

Alterations to Heritage Properties and Authority to Amend a Heritage Easement Agreement - 508 and 510 Church Street

Date: December 18, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage properties at 508 and 510 Church Street (designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act) in connection with the development of the subject site.

The development site at 506-516 Church Street contains the Crews and Tangos building at 508 and 510 Church Street, which comprises two adjoining structures, originally constructed as part of a row of six residences in c.1856-1858, along with a surviving nineteenth-century coach house to the rear. The primary structures are a unique example of semi-detached house-form buildings from the mid-nineteenth century that have evolved for commercial use. Since 1994 they have been the home of Crews, later Crews and Tangos, a storied venue for drag performances and queer gatherings. The building is notable for its asymmetrical configuration and details that demonstrate the influence of the Romanesque Revival style. The properties are a cultural landmark within the Church and Wellesley Village and for Toronto's broader 2SLGBTQ+ community.

The development application proposes a 48-storey mixed-use building, the retention of a portion of the existing Crews and Tangos building at 508 and 510 Church Street and the demolition of the coach house to the rear. A previous development application for a 14-storey building with a similar conservation strategy was approved by City Council at its meeting of July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022. In both this proposal and the previous proposal, the retained portion of the heritage building is to be restored with minor modifications to support ground floor retail uses. The existing World Pride Mural will be removed to allow for masonry restoration, and it will be commemorated through documentation and two new murals.

The most significant change from the previously approved application is the increase in tower height from 14-storeys to 48-storeys and the reduction in the tower stepback from the east property line from 15.77 metres to 6.5 metres, with balconies encroaching into the stepback. Although staff acknowledge that the reduction in the tower stepback, combined with the increase in the tower height, negatively impacts the heritage building's scale, form and massing, these impacts will be mitigated through the overall conservation strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council consent to the application to alter the designated properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, with conditions, under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a new mixed use building with the alterations to the designated heritage properties being substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated September 27, 2024 prepared by Diamond Schmitt Architects on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated December 21, 2021 and Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated November 7, 2024 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.
2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated properties at 508 and 510 Church Street under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage is also subject to the following conditions:
 - a. That the related Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment requiring the proposed alterations and proposed removal of the heritage attributes has been enacted by City Council and has come into full force and effect.
 - b. That the owner shall
 1. Amend the existing Heritage Easement Agreement for the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street in accordance with the plans and drawings dated September 27, 2024, prepared by Diamond Schmitt Architects, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 below, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning including registration of such amending agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor; and
 2. Provide a detailed Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant, that is consistent with the conservation strategy set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated December 21, 2021 and Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum

prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated November 7, 2024 for the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

c. That prior to final Site Plan approval for the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment by City Council, for the properties located at 508 and 510 Church Street the owner shall:

1. Provide final site plan drawings substantially in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 above to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning;
2. Have obtained final approval for the necessary Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment required for the subject properties, such Amendment to have come into full force and effect;
3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the heritage properties will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character 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. Provide a detailed landscape plan for the subject properties, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning;
5. Provide an Interpretation Plan for the subject properties, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and
6. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

d. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the properties at 508 and 510 Church 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 obtained final approval for the necessary Zoning By-law Amendment required for the subject properties, such Amendment to have come into full force and effect;
2. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 above, 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;

3. 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, Lighting Plan, and Interpretation Plan; and

4. Provide full documentation of the existing Crews and Tangos building and coach house, including two (2) printed sets of archival quality 8" x 10" colour photographs with borders in a glossy or semi-gloss finish and one (1) digital set on a flash drive in tiff format and 600 dpi resolution keyed to a location map, elevations and measured drawings, and copies of all existing interior floor plans and original drawings as may be available, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

e. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 1.d.3 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 the required interpretive work has been completed in accordance with the Conservation Plan and Interpretation Plan and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and

2. Provide replacement Heritage Easement Agreement photographs to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

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 May 11, 2022, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 508 and 510 Church Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.CC43.6>

On July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, City Council adopted recommendations to alter the designated properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, with conditions, under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE34.54>

On July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, City Council amended the Official Plan and the City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 for the lands at 506-516 Church Street to permit a 14-storey mixed-use building.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE34.47>

BACKGROUND

Area Context

The development site at 506-516 Church Street is located at the centre of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood (also known as The Village), less than two blocks south of its eponymous intersection. Situated on the west side of Church Street between Alexander and Maitland streets, the properties contribute to an eclectic streetscape that is characterized by a variety of commercial typologies as well as a predominance of nineteenth-century residential buildings converted to commercial use. For over four decades, Church and Wellesley has been the geographical heart of Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ community, with a concentration of queer community spaces, clubs, bars, restaurants, among which Crews and Tangos is considered an anchor.

