

522 University Avenue - Alterations to and Demolition of Heritage Attributes at a Designated Property under Sections 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: December 16, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 11 - University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report recommends City Council approve the alterations and demolitions proposed under Sections 33 and 34(1)1 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the Part IV designated heritage property at 522 University Avenue and grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement, in connection with the proposed development of the property.

The property at 522 University Avenue is located at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Elm Street and contains a 15-storey office building, known as the National Life Building, constructed for the National Life Insurance Company of Canada between 1971 and 1974 to the design of John C. Parkin. It is a fine example of Monumental Modernist architecture utilizing precast concrete in Toronto.

A heritage permit application has been submitted in connection with applications for amendments to the Zoning By-law and Site Plan Approval. Following the property's designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, the applicant worked with the City to revise their applications to include a conservation strategy for the National Life Building. The revised applications propose to alter and integrate the building into the redevelopment as a podium, including interior heritage attributes. The northern two-thirds of the building will be retained in-situ, including its floor slabs and core. The southern bay of the building and its heritage attributes will be demolished and reconstructed to allow for construction of a 49-storey residential tower above. The applications conserve the onsite heritage building's cultural heritage value and attributes in accordance with the existing policy framework. The heritage impacts of the development proposal are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve:

a. The alterations to the designated heritage property at 522 University Avenue, in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 64-storey mixed-use building, with such alterations substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated July 31, 2024 prepared by WZMH and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects, dated October 15, 2024, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

b. The demolition of heritage attributes of the existing designated heritage property at 522 University Avenue accordance with Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 64-storey mixed-use building , substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated July 31, 2024 by WZMH and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects dated October 15, 2024, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 522 University Avenue, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and its consent to the demolition of heritage attributes at 522 University Avenue, under Part IV, Section 34(1)1 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following conditions:

a. That the related Zoning By-law Amendment permitting the proposed alterations has been enacted by City Council and has come into full force and effect in a form and with content acceptable to City Council, as determined by the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning;

b. That prior to the introduction of the bills for such Zoning By-law Amendment by City Council, the owner shall:

1. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 522 University Avenue, substantially in accordance with the

plans and drawings dated July 31, 2024 prepared by WZMH, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated October 15, 2024 prepared by ERA Architects, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Provide a detailed Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant that is substantially in accordance with the conservation strategy set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment for the property at 522 University Avenue, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

c. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 522 University Avenue, 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, Urban Design, City Planning the owner shall:

1. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City required in Recommendation 2.b.1 above for the property at 522 University Avenue including registration on title of such agreement, to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Have obtained final approval for the necessary Zoning By-law Amendments, and such Amendments to have come into full force and effect.

3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describe how the exterior of the heritage property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and thereafter shall implement such a plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

4. Provide an Interpretation Plan for the subject property, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning and thereafter shall implement such plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

5. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

6. Provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

7. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plans required in Recommendation 2.b.2, including a description of materials and finishes, to be prepared by the project architect and a qualified heritage consultant to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

8. 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, Urban Design, City Planning to secure all work included in the approved Conservation and Interpretation plans.

d. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.c.8, 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 and Interpretation Plans and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

2. Provide replacement Heritage Easement Agreement photographs to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City 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 522 University Avenue.

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

At its meeting on June 26, 2024 City Council issued a Notice of Intention to Designate under Part IV, S. 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the property at 522 University Avenue.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH13.12>

On September 5, 2024 City Council enacted Designation By-law 899-2024 for the property at 522 University Avenue.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2024/law0899.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Area Context

The National Life Building at 522 University Avenue occupies a highly visible site at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Elm Street within the University Avenue Precinct, which is one of Toronto's major streets and a ceremonial avenue that is home to a collection of significant buildings associated with important corporate institutions in Toronto's history.

Heritage Property

The property at 522 University Avenue contains a 15-storey office building constructed between 1971 and 1974 known as the National Life Building. Designed by the prominent architect John C. Parkin for the National Life Assurance Company of Canada, the Modernist building is characterized by the uniform treatment of its tower façades in precast concrete, and a double-height, wedge-shaped colonnade at three sides which extend the public space along University Avenue, Elm Street and Simcoe Street. The building contributes to the monumental streetscape of University Avenue as developed in the post-WWII era and the site at 522 University Avenue represents the location of Toronto-based National Life Assurance Company of Canada's offices for nearly 95 years.

The property's full Statement of Significance with heritage attributes can be found in Attachment 4 and Designation By-law 899-2024.

Development Proposal

Zoning By-Law Amendment and Site Plan applications (22 192156 STE 11 OZ and 22 192155 STE 11 SA) were submitted to permit a 62-storey mixed-use building in 2022, comprised of a 49- storey residential tower atop a 13-storey office podium that stepped down to a 4-storey base element along University Avenue. The existing National Life Building was proposed to be fully demolished and replaced with the 13-storey office component.

