

309-349 George Street – City-Initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment – Decision Report – Approval

Date: March 18, 2025

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Ward: 13 - Toronto Centre

Planning Application Number: 25 112155 STE 13 OZ

SUMMARY

This report reviews and recommends approval of a City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit a 10-storey (52-metre, excluding mechanical penthouse) building with a mix of institutional uses, including 180 municipal shelter beds, 124 long-term care beds, 70 new affordable rental dwelling units with supports and a 2,269 square-metre community hub at 309-349 George Street.

The proposal is part of a broader initiative to revitalize George Street and is a core project of the Downtown East Action Plan which advances several initiatives to address the barriers and needs of community members from equity-deserving groups who have a history of accessing services in this area.

This proposal modifies and replaces an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment that was approved by City Council in 2017. The current development site at 309-349 George Street is about two-thirds the size of the original site which ran from 295-349 George Street. The current proposal increases the permitted height by 15 metres. Staff are exploring development opportunities on the southern portion of the block at 295-305 George Street, to be brought forward as a second phase at a later date.

A separate report from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, on the proposed heritage conservation of the designated heritage properties known as the Robert Armstrong Houses (309-311 George Street) and the Allan School (349 George Street) will be considered by City Council in conjunction with this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council amend the Official Plan for the lands at 309-349 George Street substantially in accordance with the draft Official Plan Amendment included as Attachment No. 7 to this report.
2. City Council amend City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 for the lands at 309-349 George Street substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law Amendment included as Attachment No. 8 to this report.
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments as may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. All associated project costs are included within the accompanying report from the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, dated April 14, 2025, and any necessary adjustments will be addressed through the annual budget process.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 6, 2024, City Council directed staff to end the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Infrastructure Ontario to deliver the George Street Revitalization (GSR) project using the Design-Build-Finance alternative financing and procurement delivery model. City Council also directed staff to explore a City-delivered method for the GSR project to maximize the value of the current approved project budget. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX11.9>

On April 21, 2022, Toronto and East York Community Council received a Preliminary Report for an Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment to allow for a 57-metre institutional building containing 230 municipal shelter beds, 378 long-term care beds, and 21 affordable dwelling units. This application was subsequently withdrawn. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE32.40>

On December 10, 2021, By-law 1027-2021 was enacted designating the Garden District Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2021/law1027.pdf>

On April 24, 2018, City Council authorized use an Alternative Financing and Procurement approach to implement the George Street Revitalization project and enter into a Phase Two Agreement with Infrastructure Ontario.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.EX33.4>

On November 7, 2017, City Council adopted recommendations to alter the heritage properties at 309, 311, and 349 George Street.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2017.TE27.22>

On November 7, 2017, City Council amended the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to allow for a 9-storey (37-metre, excluding mechanical penthouse) institutional building, containing 230 municipal shelter beds, 378 long-term care beds, 21 affordable dwelling units, and a 4,000-square-metre community hub at 295-349 George Street. Council also directed the General Manager, Transportation Services to examine opportunities and prepare a public realm plan to provide an enhanced streetscape on George Street.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2017.TE27.5>

On November 7, 2017, City Council enacted By-law No. 1024-2017 designating the property at 349 George Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2017/law1024.pdf>

On July 16, 2013, City Council approved in principle the redevelopment of Seaton House. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2013.EX33.17>

On January 22, 2013, an information report on the Downtown East Revitalization Initiatives from the Social Development, Finance and Administration and City Planning divisions was received for information by the Toronto East York Community Council. The report referred to the potential Seaton House redevelopment as an important element for the advancement of a successful housing strategy in that neighbourhood.
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bqrd/backgroundfile-53970.pdf>

On October 4, 2012, City Council enacted By-law No. 1243-2012 designating the properties at 309-311 George Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2012/law1243.pdf>

On November 30, 2009, City Council directed the General Manager, SSHA to negotiate a non-binding proposal for a public interest partnership for the redevelopment of Seaton House and properties to the south. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2009.CD28.1>

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The George Street Revitalization (GSR) project is a key initiative aligned with the objectives in the City's Downtown East Action Plan, the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy and HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

The services and supports proposed to be provided through the GSR project are anticipated to have a positive equity impact on Indigenous peoples and Black residents, among other diverse equity-deserving community members, including other racialized

residents, women and gender diverse people, seniors, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, youth, newcomers, those with low-income levels, and those living with disabilities, among others. These programs are also anticipated to have a positive equity impact on people experiencing marginalization.

THE SITE

Description: The City-owned site is located on the eastern side of George Street, between Gerrard Street East and Dundas Street East. The lot has an area of 5,623 square metres and is generally rectangular in shape, sloping approximately 2.5 metres from the north to the south end of the site. It has a 133.5-metre frontage along George Street and there are public lanes on the north and east sides of the property.

Existing Use: The site is currently occupied by Seaton House, a City-owned and City-operated men's shelter. There are three vacant 2-4 storey buildings on site.