Heritage Properties

The properties at 508 and 510 Church Street comprise two adjoining structures, originally constructed as part of a row of six residences (508-518 Church Street) c.1856-1858, along with a surviving nineteenth-century coach house to the rear of 508 Church Street. The primary structures constitute a unique example of semi-detached house-form buildings from the mid-nineteenth century, which have since evolved for commercial use. They are notable for their asymmetrical configuration and details that demonstrate the influence of the Romanesque Revival style.

Since 1994 the integrated properties have been the home of Crews, later Crews and Tangos, a storied venue for drag performances and queer gatherings. The properties are a cultural landmark within the Church and Wellesley Village and for Toronto's broader 2SLGBTQ+ community. Additionally, the mural added in 2013 for World Pride contributes to the building's status as a visual landmark.

The properties at 508 and 510 Church Street meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, under all three categories of design and physical, historical and associative and contextual values.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The development site is not adjacent to any properties that are listed on the City's Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. However, it is adjacent to several properties that were identified as having heritage potential through the North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines.

Development Proposal

The Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications propose the development of the site at 506-516 Church Street for a 48-storey mixed-use building. The development involves the retention of a portion of the existing building at 508 and 510 Church Street and the demolition of the coach house to the rear. The proposed built form and massing does not conform with the Church Street Village Character Area policies of Site and Area Specific Policy 382 in the Official Plan.

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."

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

Conservation Strategy

The development proposal involves the in-situ retention of a substantial portion of the Crews and Tangos building at 508 and 510 Church Street, including the primary elevation and approximately 1.5 metres of the south and north return elevations. Approximately 3.8 metres of the south elevation will be reconstructed with salvaged masonry and new brick to match the existing and 5.5 metres of the north elevation will be reconstructed with new non-combustible materials and in-kind brick. The remainder of the building fabric will be removed and replaced with new construction.

Heritage Planning has compared the current application to the conservation strategy of a previous development application on the site, which was approved by City Council on July 19, 2022. The most significant change to the conservation strategy since the previous approval is the increase in building height from 14-storeys to 48-storeys and the reduction in the building setback from the east property line from 15.77 metres to 6.5 metres. Balconies are proposed to encroach 1.8 metres above into this 6.5 metre setback. Although staff acknowledge that the reduction in the setback, combined with the increase in the height, negatively impacts the perception of the heritage building's scale, form and massing, these impacts will be somewhat mitigated through the overall conservation strategy. However, a greater depth of setback is desirable, especially given the proposed new development's height increase from 14 to 48 storeys. A generous setback would better maintain the prominence of the heritage building. Additions to heritage buildings should be "physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place" consistent with the Council-adopted Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Staff recommend the applicant consider increasing the setback from Church Street to improve the mitigation of heritage impacts.

Several alterations are proposed in combination with restoration of the retained portion of the building. The historic stained-glass windows will be salvaged, repaired, and reinstated, and the existing clear windows will be replaced with new windows that match the materials, operation, and profile of the original windows. The existing entry doors, transoms and surrounds are proposed to be replaced with new wood doors that are designed to match historic profiles. A new door opening is proposed on the south side elevation at the ground floor. The design of the new masonry opening, and door will be contemporary, so they are legible as alterations. The masonry and stone will be cleaned, repaired, and replaced where necessary.

Further alterations are proposed to make the ground floor retail space within the Crews and Tangos building universally accessible. The existing door sills and ground floor will be lowered to grade to provide barrier-free access to the ground floor commercial space from Church Street. To better align the existing windows with the new lower ground floor, the existing ground floor bay window openings will be extended resulting in the

replacement of the basement arched window lintels with new rectangular stone sills. The local community identified accessibility as an important goal for the project and the proposed alterations for improved accessibility are in keeping with the property's legacy as an inclusive space.

