

## **68 Wellesley Street East - Refusal of Application for Alterations to Designated Heritage Properties Under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

**Date:** March 12, 2024

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** 13 -Toronto-Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council refuse the application under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to construct a new structure on the designated heritage property at 68 Wellesley Street East (which includes convenience addresses of 70-78 Wellesley and 505-509½ Church Street) in connection with the development of the properties at 68 Wellesley Street.

On January 30, the City received an Official Plan and Rezoning application for a 28-storey mixed-use building in conjunction with an application for Site Plan approval for the proposed development. The project would have a non-residential gross floor area of 620 square meters, and a residential gross floor area of 16,903 square metres with 258 dwelling units.

The Site contains the properties located at 68 Wellesley Street East (convenience addresses: 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 78A Wellesley Street and 505, 507, 509 and 509 1/2 Church Street). Collectively known as the William McBean Terrace, these properties are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act under By-law 914-2014.

Constructed in the late 19th century, the built form of the William McBean Terrace is a contiguous row of 2 ½ storey row houses designed in the Second Empire style with a mansard roof, projecting dormers, and decorative detailing. The property was first listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1974.

The owner has submitted an application to alter the designated heritage property under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and this report recommends the application be refused.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council refuse the alterations to the designated heritage property at 68 Wellesley Street East in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act as found in the plans and drawings prepared by Quadrangle Architects Limited, dated December 15, 2023 and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects, dated January 23, 2024.
2. In the event of an appeal to the Ontario Lands Tribunal, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and the necessary City staff to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal hearing in opposition to the appeal.

## 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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In 1974, City Council listed 68 Wellesley Street East (including the entrance addresses 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 78A Wellesley Street and 505, 507, 509 and 509 1/2 Church Street at 376 A Yonge Street) on the Heritage Register

On February 19 and 20, 2014, City Council designated the property at 68 Wellesley Street East (including the entrance addresses) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value per By-law 914-2014.

[TE29.8 - Staff Report - 68 Wellesley Street East - Intention to Designate.doc \(toronto.ca\)](#)

## BACKGROUND

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### Heritage Value

Located on the northeast corner of Wellesley Street and Church Street, the William McBean Terrace (1878) was designed as a group of 2½-storey row houses that were later converted to commercial and residential uses. The site was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1974.

The property at 68 Wellesley Street East has cultural heritage value as an early extant representative example in Toronto of the Second Empire style applied to a group of late 19th century row houses (which were afterward converted to mixed residential and commercial uses). The William McBean Terrace is distinguished for its design with surviving original detailing, including the distinctive mansard roofs with intricate dormers and the well-crafted decorative detailing applied to the fenestration in the second storey that are indicative of the Second Empire style.

Contextually, the William McBean Terrace is valued for the historical linkages to its surroundings in the Church and Wellesley community where the group stands as the only surviving original buildings adjoining the intersection. The property reflects the evolution of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood from its origins in the 19th century as part of the Church Street residential corridor, through its transformation in the 20th century to an anchor for two important commercial arteries in Toronto and, beginning in the 1960s to its position near the geographical cross-roads of the city's Gay Village that continues as the historic centre of the LGBTQ community.

Anchoring the northeast corner of an important city intersection, the William McBean Terrace at 68 Wellesley Street East has cultural heritage value as a long-standing local landmark in Toronto's Church and Wellesley neighbourhood

## **Heritage Adjacencies**

As defined in the Official Plan, the Site is not considered adjacent to any heritage properties.

## **The Proposal**

At the subject site, the development proposes a 28-storey mixed-use tower at the northeast corner of Church Street and Wellesley Street East. Its primary street-facing elevations align west with Church Street and south with Wellesley Street East.

