

123 Wynford Drive – Refusal of Application for Alterations to the Attributes and Demolition of a Building and Heritage Attributes on a Designated Heritage Property Under Part IV, Sections 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: April 18, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Ward 16 - Don Valley East

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council refuse the application under Sections 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act to alter the heritage attributes of the property and demolish a building and heritage attributes, respectively, on the significant property at 123 Wynford Drive in connection with a development proposal to construct two new residential towers.

The subject significant property, originally known as the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC), contains a two-storey institutional building and designed landscape garden by Order of Canada Companion and internationally-renowned architect, Raymond Moriyama. Completed in 1963, the property served as the city's community hub for the re-establishment, promotion and sharing of Japanese culture in the post-war period. Situated on a wooded ravine lot, the building responds directly to the natural and topographical features of the site.

On July 29, 2022, applications for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control were submitted to construct two residential towers of 52 and 48 storeys on the property which was listed on the City's Heritage Register at the time.

On July 25, 2023, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 123 Wynford Drive under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and on September 6, 2023 passed By-law No. 810-2023. While the property owner initially challenged this By-Law by filing an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), the appeal was withdrawn in February 2024. As such, Council's by-law to designate this heritage property is in full force and effect.

On February 16, 2024 the owner submitted an application to alter attributes and demolish the building and heritage attributes on the protected heritage property under Sections 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The proposal to demolish the building and alter the property would result in the irrevocable loss of the significant cultural heritage values and attributes of this landmark property in Toronto including the building and its relationship with the landscape and natural ravine, its value as a living memorial to the resilience of the Japanese Canadian immigrants to Canada and its associative value as having been designed by the late celebrated architect, Raymond Moriyama. This report recommends the application be refused.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council refuse the demolition and alterations on the designated heritage property at 123 Wynford Drive in accordance with Sections 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act as found in the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Addendum prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated February 16, 2024 which includes an HIA dated July 22, 2022, architectural plans and drawings prepared by Kirkor Architects and Planners dated January 15, 2024 and a revised conservation strategy dated January 15, 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

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

The property at 123 Wynford Drive was listed on the North York Inventory of Heritage Properties on October 6, 1997, and subsequently adopted onto the City of Toronto Heritage Register on September 27, 2006 after amalgamation.

On July 25, 2023, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 123 Wynford Drive under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and on September 6, 2023, passed By-law No. 810-2023.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH5.10>

On October 11, 2023, City Council adopted recommendations in a report from the Director of Community Planning, North York Districts, dated August 15, 2023 directing appropriate staff attend the Ontario Land Tribunal in opposition to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.NY7.7>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Value

The subject property at 123 Wynford Drive, known as the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-law No. 810-2023, passed by City Council on September 6, 2023.

Designation By-law No. 810-2023 is in force and confirms that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

Japanese-Canadian Community in Toronto

As a result of the forcible detainment, incarceration, and dispersal of Japanese Canadians by the Canadian government during World War II, Toronto became home to the largest postwar resettlement population of this community. However, their resettlement was dispersed throughout the city to avoid establishing an ethnic enclave similar to Toronto's Chinatown and becoming once again an easily identifiable and targeted group. Anti-Japanese racism continued with overt racist policies of the day and discriminatory practices which meant that finding housing and jobs in Toronto were a challenge.

In response to this context, a group of Japanese Canadians living in Toronto conceived the idea of establishing a community centre as a collective endeavour to build a centre for the community that would serve as a living memorial or lasting tribute to the enduring optimistic spirit of the early Japanese immigrants to Canada.

Fundraising events to fund construction of the centre included door-to-door canvassing, donations, bazaars, dances and other efforts. In addition, a large portion of the estimated budget was covered by a mortgage with 75 individuals in the community acting as guarantors to secure a bank loan. An affordable site for the centre was found in a ravine lot at 123 Wynford Drive. Community members volunteered to clear the wooded lot of trees and brush to prepare it for construction.

The JCCC was officially opened on June 7, 1964 by the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, the Late Honourable Lester B. Pearson, with 600 community members in attendance

Raymond Moriyama

Architect Raymond Moriyama became involved in the project in 1957, which was from its inception to be a place that would be a living memorial to the early Japanese immigrants, a place for cultural transmission, and be a centre for, not only the diasporic community, but also open to the wider Canadian public.

Moriyama, a person of Japanese heritage who lived through the trauma of the wartime internment, displacement, and dispossession of Japanese Canadians, was one of the most highly regarded architects in Canada of the twentieth century. Renowned for his humanistic approach to design, his work includes a number of notable buildings in Canada and across the world, including the Canadian War Museum, the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, the Ontario Science Centre, the Toronto Reference Library and the Scarborough Civic Centre. The JCCC was Raymond Moriyama's first major commission. Among numerous awards, in 1985, Mr. Moriyama was made an Officer of the Order of Canada and in 1997 received the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's Gold Medal, Canadian architecture's highest honor.

Building and Landscape

The building on the former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre property is a unique example in Toronto of Brutalist architecture which is combined with a landscape inspired by traditional Japanese garden design. Largely constructed of concrete, the two-storey building on an exposed basement level containing a double-height auditorium hall and mezzanine is nestled into its deeply sloped and treed ravine lot containing a designed Japanese stroll garden amongst the existing natural conditions of the site. Despite budgetary constraints, the building displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit in its creative use of cost-effective materials such as wood and concrete, including concrete block.

The property is also valued for the interrelationship of the building and landscape designs, which similarly combine traditional Japanese architectural principles and elements with Canadian topography and materials. Traditional Japanese design intent is expressed through the building's blurring of boundaries between interior and exterior space (using sliding doors, balconies with deep overhangs, and continuous floor and ceiling planes that extend beyond the vertical elevations defining inside and outside), and the orientation of the building's main rooms toward the moonlight and the water below in the Nikka Teien (Japanese Canada Garden). The significance of the Nikka Teien to the property's overall design is celebrated by a bronze plaque which was presented on October 20, 1973 by Akira Nishiyama, Ambassador of Japan to Canada, and affixed to Moriyama's dynamic stone slab sculpture situated on a landscaped island directly north of the building's main entrance.

The property has contextual value as a physical and cultural landmark within the community for 60 years. It is also valued for maintaining the character of the area which features a number of important cultural and institutional buildings of distinctive high-quality design surrounding Don Mills, including the Ontario Science Centre (1969) at 770 Don Mills Rd, an iconic heritage property, and the Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre (2014) at 77 Wynford Drive. Like the original Japanese Canadian Cultural

Centre, both the Ontario Science Centre and the Ismaili Centre were also designed with Raymond Moriyama's "humanistic touch".

