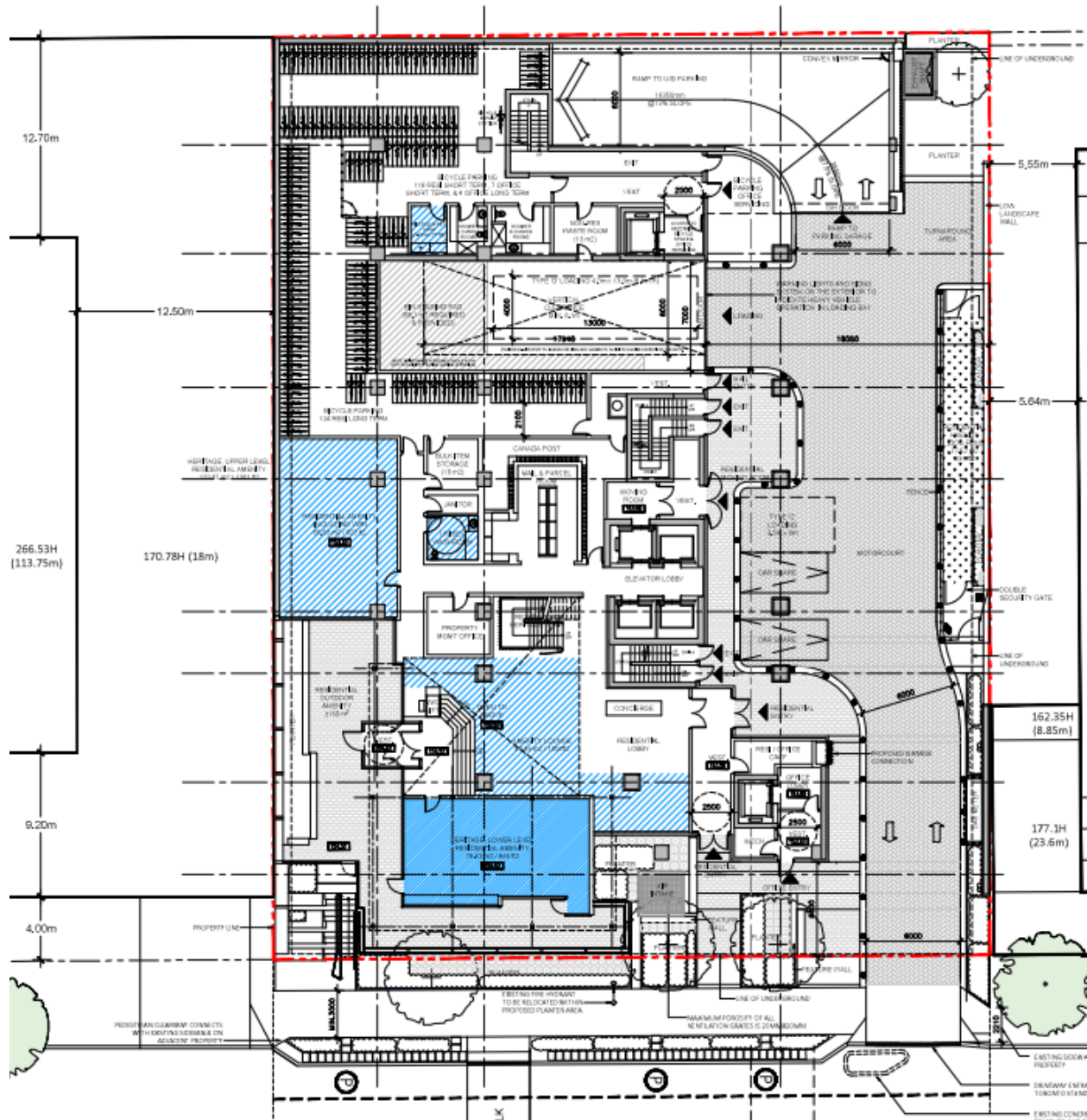
The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the Girl Guides of Canada Headquarters at 50 Merton Street as it supports the Post-World War II character of Merton Street in the section between Yonge Street and Mount Pleasant Road

- The scale, form and massing of the two-three-storey building, in a Post-War Modern style clad with a combination of brick and curtain wall glazing set on raised podium with an exterior terrace facing the street on the north side of Merton Street.