Site Access and Public Transit: The site is within close proximity of public transit, as Dundas Subway Station, and three streetcar lines are all under 800 metres away, including the 505 Dundas, 506 College, and 501 Queen streetcar lines. A planned subway station along the Ontario Line is also contemplated on the southern side of Moss Park, under 600 metres from the site. George Street is a two-way street with no street parking and there are public lanes to the north and east of the site that take access from George Street and Pembroke Street.

THE PROPOSAL

Description: The proposal is for a 10-storey (52-metre, excluding mechanical penthouse) building containing a mix of institutional uses, including approximately 180 municipal shelter beds, 124 long-term care beds, 70 new affordable rental dwelling units with supports and a 2,269 square-metre community hub. The proposed by-law amendment provides some flexibility on performance standards to accommodate any adjustments necessary during the site plan phase of design.

Modifications from the 2017 proposal include an increase to the maximum permitted height, adjustments to the proposed minimum setbacks, inclusion of additional uses, ancillary structure provisions, among other performance standards.

Density: The proposed building has a density of 7.61 times the area of the lot.

Uses: The proposal includes 180 municipal shelter beds, 124 long-term care beds, 70 affordable dwelling units with supports, and a 2,269-square-metre community hub.

The community hub is an accessible community meeting place for people to come together to build community, with shared resources and integrated services between multiple providers and in partnership with the residents and the communities being served. Potential uses in the community hub include:

- Commercially Certified Teaching Kitchen
- Great Hall, Social Enterprise Café and Connection Spaces
- Computer Lab, Training & Education Spaces
- Flexible, Bookable, Multipurpose Program/Wellness Spaces
- Counseling Rooms (Private/Group)
- Hygiene Centre (Laundry, Washrooms, Shower, Lockers/Storage, Barber)
- Tenanted, Community Agency Services (Community Space Tenancy)

Amenity Space: The proposal includes a minimum of 0.9 square metres of combined indoor and outdoor amenity space per dwelling unit and bedsitting room. The community hub will serve as amenity space for all the residents and users of the building.

Bicycle Parking, Vehicular Parking, and Loading: There are 81 vehicular parking spaces proposed in a below-grade parking garage and 81 bicycle parking spaces. Five loading spaces are proposed at grade on the eastern side of the building accessed via the laneway, including 2 Type B, 2 Type C, and 1 Type G spaces.

Additional Information: See the attachments of this report for the Application Data Sheet; Location Map; a site plan; and elevations of the proposal. Detailed project information including all plans and reports submitted as part of the application can be found on the City's Application Information Centre at: www.toronto.ca/309GeorgeSt

Reasons for the Application: The proposal requires an amendment to the Official Plan to allow for a building taller than 37 metres on the site. An amendment to Zoning By-law 569-2013 is required to vary performance standards, including the maximum building height, maximum density, minimum setbacks, maximum projections and encroachments, and vehicular and bicycle parking requirements, among other standards. This amendment will replace site specific by-law 1253-2017 on the site.

POLICY & REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Land-Use Policies: All Council decisions 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 Designation: Institutional. See Attachment 3 of this report for the Official Plan Land Use Map.

Downtown Plan: The site is located within the Garden Park District on Map 41-8 and is designated Institutional. See Attachment 4 of this report for the Downtown Plan Mixed Use Areas Map.

Site and Area Specific Policy 461: The site is located within the North George Street Character Area of the Garden District SASP, which allows for a 37-metre tall institutional building on the site. See Attachment 5 of this report for the North George Street Character Area Map.

Zoning: The site is zoned Institutional I (x4) in City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 with a maximum height of 37 metres as a result of site specific by-law 1253-2017. See Attachment 6 of this report for the Zoning By-law Map.

Heritage: 309, 311, and 349 George Street are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and the entirety of the site is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the Garden District Heritage Conservation District.

Design Guidelines: The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines have been used in the evaluation of this application.

Toronto Green Standard: The TGS is a set of performance measures for green development. Council has directed that any affordable housing built on City land is subject to the TGS Version 4 for City Agencies, Corporation & Division-Owned Facilities, which meets and exceeds Tier 2 for Mid-to-High-Rise Residential targets. This includes the requirement that the building have net-zero operational carbon and low embodied carbon. It must also be prepared for the future installation of solar panels.

The TGS for City Agencies, Corporations, and Division-Owned Facilities is available here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-planning-guidelines/toronto-green-standard/toronto-green-standard-version-4/city-agency-corporation-division-owned-facilities-version-4/>

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

Development Review, Corporate Real Estate Management, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, Senior Services and Long Term Care, Housing Secretariat, and CreateTO staff hosted an in-person Community Information Drop-In Session on February 25, 2025, at the John Innes Community Centre, which was attended by approximately 20 people and the local Ward Councillor. Comments and questions raised at the Community Information Drop-In Session and through email and telephone communication, include:

- Concern over the expansion of Seaton House and its impacts on local residents;
- Current lack of security or policing around the building, particularly in the adjacent lanes;
- Concern over existing open drug use on George Street and the lack of care for individuals suffering in the street;
- Questioning the location of Seaton House on George Street as opposed to other areas of the City;
- Desire for more affordable housing in the building;