Proposal

The application proposes to construct two towers on the protected heritage property at 52-and 48-storeys which anticipates the demolition of the building and the slab stone sculpture, demolition of heritage attributes and alterations to the property. Building A would be situated in the north-west corner of the site and Building B would replace the heritage building. The application proposes that, once demolished, select portions of the interior and exterior of the building would later be reconstructed onto a new base building for Building B situated at the general location of the original building but at a much higher grade and with altered attributes and relationship to the landscape and ravine. The raised elevation is intended to accommodate level vehicular and pedestrian access from Wynford Drive and to allow service access through the basement of the new building's east elevation.

The applicant's engineer, Facet Group Inc., provided an assessment and opinion in a letter submitted as part of the application package advising that the foundations required to support the proposed towers include a raft slab extending beyond the tower floorplate in all directions and structural caissons within the footprint of the raft slab. As a result, the building on the property would have to be demolished in order to provide the clearance necessary to install the structural caissons and could not be retained in situ.

The applicant also proposes to retain in situ and rehabilitate the landscape and ravine elements including the stone stairs, stone slab bridge and granite elements, however, a more comprehensive description of the scope of work remains outstanding.

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."

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."

3.1.6.6: "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

Impact to Design Value

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre building has design value as a unique example of Brutalist architecture in Toronto. The heritage building presents, in its scale, form and massing, as a two-storey building nestled into the Don River Valley Ravine with an exposed basement level that connects to a designed landscape and Japanese stroll garden.

The application proposes to demolish the building by disassembling it and removing it from its site. After demolition, select components of the original building would be re-attached onto the new tower structure constructed on the site. The dynamic slab stone sculpture, designed by Mr. Moriyama, is also proposed to be demolished and reconstructed in a new location.

Demolition is defined in the Official Plan as, "the complete destruction of a heritage structure and property from its site, including the disassembly of structures and properties on the Heritage Register for the purpose of reassembly at a later date."

In addition, Section 3.1.6.27 of the Official Plan states: "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 proposal to demolish the building (with the exception of the north-west concrete pylon) and alter the property, would result in the permanent loss of this significant cultural heritage resource. The proposal to demolish and re-attach select portions of the original building onto a new tower structure in its former location at a much higher grade would remove the building's integrity as a whole building and all its interior and exterior heritage attributes as well as alter its placement on the site.

The introduction of two tall towers on the site to replace the existing building would additionally result in the removal of a fundamental attribute of the property which is the inextricable relationship the building was designed to have with the landscape and natural ravine. This would have a considerable negative impact on the original vision for the property and the manner in which that vision is currently expressed.

Impact to Historical/Associative Value

The JCCC was conceived and stewarded by the broad participation of the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto and financed through individual donations and community fundraising events, as well as with 75 families acting as guarantors on a bank mortgage.

The significant historical and associative value of the property as a living memorial to the enduring optimistic spirit of the early Japanese immigrants to Canada in the face of the government's unjust and racist policies will be lost in the application.

In addition, the property was designed by Order of Canada recipient, Raymond Moriyama, whose family also suffered intolerable injustices and forcible internment. Renowned for his humanistic approach to design, commitment to addressing social justice issues and advancing the public good through the built form and sensitivity in connecting the built form and landscape, the late Mr. Moriyama was a leading figure in the field of architecture and urban design as Canada was coming of age on the world stage.

The proposed demolition of the building and slab stone sculpture and the resulting alterations to the property would greatly diminish its connection to the JCCC and its representation as a place of Japanese Canadian optimism in the face of adversity. In addition, the property's associative value as being designed by Raymond Moriyama, whose work has had an immense impact on Canadian architecture, would be destroyed.

Impact to Contextual Value

As the first Japanese cultural centre built in Canada, the property at 123 Wynford Drive is visually, physically and historically linked to its surroundings. Contextually, the property has been a physical and cultural landmark in the community for 60 years and maintains the character of the area featuring a number of cultural buildings of distinctive high-quality design including the Ontario Science Centre and the Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre.

With the proposed loss of the building, its attributes and the property's cultural heritage value, it would no longer contribute to the context of the neighbourhood and the established sense of place in a meaningful way.

The integrated and inextricable relationship of the building and landscape designed together provides continuity with the adjacent Don Valley River ravine. The replacement of the heritage building and its attributes with two tall towers at a raised grade would negate the value of the landscape and ravine as its connection with the original heritage building would be lost.

CONCLUSION

The application would result in the complete and irrevocable loss of the cultural heritage values and attributes of the property including the entirety of the building, its integrity as a whole building and its placement on the property, the setting of the building nestled in a terraced slope and its relationship with the landscape, the slab stone sculpture; the property's historical and associative value as having been designed by Raymond Moriyama as a living memorial representing the resilience of the Japanese Canadian immigrants to Canada; and its value as a physical and cultural landmark in the community. As such, the application does not comply with the policies in the Official Plan, Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and should be refused.

CONTACT

Georgia Kuich
Senior Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning
Tel: 416-338-1078
E-mail: Georgia.Kuich@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

