

522 University Avenue - Zoning By-law Amendment Application – Decision Report - Approval

Date: December 18, 2024

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

Ward: 11 - University-Rosedale

Planning Application Number: 22 192156 STE 11 OZ

SUMMARY

This report reviews and recommends approval of an application to amend the Zoning By-law to permit a 64-storey (232.4 metres including mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building that includes the conservation of a portion of the existing heritage building, and would contain 579 dwelling units and 21,413 square metres of non-residential gross floor area at 522 University Avenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, recommends that:

1. City Council amend Zoning By-law 569-2023 for the lands at 522 University Avenue substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law included as Attachment 5 to this report.
2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Zoning By-law Amendment as may be required.
3. Before introducing the necessary Bills to City Council for enactment, City Council require the owner to:
 - a. submit a revised Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report, ("Engineering Reports"), and supporting plans, to the satisfaction of the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services, in consultation with the General Manager, Toronto Water; and/or;
 - b. enter into a financially secured agreement with the City to secure the construction of any upgrades or required improvements to the existing municipal infrastructure identified in the accepted Engineering Reports to support the

development, if any, all to the satisfaction of the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services and the General Manager, Toronto Water.

c. 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; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated October 15, 2024 prepared by ERA Architects, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

d. provides 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.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

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.

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

THE SITE

Description

The site is located on the southwest corner of University Avenue and Elm Street and extends the full block between University Avenue and Simcoe Street. The site is rectangular in shape and has a frontage of approximately 38 metres along Elm Street and 60 metres along University Avenue and Simcoe Street.

Existing Use

The site contains a 15-storey commercial building designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

THE APPLICATION

Description

A 64-storey (232.4 metres including mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building. The application proposes to alter and integrate the existing 15-storey building into the redevelopment, including interior heritage attributes. The northern two-thirds of the building will be retained in-situ. The southern bay of the building and its heritage attributes will be demolished and reconstructed to allow for construction of the new tower.

Revisions

The Zoning By-Law Amendment application initially proposed the demolition of the existing 15-storey building on the property and a new 62-storey (232.9 metres including the mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building.

The table below summarizes the main changes between the original and revised proposals.

Table 1: Summary of application revisions

	Original Proposal (August 2022)	Revised Proposal (August 2024)
Heritage	Building demolished	Conservation
Height - Storeys (metres including mechanical penthouse)	62 (232.9)	64 (232.4)
Tower Floorplate (m ²)	792	766
Total Gross Floor Area (m ²)	58,859	54,983
Residential Gross Floor Area(m ²)	35,154	33,570
Office Floor Area(m ²)	23,351	21,202

	Original Proposal (August 2022)	Revised Proposal (August 2024)
Retail Gross Floor Area(m ²)	354	211
Density	24.4 times the area of the lot	22.8 times the area of the lot
Dwelling Units	611	579
Vehicle Parking	136	40
Bicycle Parking	768	732

Heritage

The property at 522 University Avenue is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act through designation by-law 899-2024. The 15-storey office building was constructed between 1971 and 1974, and is 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 extends 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.

Density

The proposal has a density of 22.8 times the area of the site.

Dwelling Units

The proposal includes 579 dwelling units, comprised of 63 studio units (10.9%), 297 one-bedroom (51.3%), 155 two-bedroom (26.8%) and 61 three-bedroom units (10.5%).

Non-residential Uses

A total of 21,413 square metres of non-residential gross floor area is proposed, comprised of 21,202 square metres of office floor area and 211 square metres of retail floor area.

Access Parking and Loading

Access for pedestrians to the office and residential uses is proposed from Elm Street, and to the retail uses from University Avenue.

Vehicle access to parking and loading are proposed via existing driveways from Simcoe Street on the south portion of the site. The proposal includes 40 vehicle parking spaces (33 for residents and 7 for visitors) within the existing 5-level below grade garage. A total of 732 bicycle parking spaces are proposed including 166 short-term spaces and 566 long-term spaces. One Type G loading space is proposed.

Additional Information

See Attachments 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of this report for the Application Data Sheet, location map, site plan, ground floor plan, elevations and three-dimensional massing of the proposal, respectively. Detailed project information, including all plans and reports submitted as part of the application, are available on the City's Application Information Centre at: www.toronto.ca/522UniversityAve

Reasons for Application

While the proposed land uses are permitted under existing zoning provisions for the site, an amendment to the Zoning By-law 569-2013 is required to vary performance standards including, building height and setbacks, gross floor area, parking, and loading among other standards.

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

The application was submitted on August 17, 2022 and deemed complete on August 30, 2022, satisfying the City's minimum application requirements. The reports and studies submitted in support of the application are available on the [Application Information Centre](#).

Agency Circulation Outcomes

The application together with the applicable reports noted above, have been circulated to all appropriate agencies and City Divisions. Responses received have been used to assist in evaluating the application and to formulate appropriate Zoning By-law standards.

POLICY & REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Land-Use Policies

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and shall conform to Provincial Plans.

Official Plan

The site is situated within the Downtown and Central Waterfront Area on the Urban Structure Map 2 of the Official Plan and is designated Mixed Use Areas on Land Use Map 18 of the Official Plan. See Attachment 3 of this report for the [Official Plan](#) Land Use Map.

Downtown Secondary Plan

The site is also situated within the Downtown Secondary Plan area. The site is designated Mixed Use Areas 1 - Growth, and is located within the Health Sciences District. Policies of the Downtown Plan require the replacement of non-residential uses either on site or off-site with new development within the Health Sciences District. University Avenue is identified as a Great Street in the Downtown Plan.

Zoning

The site is zoned CR in Zoning By-law 569-2013. This zoning category permits a wide range of commercial, residential, and institutional uses. See Attachment 4 of this report for the existing Zoning By-law Map.

