

149 College Street - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: June 13, 2025

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 that City Council approve alterations under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the Part IV designated heritage property at 149 College Street. This is in connection with an application to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit a 60-storey mixed-use building that integrates the existing 6-storey heritage property known as the Stewart Building. The report also seeks approval to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to ensure the long-term conservation of this significant heritage resource.

The site was designated in 1978 under the Ontario Heritage Act, on architectural and historic grounds, by City of Toronto By-law 508-1978. The designation identifies the building, which was designed by E.J. Lennox, as "a significant work in the Romanesque Revival style, by [an] important Toronto architect." The designation identifies "large arched windows, prominent wall dormers, a fine arched entrance portico and a distinctive use of stone and brick" as noteworthy features.

A heritage permit application was submitted that integrates the retained building, including the College Street north façade, the east façade and a partial east and south façade into a base building with a 60-storey building component above. The new construction incorporates stepbacks above the retained heritage building. The transition in height between the heritage building and the tower will be moderated by a glazed reveal. A new landscape open area will be included at the northeast corner of the site. Staff are of the opinion that the proposal conserves the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the heritage property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the designated heritage property at 149 College Street, in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 60-storey mixed-use building, with such alterations substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated March 11, 2025 prepared by Sweeney Architects Inc. and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects, dated February 24, 2025, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 149 College Street, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 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 Executive Director, Development Review, in consultation with the Senior Manager, Heritage 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 149 College Street, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated March 11, 2025 prepared by Sweeney Architects inc. and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated February 24, 2025 prepared by ERA Architects, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage 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 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 149 College Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

c. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 149 College Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing

heritage building as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City required in Recommendation 2.b.1 above for the property at 149 College Street 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 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.
4. 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.
5. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
6. Provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage 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.
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, 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.

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 149 College Street.

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

On July 17, 1978, City Council designated the site based on architectural and historic grounds under Part IV of the OHA by City of Toronto By-law 508-1978.

BACKGROUND

Heritage Property

The property at 149 College Street is known as the Stewart Building. It was built in 1892-94 as the Toronto Athletic Club by the notable architect E. J. Lennox. It was designated on architectural and historic grounds. The designation by-law notes it to be a significant work in the Romanesque Revival style, by this important Toronto architect. In 1900 the lavish interior of the building was altered by the architect A. F. Wickson to convert it to the first Technical School for the Toronto Board of Education. In 1930 it was again remodelled for civic offices by the architect J. J. Woolnough. The building is noted for its large arched windows, prominent wall dormers, arched entrance portico and a distinctive use of stone and brick which were retained in each alteration.

Staff has, with the heritage consultant, verified that all of the internal floor plates and uses have been modernized fully/altered for various office and institutional uses through

the years and any significant interior heritage fabric had been removed prior to this proposed project.

The Site's immediate surrounding context includes:

- To the north, on the opposite side of College Street, is the University of Toronto's Fitzgerald Building. Located at 150 College Street, this four-storey building opened in 1927 as the School of Hygiene
- To the east, is the rear elevation of the Ontario Power Building, a 19-storey glass office building located at 700 University Avenue that was constructed in 1975
- To the south, separated by an intervening playing field, is the Orde Street Public School. Located at 18 Orde Street, this three-storey building was constructed in c. 1914
- To the west, is the Toronto Board of Education Centre located at 155 College Street. Constructed in 1961, this seven-storey building now serves as University of Toronto's Health Sciences Building

The Proposal

The College Street (north) facing façade and prominent east façade (facing a proposed future open space) will be completely conserved in situ and the west and south facades will be partially retained. The east portion of the south/rear elevation will be retained in-situ to a depth of approximately 11 metres. The western half of the south elevation will be demolished, and materials will be salvaged for repair on the remainder of the building. The northern portion of the west elevation will be conserved to a depth of approximately 7 metres with an additional 4 metres being disassembled and reassembled. The south portion of the west elevation will be demolished.

