

625 Yonge Street (Including 627, 629, 631, 633, 635 and 637 Yonge Street and 1, 3 and 5 Isabella Street) - Alterations to a Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: February 26, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage property at 625 Yonge Street (with entrance addresses of 627, 629, 631, 633, 635 and 637 Yonge Street and 1, 3 and 5 Isabella Street) under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act in conjunction with Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications on the properties at 619-637 Yonge Street which have been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The application proposes the redevelopment of the site by constructing a 70-storey mixed-use building with two levels of mechanical on the properties at 619-637 Yonge Street which includes the designated heritage property at 625 Yonge Street.

The proposed development is consistent with the relevant provincial and municipal policies and staff are of the opinion that the impacts to the heritage resource on the site are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy in the context of the settlement of the appeal on the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve:

- a. the alterations to the heritage property at 625 Yonge Street (including entrance addresses of 627, 629, 631, 633, 635 and 637 Yonge Street and 1, 3 and 5

Isabella Street) in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 70-storey tower with such alterations substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated December 15, 2023 prepared by Core Architects and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated December 29, 2023 prepared by The Ventin Group Limited Architects, both 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 it consents to the application to alter the designated property at 625 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, also subject to the following conditions:

a. prior to any Ontario Land Tribunal Order issued in connection with the related Zoning By-law Amendment appeal, the owner shall:

1. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 625 Yonge Street substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated December 15, 2023 prepared by Core Architects and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated December 29, 2023 prepared by The Ventin Group Limited Architects, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2. a. 2 below, 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 consistent with the conservation strategy set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment for 625 Yonge Street dated December 29, 2023 prepared by The Ventin Group Limited Architects, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

3. Withdraw their appeal(s) of the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan, and if not an appellant, but rather a party to such appeals, the owner shall withdraw as a party and not seek any party or participant status on the appeals, or advise the City Solicitor, in writing, that they shall not object to the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan and only maintain a monitoring brief of the hearing on the merits.

4. Withdraw the appeal of By-law 70-2023, being a by-law to designate the property at 625 Yonge Street (including entrances at 627, 629, 631, 633, 635, and 637 Yonge Street, and 1, 3 and 5 Isabella Street) as being of cultural heritage value or interest under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

b. That prior to Site Plan approval for the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment by City Council for the property at 625 Yonge Street, the owner shall:

1. Provide final Site Plan drawings substantially in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.a.2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Have obtained final approval for the necessary Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment required for the subject property, such Amendments to have come into full force and effect.
3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the property located at 625 Yonge Street will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character 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 an Interpretation Plan for the property located at 625 Yonge Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
5. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning

c. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 625 Yonge Street, 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. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City required in Recommendation 2.a.1 above including registration on title of such agreement, to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor
2. Have obtained final approval for the necessary Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment, and such Amendments to have come into full force and effect.
3. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.a.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 Plan and Interpretation Plan.

d. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.c.4 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 and the required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the Conservation Plan and Interpretation Plan 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 the property at 625 Yonge 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 City Council authorizing the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement for the property at 625 Yonge Street.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 15, 2022 City Council enacted By-law No. 70-2023 designating the property at 625 Yonge Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2023/law0070.pdf>

On March 10, 2016, City Council adopted item TE14.4 designating by by-law the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District and adopting the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan, dated January 2016, as the district plan for the Historic Yonge Street HCD.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2016.TE14.4>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Value

The subject property is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-law No. 70-2023, enacted by City Council on December 15, 2022.

In addition, the development site is located within the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD), adopted by City Council on March 10, 2016 which is currently under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal and not in force.

The designated property at 625 Yonge Street consists of two adjoining buildings that are related historically and architecturally: a northern building at 631-637 Yonge Street/1-5 Isabella Street, and a southern building at 625-629 Yonge Street. The two adjoining buildings constitute a representative example of Edwardian Classicist-style commercial main street buildings that are important in maintaining and supporting the historic commercial character along this portion of Yonge Street. In addition, the property holds associative value with the automotive industry and, later, with a series of clubs that served the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The existing listed building at 619-623 Yonge Street is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new base building. This property was included on the City's Heritage Register as part of the Historic Yonge Street HCD study. In conjunction with the related development application, Heritage Planning, Policy and Research staff conducted thorough research and analysis and concluded that the property lacks integrity and does not retain sufficient cultural heritage value to meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria for determining significance, and therefore does not merit Part IV designation.