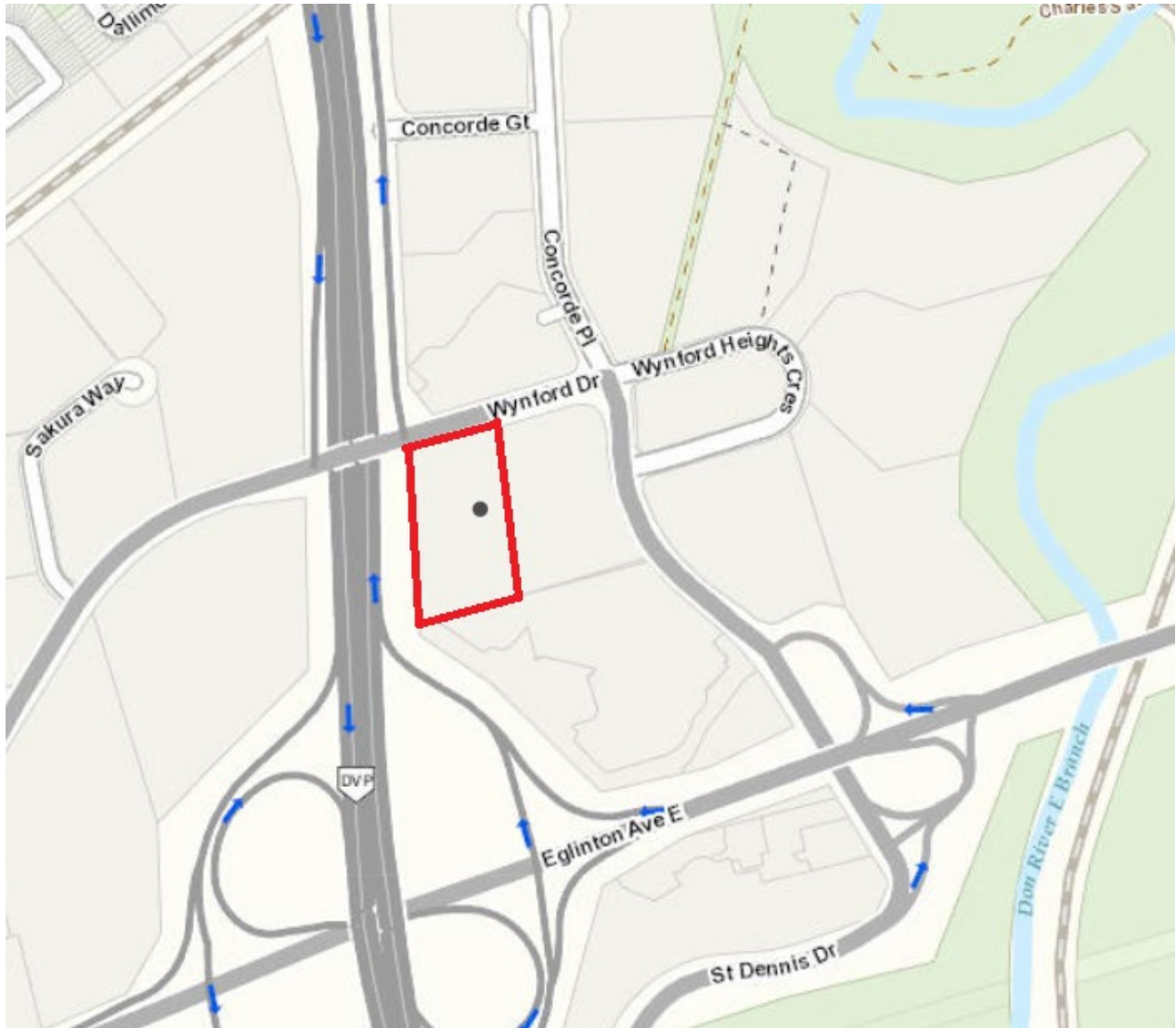
ATTACHMENTS

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

LOCATION MAP

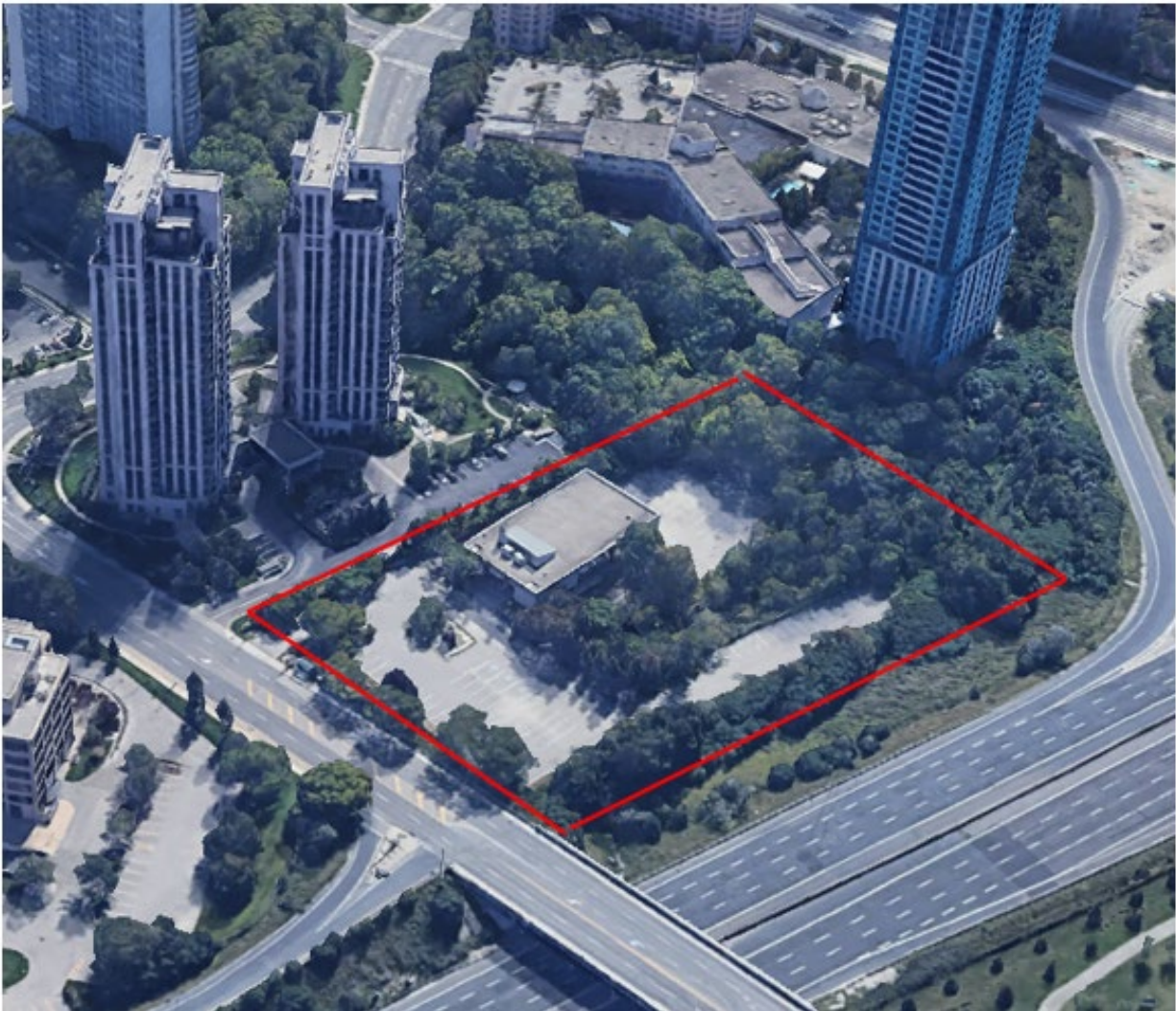
123 Wynford Drive

ATTACHMENT 1



Location Map, 123 Wynford Drive (boundaries are approximate)

123 Wynford Drive



Aerial photograph looking south-east showing the location of the subject property east of the Don Valley Parkway (boundaries are approximate)

PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 3

123 Wynford Drive



View of the property from Wynford Drive looking south-east (Google Maps 2021)



View of the property from Wynford Drive looking south-west (Google Maps 2021)



North elevation (photo by James Brittain, canadianarchitect.com)



Archival image of north elevation with slab stone sculpture (left), 1963 (JCCC Archives)