Specifically, the proposed development will feature the following:

- A 3-storey podium consisting of the heritage property, to include: a one storey ground floor of at grade retail frontages, as well as a residential lobby and community lobby; two storeys of amenity and community space behind the existing heritage facade; and an outdoor amenity space set behind the existing heritage mansard roof
- The initial 3-storeys of the tower, above the heritage property roof (the reveal), provide both interior amenity and residential units
- Above the 3-storey reveal is the 22-storey cantilevered residential tower, with a mechanical penthouse
- Removal of one-storey structure at the north end of the Site (509/509 1/2 Church Street), to be replaced with three-storey glazed atrium lobby, proposed for use by local community centre to serve the surrounding LGBTQ+ community

## **The Conservation Strategy and Alterations**

Specifically, the conservation strategy will include the following:

- 1) The current storefronts along the Church Street and Wellesley Street elevations will be replaced (Ground level elevation/storefronts are not a heritage attributes), specifically; the awning and storefront addition along the Church Street elevation will be demolished and replaced with glazed storefronts and the storefront additions and balconies along the Wellesley Street elevation will be demolished and replaced with glazed storefronts;
- 2) In situ retention and conservation of the primary (south and west) elevations at the second storey and mansard roof at both the Church Street and Wellesley Street East facades;
- 3) A three-story reveal is proposed above the heritage roof, with a step back depth from the heritage façade of 4.06 metres on the Church Street elevation (West) and a step back depth of 3.89 metres on the Wellesley Street East elevation (South). Above the three-story reveal, the tower does not cantilever at the Wellesley Street East elevation (maintaining the 3.89 metre step back). However, at the Church Street elevation, the proposed cantilever will project 2.69 metres from the top of the three story reveal towards the lot line and heritage façade below;
- 4) Partial dismantling and reconstruction of the north elevation (side elevation) second-storey brick, dormer and mansard roof, alongside the restoration of the dormer opening from a door to a window to a depth of approximately 4.6m;
- 5) The one-storey building at 509/509 1/2 Church Street will be demolished and replaced with a three-storey glass vestibule, intended to partially encase the north return of the heritage facade, mansard roof, and dormer. The storefront visually combines and interfaces the northernmost storefront bay at the heritage property along the Church Street frontage with the new storefront extending north of the heritage property;
- 6) Five second storey doors on the Wellesley Street elevation will be altered to rehabilitate the window form, with like infill of a sill and brickwork below to match the extant heritage fabric.
- 7) The contemporary rectangular bump-out located at the third bay of the second storey from the southeast corner on the Church Street elevation will be replaced with a window using the materials and style of the existing fenestration.
- 8) Vertical articulation at the ground floor storefronts at select locations along the south Wellesley Street elevation, some to become recessed entrances/vestibules to render the three-dimensional legibility of historic residential interior divisions.

Generally, the conservation will also include the select repair, restoration, and repainting of the brick and stonework; as well as the select repair and restoration of window lintels and brackets, as needed.

## **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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### **Impact to Design Value**

The impact of the project with regards to the fundamental heritage attributes of scale, form and massing of the heritage buildings on the subject property is substantial. The proposed tower, placed atop the heritage building with inadequate step back from both Church Street and Wellesley Street East in combination with the inadequate reveal directly above the heritage properties as proposed, would interfere with perception of the low-rise flat roof form of the heritage building as perceived from the public realm. In addition, the design of the new development would result in the loss of the building's three-dimensional integrity and low scale by reducing perception of the building to only a façade generally perceived as contiguous with the tower above.

The project should provide increased step backs from the heritage façade, at roof level, to the three-storey reveal at both the Church Street and Wellesley Street East elevations. The three-storey reveal should also be increased, specifically at the Church Street elevation, where the cantilever element will be employed.

## **Storefront Design at Interface of Heritage Building and North Abutting Site on Church Street**

The scale, form and massing are attributes of the heritage property. Form and massing are perceived by aspects such as conservation of building facades and building edges or corners. Perception of the building corner visually ties or anchors the building from the roof level to grade level.

Though the first-floor storefronts and the single-storey north wing on Church Street are additions that are not identified as heritage attributes, a new storefront will be created to replace the one-storey north wing at 509/509 1/2 Church Street. This replacement will be in the form of a three-storey glass vestibule, intended to partially encase the north return of the heritage facade, mansard roof, and dormer. The storefront visually combines and interfaces the northernmost storefront bay at the heritage property along the Church Street frontage with the new storefront extending north of the heritage property. As a result, the corner or edge of the heritage property cannot be discerned. The project should be modified so that the heritage property has a definitive edge and the new storefront abutting the heritage property to the north is understood as a differentiated building form (See render of proposed storefront at this location). Note that if the design incorporates a three storey glass vestibule abutting the heritage property, the return wall/north elevation of the heritage property should be retained and visible.