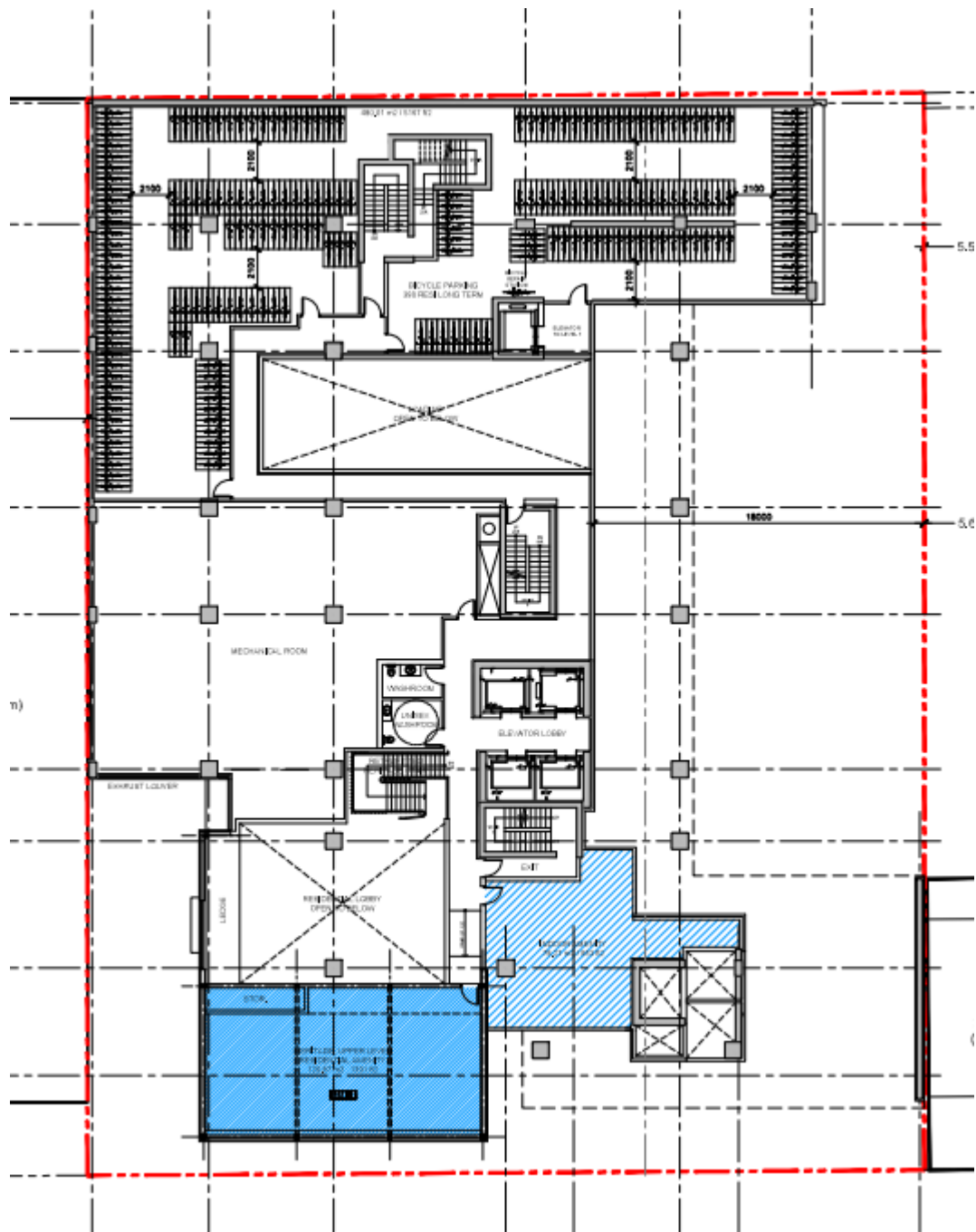
50 Merton Street



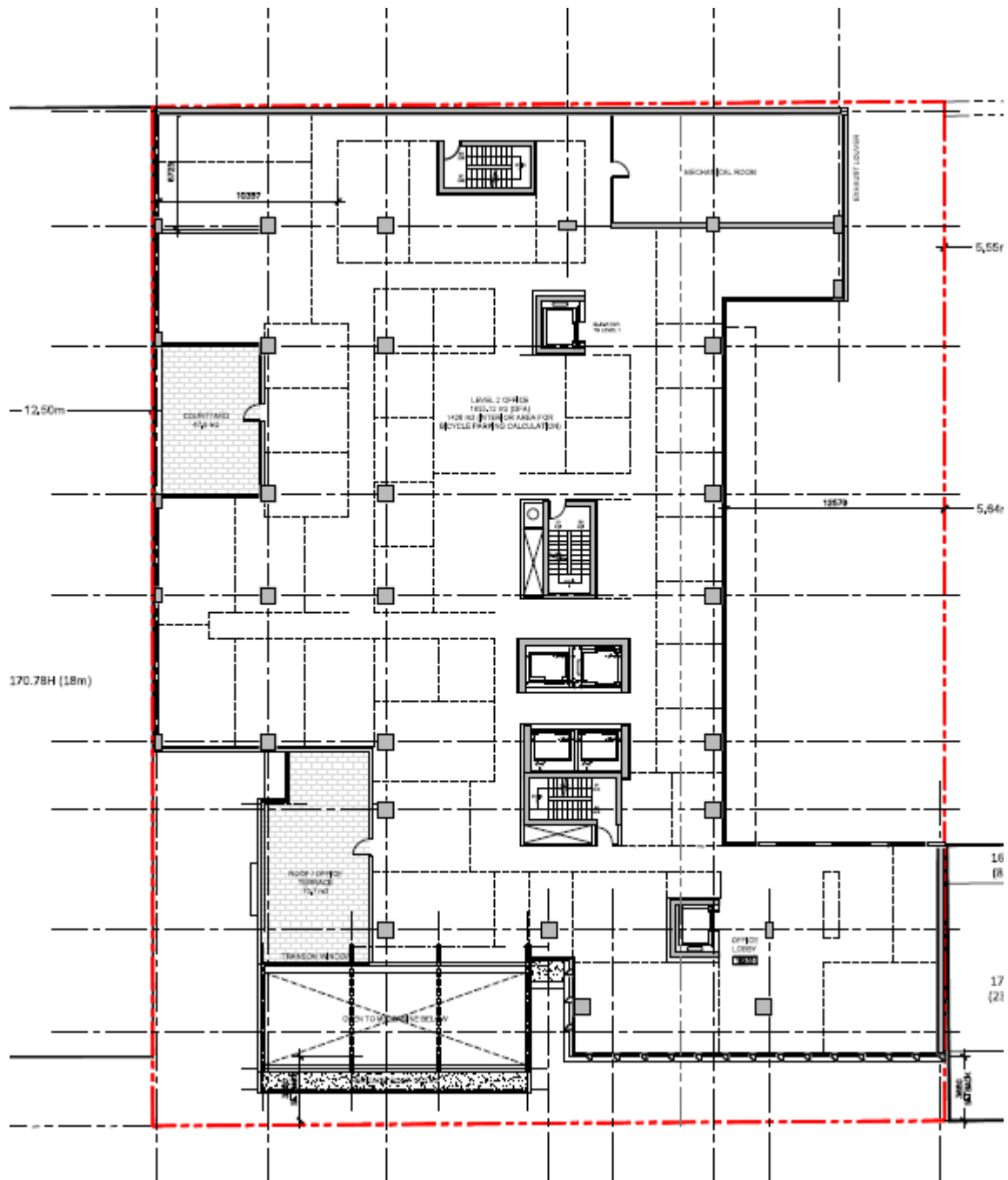
Proposed Site Plan (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



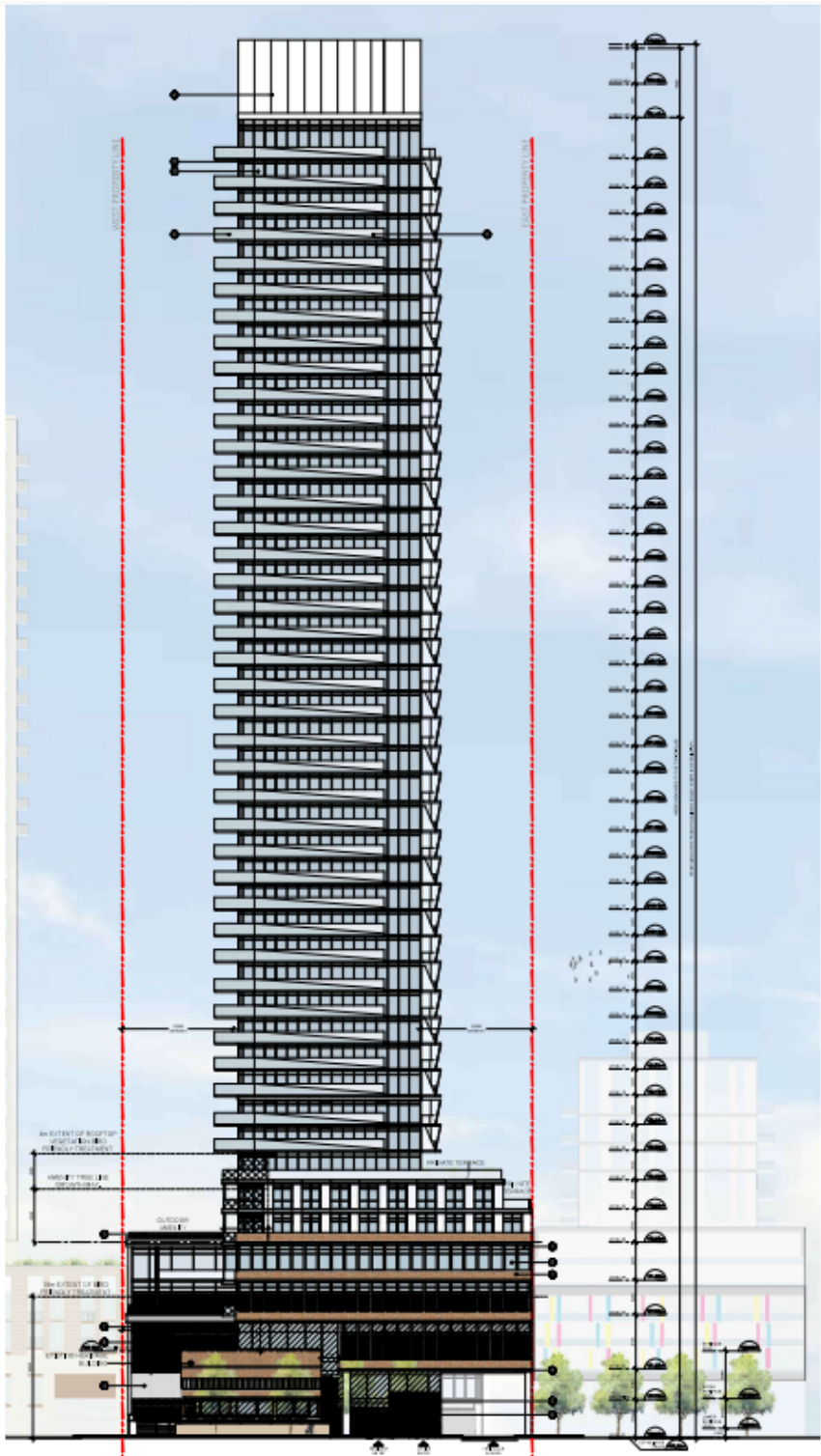
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