Following the property's designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, the applicant worked with the City to revise their applications to include a conservation strategy for the National Life Building. Revised applications were submitted in 2024 that conserve two-thirds of the existing National Life Building and its interior in-situ, and demolish and reconstruct the southern third of the building to create a new 49-storey residential tower on top, for a total of 64 storeys. A conservation strategy has also been proposed for the building's interior heritage attributes.

Heritage Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Act

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario. It states that municipalities must have regard for matters of provincial interest. Section 2(d) specifically refers to “the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest” and 2(r) “to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place.”

The Provincial 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, 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.

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, management and use of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.

Policy 4.6.2 states that "Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless the significant archaeological resources have been 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.

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 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 staff has reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted in support of the proposal prepared by ERA Architects, 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.

Conservation Strategy

The application proposes a rehabilitation approach to conserving the National Life Building integrating it into the redevelopment with alterations as a podium, including interior heritage attributes. The northern two-thirds of the building will be retained in-situ, including its floor slabs and core, and will be subject to a comprehensive conservation scope to be further outlined in the Conservation Plan. The southern third of the building and its heritage attributes will be demolished and reconstructed to allow for construction of a 49-storey residential tower above.

Demolition of Heritage Attributes

The southern third of the existing building will be demolished to accommodate the new construction, and then its east and west elevations, along with one bay returns of the south elevation, will be reconstructed. The heritage attributes to be demolished include its pre-cast concrete panels, window bays along the east, south and west elevations and two tapered concrete columns. Portions of the coffered/waffle ceiling underneath the second storey of the building in these locations will need to be removed and reinstated or reconstructed, depending on their condition. The glazed curtain wall system at the first and second storeys with its metal banding will also be demolished and replaced with a higher performance curtain wall system that matches the proportions, finish and appearance of the original system. The two-storey addition at the south of the building is not an identified heritage attribute and is to be demolished.

The Heritage Impact Assessment describes the alternative development approaches the applicant explored to determine the least invasive approach that could conserve the heritage building while supporting a tower above. The proposed strategy of retaining two-thirds of the existing building, including its floor slabs and core, represents the

greatest extent of building retention that is structurally possible, while minimizing physical and visual impact to the building and its heritage attributes.

The design of the reconstructed portion of the building was carefully considered to ensure the cultural heritage values and attributes of the National Life Building continue to be conveyed. Due to their original construction method, the existing pre-cast concrete cladding units were found to be unable to be salvaged and reused in the reconstruction. Instead, the reconstructed portion of the building and its two columns are proposed to be clad in limestone. The use of limestone will allow for a visually compatible, yet subtle distinction between new material and original concrete building fabric. The uniform arrangement of fenestration along with the symmetry and proportions of the existing window openings, on the east and west elevations will be replicated. Existing and new window units will be replaced by new insulated glass units that match the profile, depth and tint of the existing.

Alterations and New Addition

The building's scale, form and massing will be altered by the introduction of a new tower on the site. The placement of the tower with a very deep stepback of 28.8m from the north face of the heritage building and slight cantilevers over the east and west elevations of 0.48m and 0.28m respectively, mitigates its visual impact on the heritage building and preserves its monumentality at the corner of University Avenue and Elm Street. A recessed two-storey amenity floor acts as a reveal directly above the heritage building and connects to the podium addition, creating a glazed backdrop framing the heritage building. The tower portion has been designed with a simple grid pattern that draws reference to the uniformity and proportions of the heritage building below. Amenity space is proposed atop the heritage building.

The continuous open ground floor plane extending from the exterior terrace into the interior entrance lobby is a heritage attribute of the property. Proposed alterations to the ground floor plane align with its original design intent, including the reinstatement of planters, improved seating and gathering spaces and the removal of unsympathetic alterations. Barrier-free access will be enhanced by relocating the existing ramp to the north elevation.

The centred section of granite wall cladding at the ground storey of the north elevation fronting onto Elm is a heritage attribute and is proposed as a location for new public art. Staff will review the proposed placement, size and attachment method through the Conservation Plan stage and will encourage the applicant to explore public art opportunities that are coordinated with the required Interpretation Plan.

The configuration of the existing entrance lobby will be altered to connect to the new addition, however the presence of the double-height volume facing University Avenue will be conserved. The existing mirrored walls within the lobby will be removed during construction and reinstated with new mirrors. Interior coffered ceiling panels, many of which have been replaced by drywall, will be reinstated and repaired. Where coffers are unable to be reinstated or repaired, they are proposed to be replaced with

complementary recessed coffers that reflect the original design intent. Staff will review this as part of the Conservation Plan to ensure that the presence of coffers are restored throughout the interior as per the original design.

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.

Interpretation, Signage and Lighting Plans

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a heritage lighting plan, a signage plan and a heritage interpretation plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The lighting plan should provide details of how the heritage property will be lit so that its unique heritage character is highlighted. The signage plan should provide parameters for new commercial signage to ensure that the heritage values, attributes and character of the building is conserved. The interpretation plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the heritage building to users and visitors of the property.

Heritage Easement Agreement

Staff is recommending that the owner enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to secure the long-term protection of the building at 522 University Avenue.

