

68 Wellesley Street East - Alterations to a Heritage Property Designated Under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: May 9, 2025

To: City Council

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: 13 -Toronto-Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations for the property at 68 Wellesley Street East under Section 33, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, in connection with an agreed resolution with respect to the Conservation Strategy at the site.

On January 30, 2024, the City received applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit 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 427 square metres, and a residential gross floor area of 17,056 square metres with 258 dwelling units.

On April 17 and 18, 2024, City Council refused an Application for Alterations to Designated Heritage Properties Under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act. [Agenda Item History - 2024.TE12.26](#)

On May 17, 2024, the owner of 68 Wellesley Street East appealed Council's refusal of the Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Heritage applications for 68 Wellesley Street East to the Ontario Land Tribunal (the "Tribunal").

The site contains the properties located at 68 Wellesley Street East (convenience addresses: 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 78A Wellesley Street East 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 proposal will feature in-situ retention of the entire street facing facades of the property at both Church Street and Wellesley Street East. The heritage attributes at the facades will be rehabilitated and restored. The existing storefront, which is not considered to be a heritage attribute, is proposed to be replaced by a new storefront that is more compatible with the existing building. The project would employ a seven-metre step back from Church Street with no cantilever above. At Wellesley Street East, the step back would be three metres with a 3 storey reveal. A cantilever would project to the façade plane above the three-storey reveal.

The owner has applied to alter the designated heritage property under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and this report recommends the application be approved with authority to enter into a heritage easement agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 68 Wellesley Street East in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a new mixed use building in conjunction with an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal, comprised of the plans and drawings prepared by BDP Quadrangle, dated March 3, 2025 submitted with the Heritage Impact Assessment and addendum prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated January 23, 2024 and March 4, 2025, on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with a 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 heritage property at 68 Wellesley Street East under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following conditions:

a. Prior to issuance of an OLT order in connection with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment appeals for the property at 68 Wellesley Street East, the owner shall:

1. 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 and addendum for 68 Wellesley Street East, prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated January 23, 2024 and March 4, 2025 and details all future conservation efforts as part of this application, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

2. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 68 Wellesley Street East in accordance with the plans and drawings prepared by BDP Quadrangle, dated March 3, 2025 submitted with the Heritage Impact Assessment and addendum prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated January 23, 2024 and March 4, 2025, and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.a.1, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning including registration of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

b. prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 68 Wellesley Street East 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 obtained final approval for the necessary Zoning By-law Amendment required for the subject property, such Amendment to have come into full force and effect.

2. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes 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. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

5. 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.1, 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.

6. 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.

c. that prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.b.6 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 required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the Conservation 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 City Solicitor to introduce the necessary Bill in Council authorizing the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement for the property at 68 Wellesley Street East.
4. City Council authorize the City Solicitor and City staff to take all necessary actions to implement City Council's decision.

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

In 1974, City Council listed 68 Wellesley Street East (including the entrance addresses 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 78A Wellesley Street East 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.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2014.TE29.8>

On April 17 and 18, 2025, City Council refused an Application for Alterations to Designated Heritage Properties Under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

[Agenda Item History - 2024.TE12.26](#)

BACKGROUND

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) located in the historic Church Street Village neighbourhood. 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 at the geographical cross-roads and historic centre of the LGBTQ2S 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 Street Village neighbourhood

Heritage Adjacencies

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

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY

At the subject site, the development proposes a 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 2-storey podium consisting of the heritage building, to include: a one storey ground floor with at grade retail frontages, as well as a residential lobby; residential units in the second storey; interior amenity and residential units in the third storey 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
- Removal of 1 storey structure at the north end of the Site (509/509 1/2 Church Street)

The Conservation Strategy and Alterations

Specifically, the conservation strategy will include the following:

- 1) The current storefronts along the Church Street and Wellesley Street East 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 3-storey reveal is proposed above the heritage roof, with a step back depth of three metres on the Wellesley Street East elevation (south). Above the 3-storey reveal, the tower does not cantilever at the Church Street elevation (maintaining the seven metre step back). However, at the Wellesley Street East elevation, the proposed cantilever will project 3 metres from the top of the three story reveal so that it is coplanar with the heritage façade below.
- 4) The north return/sides wall will be conserved to a 7-metre depth and will also conserve the dormer window located at that façade. This return wall will be visible from the public realm as seen just above the one storey commercial space that will be built abutting and just to the north of the heritage property.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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 Framework

Cultural heritage resources are protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Planning Statement (2024). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

The Planning Act

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario and 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."