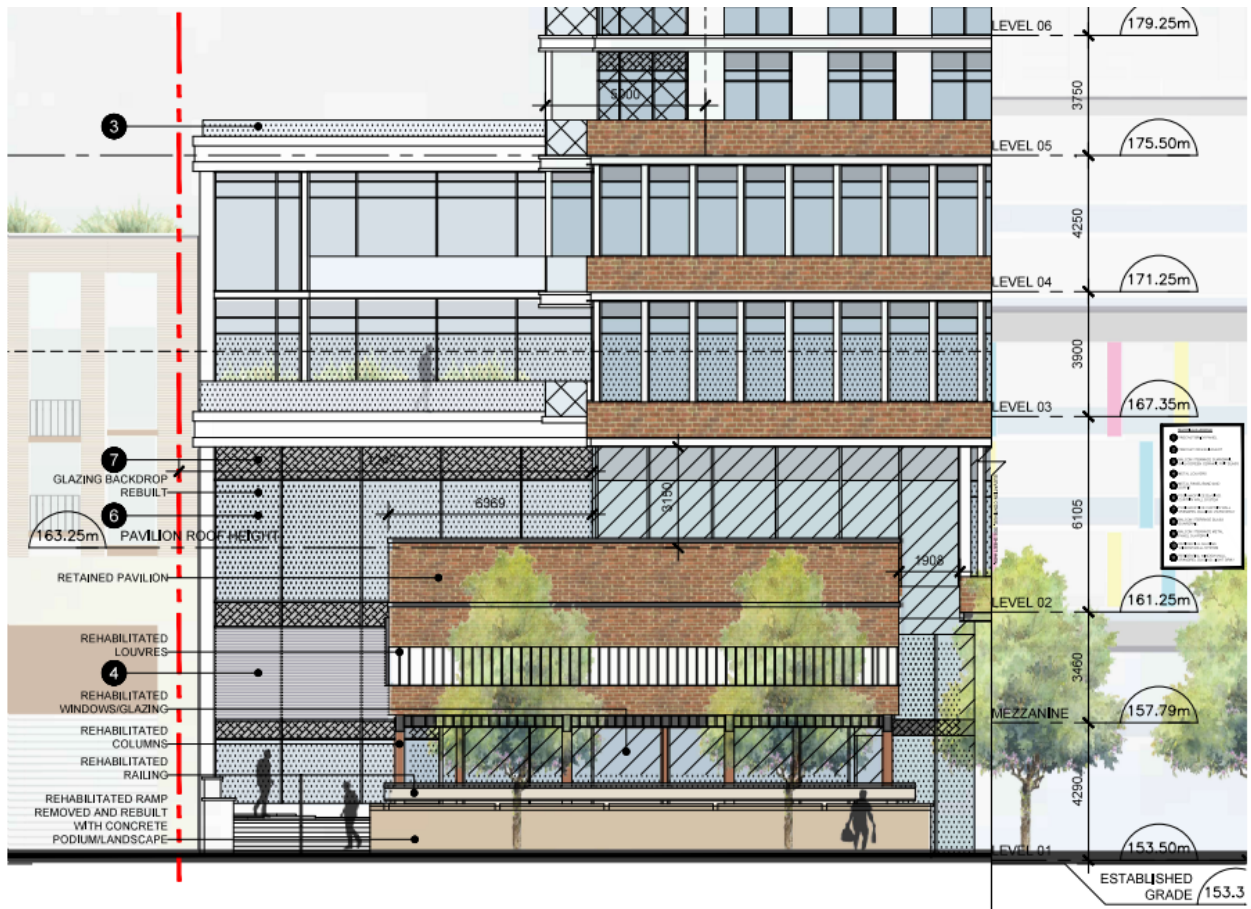
Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