The southwest portion of the roof will be removed to construct the new mixed-use building containing institutional and residential uses. The north portion of the hipped roof will be maintained to a depth of approximately 7 metres, which is approximately 1 metre south of the existing ridgeline. The new construction has been designed to expose the west gable roof. The east portion of the roof will be retained to the central ridge, with a step back of 11 metres.

At the west façade, the height of an abutting new two-storey base portion of the new development is set back (4 metres) relative to the street facing north façade of the heritage property. Additionally, the new construction will include an 8-storey glazed reveal with an inset that has been designed to enhance and maintain the visibility of the west gable end as viewed from the public realm.

Above the heritage roof, a glazed reveal is proposed that measures 15 metres from the roof ridge of the heritage building to the underside of the cantilever. The cantilever will project out 3.7 metres from the glazed reveal at the west elevation thereby resulting in a 7.3

metre step back (11 metres at roof level). At the north street facing façade, the cantilever will project out by 2.2 metres resulting in a 4-metre step back (6.2 metres at roof level) from the north heritage facade to the tower façade.

At the main entrance, the project would replace the non-original existing stair landing at the central portion of the north elevation to provide for both a new barrier-free access at grade in addition to continuing access to the raised central entrance. The barrier free access would be provided at the front wall/façade of the stair landing. The third floor loggia is proposed to be enclosed with glazing being installed behind the existing columns.

Internally, the basement, ground, and second floors will be adapted for the proposed new uses, including lobbies, circulation, accessible entry, and amenities. The third through sixth floors will be adapted and improved for continuing institutional uses.

The project will also provide a new public open space abutting the northeast corner of the building replacing a portion of the existing surface parking area at the College Street frontage.

The Conservation Strategy

- In-situ retention of the front (College Street facing) and east façades with the retention of part of the east and south facades.
- The existing fire escape doors on the rear (south façade) would be removed and original window openings restored. Ventilation grilles and fire escapes would be removed.
- Temporary dismantling and reconstruction of a portion of the west elevation gable end
- Wood windows to be retained with upgrades to enable a higher performance.
- Wood paneled doors to be retained and adapted with new hardware.
- Steel windows (south elevation) to be replaced with new historically appropriate, high-performance windows.
- Steel doors (south elevation) to be replaced with compatible new doors.
- New sheet metal string course.
- Salvage sound heritage fabric from the western portion of the south elevation and the south portion of the west elevation for repairs to the retained portion.
- Masonry cleaning to address soiling, selective brick replacement using salvaged material in sound condition and repointing where needed.

- Selective stone replacement using matching material and repointing where needed.
- Repairs as required and painting of the wood trim on the dormer along the north elevation
- The copper string courses and cornices to be repaired or replaced where needed.
- The copper and shingle roofs to be repaired or replaced in kind where needed.
- The concealed gutters and downspouts to be replaced in kind where needed.

Heritage Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Act

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

The Provincial 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 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.

3.1.6.26 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.

3.1.6.28 The owner of a designated heritage property will be encouraged to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement where the City considers additional protection beyond designation desirable due to the location, proposed alteration, and/or the nature of that property.

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 have 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 introduction of a new 60-storey building on the property has been designed so that it conserves in situ the primary east and street facing north façade of the property as well as the partial south and west facades. Staff have worked diligently with the applicant through several revisions of the project to develop a conservation strategy that conserves the visual perception of the building as a discrete building with the tower placed behind and somewhat to the west side of the property. Step backs and the cantilever design have been greatly improved from that initially proposed (see drawing in attachments). The initial development proposal for the site incorporated a tower with a three-storey reveal above the retained building ridge with a projecting 9.2 metre cantilever on the east. Also, the west gable end was not fully visible on the building exterior. Subsequent design iterations following consultation with City of Toronto heritage staff resulted in a refined massing with a reduced cantilever depth on the east (from 9.2 m to 3.7 m) such that location of the tower moved further west. The massing was also revised so that the west gable end would remain visible on the building exterior.