Airport Zoning Regulation - Helicopter Flight Path

The subject site is adjacent to the Obstacle Limitation Surface for the Hospital for Sick Children helicopter flight path as identified in City By-law 1432-2017.

On January 6, 2024, the Province of Ontario issued a Ministerial Zoning Order to protect public health and safety by ensuring the safe operation of air ambulance services provided to St. Michael's Hospital and The Hospital for Sick Children. The Obstacle Limitation Surface for the Hospital for Sick Children helicopter flight path, as identified on the Protection Corridor Map (Map No. 345) from the Minister's Zoning Order, extends along the Elm Street frontage of the site.

Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines have been used in the evaluation of this application:

- [Tall Building Design Guidelines](#)
- [Growing Up Guidelines for Children in Vertical Communities](#)
- [Pet Friendly Design Guidelines for High Density Communities](#)
- [Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines](#)

Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines

The [Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada](#) assists in guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approaches for listed and designated heritage resources in Toronto.

Toronto Green Standard

The [Toronto Green Standard](#) (TGS) is a set of performance measures for green development. Applications for Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision and Site Plan Control are required to meet and demonstrate compliance with Tier 1 of the TGS.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community Consultation

A Virtual Community Consultation meeting was held on November 26, 2024 hosted by Community Planning Staff. Approximately 11 people participated, as well as the applicant and the Ward Councillor. At the meeting, City staff and the applicant gave presentations on the planning policies, development review process and the details of the proposal. Following the presentations, City staff led a question and comment period. Comments and issues raised at the meeting included:

- Liveability in relation to the number of new developments within the area;
- Concern that not enough parking is being required by the City for new developments, including for the subject proposal;
- Traffic congestion in the area;
- Potential shadow impacts;
- Privacy for residents in existing buildings on the west side of Simcoe Street; and
- Ensuring that the new building does not impact the helicopter flight path for Sick Children's Hospital.

Design Review Panel

The revised proposal was considered by the Design Review Panel at their meetings of November 23, 2023 and June 19, 2024.

At the meeting on November 23, 2023 the applicant presented their preliminary design for the proposal that includes the partial retention of the existing building on the site. Comments from Panel members included:

- Many comments identified the homage to the existing building as a positive thing, but also acknowledged that the original building is complete, and should be appreciated as that.
- Members recommended making the clarity of the moves shown clear; the fewer the moves, the greater the care that is needed to ensure that the existing and proposed work well together.

- Members recommended further study for the treatment at the south end of the existing building.
- Members suggested considering a design that is more towards the original character and feeling of the original building itself and that all of the care that is evident in the original building carries its way forward into the residential floorplates.
- Members recommended pushing sustainability strategies further.

At the meeting on June 19, 2024, the applicant presented a more complete design for the proposal. Panel members unanimously supported the proposal. Members appreciated the design of the new addition noting it was not a copy of the original but lighter and elegant. Members supported the public realm strategy and noted that the plaza design was strong and would enliven the plaza and streetscapes. Members noted that the retention of a large portion of the building supported sustainability objectives and recommended focusing on low carbon systems in the building.

Statutory Public Meeting Comments

In making their decision with regard to this application, Council members have been given an opportunity to view the oral submissions made at the statutory public meeting held by the Toronto and East York Community Council for this application, as these submissions are broadcast live over the internet and recorded for review.

COMMENTS

Provincial Planning Statement and Provincial Plans

Staff's review of this application has had regard for the relevant matters of provincial interest set out in the Planning Act. Staff has reviewed the current proposal for consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024). Staff find the proposal consistent with the PPS (2024).

Heritage Impact and Conservation Strategy

A Heritage Impact Assessment with conservation strategy was submitted for the proposed alterations to the building and has been reviewed by Heritage Planning staff. A report from Heritage Planning dealing with the required approvals under the Ontario Heritage Act is scheduled to be considered by City Council concurrently with this report. The proposed conservation strategy is consistent with provincial policy, conforms with the Official Plan and complies with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Staff are satisfied that the proposal to alter the designated heritage property at 522 University Avenue to permit the development will conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the heritage property.

Public Realm

Staff are satisfied that the proposal conforms to applicable public realm policies of the Official Plan and supports the policies of the Downtown Plan in relation to University Avenue as a Great Street.

The application proposes that the ground floor setback of the new addition align with the setback of the existing building along Simcoe Street and University Avenue. There is a covered plaza along the University Avenue, Simcoe Street and Elm Street frontages of the site. This plaza space is proposed to be maintained and enhanced to better connect it to the surrounding streets and to animate the space. Enhancements include replacing the high walled planters that currently extend around the plaza edges with lower planters and seating walls, enhanced paving treatments, new railings, lighting and furniture. The area facing Elm Street is designed for gathering with new seating, lighting and other amenities. The generous depth of the plaza also provides opportunity for spill out activities, such as cafes with the retail uses proposed along the University Avenue frontage of the plaza. To improve accessibility to the plaza, a new ramp is proposed from Elm Street.

Streetscapes enhancements are also proposed along all street frontages with new street trees, planters and seating. Improvements are also proposed at the intersection of Elm Street and Simcoe Street with a curb realignment to reduce the width of the pedestrian crossing and widen the sidewalk zone improving conditions for pedestrians at this intersection. Improvements to the cycling track on Elm Street are also proposed.

Land Use

The proposed residential, office, and retail uses are permitted uses within the Mixed Use Areas designation and support key objectives of the Official Plan and Downtown Plan. The application proposes 21,413 square metres of non-residential floor area, which exceeds the amount of non-residential floor area within the existing building on the site, consistent with the policies of the Downtown Plan that require the replacement of non-residential uses with new development within the Health Sciences District.