Proposed Level 2 Plan (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



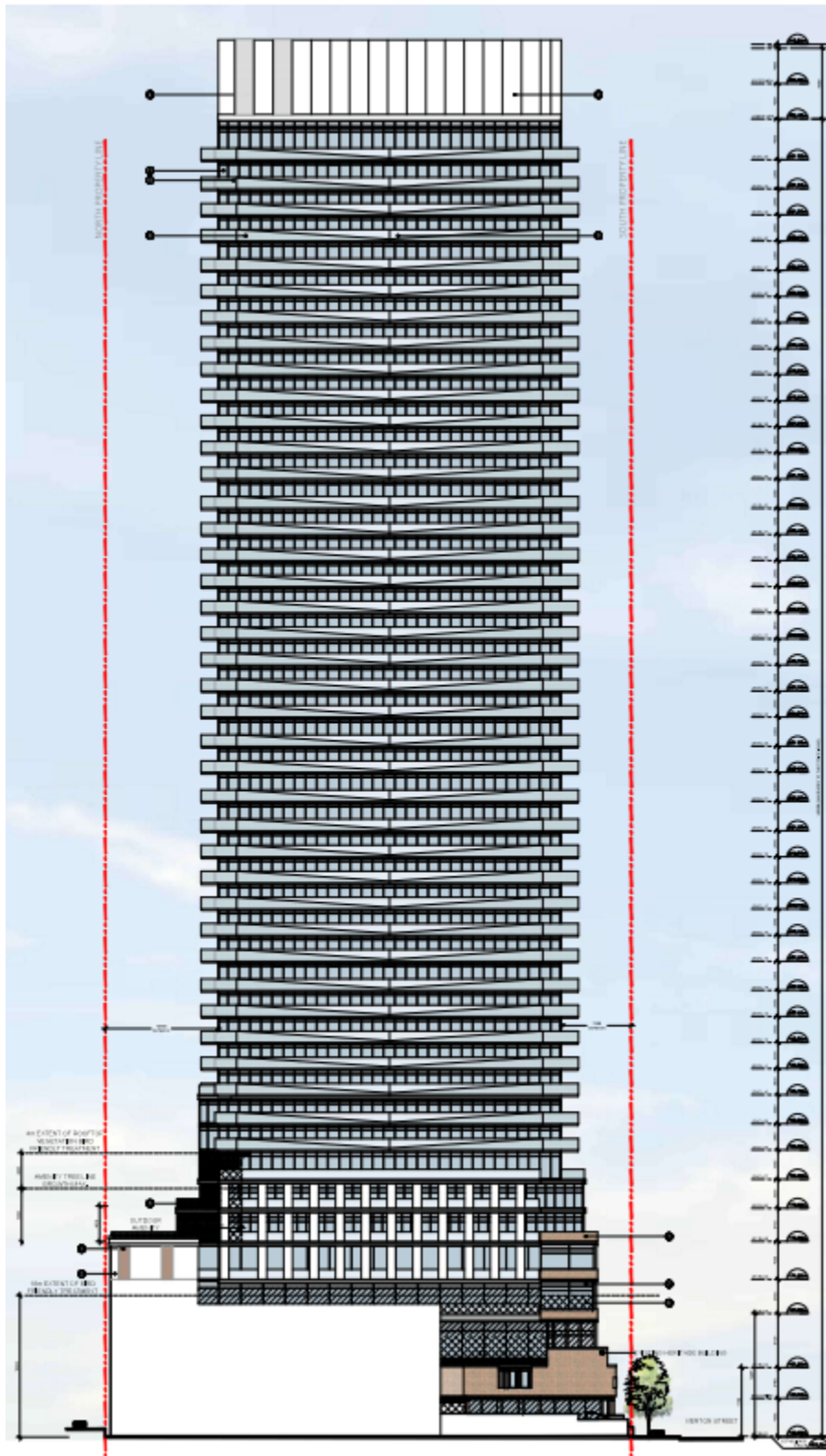
Proposed South Elevation (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