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (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 interrelationships 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.

Policy 4.6.1 of the PPS directs that "Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved."

"Conserved" is defined in the PPS as "the identification, protection, use and/or management 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.

City of 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.

Relevant policies include the following:

3.1.6.3 Heritage properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including Heritage Conservation Districts and archaeological sites that are publicly known will be protected by being designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and/or included on the Heritage Register.

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 as 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. Where a Heritage Impact Assessment is required in Schedule 3 of the Official Plan, it will describe and assess the potential impacts and mitigation strategies for the proposed alteration, development or public work.

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 facades 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/>

Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

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

Heritage Planning has reviewed the revised drawings and revised Heritage Impact Assessment from ERA Architects Inc. for conformity with the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, the City's Official Plan heritage policies, and the Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and are supportive of the proposal insofar as it relates to the conservation of the heritage attributes for the Site.

Relative to the previous proposal, the tower massing has shifted toward Wellesley Street East and away from Church Street. The tower step back from the Church Street property line has increased from four metres to seven metres for the full height of the tower and the tower no longer cantilevers at the Church Street/west elevation. The proposed step back from Church Street enhances the prominence of the retained heritage fabric on the west elevation and maintains its low scale streetwall at the prominent Church Street commercial corridor.

Staff would prefer a greater step back at Wellesley Street elevation. However, given the increased Church Street step back and the removal of the cantilever, staff are satisfied with the proposed tower step back that is maintained at three metres from the building façade (six metres from the property line at floors four through six). The cantilever has been revised to project to the façade plane at the seventh storey and above and the projecting balconies on the seventh floor of the south elevation, where the cantilever begins, have been removed. Further, the applicant commits to working with staff on a detailed design approach to the cantilever portion of the proposal through Conservation Plan process.

The revised proposal removes the glazed atrium lobby that was previously proposed at the northwest corner of the site. With this revision, the north edge of the storefront bay now has a clearly defined edge and aligns with the north edge of the retained heritage fabric above.

Heritage staff also recommended modifying the design of the northwest corner to retain and make visible the north return of the heritage property. In response, the increased step back on the Church Street elevation and the removal of the glazed atrium lobby allow for the retention and visibility of the full two-storey north return, including its mansard roof and dormer proposal.

Though not a heritage attribute, the applicant will work with staff through the Conservation Plan process to ensure that the new ground level storefronts are sensitively designed and compatible with the existing building typology.

Conservation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of permits for the development, the Owner will be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the HIA prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Conservation Plan should detail all the recommended interventions and conservation work including any recommended restoration work, a detailed plan describing how the heritage buildings will be protected during construction, a schedule of short- and long-term maintenance requirements and estimated costs for all conservation work.

Heritage Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant should be required to submit a Heritage Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning prior to the release of any building permit.

Heritage Lighting Plan

The Lighting Plan should provide details of how the heritage façades will be lit so that their unique heritage character is highlighted.

Heritage Signage Plan

The recommended Signage Plan should provide details of the signage strategy for the heritage property, including the appropriate type, scale, location and number of signs.

CONCLUSION

Staff are satisfied that the proposed alteration to the protected heritage property located at 68 Wellesley Street East, which will permit the development of a new mixed-use building, meets the intent of the heritage policies of the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies in conjunction with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, insofar as it relates to the conservation of the heritage attributes for the site.