Built Form

The proposal conforms with the Official Plan and the Downtown Plan and meets the intent of the Tall Building Design Guidelines with respect to built form and massing, and is compatible with the existing and planned context of the site and surrounding area.

The proposal conserves the north portion of the existing 15-storey heritage building with the south portion of the building removed and replaced to accommodate the new 64-storey tower. A 2-storey reveal is provided between the 15-storey base building and the proposed tower above. The 2-storey reveal space creates a vertical separation between the existing heritage building and the tower above to ensure that the prominence and legibility of the existing heritage building is maintained within the new development.

The massing and height of the tower are acceptable to staff. The tower is proposed to have a height of 64-storeys (232.4 metres including the mechanical penthouse). The proposal maintains the prominent views of City Hall with no intrusion into the silhouette above or behind City Hall when viewed from Queen Street West as required by the Official Plan.

The tower is proposed to have a floorplate of 766 square metres. The Tall Building Design Guidelines recommend tower floorplates of 750 square metres or less to minimize shadow impacts, maintain sky views and reduce the visual impact of the tower at the pedestrian level. Staff consider the tower floorplate to be acceptable. The tower is proposed to be setback approximately 1.8 metres from University Avenue and Simcoe Street, and approximately 29 metres from Elm Street. A tower setback of 10 metres is proposed from the south property boundary.

Staff are satisfied that the tower setbacks provide adequate separation to the existing lower scale buildings to the west along Simcoe Street (23-metre separation distance), the taller buildings on the east side of University Avenue (56-metre separation distance), and the existing 55-storey building to the south at 480 University Avenue (53-metre separation distance). The property to the south at 500 University Avenue is currently occupied with a 10-storey building. The potential for new tall building development on this property is constrained due to its size. However, the 10-metre tower setback proposed for the subject property, provides opportunity for new development on the adjacent site with an adequate separation distance should a new building be proposed in the future.

Flight Path

The placement of the tower on the south portion of the site ensures that it is well separated from the air ambulance service corridor protection zone for Sick Children's Hospital.

Shadow Impact

The proposal is consistent with the policy directions of the Official Plan and Downtown Plan that provides that development should adequately limit shadows on the public realm and surrounding properties. The shadow study submitted with the application, indicates that shadows cast from the new development will extend to the south half of the McCaul Orde Park at 10:18 a.m. during the Spring and Fall equinoxes with shadows moving off of the park by 11:18 a.m.

There will be no incremental shadowing of the Orde Street Public School property. There will be no incremental shadowing of Queen's Park, identified as a 'Sun Protected Park' in the Downtown Plan, from March 21st to September 21st consistent with the policies of the Downtown Plan.

Wind Study

The Wind Study submitted in support of the application found that wind impacts on surrounding sidewalks and property and building entrances are acceptable for the anticipated uses of the spaces without the need for mitigation. The Study found that wind conditions on the level 3 outdoor amenity terrace for the office uses would be comfortable for anticipated uses without mitigation. The Study recommends mitigation in the form of overhead pergola/canopy structures and wind barriers on the level 16 outdoor amenity terrace.

Unit Mix

The proposal complies with the applicable policies of the Downtown Plan through the provision of 26.8% of all units as two-bedroom units and 10.5% as three-bedroom units. A further 87 two-bedroom units (15%) are achievable through the conversion of units.

Amenity Space

The application proposes a total of 4 square metres per unit of amenity space, including 2.0 square metres per unit each of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces. The amount of amenity space proposed is consistent with the requirements of Zoning By-law 569-2013, and will provide adequate space for a range of amenities for future residents including spaces designed for children and pets.

Traffic Impact, Access, Parking

Transportation Services staff accept the conclusions of the Transportation Impact Study submitted in support of the application to evaluate the parking, loading and traffic impacts of the proposal which indicates that the proposal's impacts on the area's transportation network are anticipated to be minimal under future conditions.

Vehicle access to the existing parking ramp to the below-grade garage, and loading area are proposed via the existing driveways from Simcoe Street at the south edge of the site. As much of the heritage building and the existing parking garage are proposed to be conserved, the new development cannot accommodate turning movements for solid waste collection vehicles that meet the City's Solid Waste Management requirements. As a result, private waste collection is proposed for the new development.

Transportation Services staff accept the proposed supply of 7 visitor parking spaces, 33 resident parking spaces, three accessible parking spaces and 732 bicycle parking spaces including 566 long-term and 166 short-term bike parking spaces.

Servicing

Engineering and Construction Services staff have reviewed the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report submitted in support of the application and have requested additional information in relation to stormwater management and servicing for

the site. Should it be determined that upgrades are required to support the development, the owner would be required to enter into a financially secured agreement to secure the construction of any improvements to the municipal infrastructure. As such, staff are recommending that these matters be addressed prior to the enactment of bills by City Council for the proposed development.

Open Space/Parkland

In accordance with Section 42 of the Planning Act, the owner is required to satisfy the parkland dedication requirement through cash-in-lieu. As per Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 415-29, the appraisal of the cash-in-lieu will be determined under the direction of the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management. Additionally, the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 415-28, requires that the payment be made prior to the issuance of the first above-ground building permit for the land to be developed.

Tree Preservation

An arborist report was submitted and identifies 21 street trees that are subject to the City of Toronto's City Tree By-law. The application proposes to remove 11 of these street trees, while 10 are proposed to be retained. Forestry staff have advised that an application will be required for the removal of the street trees, and that replacement street tree planting is required. The landscape plan submitted with the application proposes 15 new street trees with sufficient soil volume to be planted along University Avenue, Elm Street and Simcoe Street.

Toronto Green Standard

The applicant is encouraged to achieve Tier 2 or higher to advance the City's objectives for resilience and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040 or sooner.