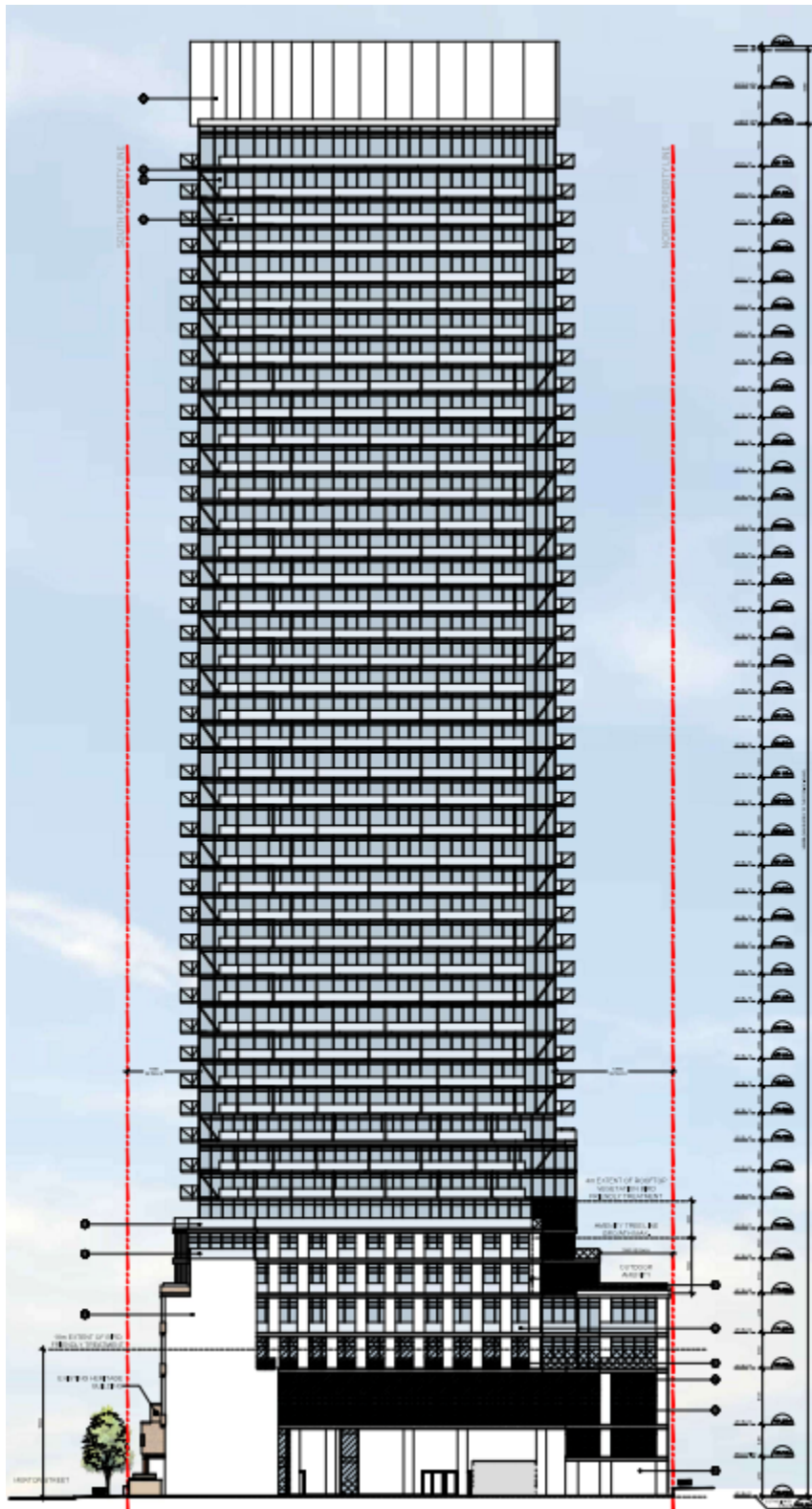
Proposed South Elevation Close-Up (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



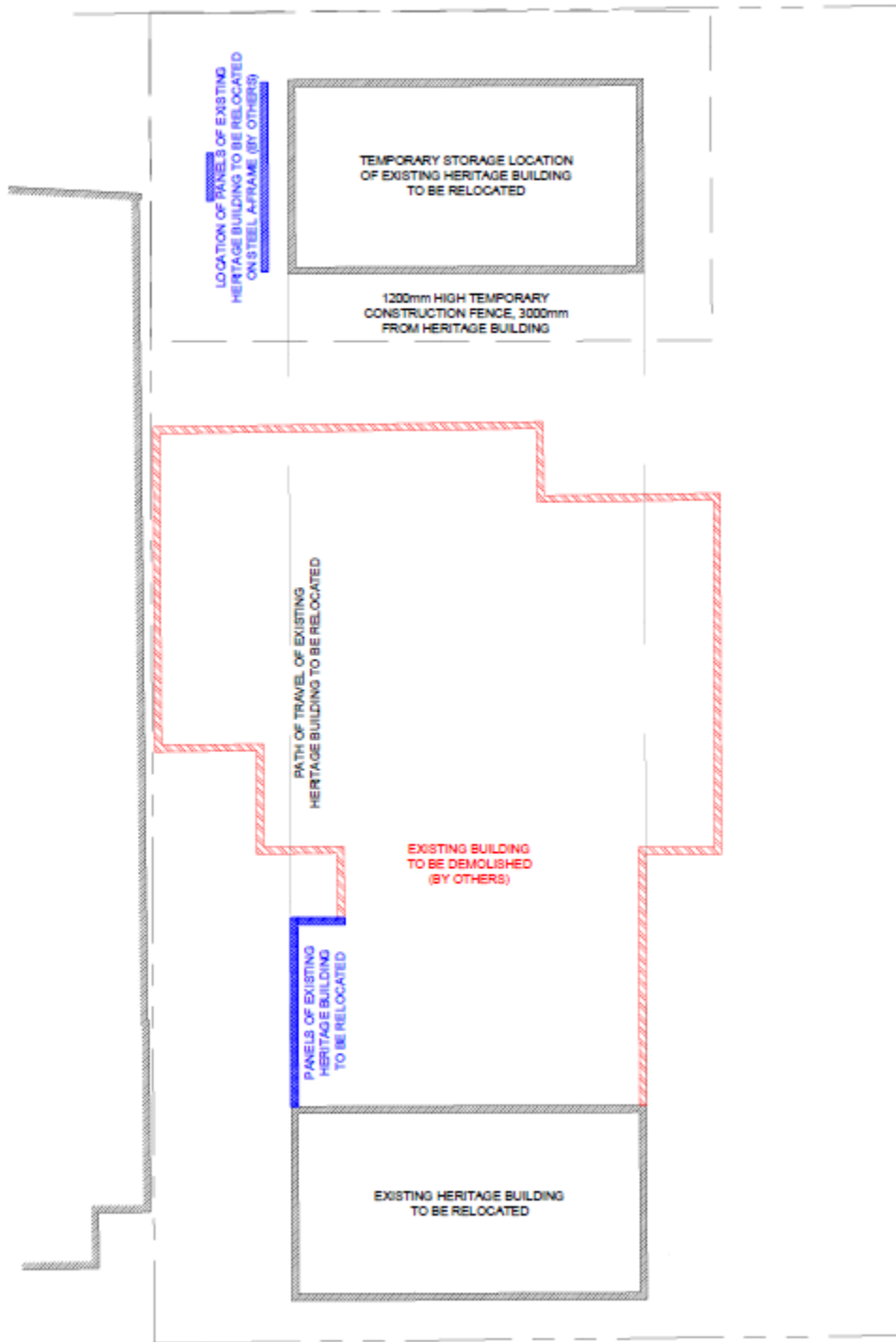
Rendering of South Elevation (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