Development Proposal and Conservation Strategy

On December 14, 2021 Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications were submitted to permit a 57-storey mixed use building atop a 4-to-10-storey podium which anticipated the demolition of all the buildings on the site, including those at 625 Yonge Street. At that time, the property at 625 Yonge Street was listed on the City's Heritage Register.

The current revised proposal involves the in-situ conservation of the two street-facing walls of the buildings at 625 Yonge Street and construction of a 70-storey tower plus mechanical penthouse. The northern portion of the glazed tower steps back 10.50 metres from Yonge Street at Levels 4-16, after which the tower steps back 21.87 metres from Yonge Street. The tower step back from Isabella Street is 5.50 metres. New three-storey base buildings will be constructed on both Yonge and Isabella streets.

The site will be excavated below to accommodate four levels of underground vehicle and bicycle parking which will be accessed through the rear (east) lane.

The red brick and stone west and north street-facing walls, as well as the northern-most portion of the east facing wall, will be retained in situ and conserved. Proposed conservation work includes restoration of masonry, parapet, stone and other details on the conserved elevations.

Functional changes to the ground floor openings will be required for barrier-free access and new commercial uses, the details of which will be determined as part of the required Conservation Plan.

The full conservation strategy showing building retention, reconstruction and new construction is illustrated in Attachment 5 of this report and is further detailed in the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application.

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

The applicant has been responsive to the designation of the subject property which occurred during the application process by submitting a revised proposal that conserves

its heritage character and attributes and incorporates generous tower step backs to mitigate the impact of the new development.

The proposed placement of the new development allows the three-dimensional appearance and strong corner presence of the heritage resource to be maintained when viewed from the public realm. In addition, the base building portions of the new development facing both Yonge and Isabella streets are consistent with the three-storey street wall height of the heritage buildings on the site and also supports the character of the Historic Yonge Heritage Conservation District.

Minimal intervention is proposed for the two street-facing elevations. The majority of the window and door openings will be maintained and/or restored to their original configuration. Some windows may be lowered to allow for new commercial uses and accessibility. The details of these alterations will be addressed in the Conservation Plan.

Masonry, stone and parapet cleaning, repair and restoration will also ensure the cultural heritage values and attributes of the property are conserved.

A Heritage Easement Agreement will secure the long-term conservation of the property at 625 Yonge Street.

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.

CONCLUSION

Staff support the proposed conservation strategy for the 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 property. 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