CONTACT

Sue McAlpine, Senior Planner, Tel. No. (416) 392-7622 E-mail:
Susan.Mcalpine@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Oren Tamir
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings

Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet

Attachment 2: Location Map

Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map

Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law Map

Attachment 5: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment

Applicant Submitted Drawings

Attachment 6: Site Plan

Attachment 7: Ground Floor Plan

Attachments 8-11: Elevations

Attachments 12-13: 3D Massing Models

Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet

Municipal Address: 522 University Avenue
Application Number: 22 192156 STE 11 OZ
Application Type: Rezoning
Project Description: A 64-storey mixed-use building

Applicant
Bousfield Inc

Owner
Industrial Alliance
Ins & Financial
Services Inc

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Official Plan Designation: Mixed Use Areas Site Specific Provision:
Zoning: CR 7.8 (c4.5;
r4.8) SS1 Heritage Designation: Y
(x2478)
Height Limit (m): 76 Site Plan Control Area: Y

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Area (sq m): 2,413 Frontage (m): 62 Depth (m): 38

Building Data	Existing	Retained	Proposed	Total
Ground Floor Area (sq m):	1,210	380	820	1,200
Residential GFA (sq m):			33,570	33,570
Non-Residential GFA (sq m):	20,017	11,649	9,764	21,413
Total GFA (sq m):	20,017	11,649	43,334	54,983
Height - Storeys:	15	15	64	64
Height - Metres:	65	65	219	219

Lot Coverage Ratio (%) 49.73 Floor Space Index: 22.8

Floor Area Breakdown	Above Grade (sq m)	Below Grade (sq m)
Residential GFA:	33,399	171
Retail GFA:	211	

Office GFA: 21,202
 Industrial GFA:
 Institutional/Other GFA:

Residential Units by Tenure	Existing	Retained	Proposed	Total
Rental:				
Freehold:				
Condominium:			579	579
Other:				
Total Units:			579	579

Total Residential Units by Size

	Rooms	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom
Retained:					
Proposed:		66	297	155	61
Total Units:		66	297	155	61

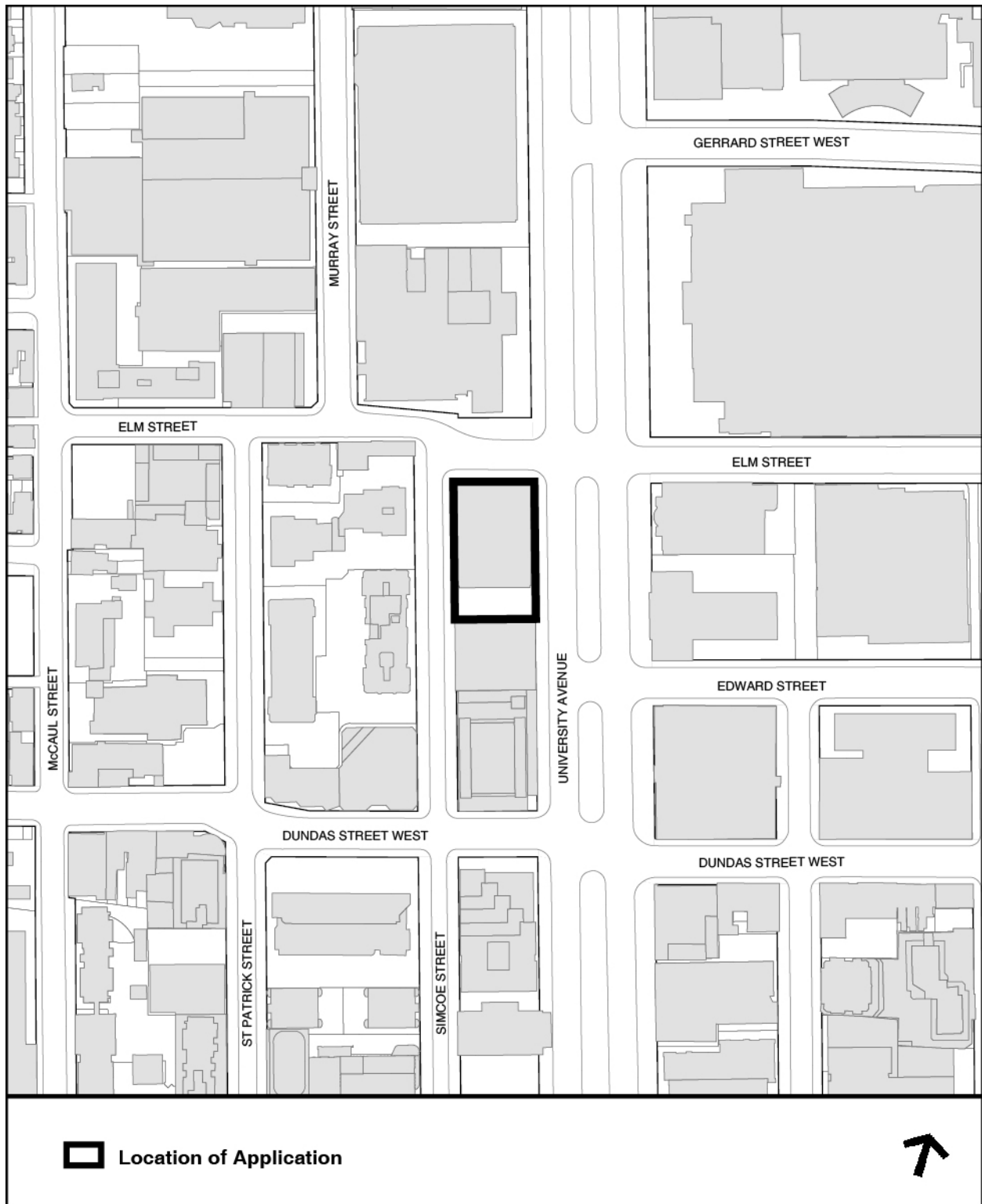
Parking and Loading

Parking Spaces: 40 Bicycle Parking Spaces: 732 Loading Docks: 1

CONTACT:

Sue McAlpine, Senior Planner, Community Planning
 (416) 392-7622
Susan.Mcalpine@toronto.ca

Attachment 2: Location Map



Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map



Official Plan Land Use Map #18

522 University Avenue

File # 22 192156 STE 11 02



Location of Application

Neighbourhoods

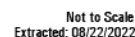
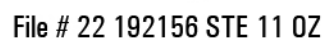
Mixed Use Areas

Parks

Institutional Areas



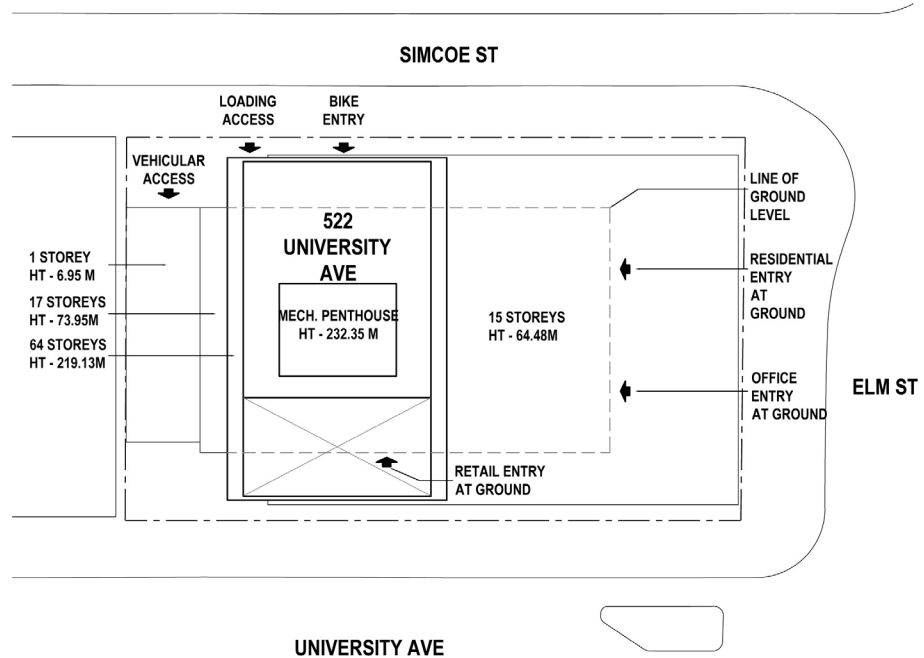
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Attachment 5: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment

Draft Zoning By-law Amendment will be made available on or before the January 14, 2025 Toronto and East York Community Council meeting.