### **Storefront Design**

The storefront scheme at both street frontage appears to utilize fully glazed storefront systems and does not appear compatible with the age and style of the heritage property.

Though the existing storefronts are not heritage attributes, the new storefronts while contemporary should be sensitively designed to fit the heritage property. In general, the following should be considered when designing the storefronts for the subject property:

- 1) Once existing storefronts are removed, no significant historic fabric should be removed.
- 2) New storefront infill should be framed by the existing or historic piers and lintels.
- 3) If piers and lintels have been removed, a new opening should conform to the building's bay rhythm.
- 4) Proportions, configuration, details, materials, and finish of the storefront should be consistent with the age and style of the building.

## **CONCLUSION**

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At the subject site 68 Wellesley Street, the proposed development will have a negative impact with regard to the heritage attributes of scale, form, and massing. As perceived

at the Church Street and Wellesley Street East frontage, these character-defining elements would not be conserved. The proposal does not adequately provide the necessary step backs over the heritage properties in order to perceive their scale, form and massing as viewed from the public realm by the pedestrian. Additionally, the storefront design requires modifications so that the conservation of the heritage is further enhanced.

In addition, the application does not protect the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the properties or minimize visual and/or physical impact on them and therefore does not conform with the City's Official Plan or relevant provincial policies and should be refused.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Acting Senior Manager, Heritage Planning  
Urban Design, City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Location Map  
Attachment 2 - Photographs  
Attachment 3 - Proposal Rendering  
Attachment 4 - Selected Plans and Drawings

# LOCATION MAP

# ATTACHMENT 1

## 68 Wellesley Street East



Location Map: Map showing the location of the subject property at 68 Wellesley Street East. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**68 Wellesley Street East**



Wellesley Street East façade. Upper photo looking towards northeast. Church Street façade in shadow. Lower photo looking north at Wellesley Street East façade.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

### 68 Wellesley Street East



Church Street façade looking towards the east.



1973 Photograph of Church Street and Wellesley Street East facades (City of Toronto Archives)

**PROPOSAL RENDERING**  
**68 Wellesley Street East**

**ATTACHMENT 3**



Render looking towards northeast.