While uses and specific tenants cannot be conserved under the Ontario Heritage Act, the developer is exploring opportunities for accommodating Crews and Tangos onsite or introducing another nightlife venue that contributes to the vitality of The Village's 2SLGBTQ+ community. Other programming that supports the 2SLGBTQ+ community is also being explored in consultation with the local community.

Building Design

The development application proposes a 48-storey mixed-use building with a three-storey base. The base is designed to reinstate the missing streetwall to the north of the heritage building and the new portions of the streetwall are set back from the heritage building. Staff appreciates the revisions to the proposed streetwall compared to the previously approved proposal. The glazed reveal to the north of the retained portion of the heritage building provides a simple, contemporary transition. Further north, the red brick two-storey volume with bays and rounded-arch openings is compatible with the heritage property and harmoniously completes the streetwall. The proposed horizontal and vertical articulation creates a regular rhythm of bays that relate to the fine-grain character of The Village.

Mural Commemoration

The Crews and Tangos building has a mural that was painted in 2013 for World Pride and is a heritage attribute of the property that contributes to the building's status as a visual landmark. The mural was painted by artists Nadijah Robinson and Elicser Elliott and depicts performers against a cobalt background. The artwork was one of 11 murals painted on 11 buildings as part of the Church Street Mural Project, led by Syrus Marcus Ware and James Fowler in association with the Church Wellesley Village Business Association and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. The initiative commemorated World Pride, which took place in Toronto in 2014.

Opportunities for conserving the mural were explored, but its conservation would prevent the masonry restoration work that is needed to ensure the long-term conservation of the historic building materials. As such, the mural will be fully documented, removed and commemorated through two new murals that recognize the recent history of Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ community and Crews and Tangos' legacy as one of Toronto's longest operating queer bars. A mural is proposed on the first-storey of the north side wall of the adjacent building at 504 Church Street where it will frame the new recessed residential entrance and be highly visible from Church Street. A large-scale mural is proposed at the first-storey of the rear elevation of the new building along Donna Shaw Lane. Both murals will interpret the theme of Queer Nightlife and engage local 2SLGBTQ+ artists. The artwork for the murals has not been determined yet and will be informed by community consultation and consultation with the artists of the existing mural, Nadijah Robinson and Elicser Elliott.

Coach House Demolition

The proposed demolition of the existing coach house to the rear of the building at 508 and 510 Church Street will have a negative heritage impact as it is identified as a heritage attribute in the Statement of Significance. The nineteenth-century coach house is a unique surviving example of an increasingly rare typology within Toronto. The coach house also has associative value for its use as part of the Crews and Tangos venue, which has multiple bar spaces and dance floors with a variety of music and activities spread across separate rooms and floors. The demolition of the coach house is mitigated through the overall conservation strategy which privileges the street-facing heritage attributes of the property associated with the main building. The design and physical value of the property will be commemorated through full documentation of the existing coach house, including archival photographs, measured drawings, interior floor plans and original drawings as may be available. Its historical and associative value will be celebrated through the interpretation strategy for the site, which will explore the theme of queer nightlife.

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. The Conservation Plan should detail all of the recommended interventions and conservation work including any recommended restoration work, a detailed plan describing how the heritage building will be protected during construction, a schedule of short and long-term maintenance requirements and estimated costs for all conservation work.

Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan approval, the applicant should be required to submit an Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Interpretation Plan should be substantial and it should communicate the cultural heritage value of the properties, particularly its historical and associative values, as described in the Statement of Significance. The Interpretation Plan should explore the theme of the site's association with Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Heritage Lighting Plan

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

Landscape Plan

Staff is recommending that the applicant be required to provide a final Landscape Plan that enhances the heritage character of the properties to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning as a condition of Site Plan approval.

Signage Plan

The recommended Signage Plan should provide details of the signage strategy for the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, including the appropriate type, scale, location and number of signs.

Heritage Easement Agreement

Staff is recommending that the existing Heritage Easement Agreement be amended to reflect the proposed alterations to the heritage properties at 508 and 510 Church Street that are the subject of this report.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning is satisfied the proposal in its current form meets the intent 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.