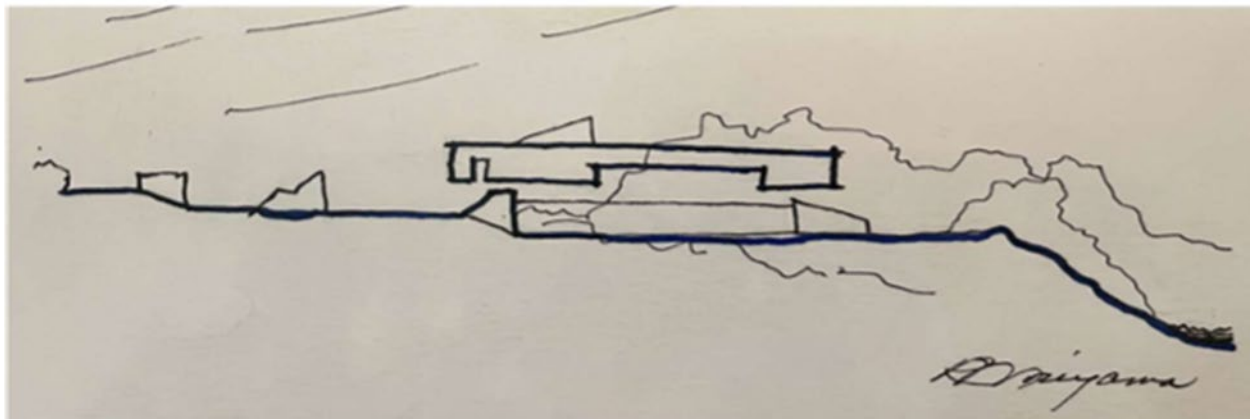
East elevation showing concrete roof troughs with suspended rain chains (kusari-doi) (Heritage Planning)



West elevation showing the connection of the interior and exterior spaces (Heritage Planning)



South elevation showing a precast concrete clad building element enclosing the existing backstage, supported on cantilevered beams (Heritage Planning)



Archival sketch of the building and site topography by Moriヤマ (JCCC Archives)



Auditorium looking south toward the stage



Archival view of the auditorium (JCCC Archives)



Interior lobby looking east and showing the ceiling lighting and built-in bench seating along the exterior wall (Heritage Planning)



Lounge looking northeast and showing the ceiling light fixtures



View of west side showing relationship of building to the landscape (Heritage Planning)



Looking north-west from the west garden terrace up the stone stair (Heritage Planning)

123 Wynford Drive



Rendering of view looking north-east (Kirkor Architects)

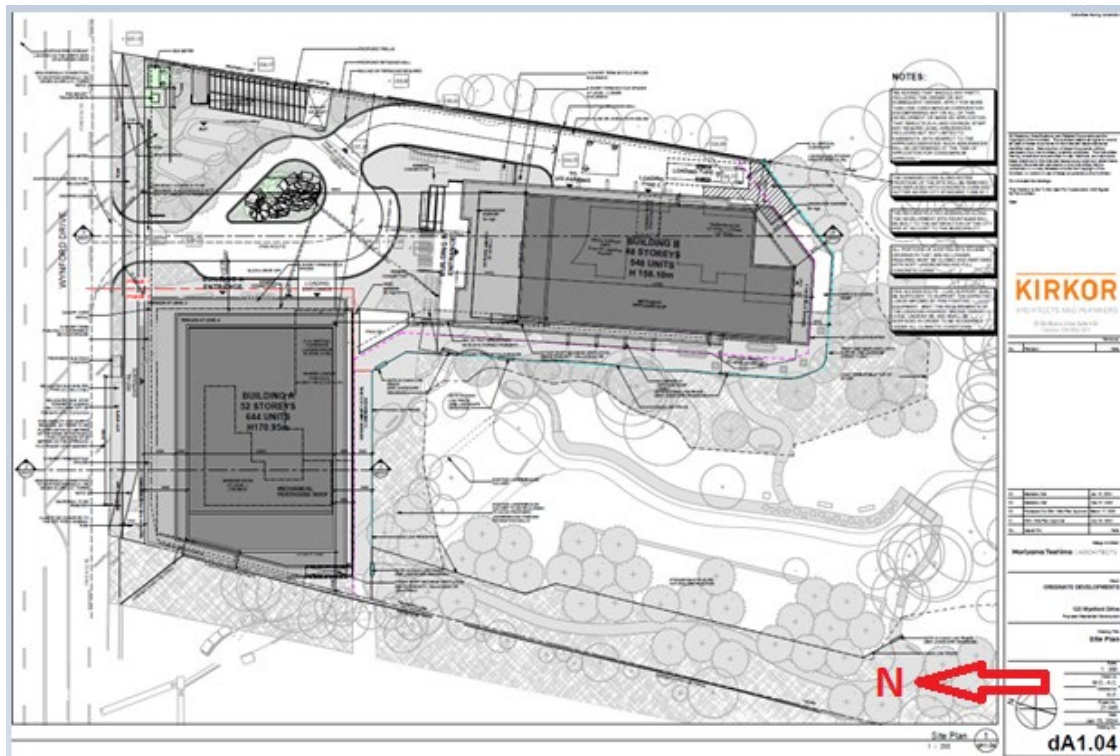


Renderings of view of west side of Tower B from ravine (left) and view looking west (right)

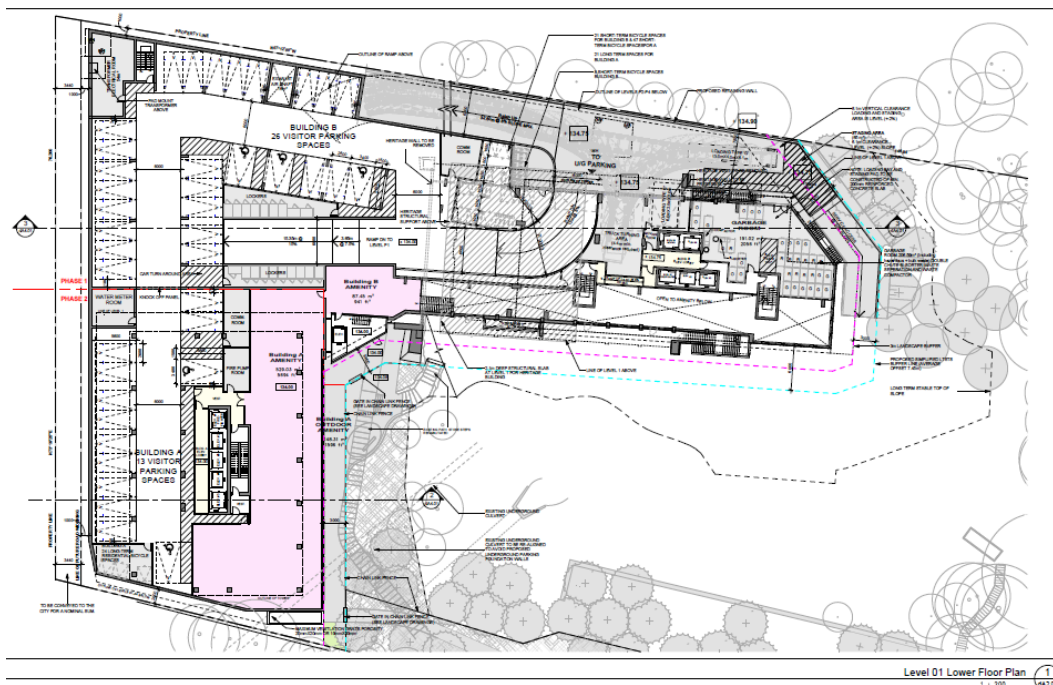
SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