CONCLUSION

Staff support the demolitions and alterations proposed for the National Life Building at 522 University Avenue in the context of the conservation and mitigation strategies proposed for the site and are of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the heritage property. As such, staff is satisfied the proposal meets the intent of the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, 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.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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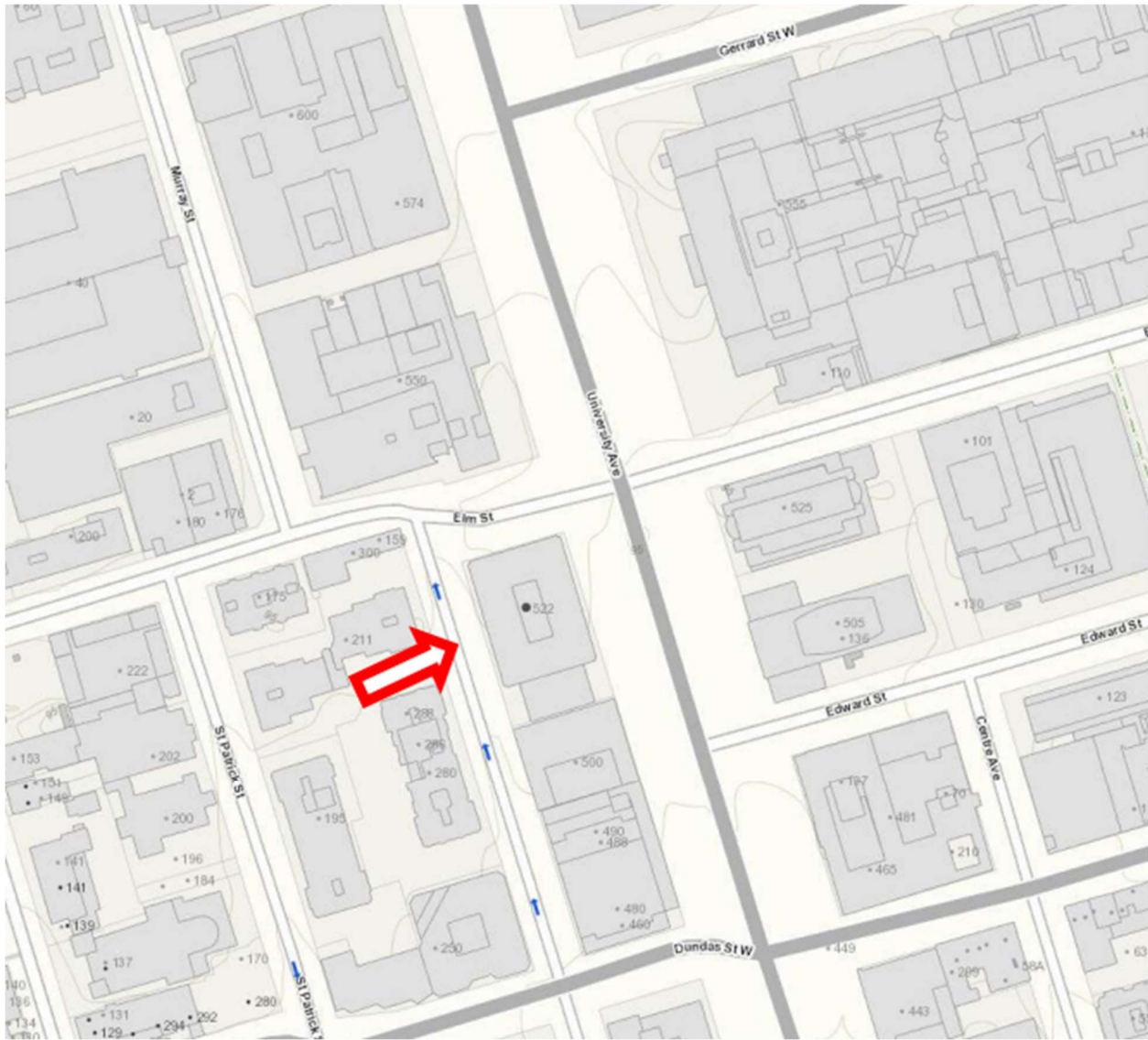
ATTACHMENTS

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

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

522 University Avenue



This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red arrow marks the location of the property containing the National Life Building at 522 University Avenue (City of Toronto iView Mapping, annotated by Heritage Planning, 2024)

PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 2

522 University Avenue



The National Life Building fronting University Avenue



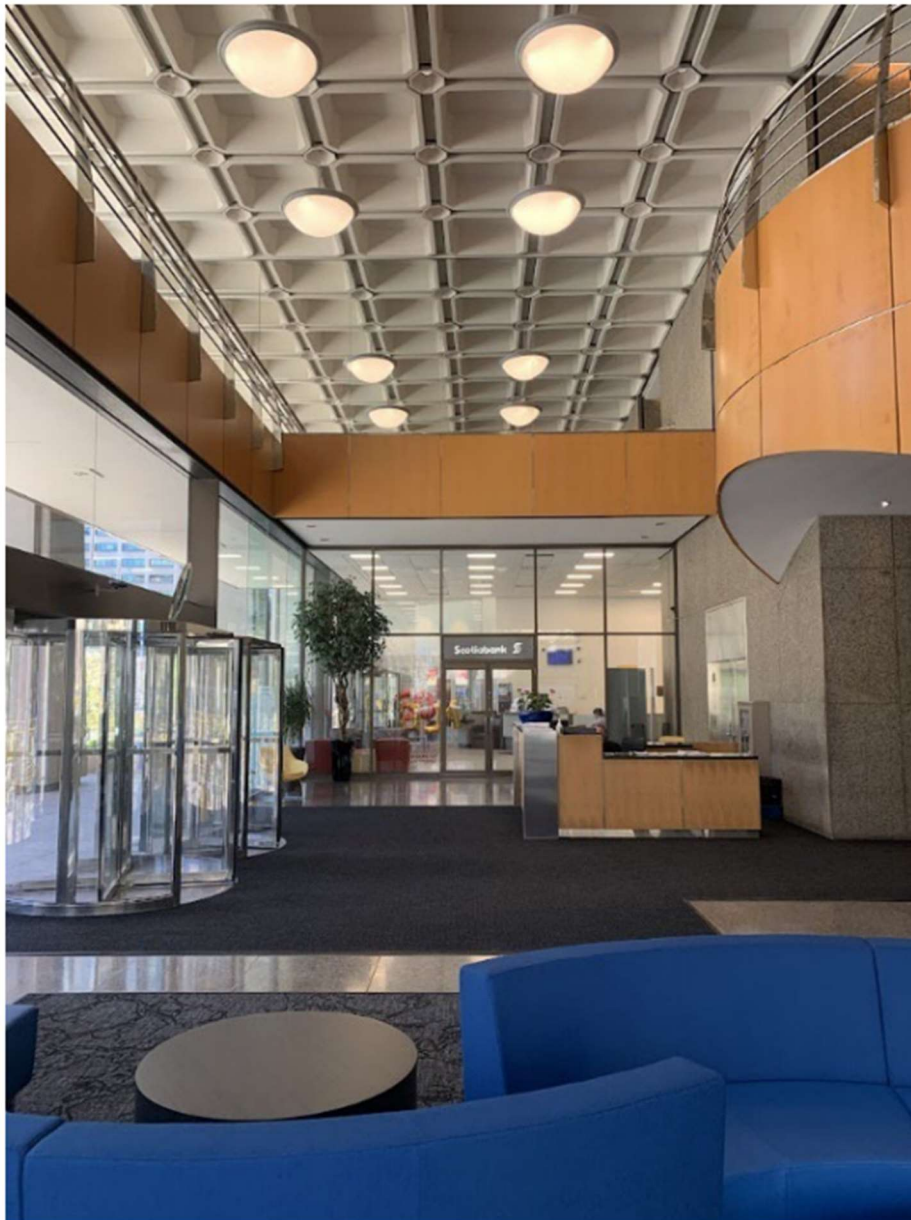
The National Life Building fronting Elm Street