- Questions pertaining to the co-location of programs in the building, including how long-term care and supportive housing would work with the municipal shelter, and what the purpose of the community hub would be;
- Concern over where the current people using Seaton House would go throughout construction and the impacts this will have on the broader shelter system;
- Need for space within the building for the broader community;
- Need for increased setbacks from the eastern property line;
- View impacts, and privacy and overlook concerns into adjacent properties to the east of the site;
- Concern over the proposed design fitting into the heritage character of the area, particularly at the base building level;
- Concern over the condition of the heritage buildings on 295-305 George Street and the future of the properties, particularly with respect to the inscribed bricks on 295 George Street;
- Need for an improved public realm on George Street, including more soft landscaping;
- Concern over the impacts of the proposed building on the laneways with respect to traffic congestion and loading activity;
- Need for the building to be sustainable and an interest in using deconstruction techniques that would allow for the salvage and re-use of building materials in the new building;
- Potential construction impacts, including duration and noise; and
- Concerns over project delays.

The issues raised through the community information session and through emails and phone calls have been considered in the review of the proposal.

Statutory Public Meeting Comments

In making their decision with regard to this proposal, 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 proposal, as these submissions are broadcast live over the internet and recorded for review.

COMMENTS

The George Street Revitalization project is the first of its kind in Toronto, co-locating shelter, long-term care, supportive housing, and community services into one campus of care that will serve vulnerable community members. As the first phase of the project, this proposal would concentrate the institutional building into the northern two-thirds of the block, which provides the opportunity for a future affordable housing development to the south.

Provincial Policy 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 have reviewed the current proposal for consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024). The proposal is

consistent with the PPS and supports the achievement of a complete community through the accommodation of an appropriate mix of housing options, public service facilities and other institutional uses in a compact built form within a major transit station area.

Land Use

City Staff are satisfied that the proposed land uses conform with the Institutional policies of the Official Plan. As the site will include the co-location of several health related uses into one campus, associated housing, commercial and recreational uses are appropriate and in keeping with the policy objectives of the Official Plan.

Height

The Garden District SASP 461 establishes a framework for growth and development, along with development performance standards for the area. The SASP currently allows for an institutional building on this site with a maximum height of 37 metres. Staff are recommending an amendment to the SASP to increase the maximum height of an institutional building to 52 metres enabling a more compact built form than was originally approved in 2017 and providing flexibility to deliver additional services on the site. In order to reduce the impact of the additional height, the upper storeys of the building are set back 12.5 metres from residential lots to the east and 25 metres from residential lots to the north. Aside from the proposed maximum height, all other aspects of the proposal conform with the Official Plan.

Massing

The massing of the proposed building fits within the existing and planned context and conforms with the Official Plan, the Downtown Plan, and SASP 461. Along George Street, the building is setback more than 10 metres from the curb, which is generally in line with existing properties on George Street. To the north, west, and south, the walls of the proposed building are built approximately to their respective property lines, but step back above the eighth storey on all sides to reduce the impact of the additional height on the public realm and on adjacent properties, including adjacent Neighbourhoods.

Streetscape and Public Realm

The proposal conforms with the applicable public realm policies of the Official Plan, the Downtown Plan, and SASP 461.

An enhanced public realm plan is being developed by Transportation Staff for the entirety of George Street between Gerrard Street East and Dundas Street East, which will strive to recognize the area's historic Indigenous presence and address the needs of vulnerable populations in the area.

While the revitalization of George Street is a separate project, the design of the public realm adjacent to this project will feed into the design for the entirety of the street. The proposed massing will provide space for widened sidewalks, soft landscaping, canopy trees, and gathering areas. The detailed design of the streetscape will be undertaken through the site plan process and will be informed by the broader public realm plan.

Heritage Impact & Conservation Strategy

Heritage Planning staff have reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted in support of this proposal and have confirmed that the conservation strategy for the heritage properties is generally consistent with both the 2017 approval for the site and the subsequently approved Garden District Heritage Conservation Plan.

A separate report has been prepared by Heritage Planning staff for consideration by City Council recommending approval of the proposed alterations under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Unit Mix

Development Review staff are satisfied that the proposal meets the unit mix requirement in the Downtown Plan. The Downtown Plan requires larger units be provided for in developments with more than 80 new residential units, however these requirements may be reduced for social housing or other publicly funded housing. In this instance, the project is for 70 studio dwelling units, all of which are social housing, and therefore larger units are not required.

Sun and Shadow

Staff have reviewed the sun shadow study and are satisfied that the shadows cast by the proposed building are acceptable and conform to the Official Plan, the Downtown Plan, and Site and Area Specific Policy 461. The proposed buildings casts no shadow on Allen Gardens during the March and September equinoxes and no net new shadows are cast on the conservatory buildings or any significant permanent structures in Allan Gardens during on March 21, September 21, June 21, or December 21st at any time of the day.