ATTACHMENT 5

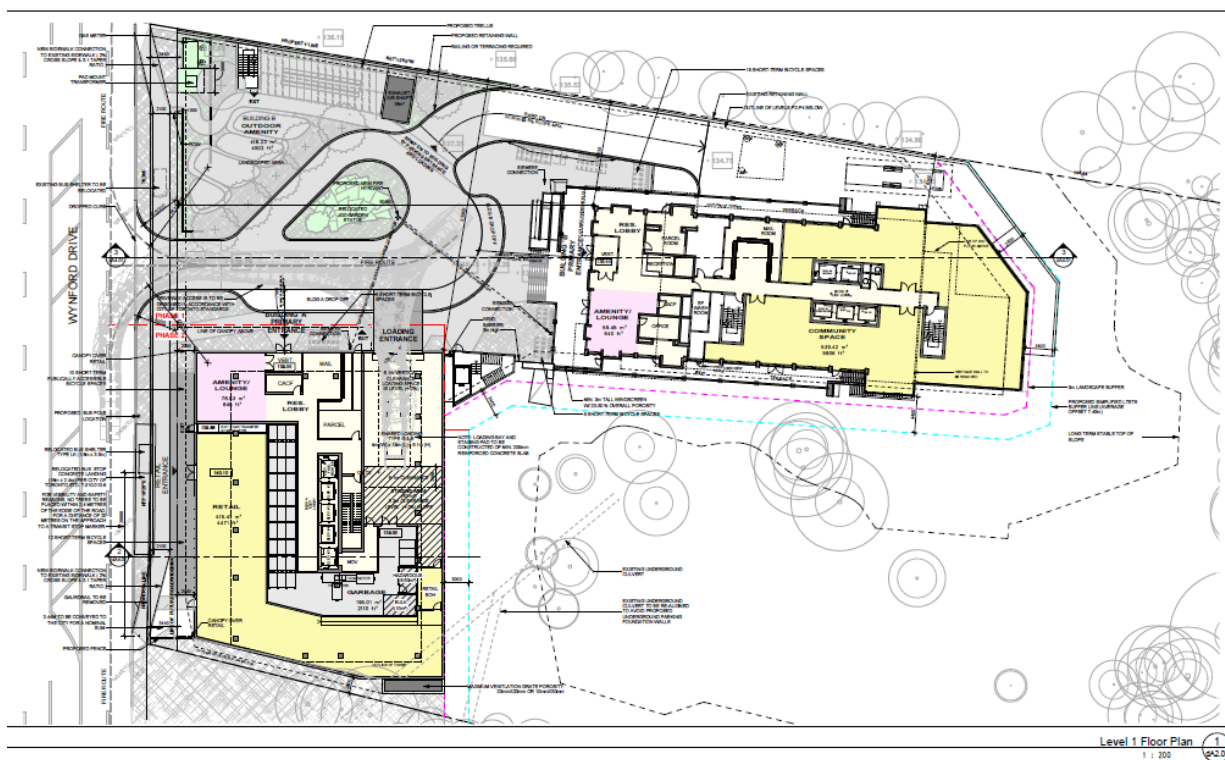
123 Wynford Drive



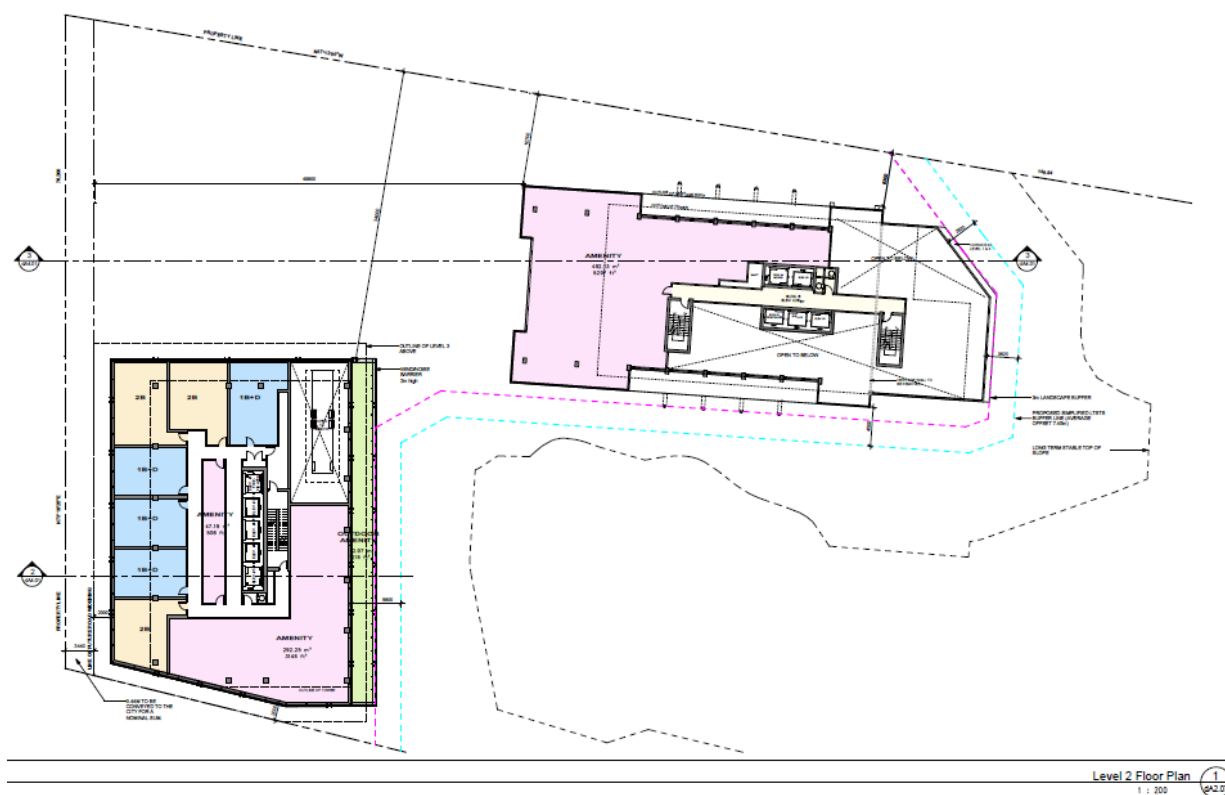
Proposed site plan



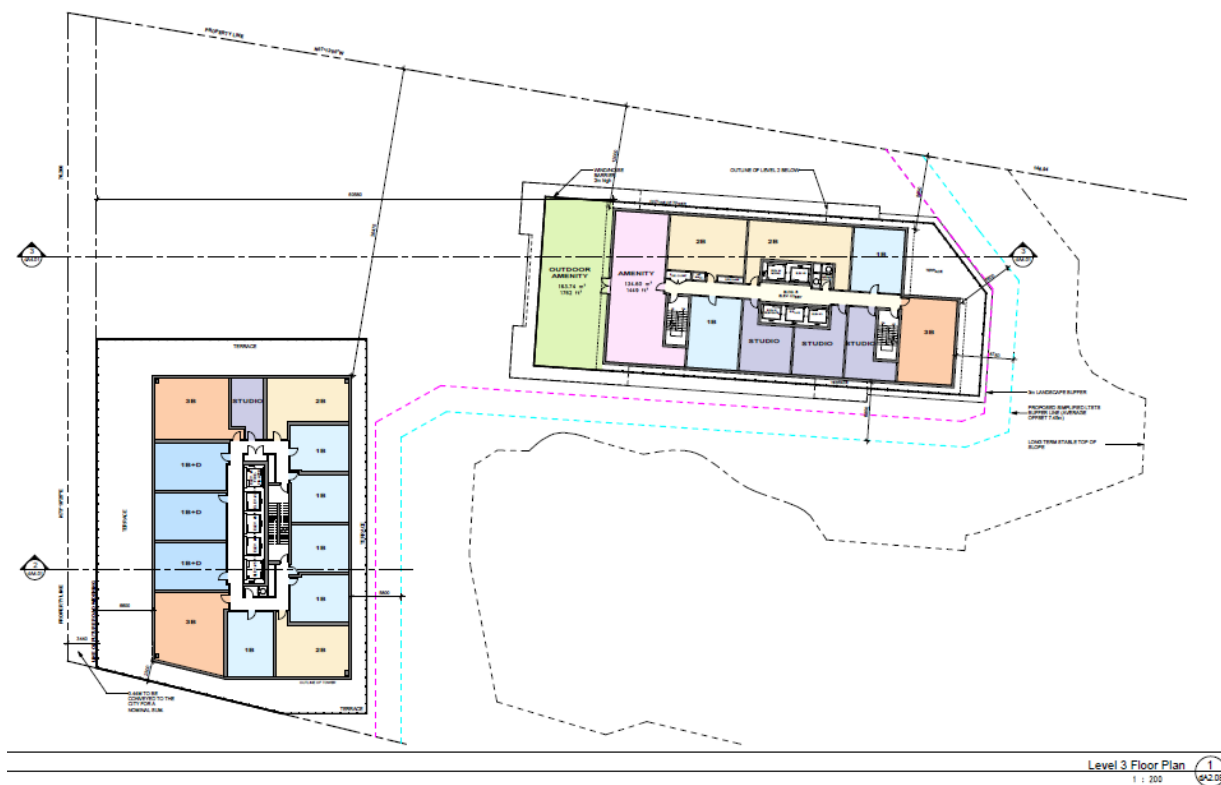
Proposed Level 01 Lower Floor Plan