The National Life Building ground plane fronting Elm Street



The National Life Building ground plane looking towards University Avenue



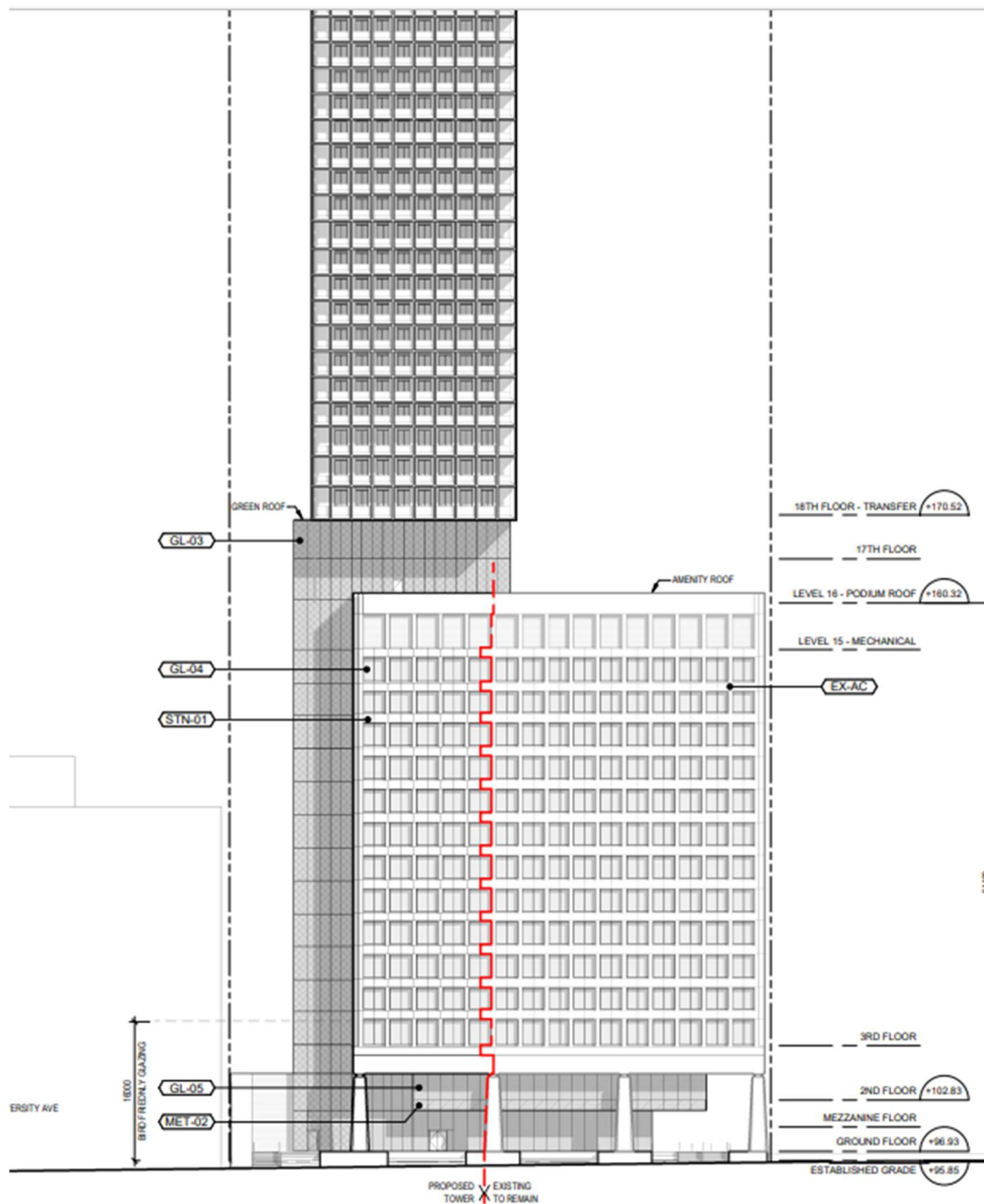
The National Life Building interior double height entrance lobby with mirrored walls