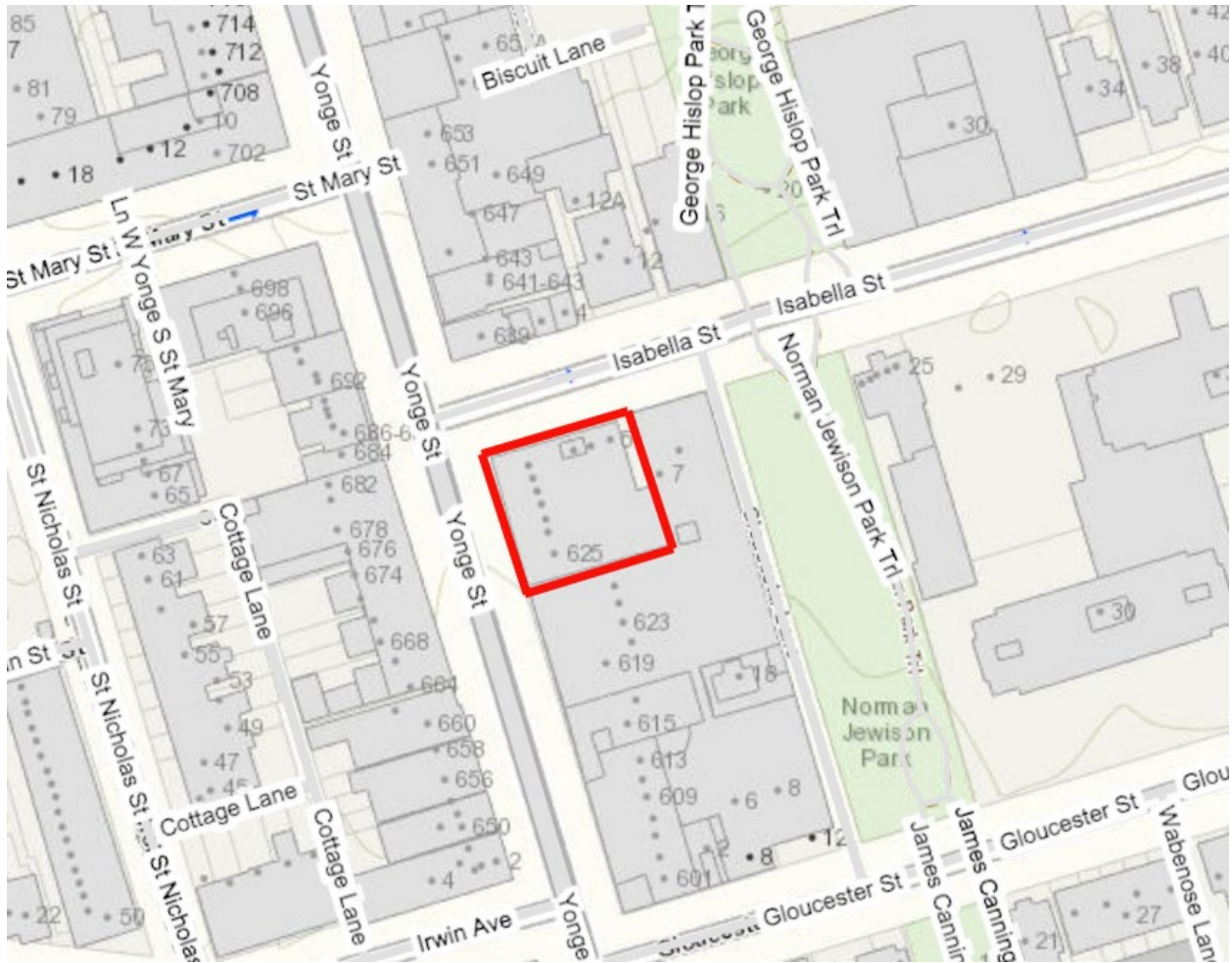
Anne Fisher, MCIP, RPP, MRTPI, CAHP
Acting Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 2 - Aerial Photograph
Attachment 3 - Photographs
Attachment 4 - Proposal Renderings
Attachment 5 - Selected Drawings

LOCATION MAP
625 Yonge Street

ATTACHMENT 1



Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 625 Yonge Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 2. Aerial photograph showing the location of 625 Yonge Street East outlined in red, located on the east side of Yonge Street south Isabella Street and north of Gloucester Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Principal (West) Elevation of 625 Yonge Street (Source: HIA prepared by VG Architects Ltd.,).



Principal (West) and South Elevations of 625 Yonge Street (Source: HIA prepared by VG Architects Ltd., 2023).



North Elevation of 625 Yonge Street (Source: HIA prepared by VG Architects Ltd.,).



North and East Elevations of 625 Yonge Street (Source: HIA prepared by VG Architects Ltd.,).



Rendering of Proposed North and West Elevations (Core Architects, 2023)