As mentioned, to lend enhanced perception of the three-dimensional building form and volume, staff worked with the applicant to conserve more of the west side gable wall with chimney. To achieve this objective, the entrance vestibule proposed that abuts the west façade of the property, has been reduced in height. Also, the glazed 8 storey reveal/inset that extends from grade to above the heritage property, will expose the gable wall at the west façade (which was previously proposed for demolition) and allows it to be readily perceived from the public realm.

At the main entrance, staff is satisfied that the heritage attributes and appearance of the raised central entry will be appropriately adapted. The project conserves the raised entry while providing barrier free access via the front wall/façade of the stair landing.

Heritage Planning staff are very pleased with the incorporation of a new public open space that abuts the northeast corner of the property. This open space will enhance the setting of the heritage property by removing a portion of surface parking area. Markedly, this will provide opportunity for the public to appreciate the heritage property within an improved public realm setting along the College Street frontage.

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, Landscaping and Lighting Plans

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Building Permit approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a Heritage Lighting Plan, a Landscape 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 Landscape Plan should provide details as to how the proposed landscaping will support the heritage values, attributes and character of the Stewart Building.

The Interpretation Plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the Stewart 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 Stewart Building.

Conclusion

Staff are supportive of the proposal to alter the heritage property at 149 College Street to allow for the construction of a 60-storey mixed use building. The applicant has worked extensively with the Heritage Planning team in an effort to design the new development in a way that mitigates the impact of the proposed massing on the lower scale heritage building, while also meeting the intent of the City's Official Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Planning Act in conjunction with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Given the above, staff are supportive of the proposal and recommend that Council approve the proposed alterations and grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

CONTACT

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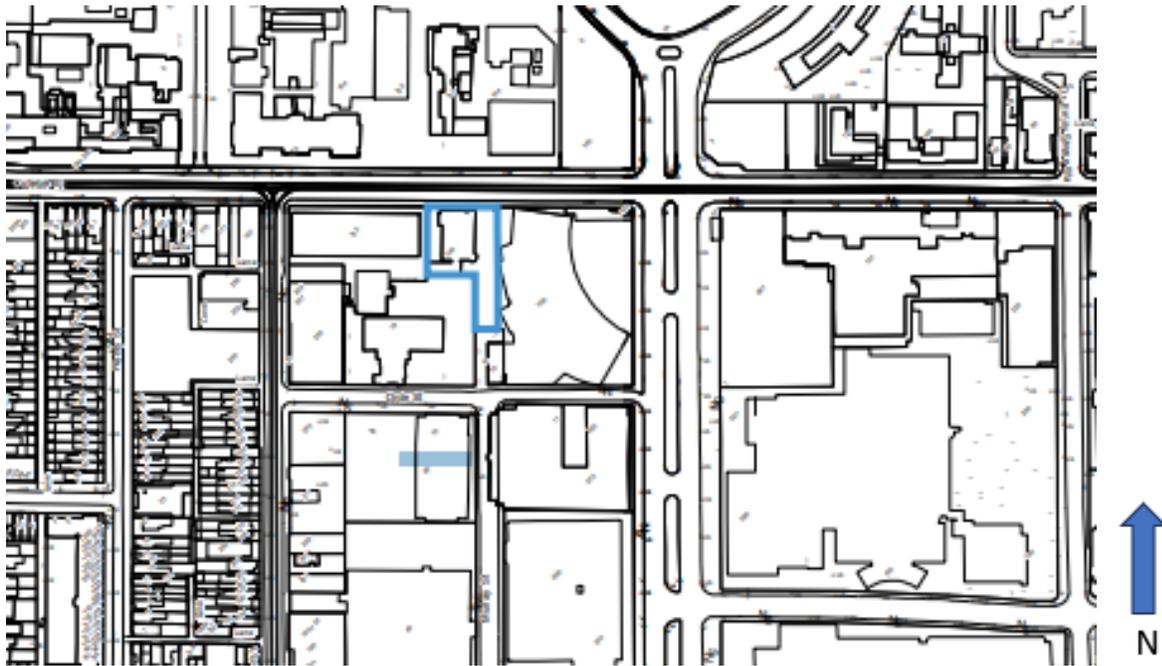
SIGNATURE