SELECTED DRAWINGS
522 University Avenue

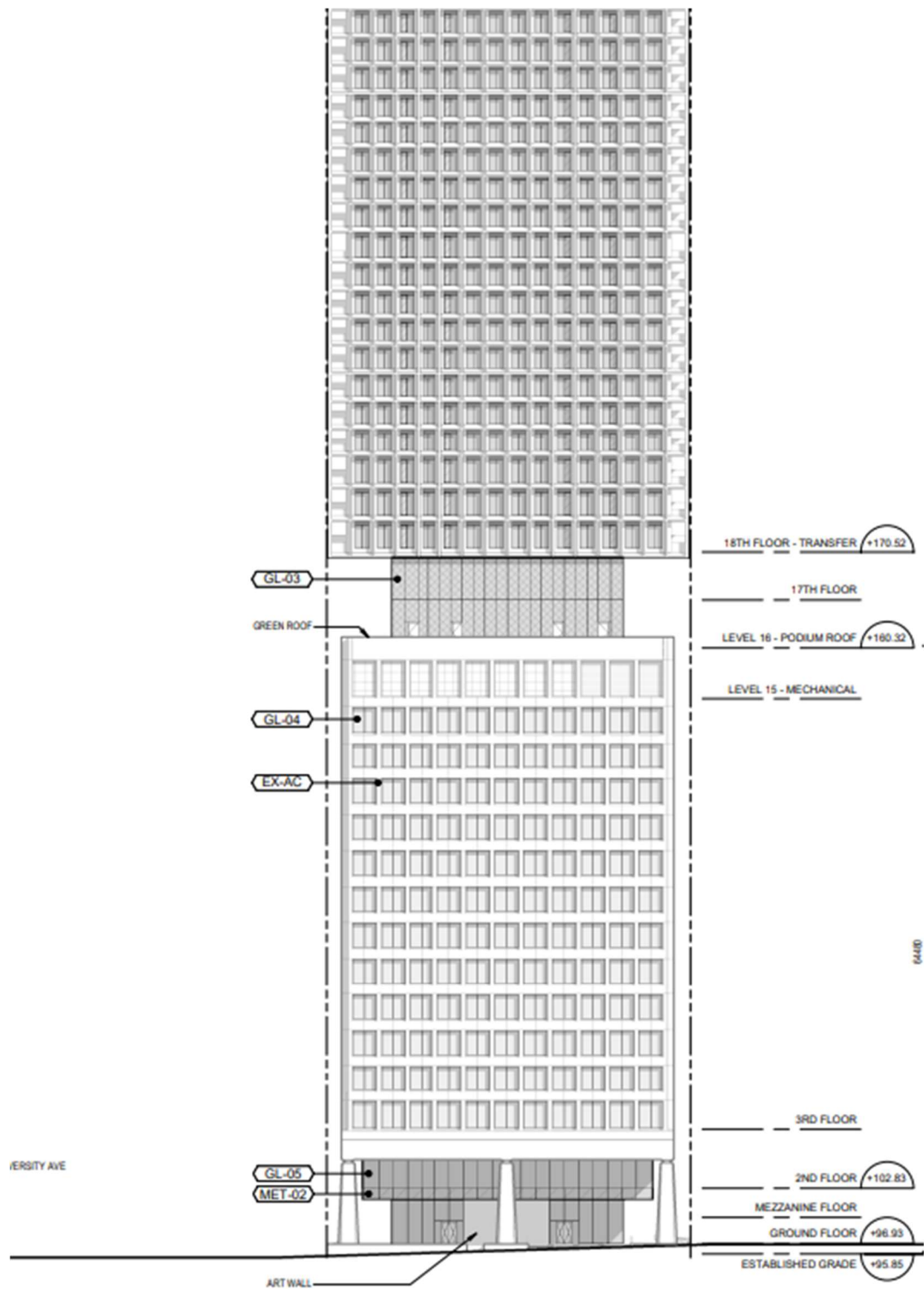
ATTACHMENT 3



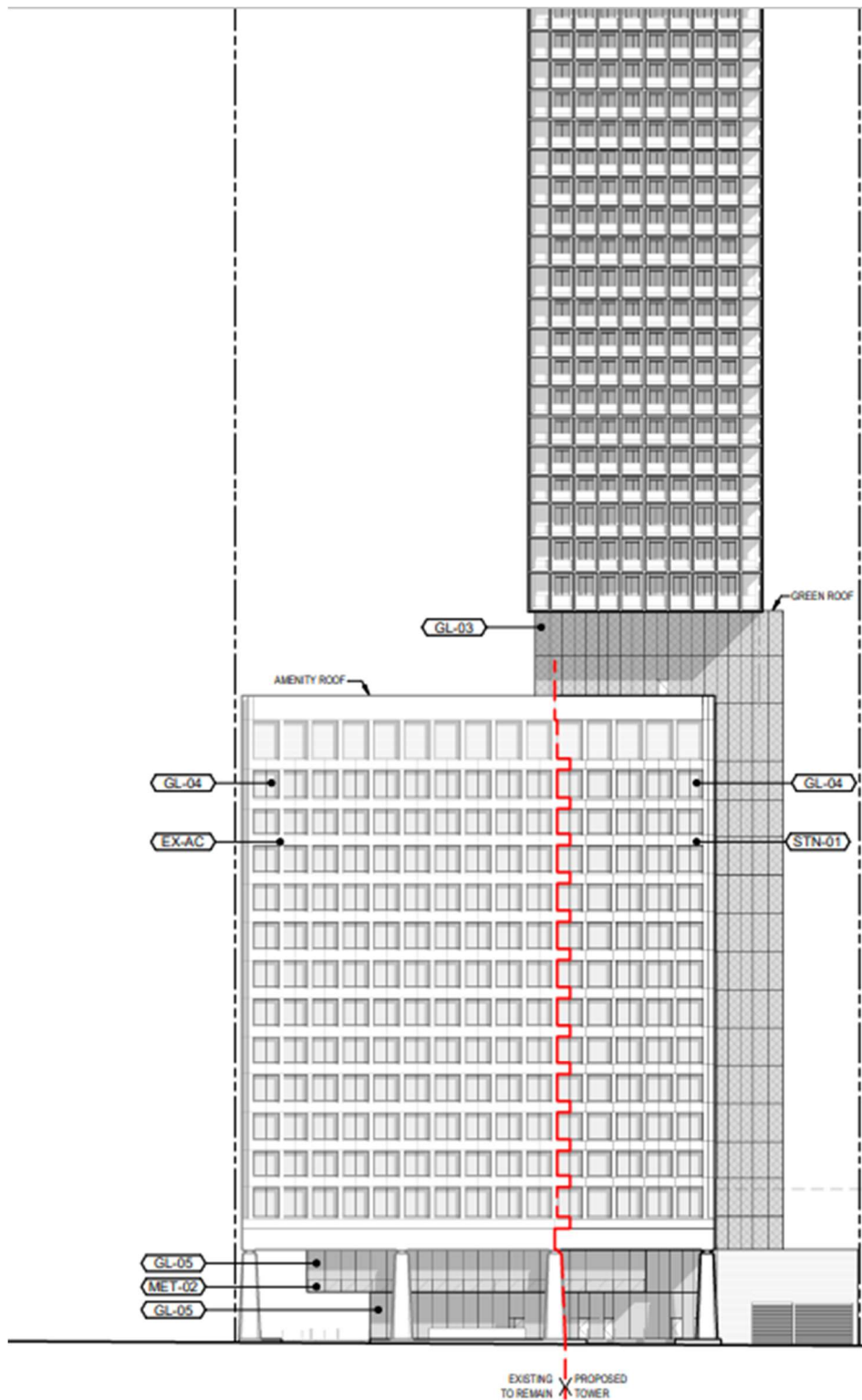
Rendering of the proposed development (WZMH Architects, [Application Information Centre](#))