Staff recommend that City Council approve the application to alter the designated properties at 508 and 510 Church Street under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage and grant authority to amend the existing Heritage Easement Agreement subject to the condition that the related Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment requiring the proposed alterations and proposed removal of the heritage attributes has been enacted by City Council and has come into full force and effect.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

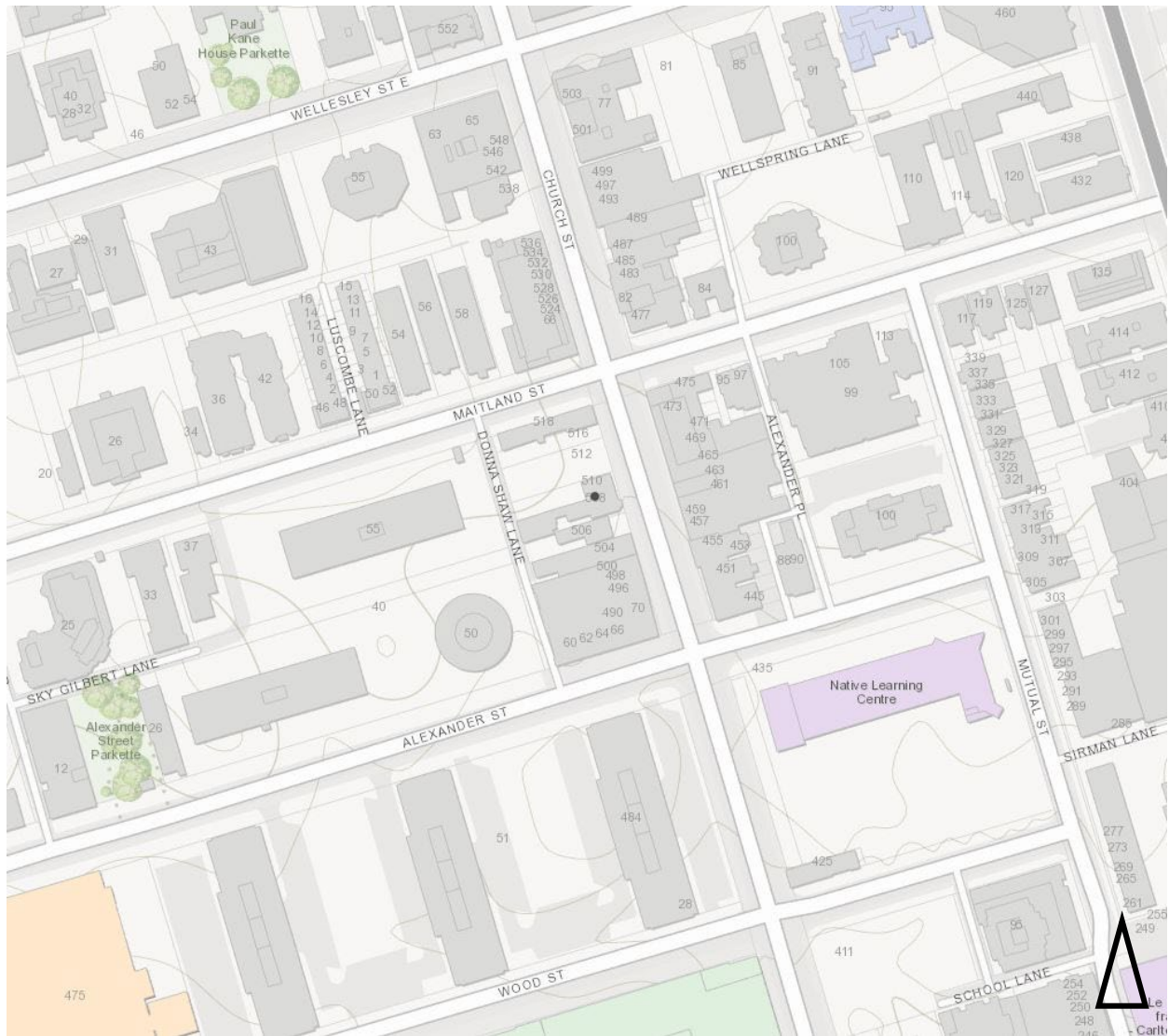
Mary L. MacDonald, MA,CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Location Map
- Attachment 2 - Aerial Photograph
- Attachment 3 - Photographs
- Attachment 4 - Selected Drawings

**LOCATION MAP
508 AND 510 CHURCH STREET**

ATTACHMENT 1



Location Map, showing the development site at 506-516 Church Street indicated by the arrow. The property boundaries are approximate (iView, City of Toronto).

**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
508 AND 510 CHURCH STREET**

ATTACHMENT 2



Aerial photograph showing the location of the development site at 506-516 Church Street (Google Maps, 2022).