Wind

A Letter of Opinion on pedestrian-level wind impacts was submitted in conjunction with the 2017 application that concluded that the wind conditions along George Street would be suitable for the intended uses. Development Review staff are recommending that the Zoning By-law be subject to a holding provision pending the submission, review, and acceptance of an updated Pedestrian-Level Wind Study.

Site Access, Parking, and Loading

Transportation Staff have reviewed the proposal. Through the site plan process, Staff will encourage the consolidation of parking below grade for this proposal and any future development to the south. Further, additional room for maneuvering vehicles will be secured at the northeast corner of the building to improve maneuverability and visibility along the laneway.

Servicing

Engineering and Construction Services staff have reviewed the submitted materials and have identified several outstanding items for review. Staff are recommending that the Zoning By-law be subject to holding provisions pending the revision, review, and acceptance of the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report to the satisfaction of the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services.

Toronto Green Standard

This proposal is required to meet the targets in the Toronto Green Standard (TGS) version 4 for City Agency, Corporation and Division-owned Facilities. The proposal will continue to be reviewed through the Site Plan process for compliance with the TGS, including low embodied emissions materials.

Existing materials that are incorporated into the new building can reduce embodied emissions by avoiding new materials. The existing buildings on site present an opportunity to demonstrate deconstruction, salvage, and reuse of materials, instead of demolition and landfilling, which helps with both TGS compliance and solid waste management.

CONTACT

Corinna Prior, Senior Project Manager, Community Planning
Tel. No. 416-392-5651
E-mail: Corinna.Prior@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

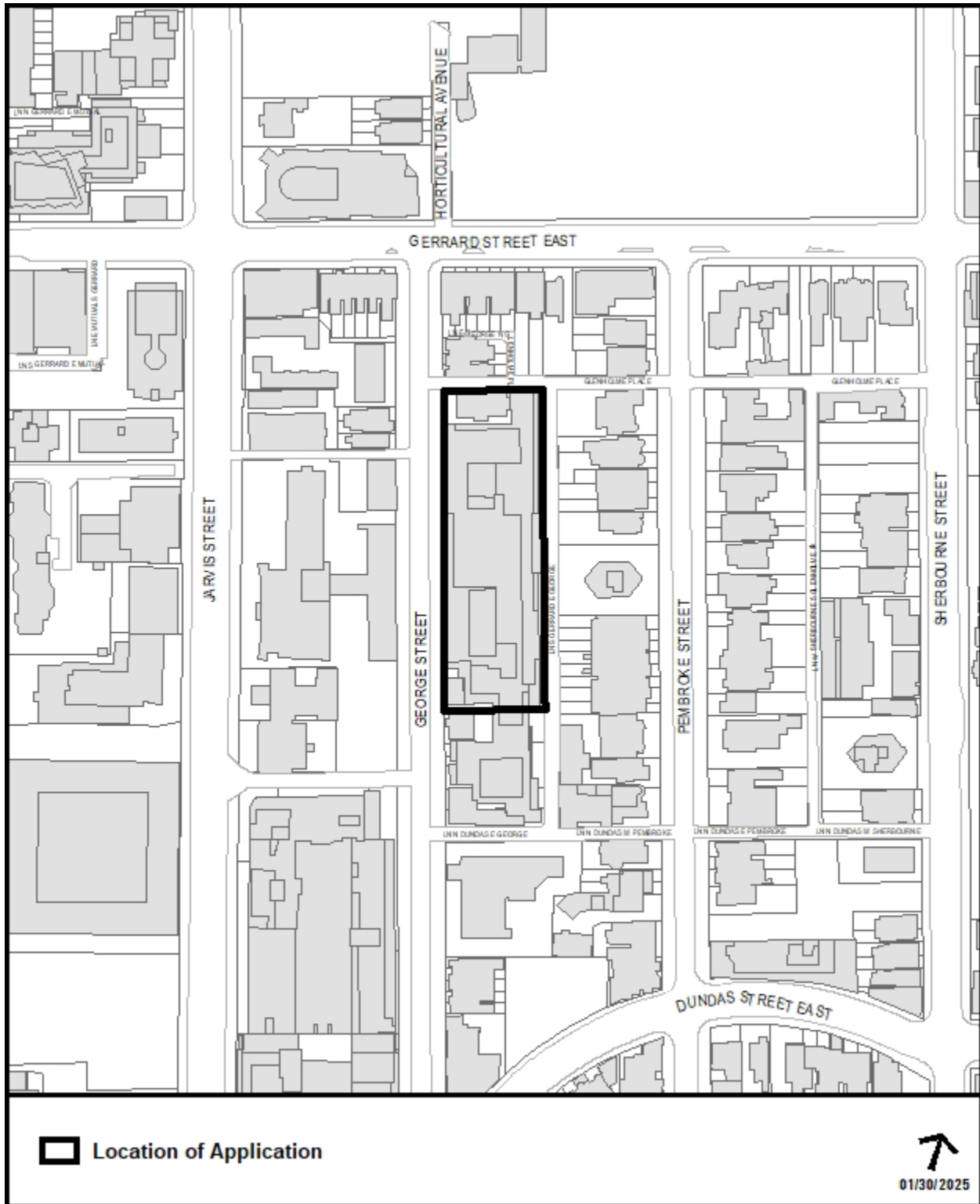
Oren Tamir
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings