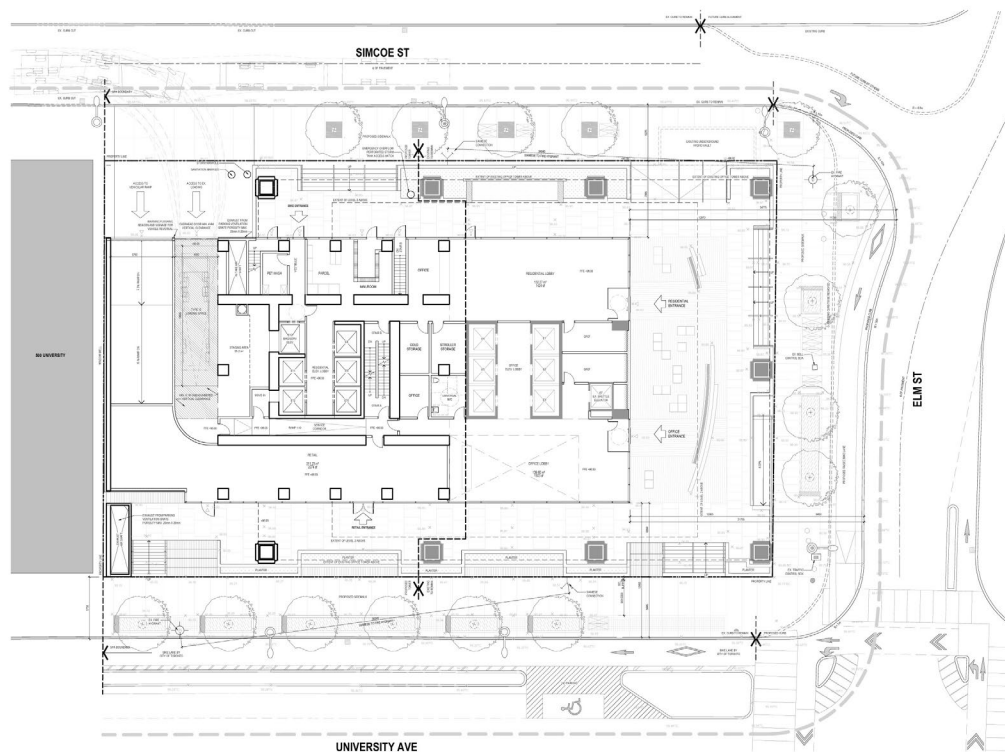
Attachment 6: Site Plan



Site Plan



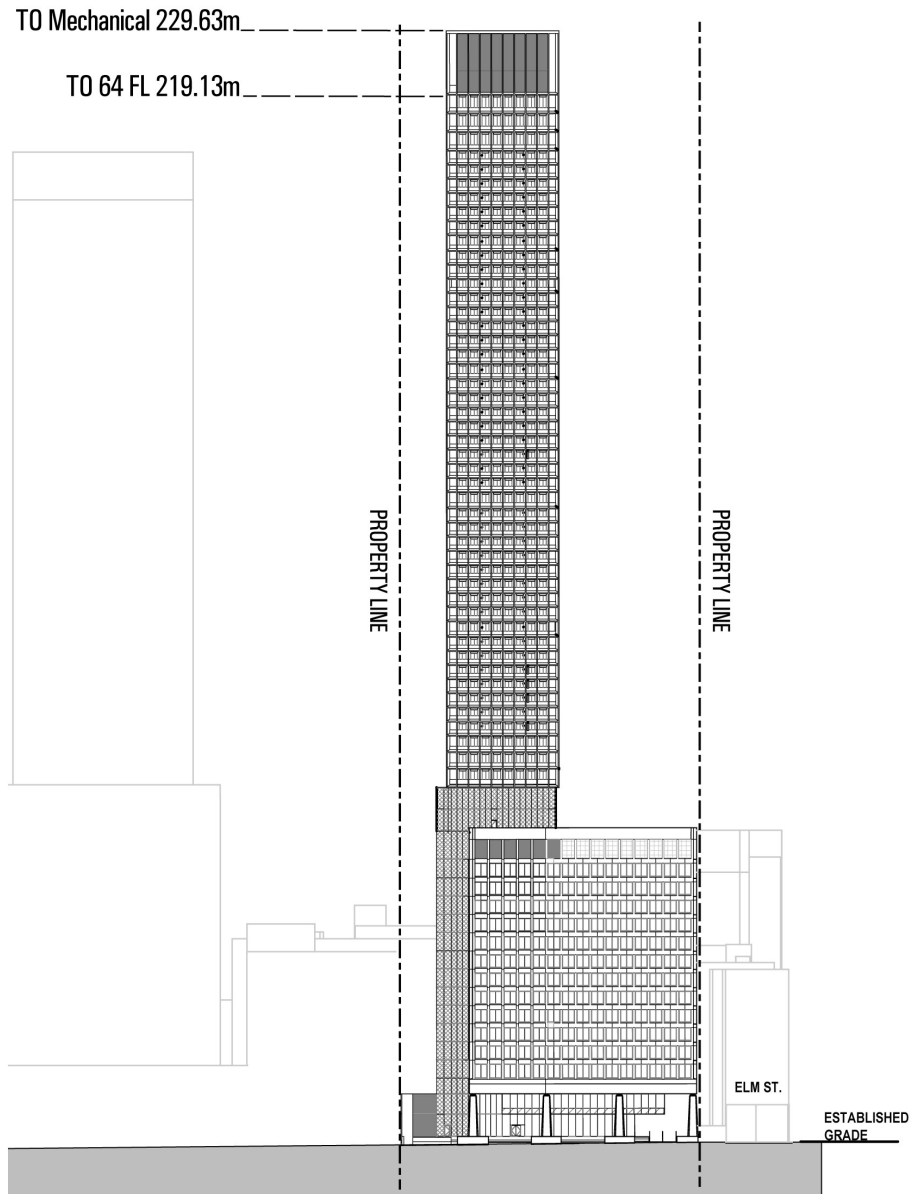
Attachment 7: Ground Floor Plan



Site Plan

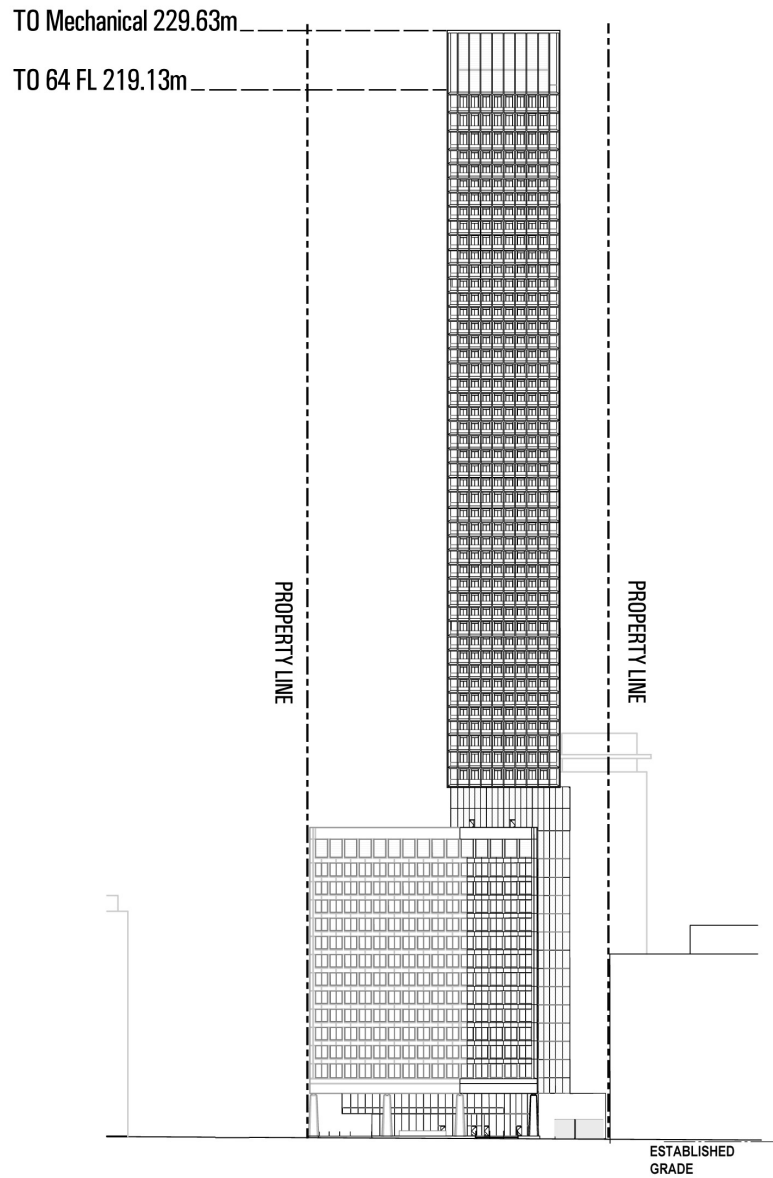


Attachment 8: East Elevation