Northwestward view of the subject properties from across Church Street, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



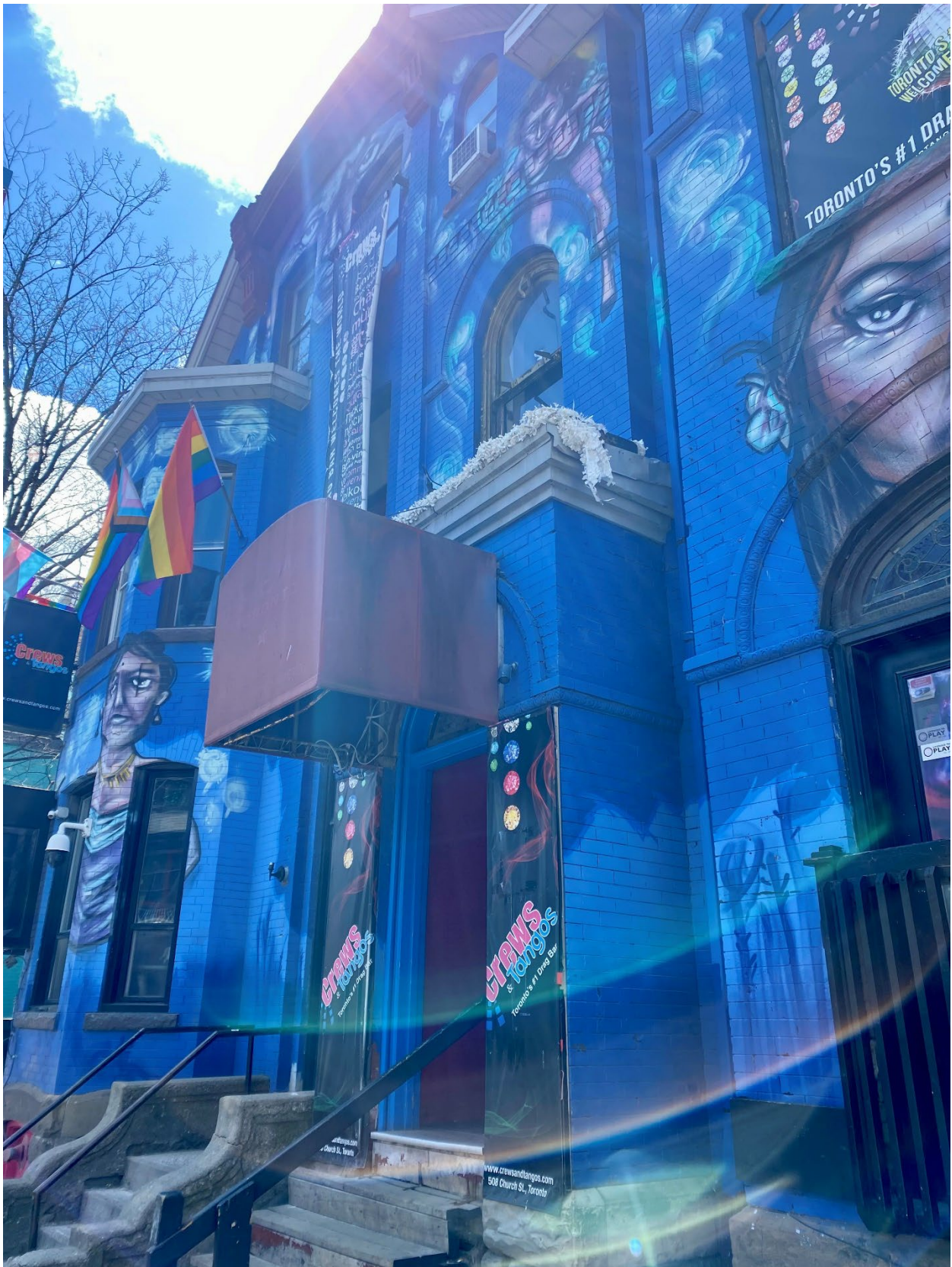
Southwestward view of the subject properties within its streetscape from the intersection of Church and Maitland streets, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Eastward view from the parking lot immediately north of the subject properties, with the north and rear building elevations visible at right, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



The rear coach house, viewed from Donna Shaw Lane, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



View of the front elevation and the main entry to Crows and Tangos, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