Staff are of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to conserve the heritage values, attributes and character of the onsite heritage property. The restoration details will be set out in a Conservation Plan to be completed to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Staff recommend that City Council approve the proposed alterations of the property and provide authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement conditional upon a variety of matters, including the owner obtaining final approval for the necessary and

related Zoning By-law Amendment, with no permits to be issued until all conditions under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act are fulfilled and with such Zoning By-law Amendment being in full force and effect.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 2 - Photographs
Attachment 3 - Proposed renderings
Attachment 4 - Selected 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)

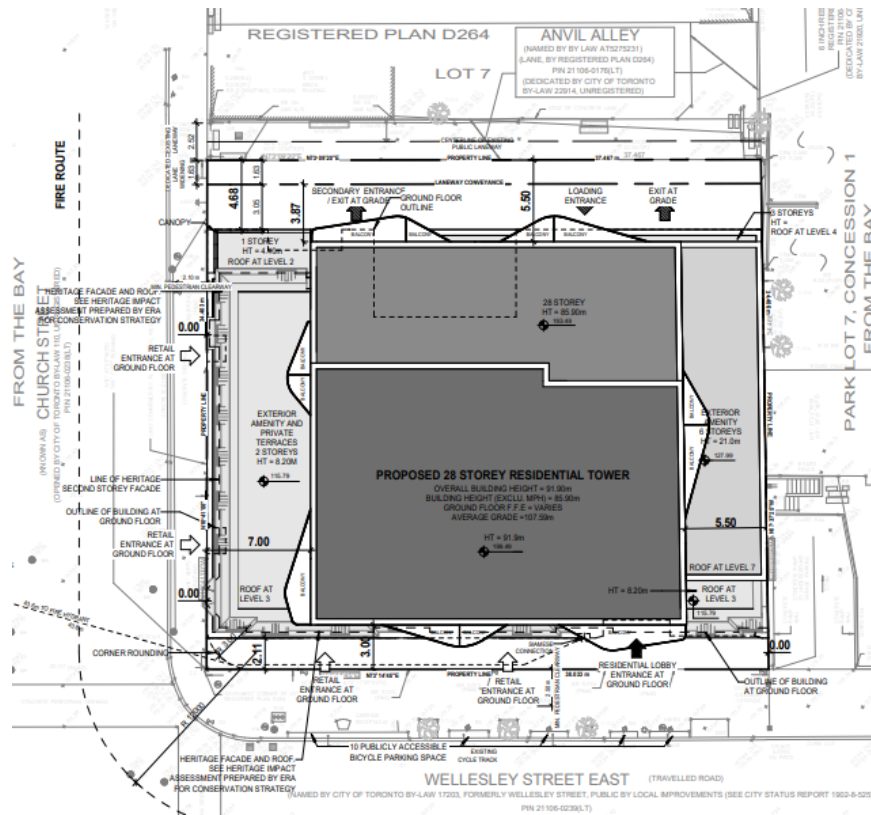
RENDERS

ATTACHMENT 3

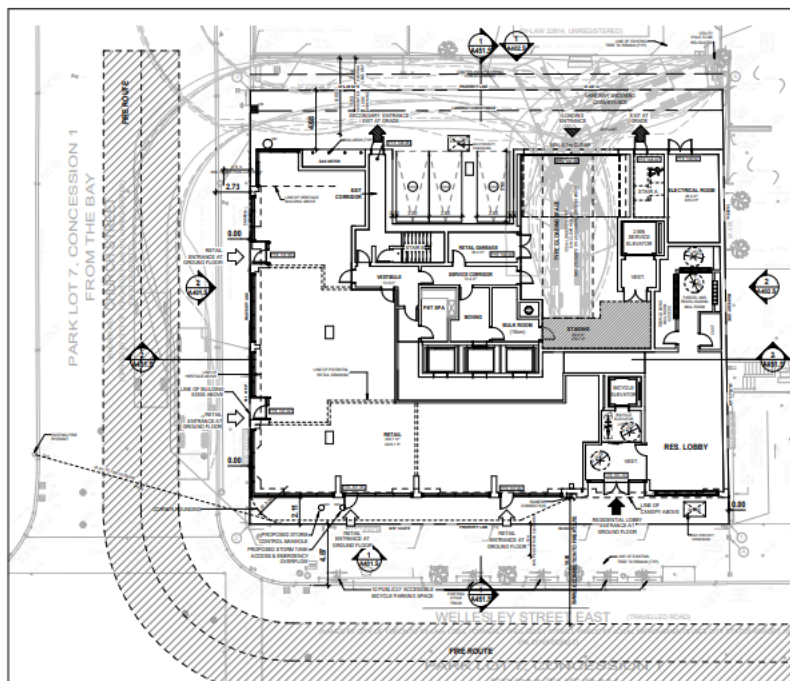
68 Wellesley Street East



Original Project at left and Revised project at right.