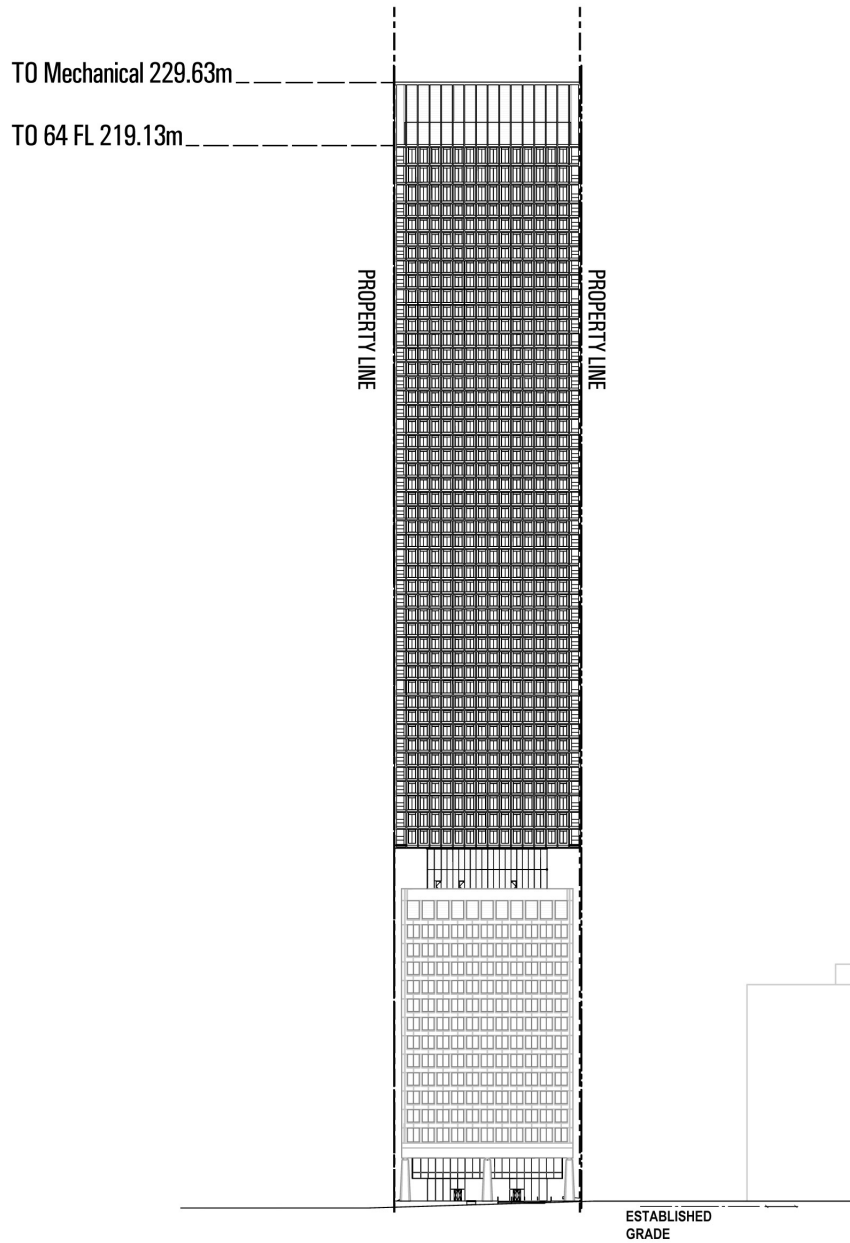
East Elevation

Attachment 9: West Elevation



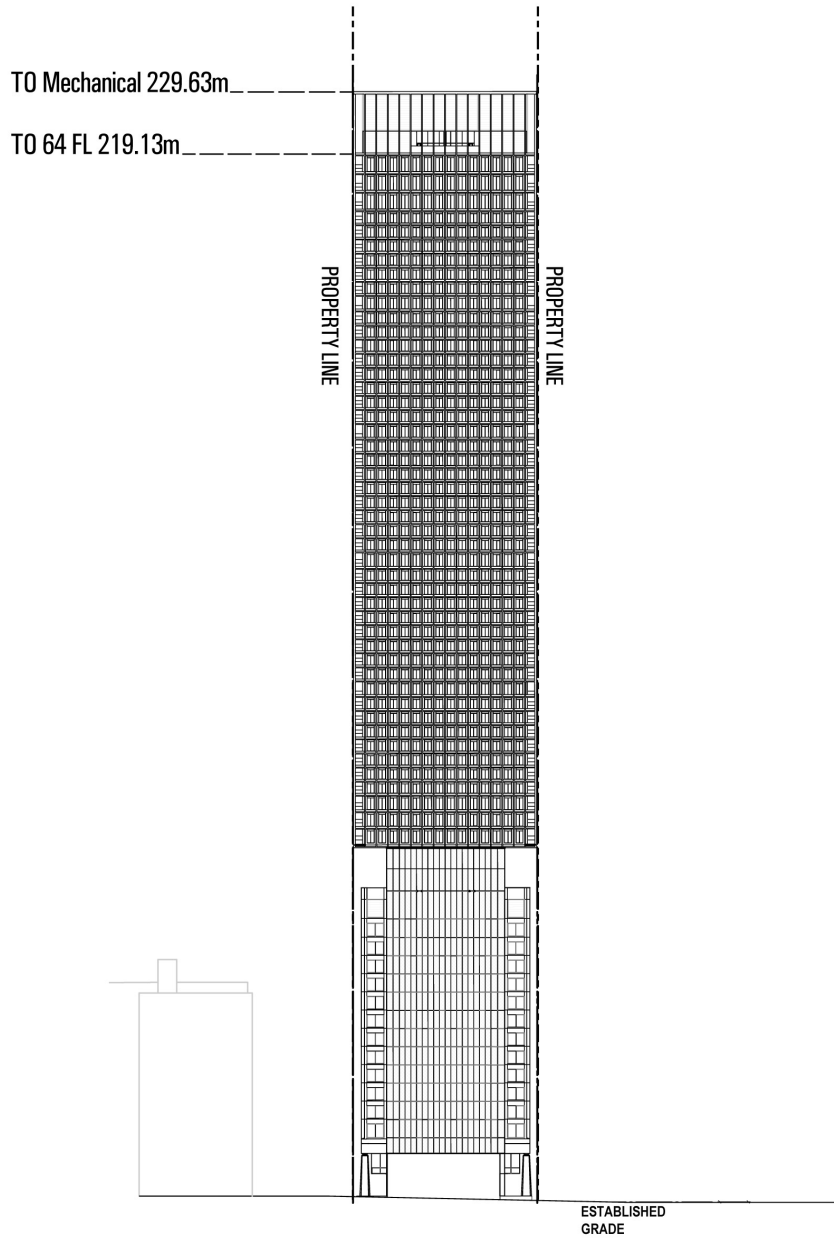
West Elevation

Attachment 10: North Elevation



North Elevation

Attachment 11: South Elevation



South Elevation