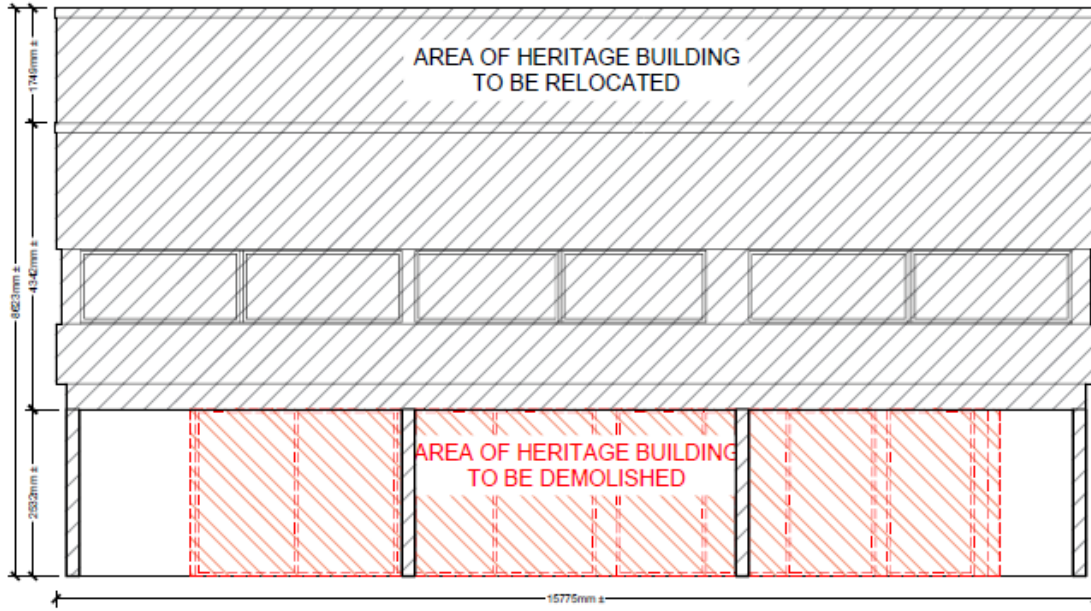
Proposed West Elevation (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