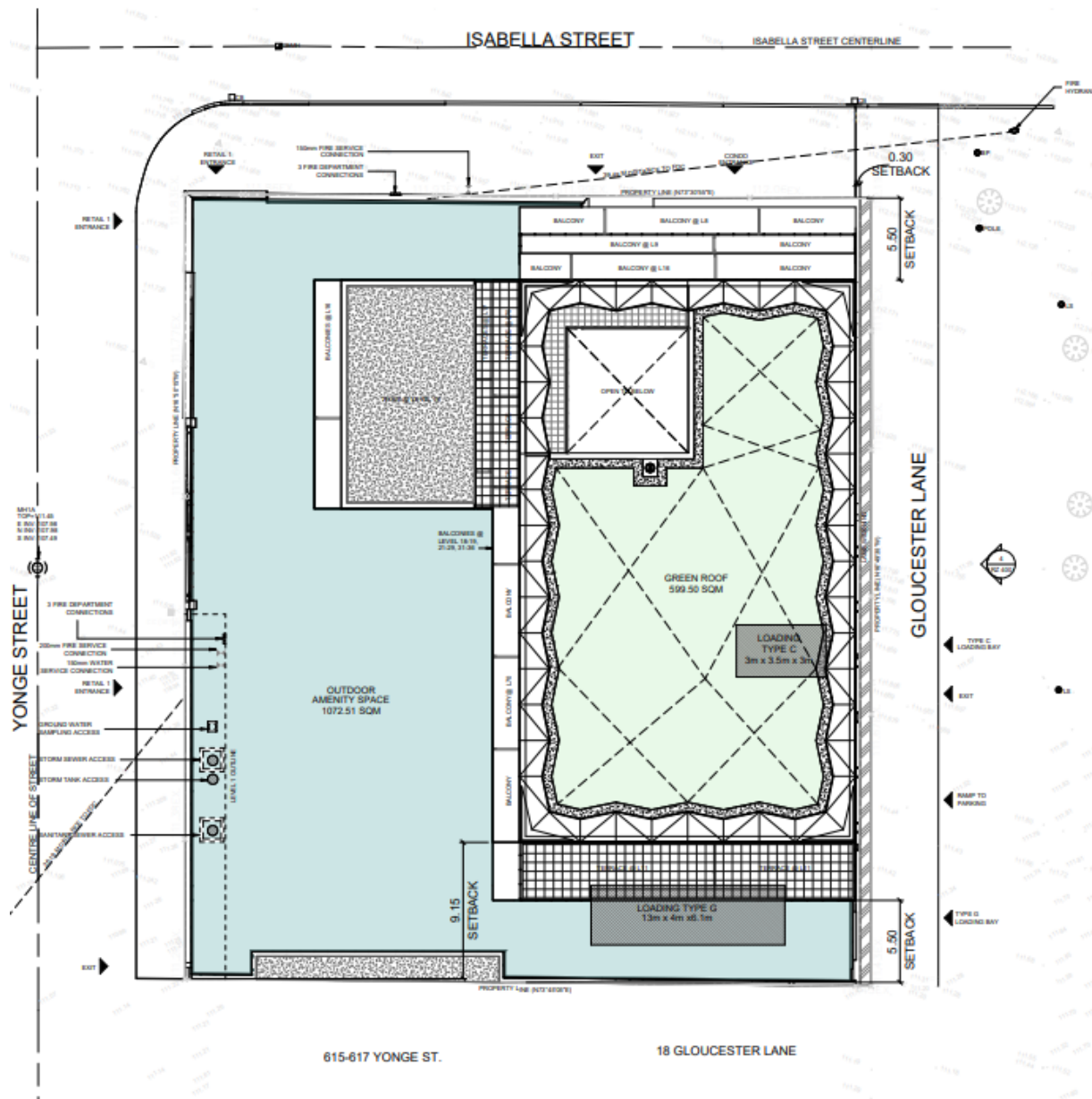


Rendering of Proposed East and North Elevations (Core Architects, 2023)