Attachment 12: 3D Model in Context - View Looking Northeast

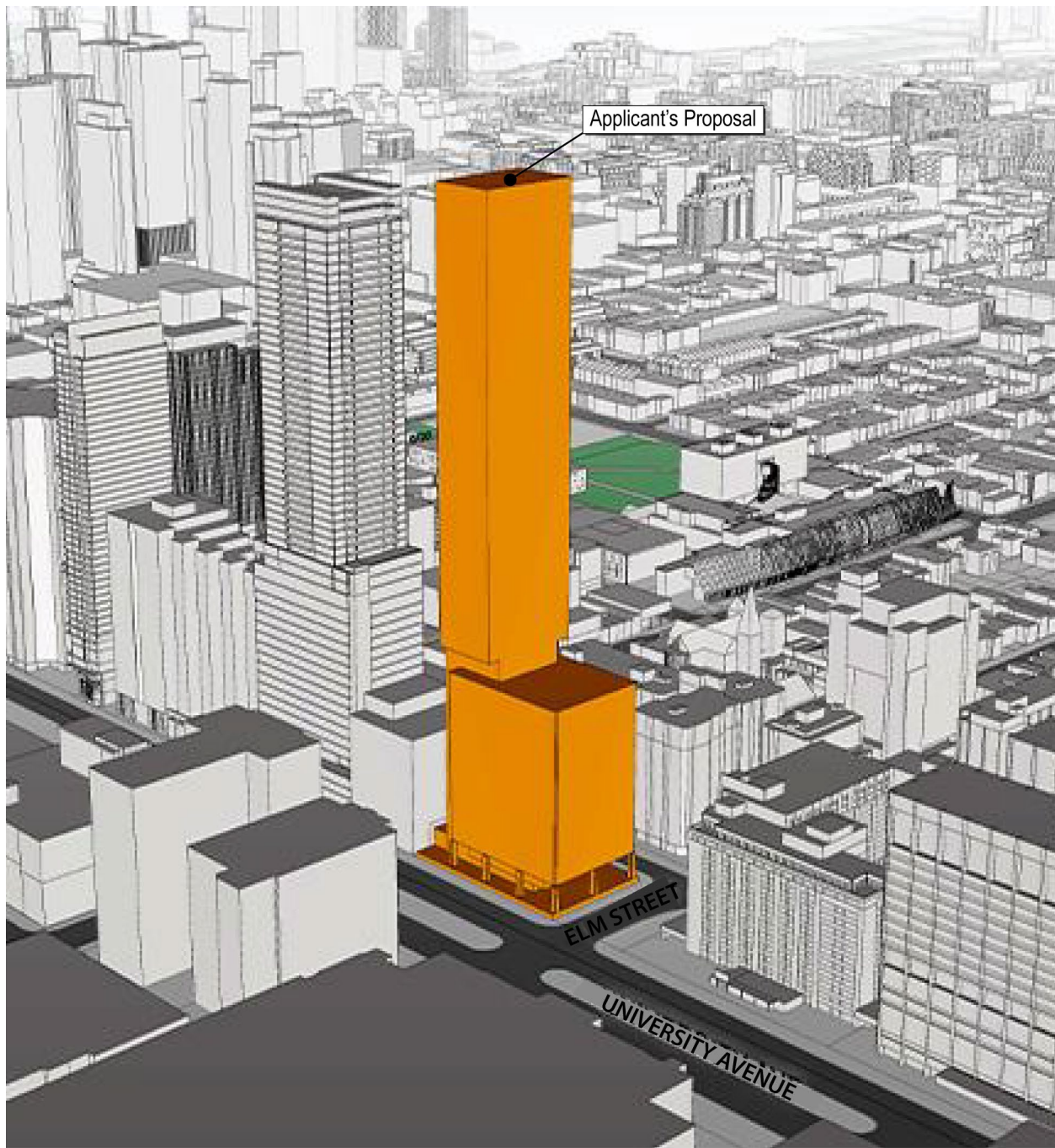


View of Applicant's Proposal Looking Northeast



11/20/2024

Attachment 13: 3D Model in Context - View Looking Southwest



View of Applicant's Proposal Looking Southwest



11/20/2024