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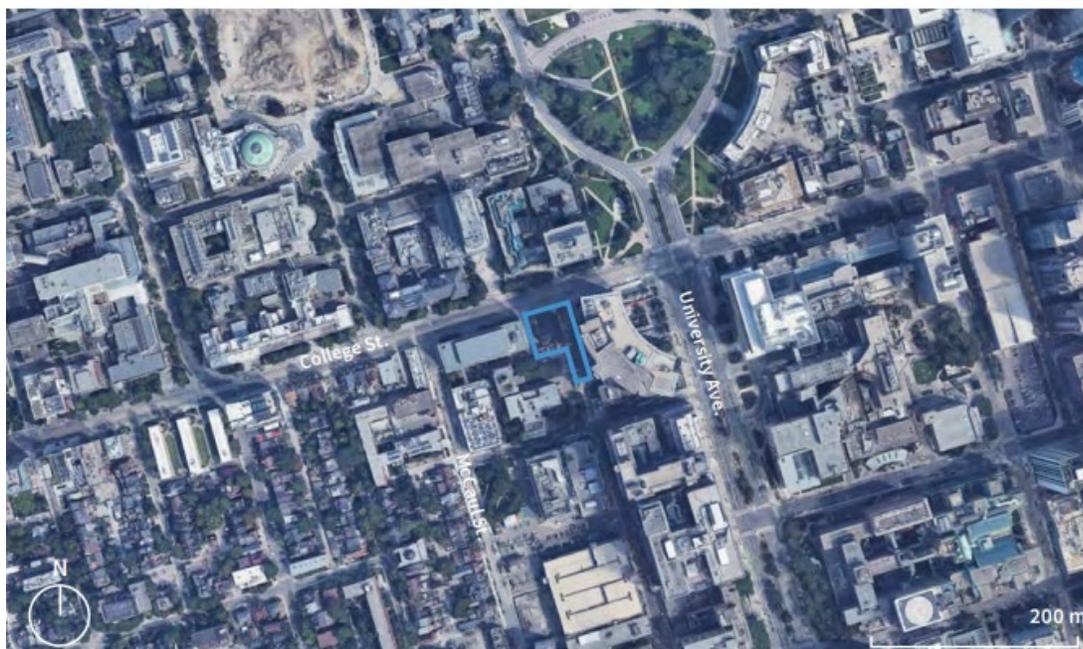
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map & Aerial View
Attachment 2 - Photographs
Attachment 3 - Renderings of 2017 Approved Proposal
Attachment 4 - Selected Drawings

149 College Street



Location map - Property indicated at south side of College Street, west of university Avenue (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)



Aerial view (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

PHOTOGRAPHS
149 College Street

ATTACHMENT 2



Front/North Façade at College Street (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)



East Elevation (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

PHOTOGRAPHS

149 College Street



West Elevation: Note Gable wall and chimney to be conserved at left picture (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)



South/Rear Elevation (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

149 College Street



Looking West at site (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)



Looking at the site from the north side of College Street (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)