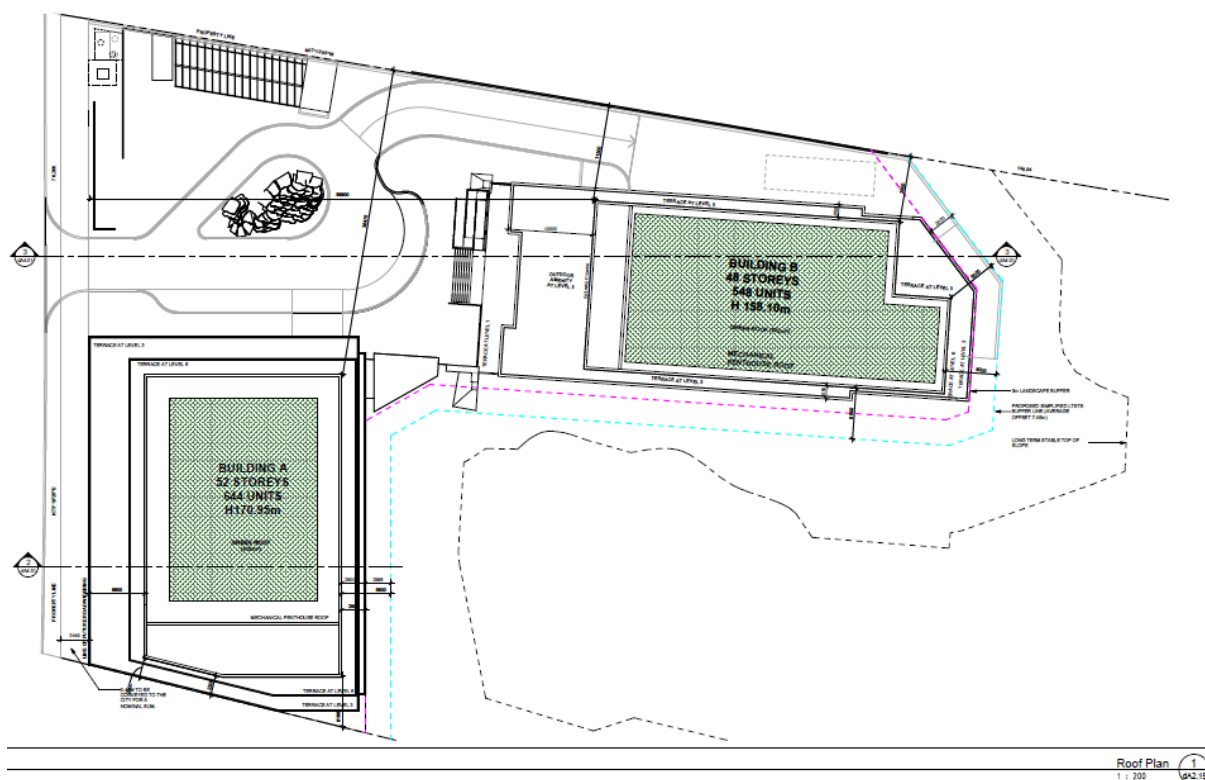
Proposed Level 1 Floor Plan



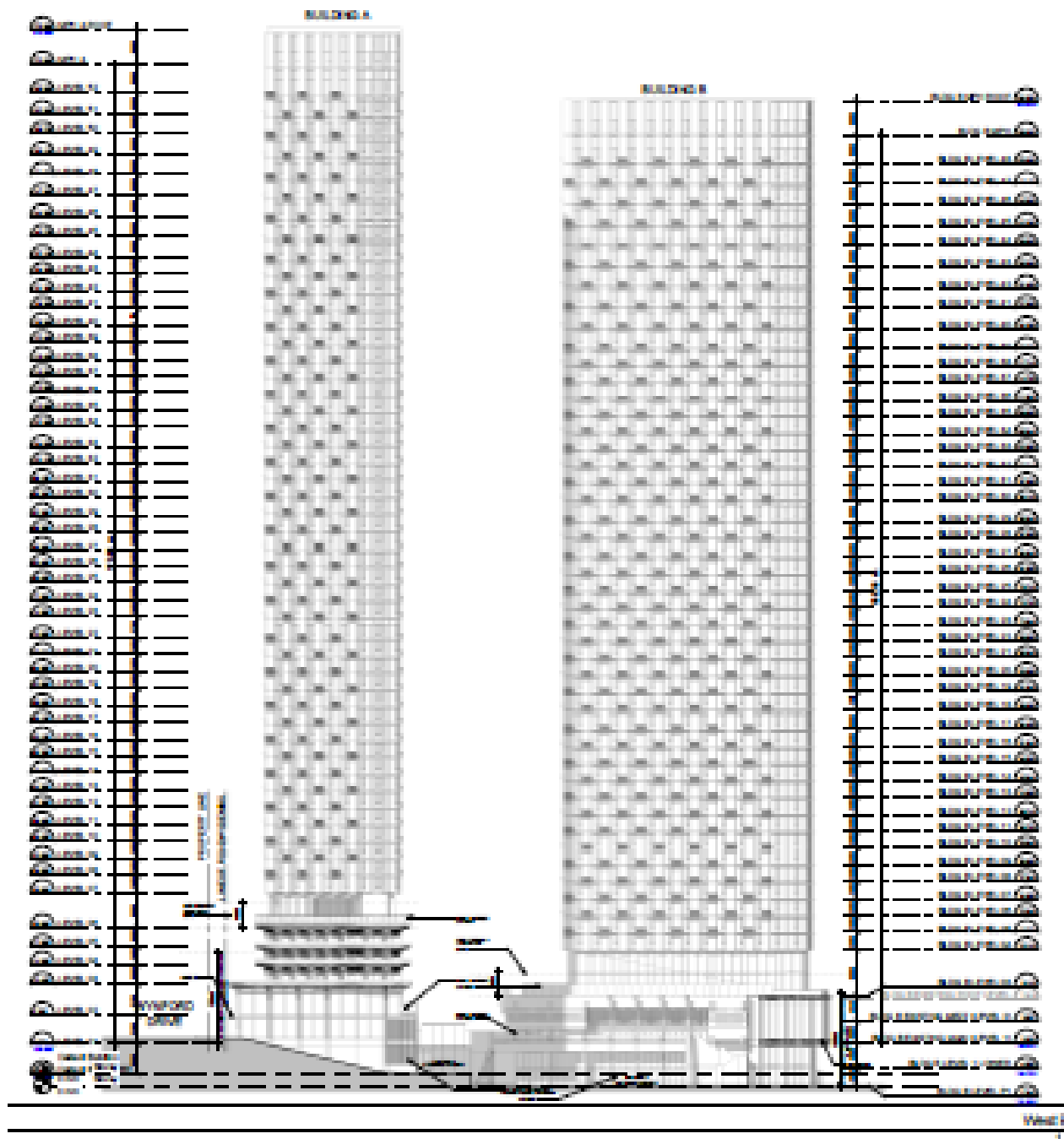
Proposed Level 2 Floor Plan



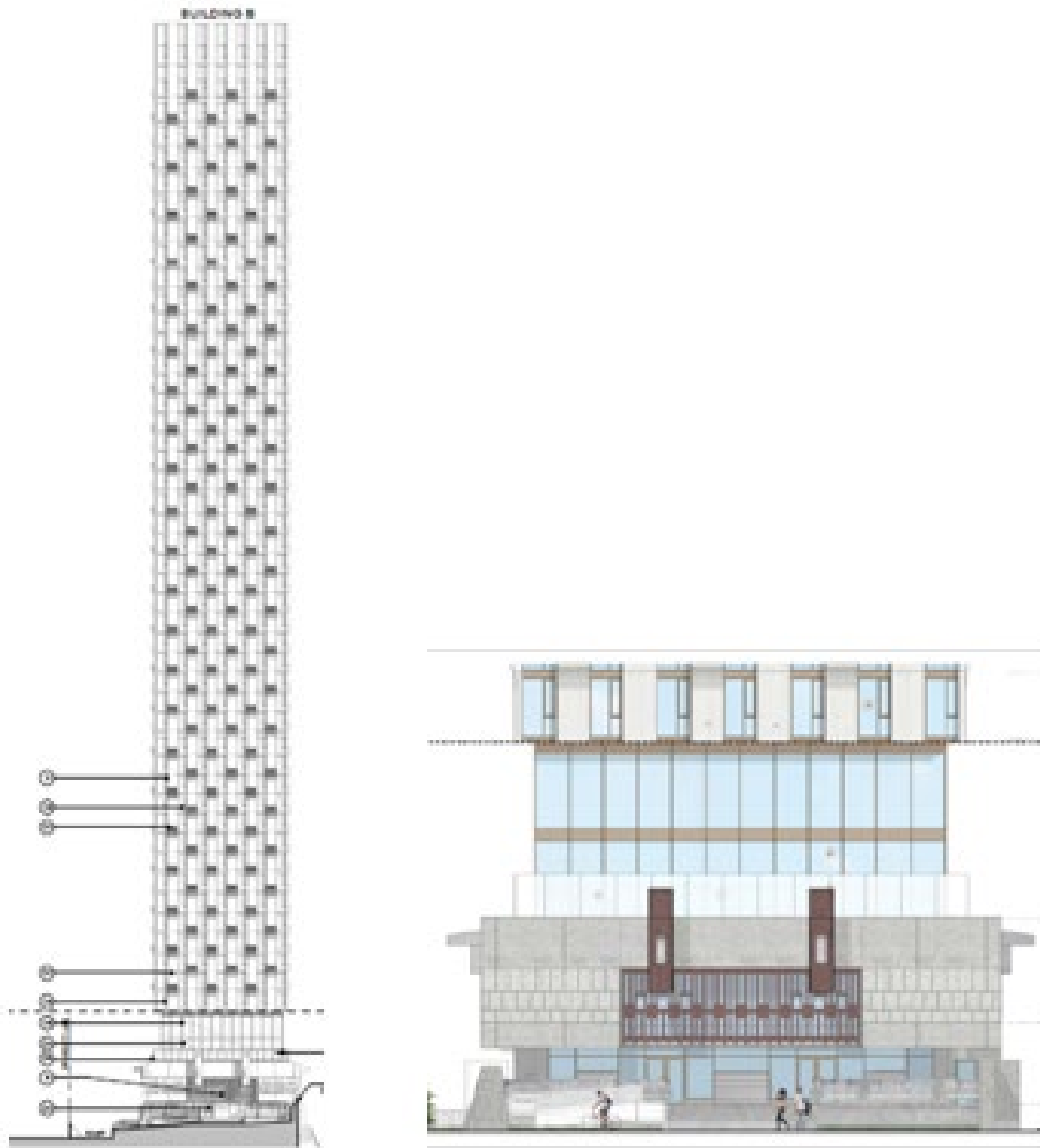