Render looking at Wellesley Street East

## PROPOSAL RENDERING

### 68 Wellesley Street East

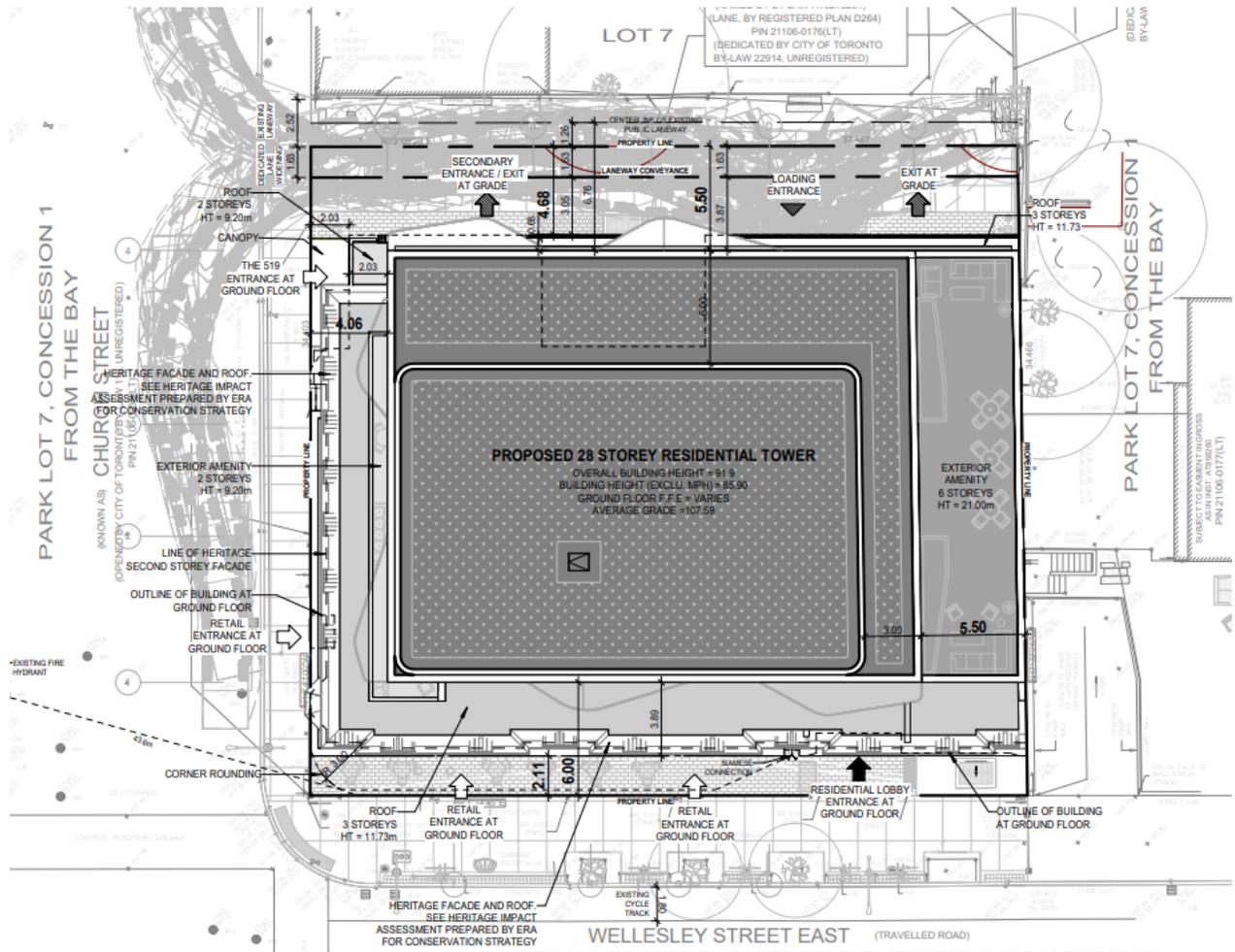


Render looking at Church Street façade. Note combined storefront at left side of Heritage Property