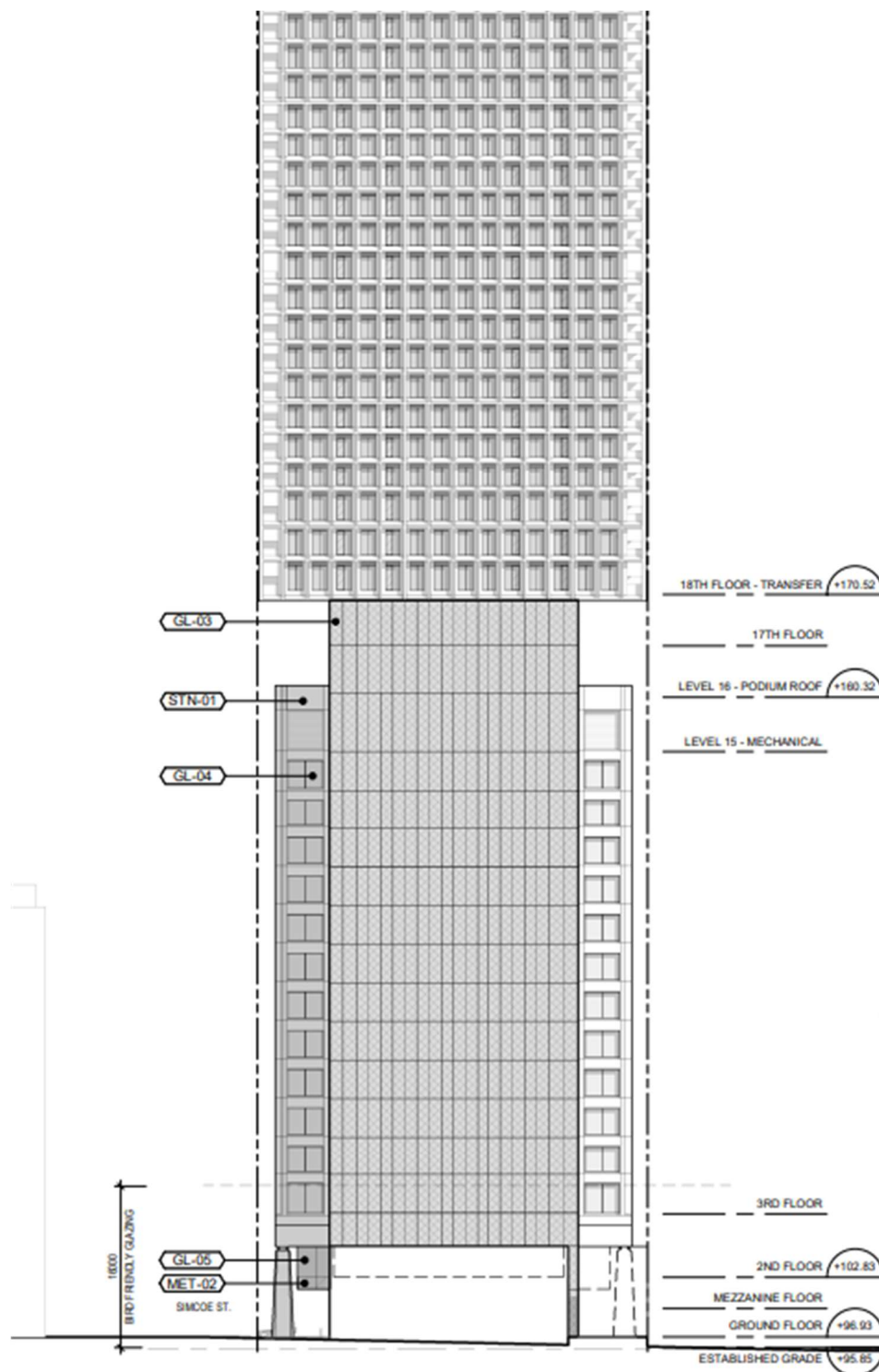
Proposed West Elevation (WZMH Architects, [Application Information Centre](#))



Proposed North Elevation (WZMH Architects, [Application Information Centre](#))



Proposed East Elevation (WZMH Architects, [Application Information Centre](#))



Proposed South Elevation (WZMH Architects, [Application Information Centre](#))

522 University Avenue**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 522 University Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/ associative and contextual value.

Description

Located on the west side of University Avenue directly south of Elm Street, the property at 522 University Avenue comprises a 15-storey office building for the National Life Assurance Company of Canada designed and completed in 1971-1974 by John C. Parkin, whose firm at the time was known as Parkin, Searle, Wilbee & Rowland.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The National Life Building is valued as a fine example of Monumental Modernist architecture utilizing precast concrete cladding in Toronto. Constructed in 1971-1974, the building's late Modernist character is evidenced by its uniform grid of punched windows and open ground floor plane. The building's distinct Monumental Modernist features include the double-height colonnade and the heavy massing of the wedge-shaped perimeter columns at three sides which extend the public space along University Avenue, Elm Street and Simcoe Street. The building is characterized by the regular rhythm and identical treatment of the east (primary), north, west, and south façades with a grid of identical prefabricated precast concrete panels.