- Attachment 1: Location Map
- Attachment 2: Application Data Sheet
- Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map
- Attachment 4: Downtown Plan, Mixed Use Areas Map
- Attachment 5: Site and Area Specific Policy 461, North George Character Area Map
- Attachment 6: Existing Zoning By-law Map
- Attachment 7: Official Plan Amendment
- Attachment 8: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment
- Attachment 9: Site Plan
- Attachment 10: North Elevation
- Attachment 11: East Elevation
- Attachment 12: South Elevation
- Attachment 13: West Elevation

Attachment 1: Location Map



Attachment 2: Application Data Sheet

APPLICATION DATA SHEET

Municipal Address: 309-349 George Street **Date Received:** February 3, 2025

Application Number: 25 112155 STE 13 OZ

Application Type: City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment

Project Description: City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment to allow for a 10-storey institutional building containing 180 municipal shelter beds, 124 long-term care beds, 70 affordable dwelling units with supports.

Applicant	Agent	Architect	Owner
City Initiated	City Initiated	B+H Architects	City of Toronto

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Official Plan Designation: Institutional Site Specific Provision: Downtown Secondary Plan and SASP 461

Zoning: I (x4) Heritage Designation: Y

Height Limit (m): 37 Site Plan Control Area: Y

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Area (sq m): 5,623 Frontage (m): 133.5 Depth (m): 42

Building Data	Existing	Retained	Proposed	Total
Ground Floor Area (sq m):	0		4,900	4,000
Residential GFA (sq m):	0		42,782	42,782
Non-Residential GFA (sq m):				
Total GFA (sq m):	0		42,782	42,782
Height - Storeys:	0		10	10
Height - Metres:	0		52	52

Lot Coverage Ratio (%): 81% Floor Space Index: 7.61

Floor Area Breakdown	Above Grade (sq m)	Below Grade (sq m)
Residential GFA:	0	0
Retail GFA:	0	
Office GFA:	0	
Industrial GFA:	0	
Institutional/Other GFA:	39,482	3,300

Residential Units by Tenure	Existing	Retained	Proposed	Total
Rental:	0		70	70
Freehold:				
Condominium:			0	0
Other:				
Total Units:	0		70	70