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

# ATTACHMENT 4

## 68 Wellesley Street East

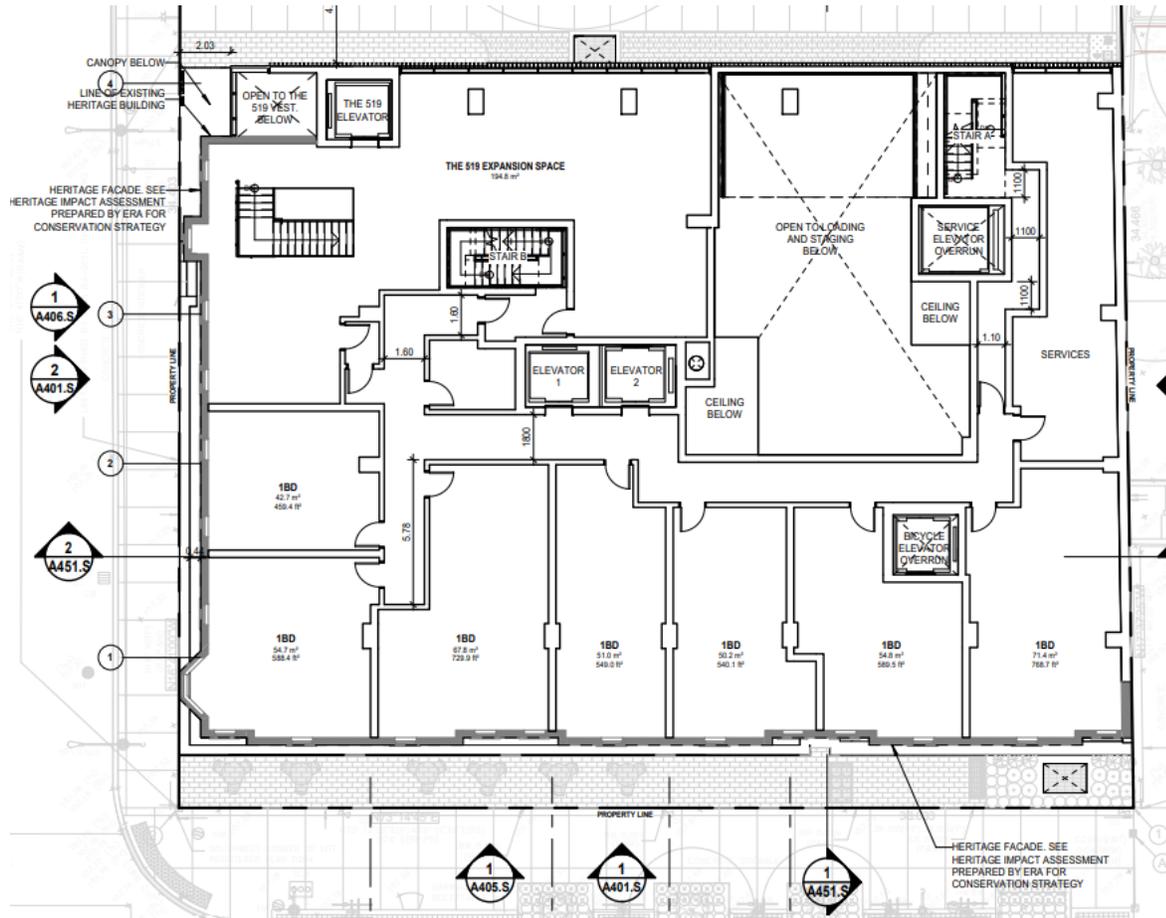


Site Plan



# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

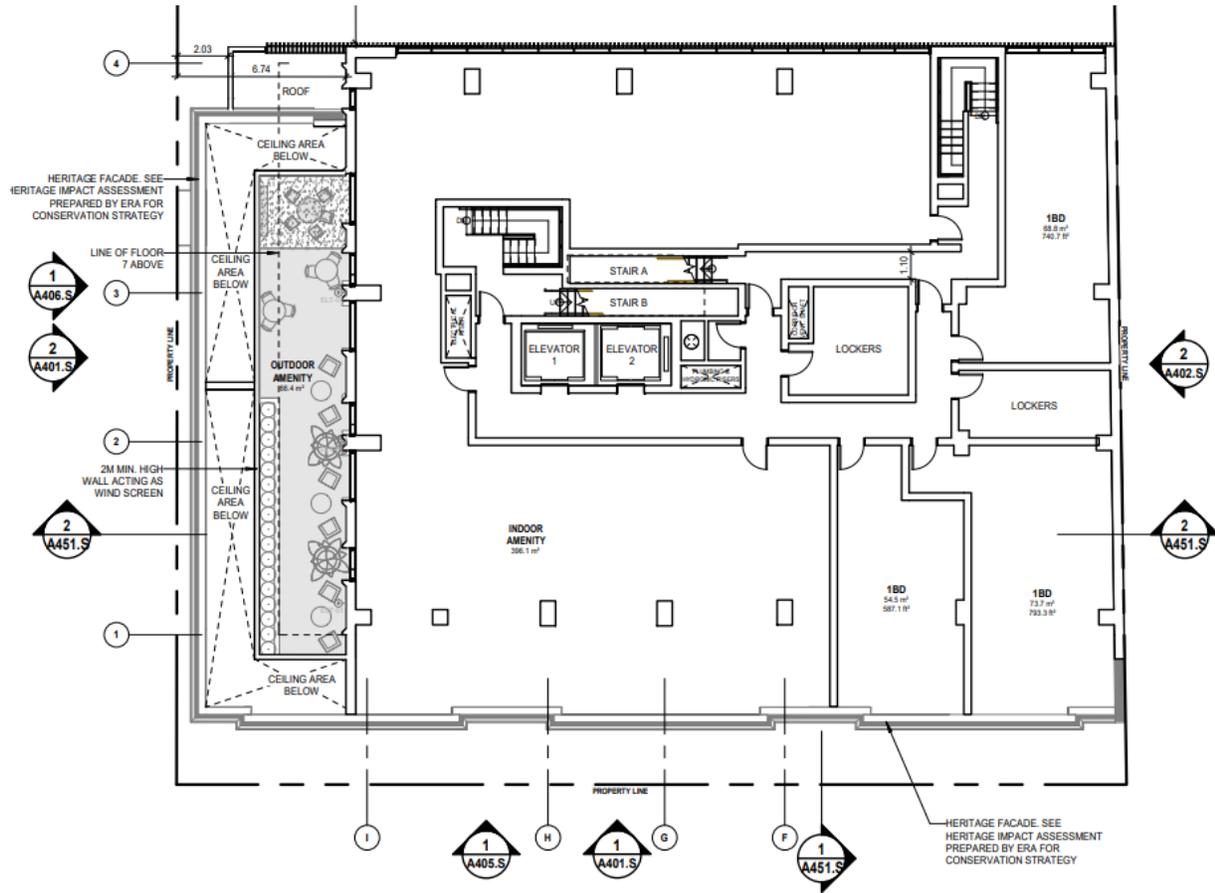
## 68 Wellesley Street East



Second Floor