Proposed Level 3 Floor Plan



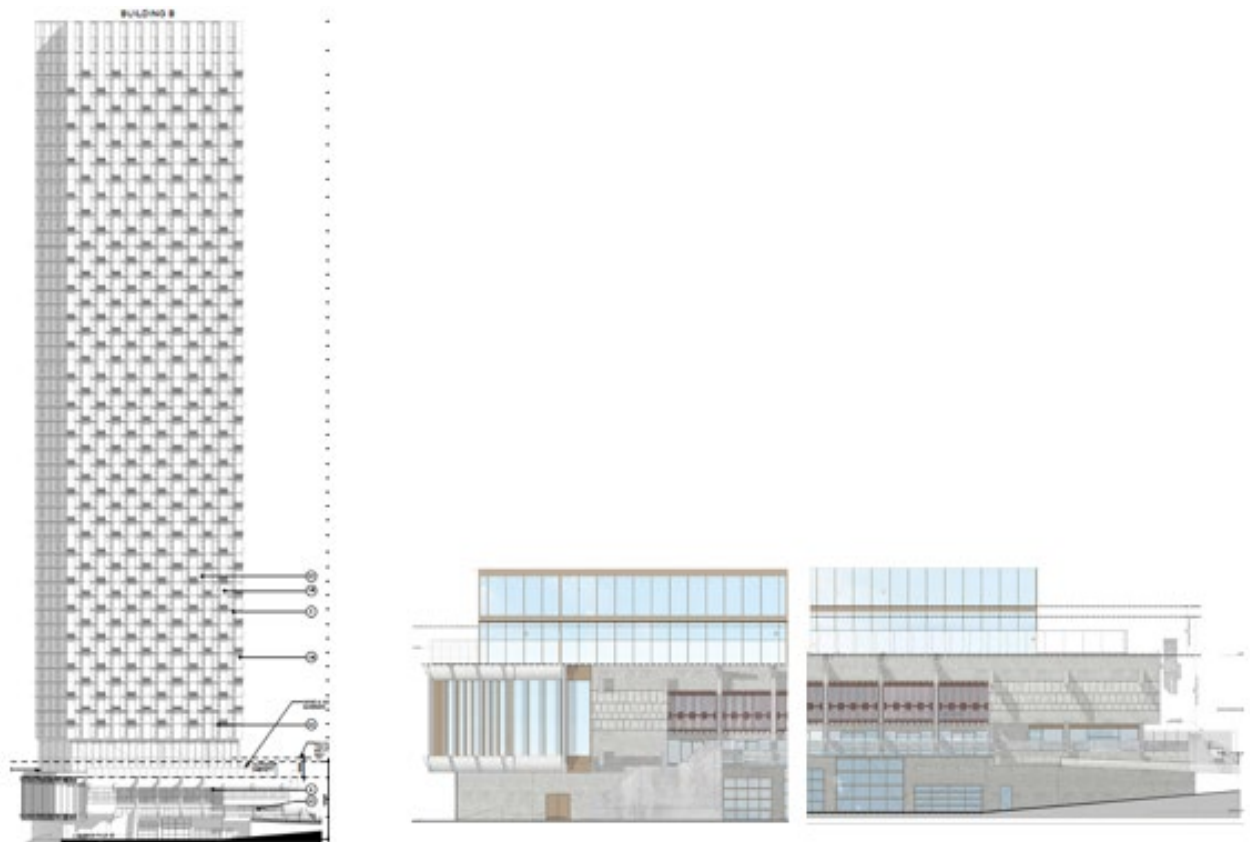
Proposed Roof Plan



Proposed site west elevation - Building A (left), Building B (right)



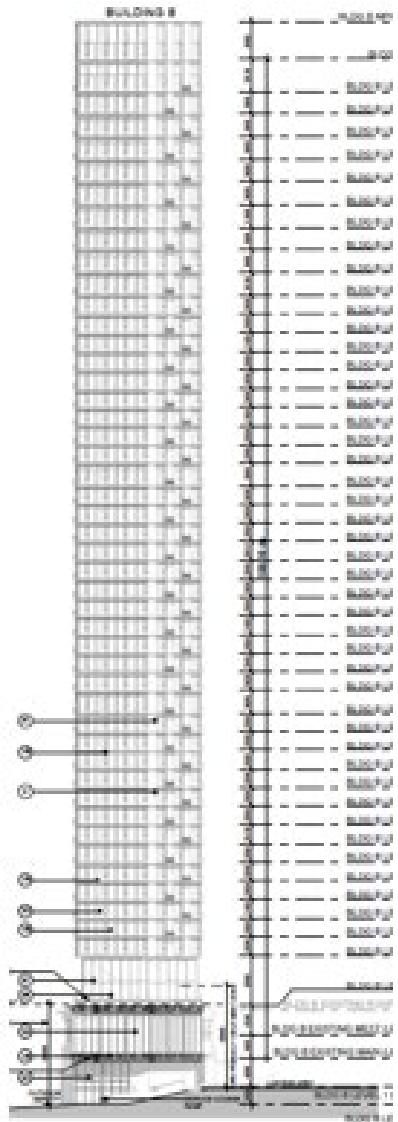
Proposed Building B north elevation tower and detail



Proposed Building B east elevation and detail (in parts)



Proposed Building B west elevation and detail (in parts)



Proposed Building B south elevation and detail