RENDERINGS OF PROPOSAL

149 College Street

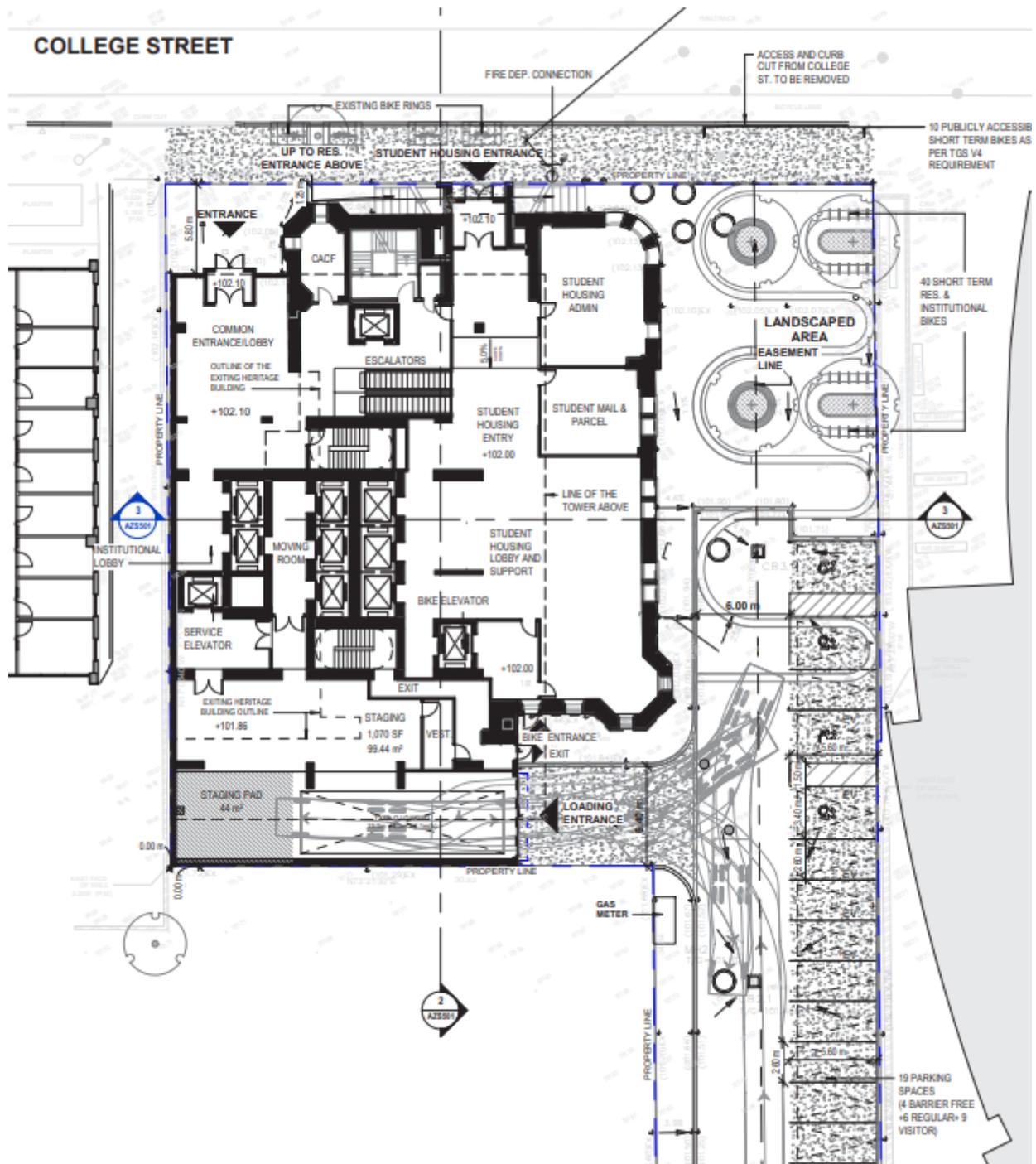


West Elevation: Note: 1) Glazed recess/inset reveal exposing the gable wall with chimney; 2) Two storey entry abutting west facade (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)



Proposed Open Space at College Street Frontage abutting Northeast of the Building (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)

149 College Street



Site Plan (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

149 College Street



First Floor (left) and Second Storey (right) (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)