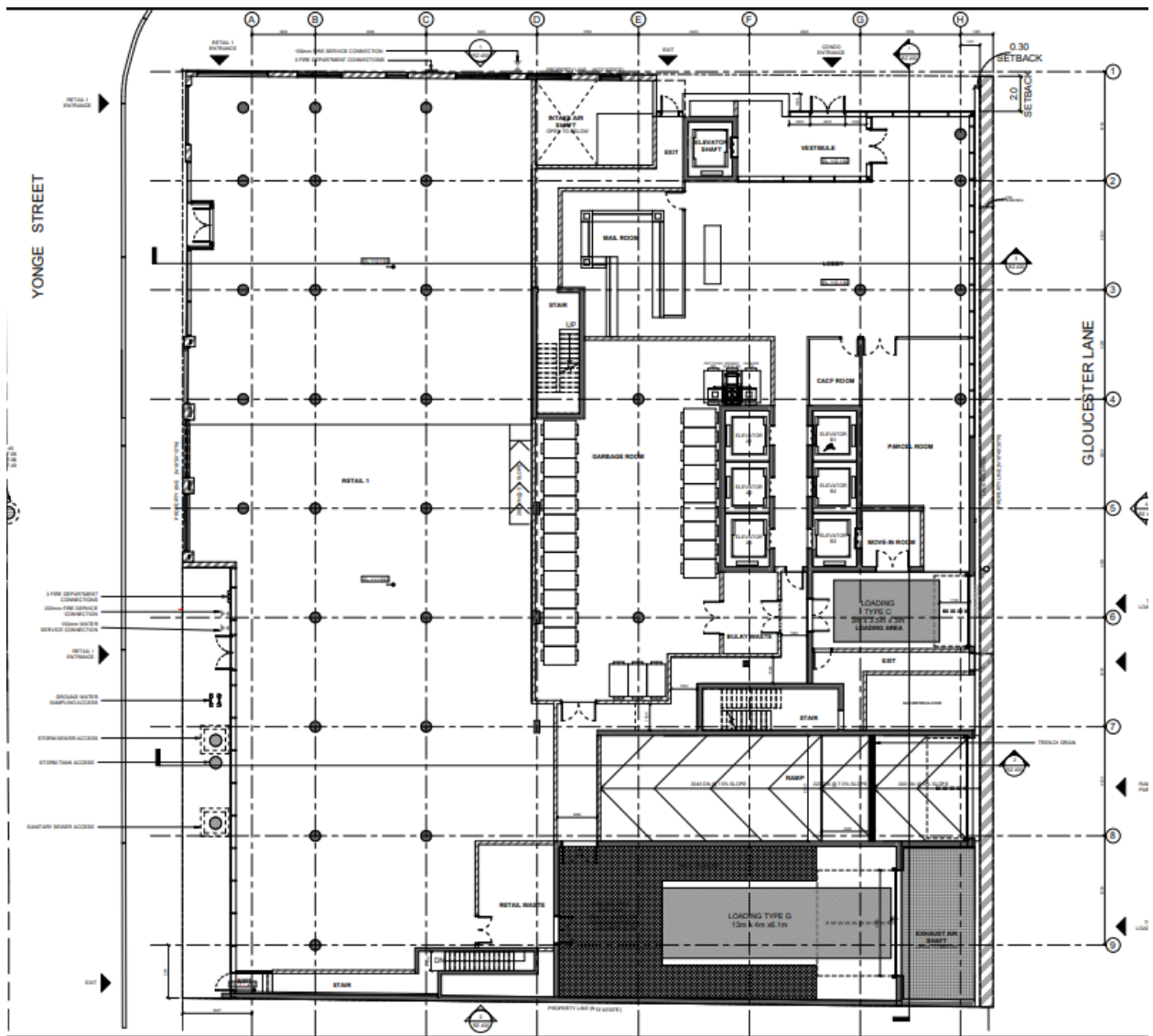
SELECTED DRAWINGS

ATTACHMENT 5

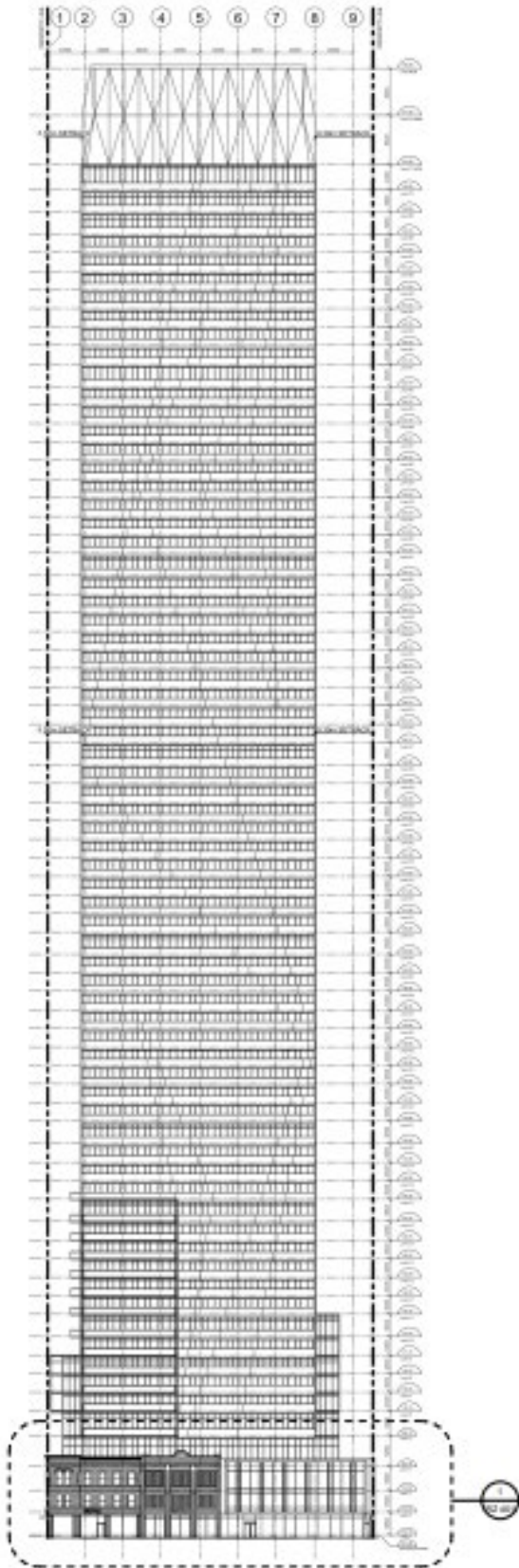