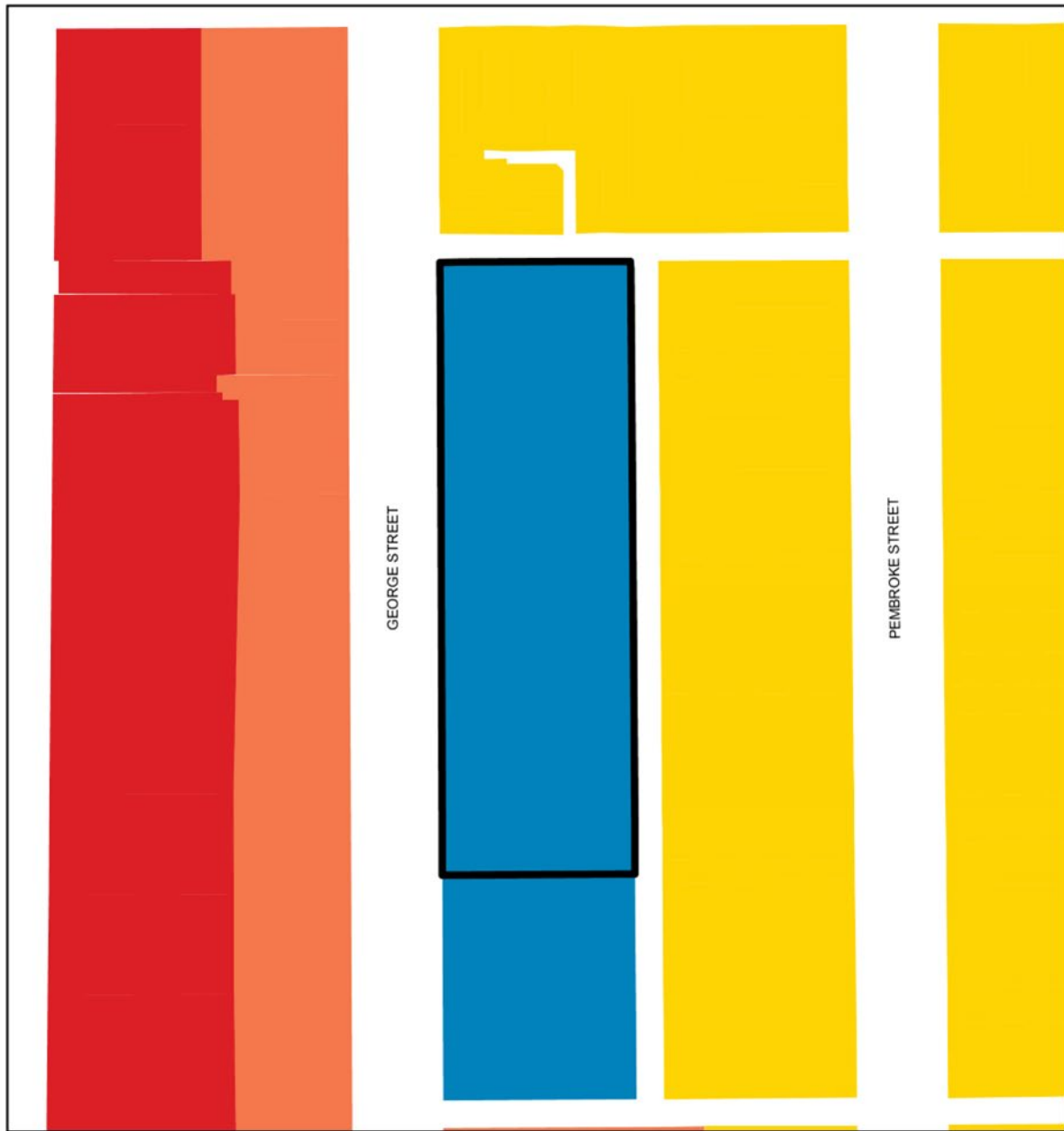
Total Residential Units by Size

	Rooms	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom
Retained:					
Proposed:		70	0	0	0
Total Units:		70	0	0	0

Parking and Loading

Parking Spaces:	81	Bicycle Parking Spaces:	81	Loading Docks:	2 Type B 2 Type C 1 Type G
-----------------	----	-------------------------	----	----------------	----------------------------------

Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map



Official Plan Land Use Map # 18

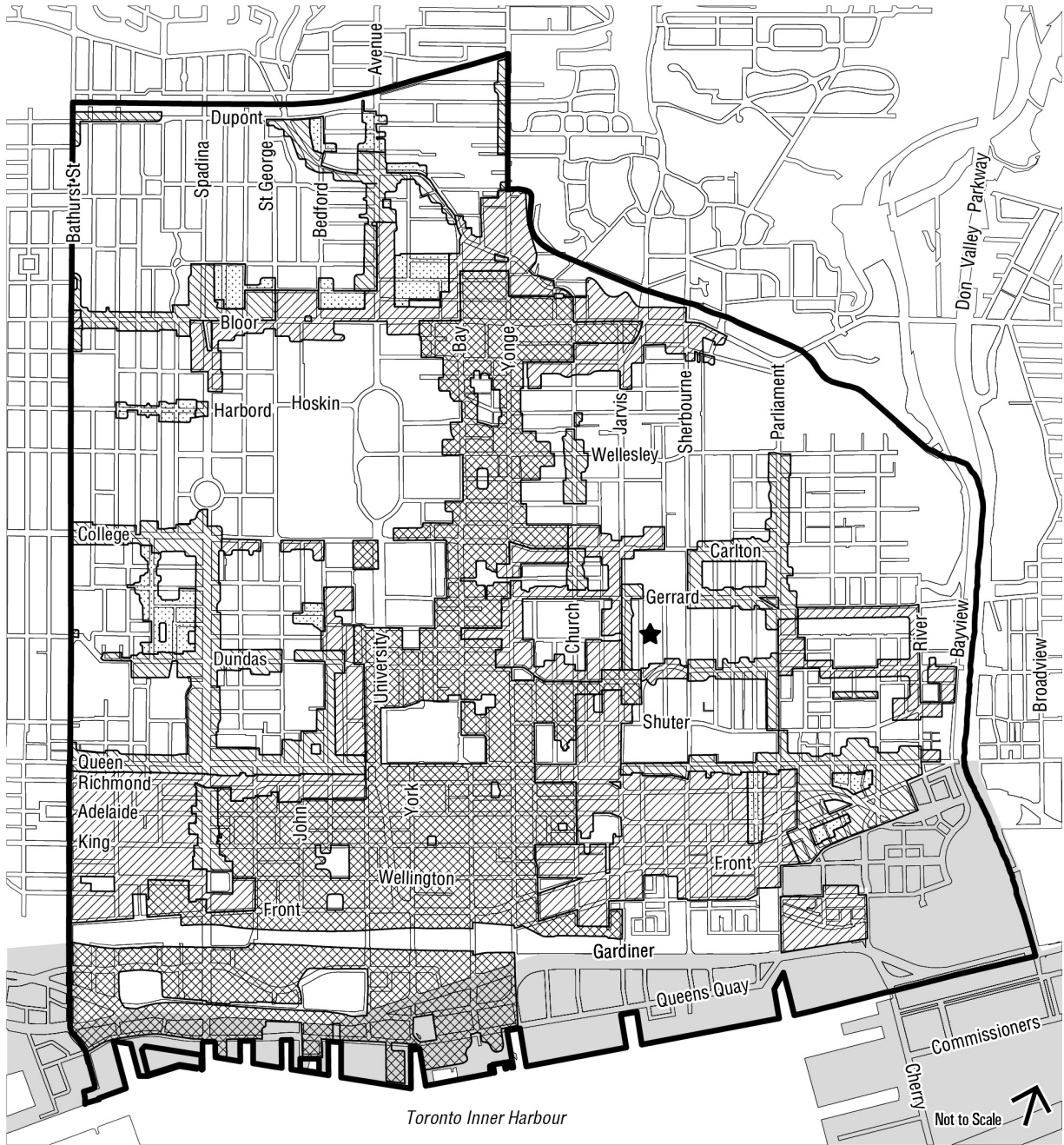
309-349 George Street

File # 25 112155 STE 13 0Z

- Location of Application
- Neighbourhoods
- Apartment Neighbourhoods
- Mixed Use Areas
- Institutional

Not to Scale
Extracted: 02/18/2025

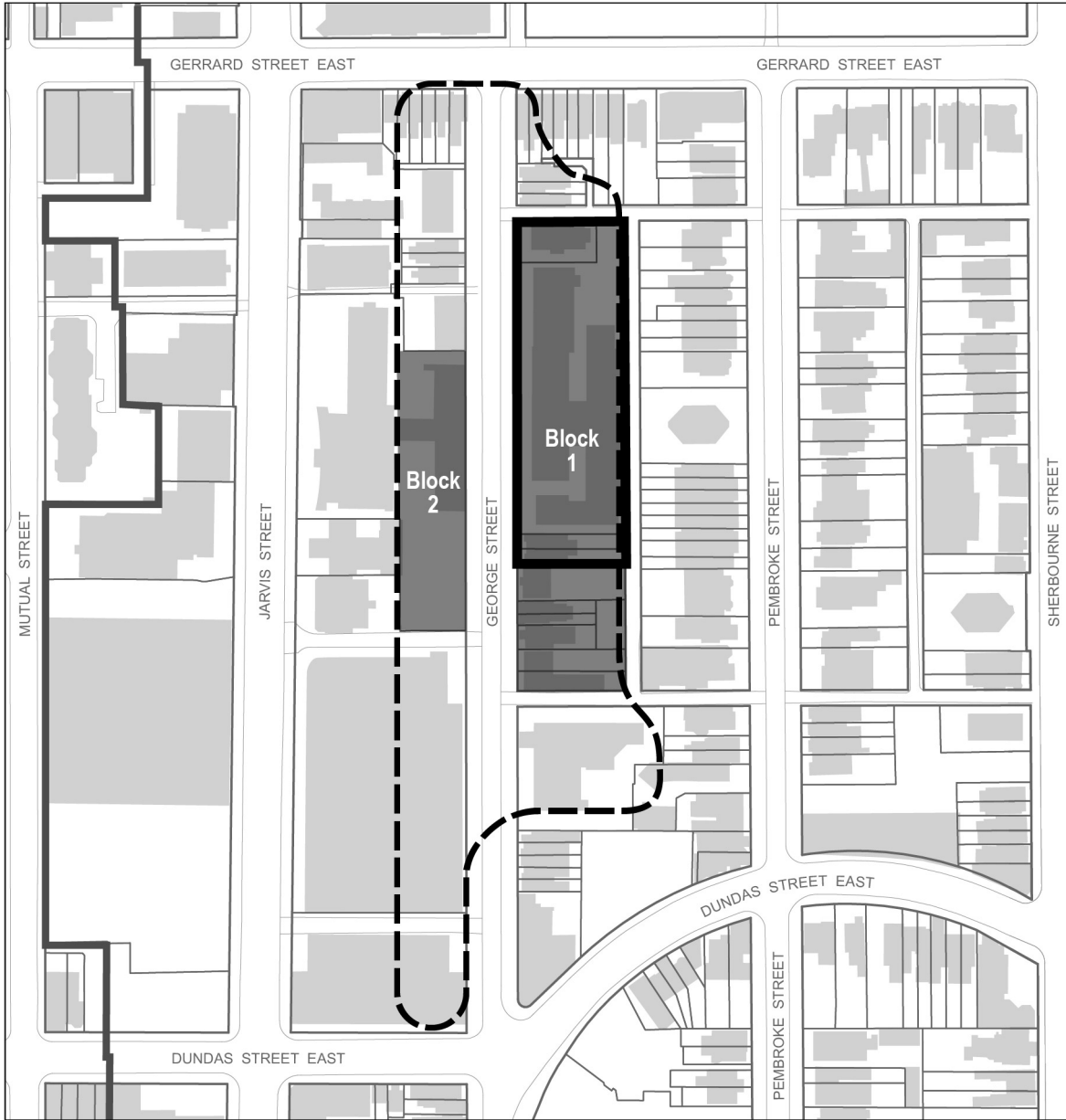
Attachment 4: Downtown Plan Mixed Use Areas Map