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

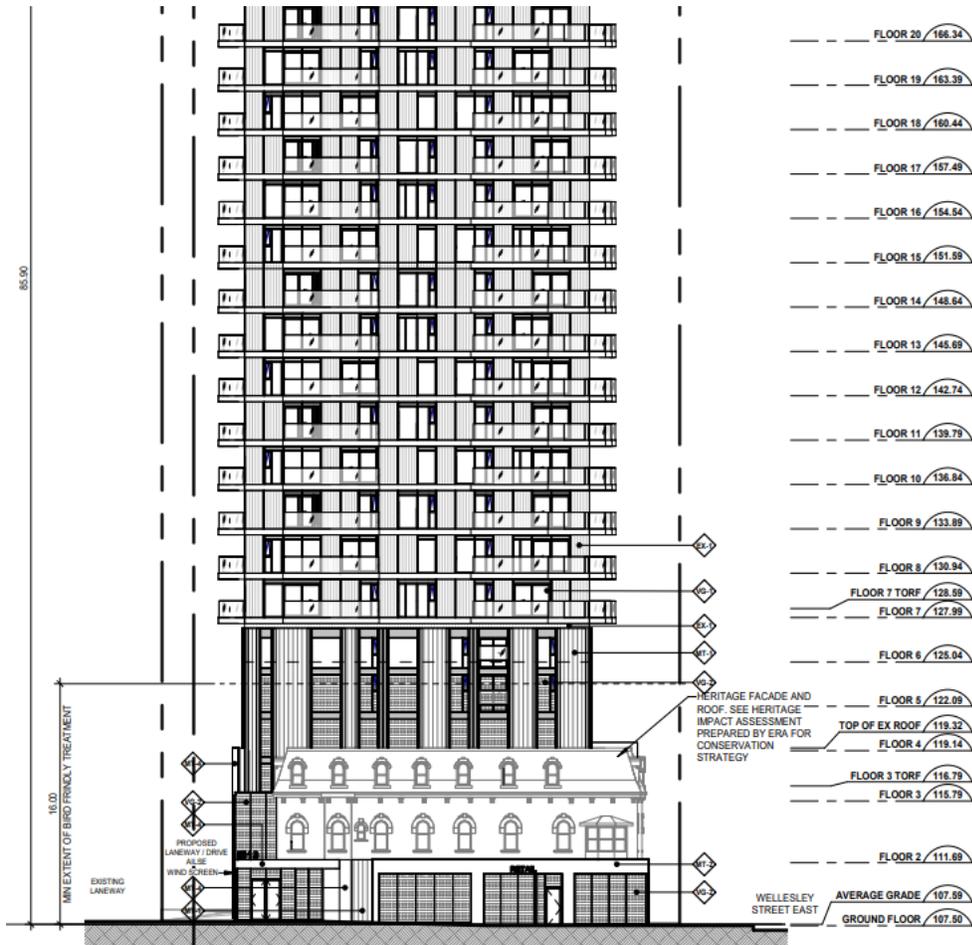
## 68 Wellesley Street East



Third floor

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

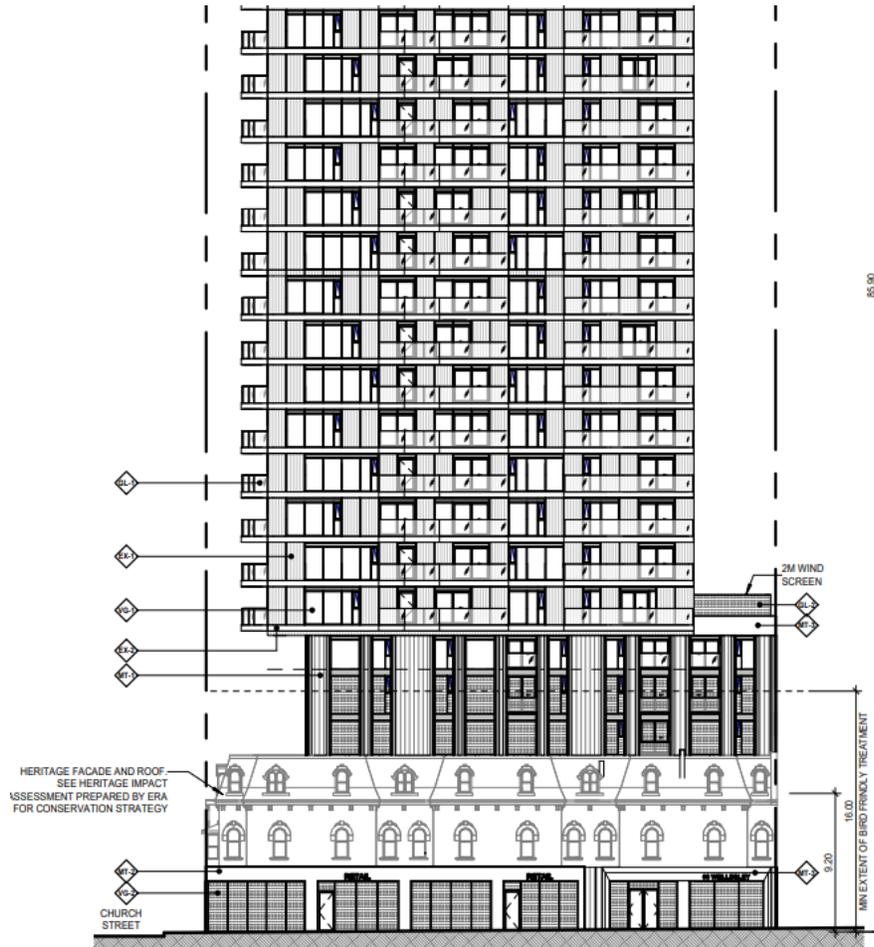
## 68 Wellesley Street East



Church Street Elevation