625 Yonge Street



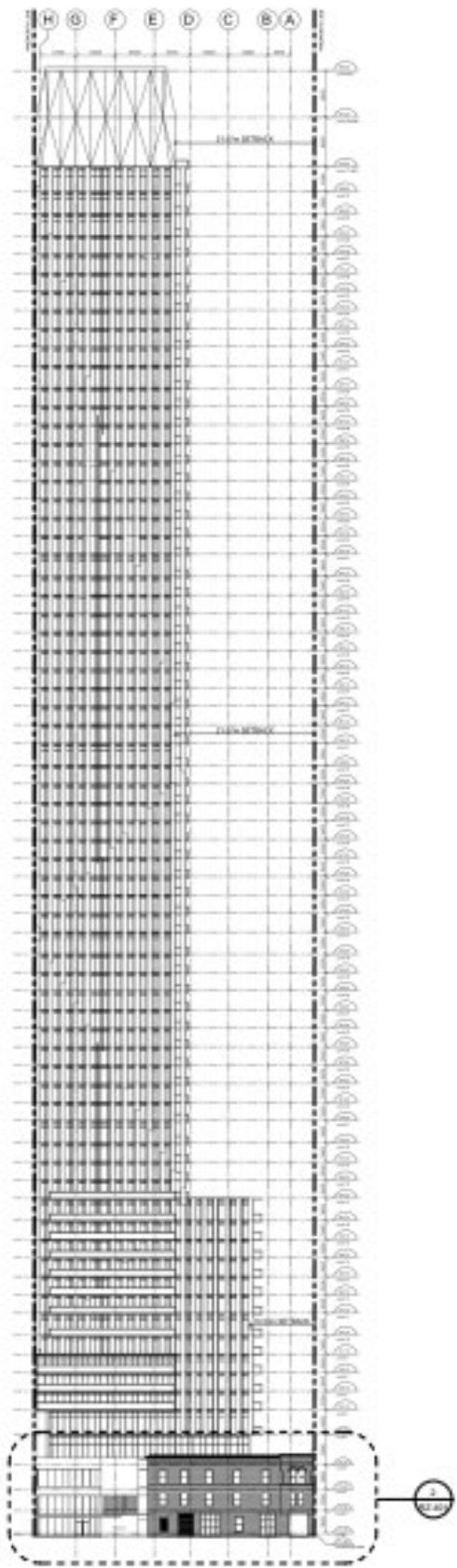
Proposed Site Plan (Core Architects, 2023)