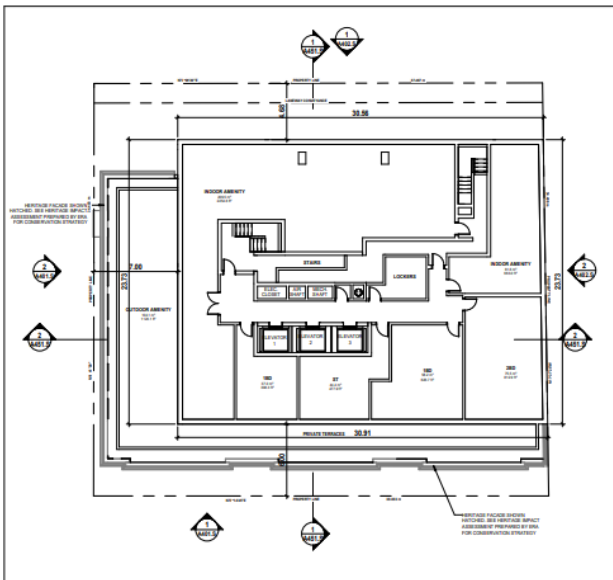
Site Plan



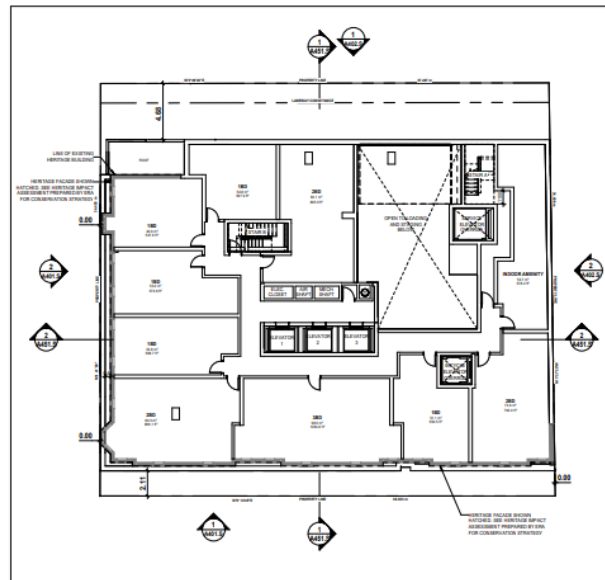
Ground Floor Plan

SELECTED DRAWINGS

68 Wellesley Street East

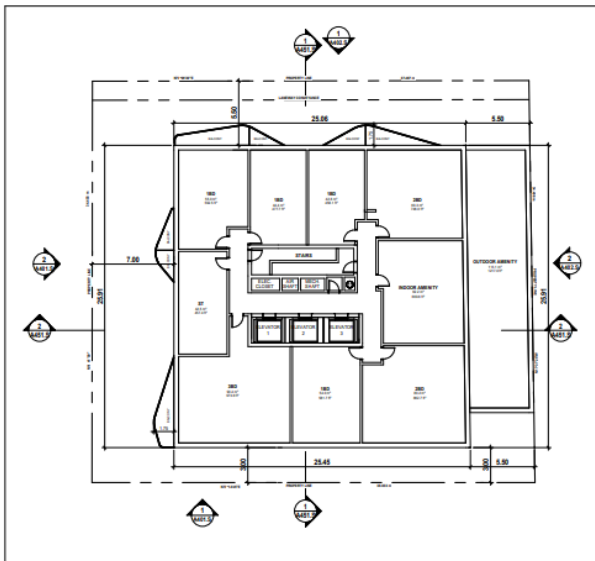


1 FLOOR 3 PLAN
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