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

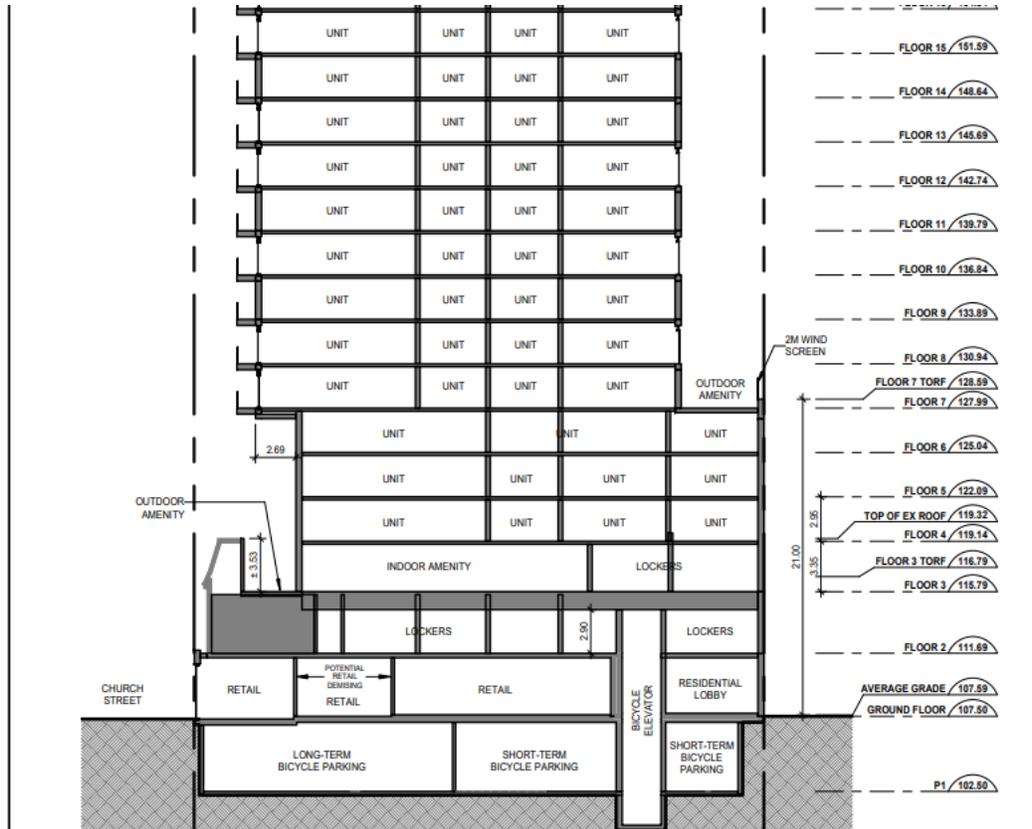
## 68 Wellesley Street East



Wellesley Street East elevation

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

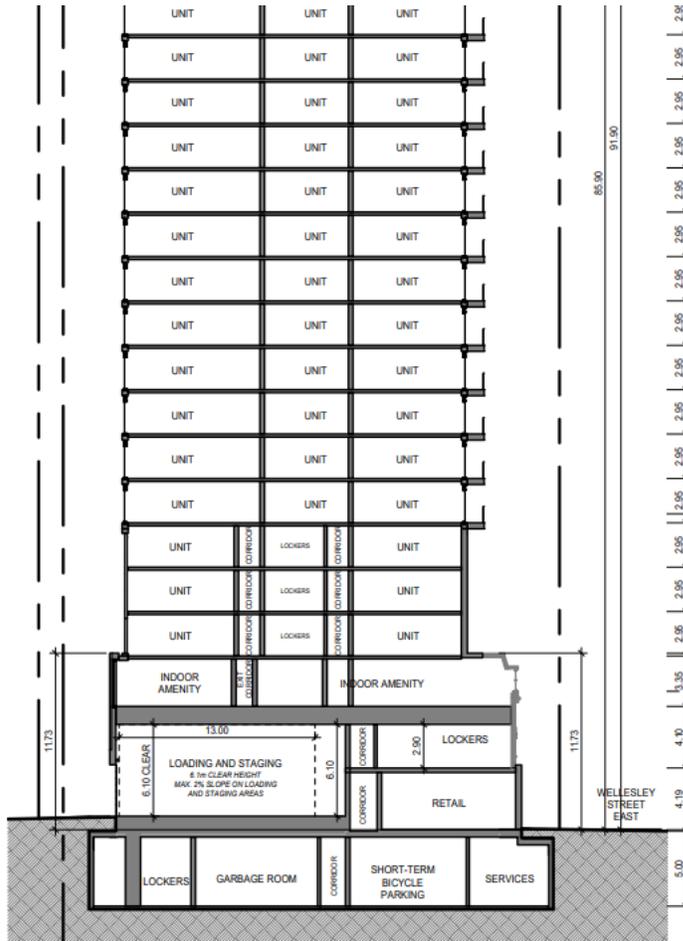
## 68 Wellesley Street East



East/West Section

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

## 68 Wellesley Street East



North/South Section

# SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

## 68 Wellesley Street East



Upper Diagram: Proposed Wellesley Street East Elevation  
Lower Diagram: Proposed Church Street Elevation