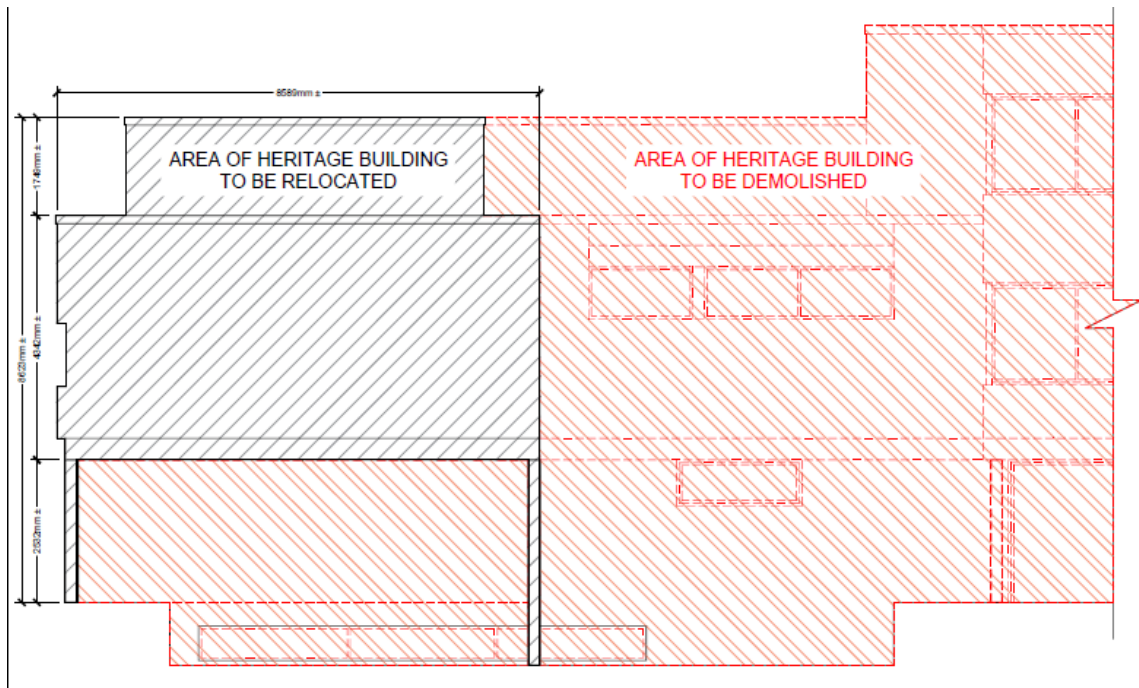
Proposed East Elevation (Hariri Pontarini Architects, November 23, 2023).



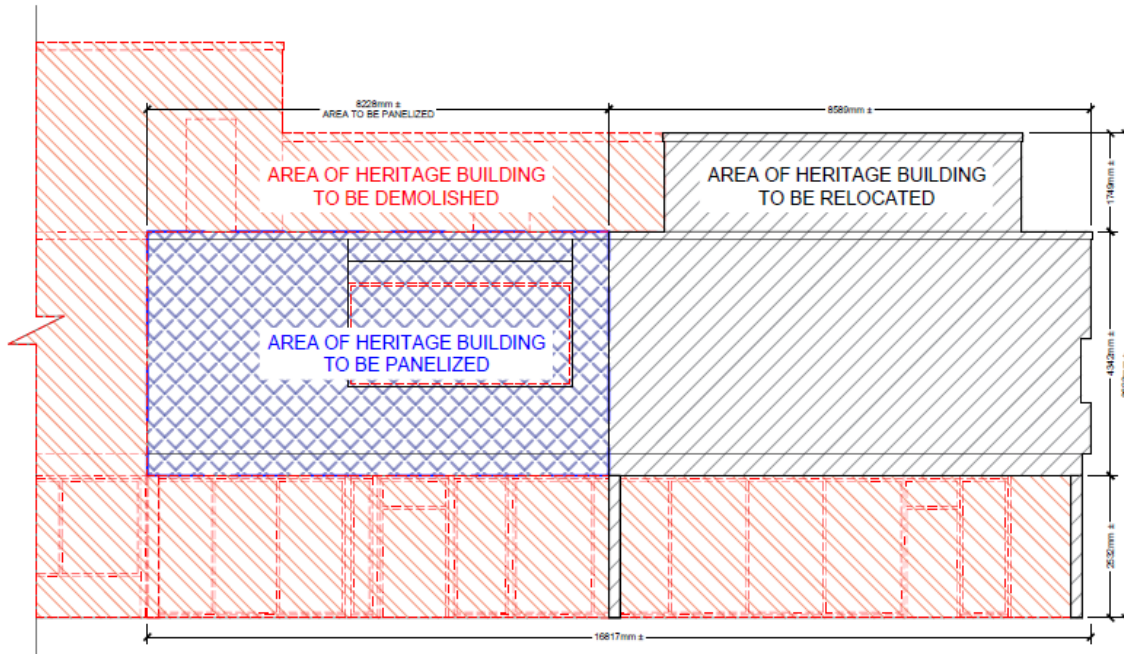
Proposed Demolition, Relocation and Panelization Plan (Facet Group Inc.)



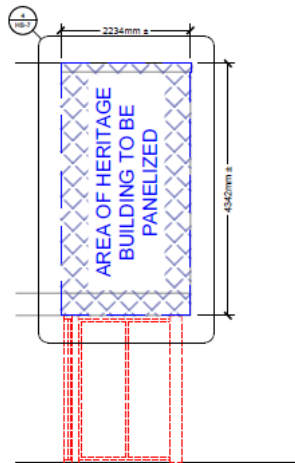
Relocation, Demolition and Panelization Plan South Elevation (Facet Group Inc.)



Relocation, Demolition and Panelization Plan East Elevation (Facet Group Inc.)



Relocation, Demolition and Panelization Plan West Elevation (Facet Group Inc.)



Relocation, Demolition and Panelization Plan North Elevation (Facet Group Inc.)