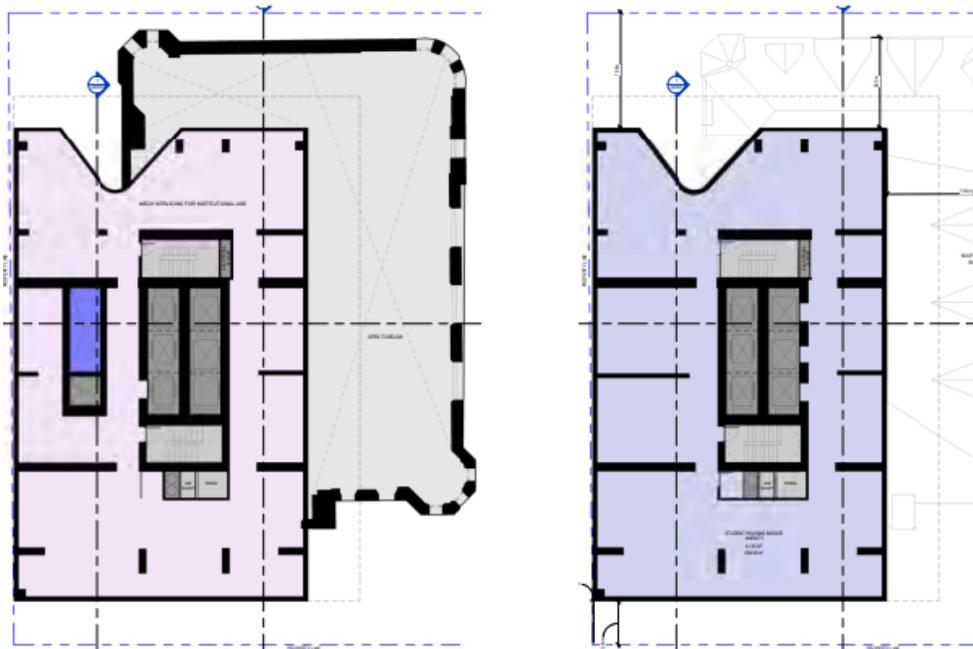
Third Floor (left) and Fourth Floor (right) (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

149 College Street



Fifth Floor (left) and Sixth Floor (right) (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)



Seventh Floor. Note the Reveal/Inset at Front West Wall and Step-back Eighth Floor. The Roof Plan (Source: Sweeney Architects Inc.)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

149 College Street



Front/North Street College Street facing Elevation at left and East Elevation at Right (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