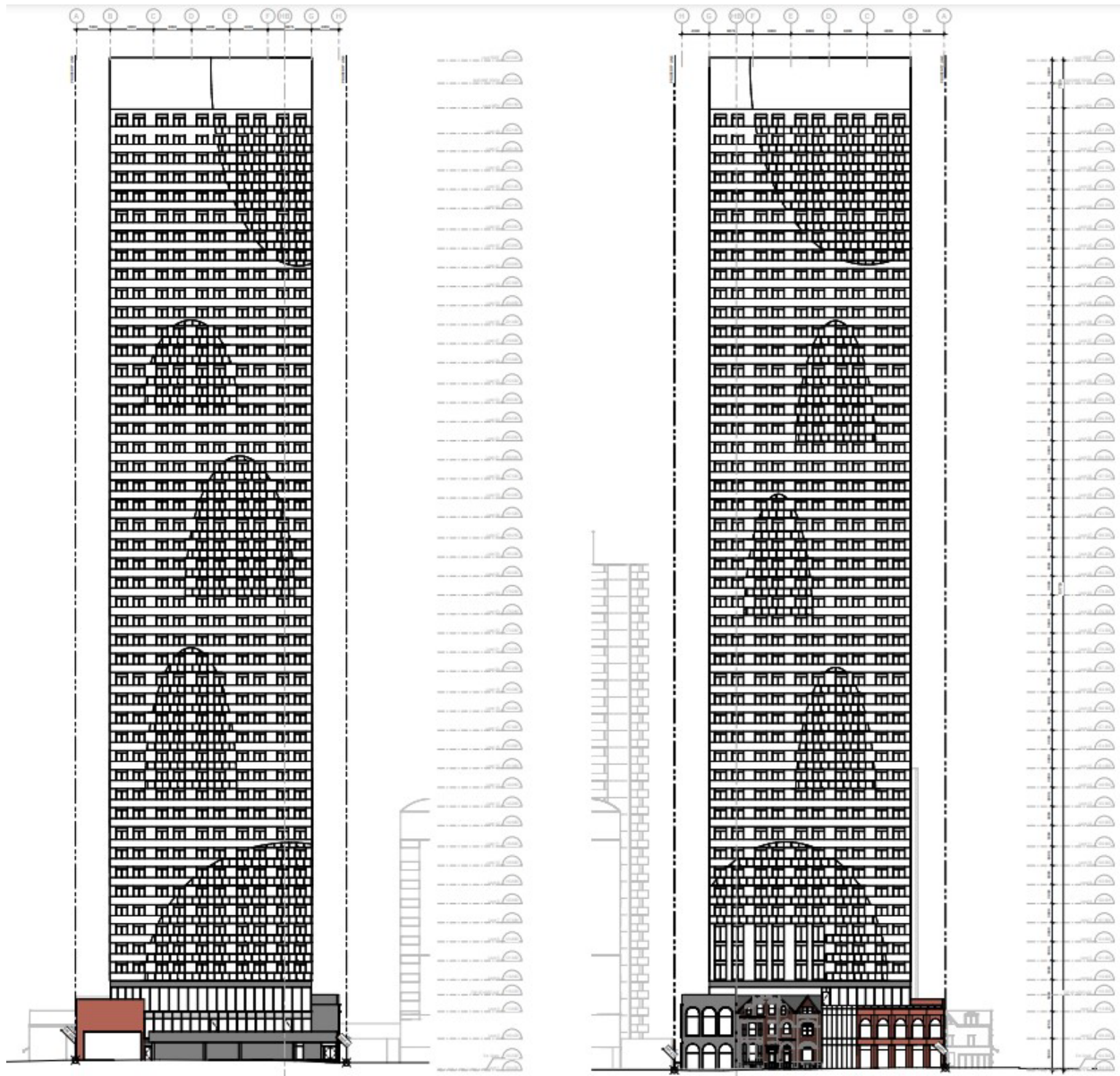
Architectural detailing on the northernmost bay of the front elevation, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Rending looking southwest (Diamond Schmidt Architects, September 27, 2024)



Aerial view looking southwest (Diamond Schmidt Architects, September 27, 2024)



West elevation (left) and east elevation (right) (Diamond Schmidt Architects, September 27, 2024)



South elevation (left) and north elevation (right) (Diamond Schmidt Architects, September 27, 2024)