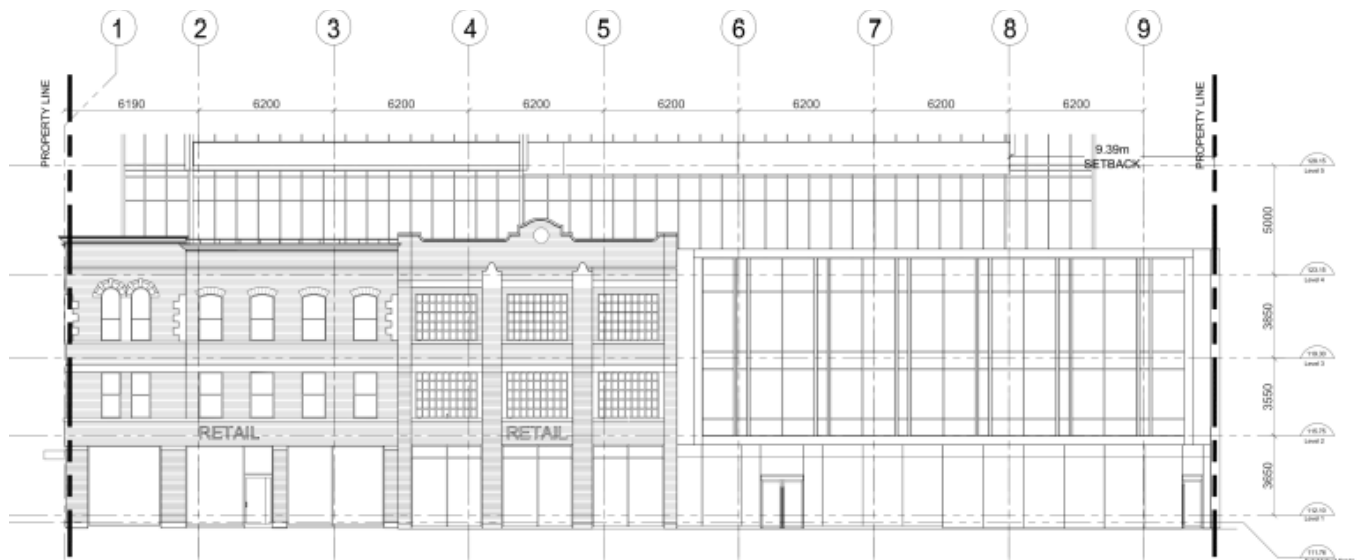
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Core Architects, 2023)



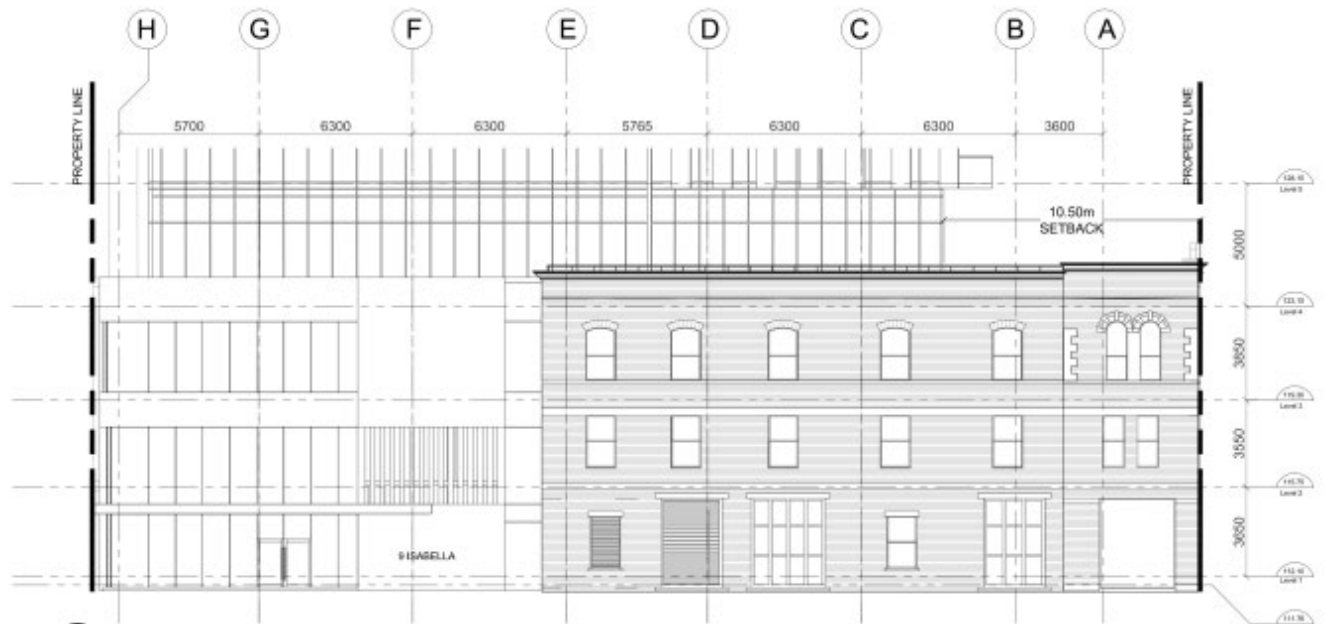
Proposed West Elevation (Core Architects, 2023).



Proposed North Elevation (Core Architects, 2023)



Proposed West Elevation (Core Architects, 2023)



Proposed North Elevation (Core Architects, 2023)
625 Yonge Street