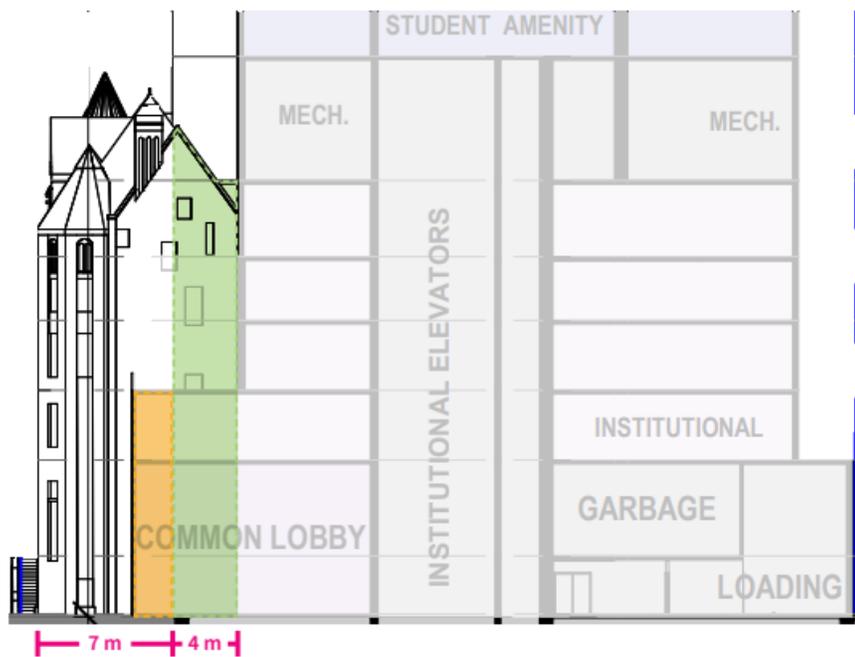


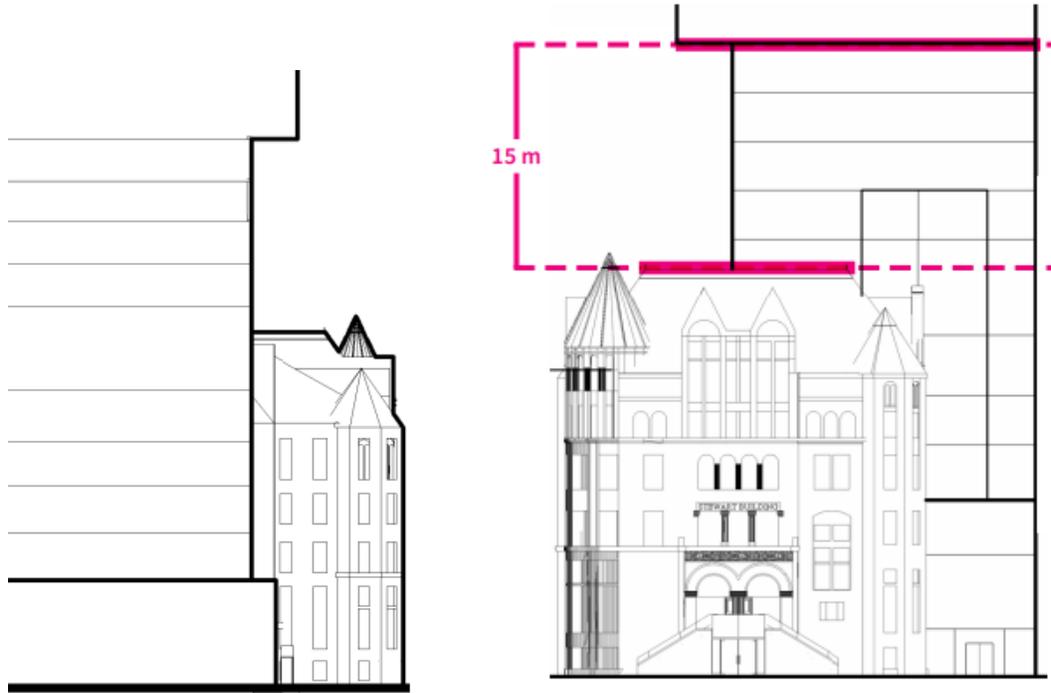
Figure 105. Proposed north-south section at inset in reveal (Sweeny&CoArchitects, 2025; annotated by ERA).

Retained in-situ and internalized Reconstructed

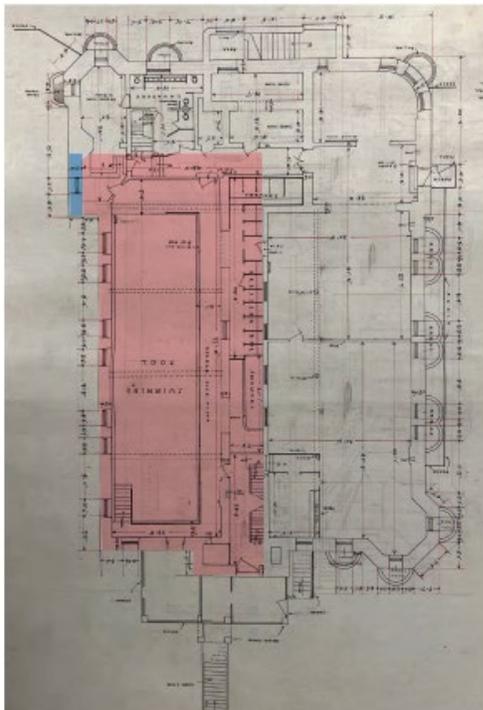
West Elevation Section/7 metres retained and internalized at Lower Levels and 4 metres reconstructed beyond. (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

149 College Street



South/Rear Elevation and Elevation showing reveal height (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)



Demolished or removed Altered Retained in-situ

Existing floor Plan showing extent of demolition and reconstruction (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

149 College Street



Earlier Proposal: Left: North façade with Cantilever; Right: West Façade with Absence of Side Gable Wall. (Source: ERA Architects Inc.)