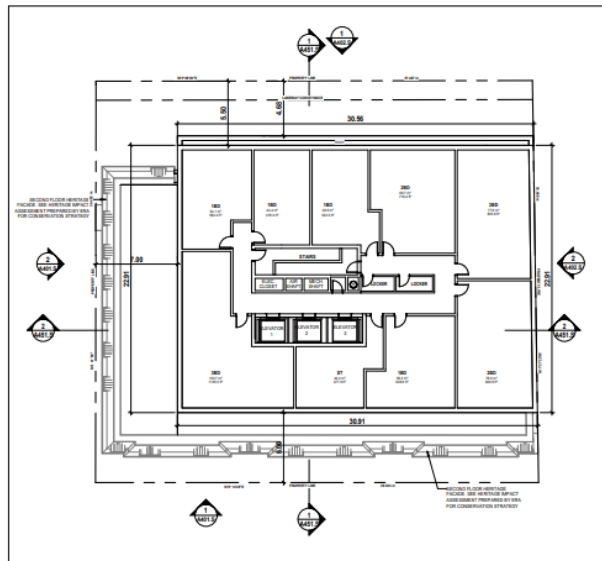


2 FLOOR 2 PLAN
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Second and Third Floor Plan



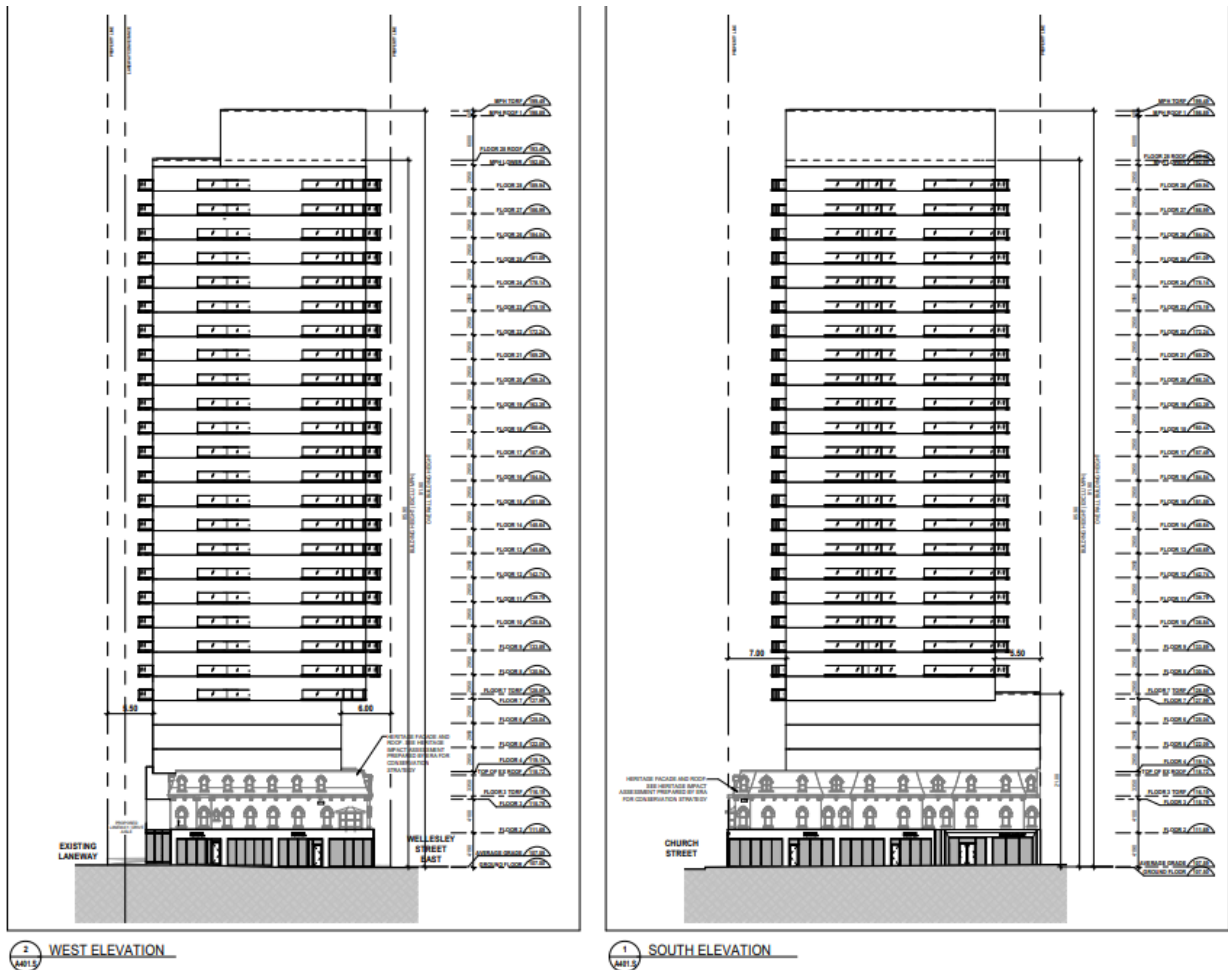
1 FLOOR 7 PLAN



2 FLOOR 4-6 PLAN

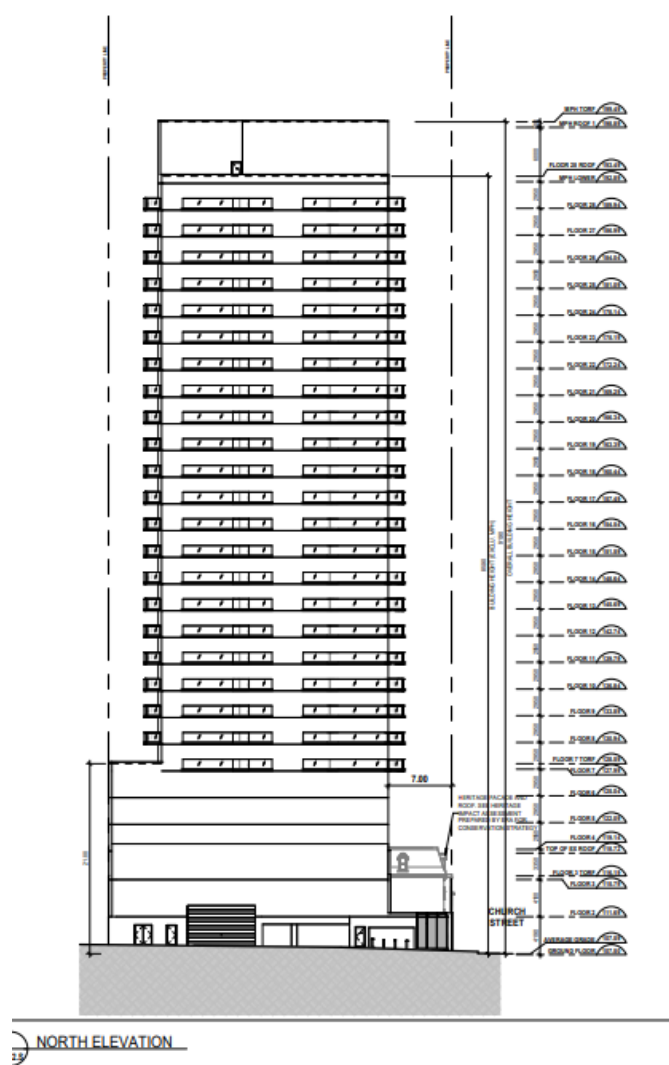
Floors 4-6 and Floor 7

SELECTED DRAWINGS **68 Wellesley Street East**



West/Church Street Elevation and South/Wellesley Street East Elevation

SELECTED DRAWINGS **68 Wellesley Street East**



North Elevation, note return wall with 7-metre stepback at right side of diagram