The building is also distinguished by the high quality precast concrete mix employed, with fine limestone aggregate, and smooth finish which resembles stone. The individual T-shaped precast concrete panels were formed as a single, sculptural, modular unit, which was designed to clad the structure and create the deep returns around the punched windows.

The National Life Building further demonstrates design/physical value through its unique construction method. Original drawings indicate that the prefabricated precast panels were temporarily supported (in sections), while the building's concrete superstructure was cast in place and permanent anchors were installed. This unorthodox construction method has resulted in a very high-quality building envelope. This distinctive and complex design is characteristic of the versatility of precast concrete as a building material, and of the range of buildings associated with this material and construction method during the Modern period in Toronto.

The building was purpose-built for the National Life Assurance Company of Canada (NLACC) to replace their Beaux-Arts style building that occupied the same site since 1930. The NLACC is a Toronto-based company founded in 1899 and whose first offices stood at the corner of Toronto Street and Adelaide Street East until the company relocated to the prestigious University Avenue Precinct in 1930, as would numerous

other significant corporate institutions like Canada Life at 330 University Avenue, the Bank of Canada at 250 University Avenue and Sun Life at 200 University Avenue, the latter company's headquarters also designed by John C. Parkin. The NLACC, established in Toronto in 1899 and a subsidiary of Industrial Alliance Insurance and Financial Services Inc. since 1988, has occupied the subject property at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Elm Street for nearly 95 years.

The National Life Building demonstrates the work of Toronto architect John C. Parkin, who has been described as one of Canada's most important modernist architects. Having begun his career with the architectural firm of John B. Parkin Associates, one of Canada's leading Modernist and most prolific firms of the 1950s and 1960s that contributed many significant buildings to Toronto during that period, the property at 522 University Avenue represents a fine example of John C. Parkin's portfolio as an executive architect following the elder Parkin's departure. While the subject property was under construction in 1972, John C. Parkin was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada for his services to architecture, urban planning, industrial design and the arts. In 1979, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) awarded him its Gold Medal.

The subject property also demonstrates the work of notable Toronto-based concrete manufacturer, Beer Precast. Their well-known projects include Toronto City Hall with Parkin Associates and Viljo Revell at 100 Queen Street West (1959-1964) and the Medical Sciences Buildings at 1 King's College Circle (1969).

Contextually, the National Life Building is valued for its role in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the University Avenue Precinct, one of Toronto's major streets and a significant ceremonial avenue that is home to a collection of significant buildings associated with important corporate institutions in Toronto's history and constructed during the twentieth century following the adoption of the University Avenue By-law (1931) that established guidelines directing the scale, materials and appearance of commercial and institutional buildings along the ceremonial boulevard leading to Queen's Park. The by-law regulations with respect to setbacks, design and appearance are reflected in both the design of - and the views framed by - the monumental colonnade.

The subject property is physically, historically and visually linked with its surroundings where it contributes to the group of custom-designed buildings characterizing University Avenue, including the Canada Life Building (1931), 330 University Avenue, the Bank of Canada Building (1958), 250 University Avenue, the Maclean-Hunter Building (1961), 481 University Avenue, the Sun Life Assurance Company Building also designed by John C. Parkin (1961), 200 University Avenue, and the Metro Toronto Court House (1966), 361 University Avenue, which are all recognized heritage properties in the city.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 522 University Avenue as a fine example of Monumental Modernism include:

- The scale, form and massing of the fifteen-storey office building situated on the southwest corner of University Avenue and Elm Street
- The rectilinear massing of the building with its symmetrical window openings on all four elevations
- The materiality of the external wall and colonnade cladding with the high quality precast concrete mix employed, with fine limestone aggregate, and smooth finish which resembles stone
- The uniform arrangement and design of individual precast concrete panels from the third to fifteenth storeys on each elevation
- The scale and proportions of the tower window openings on all four elevations
- The tapered, precast concrete-clad perimeter columns extending from the first through second storeys
- The recessed position, and use of transparent glass at the ground and second storeys, with the second storey cantilevered over the ground storey at the east, north, and west elevations
- At the ground storey of the north elevation fronting onto Elm Street, the centred section of granite wall cladding
- The coffered/waffle concrete ceiling under the second storey of the exterior podium and its continuation into the entrance lobby creating a blurring or fluidity of interior and exterior space
- The continuous open ground floor plane extending from the exterior terrace into the interior entrance lobby
- The entrance lobby interior, with its double-height volume facing the east elevation and its mirrored walls and creating an extended perception of the depth of space

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 522 University Avenue as helping to define, maintain and support the character of the University Avenue Precinct:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building in relation to University Avenue, Elm Street and Simcoe Street

N.B. the one-storey podium with a second-storey addition at the south end of the property is not considered a heritage attribute.