Downtown Plan MAP 41-3 Mixed Use Areas

- Downtown Plan Boundary
- Central Waterfront Secondary Plan
- Subject Site
- Mixed Use Areas 1 - Growth
- Mixed Use Areas 2 - Intermediate
- Mixed Use Areas 3 - Main Street
- Mixed Use Areas 4 - Local

Attachment 5: Site and Area Specific Policy 461, North George Character Area Map



TORONTO City Planning
North George Street
Character Area

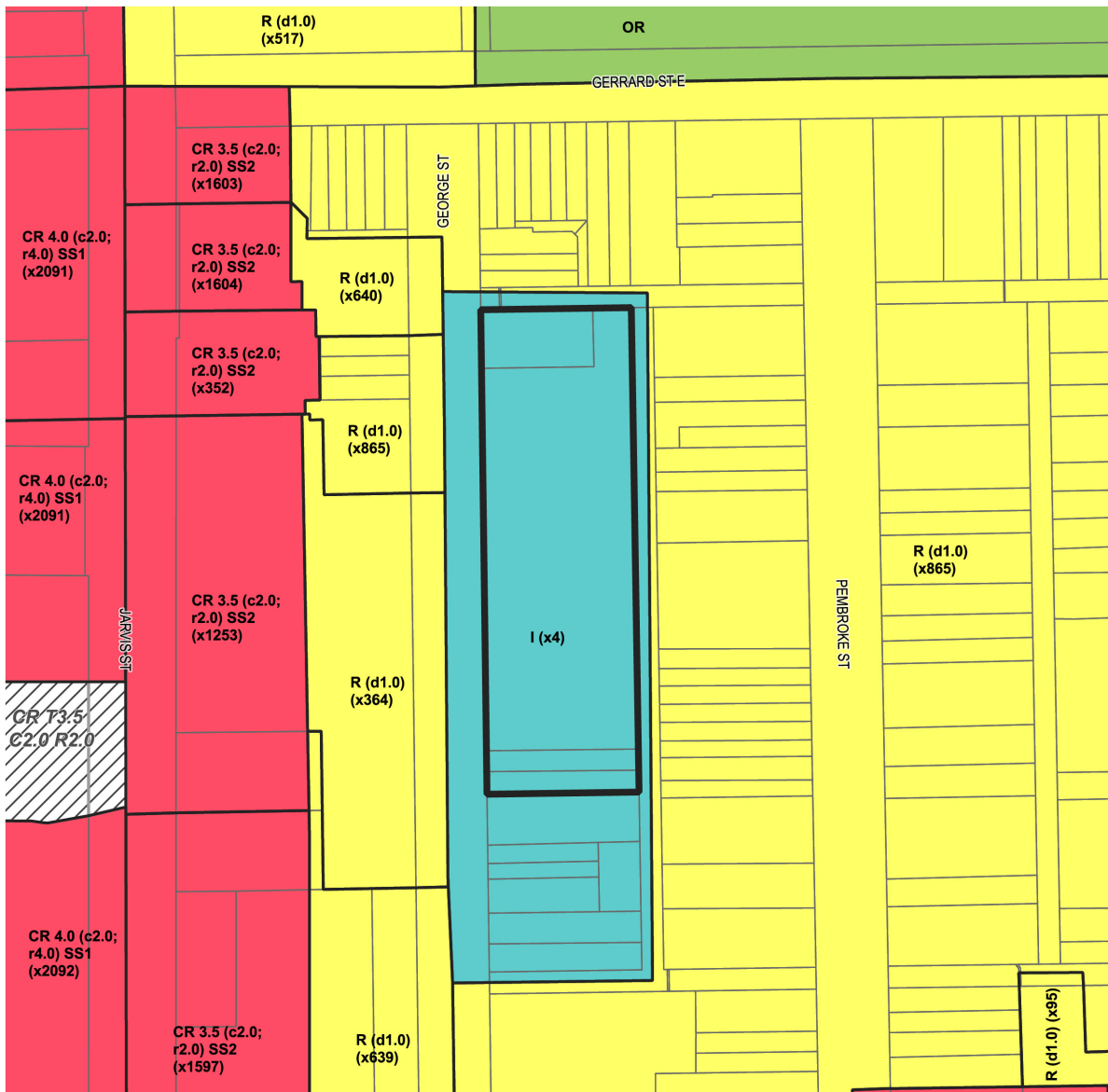
**Area Bounded by Jarvis Street, Carlton Street,
 Sherbourne Street and Queen Street East**

File # 12 294720 SPS 00 0Z

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Character Area
-  309-349 George Street


 Not to Scale
 04/24/2014

Attachment 6: Existing Zoning By-law Map



Zoning By-law 569-2013

309-349 George Street

File# 24 ##### STE ## 0Z

- R Residential
- CR Commercial Residential
- I Institutional
- OR Open Space Recreation

See Former City of Toronto By-law No. 438-86 (June 2024)
CR Mixed-Use District

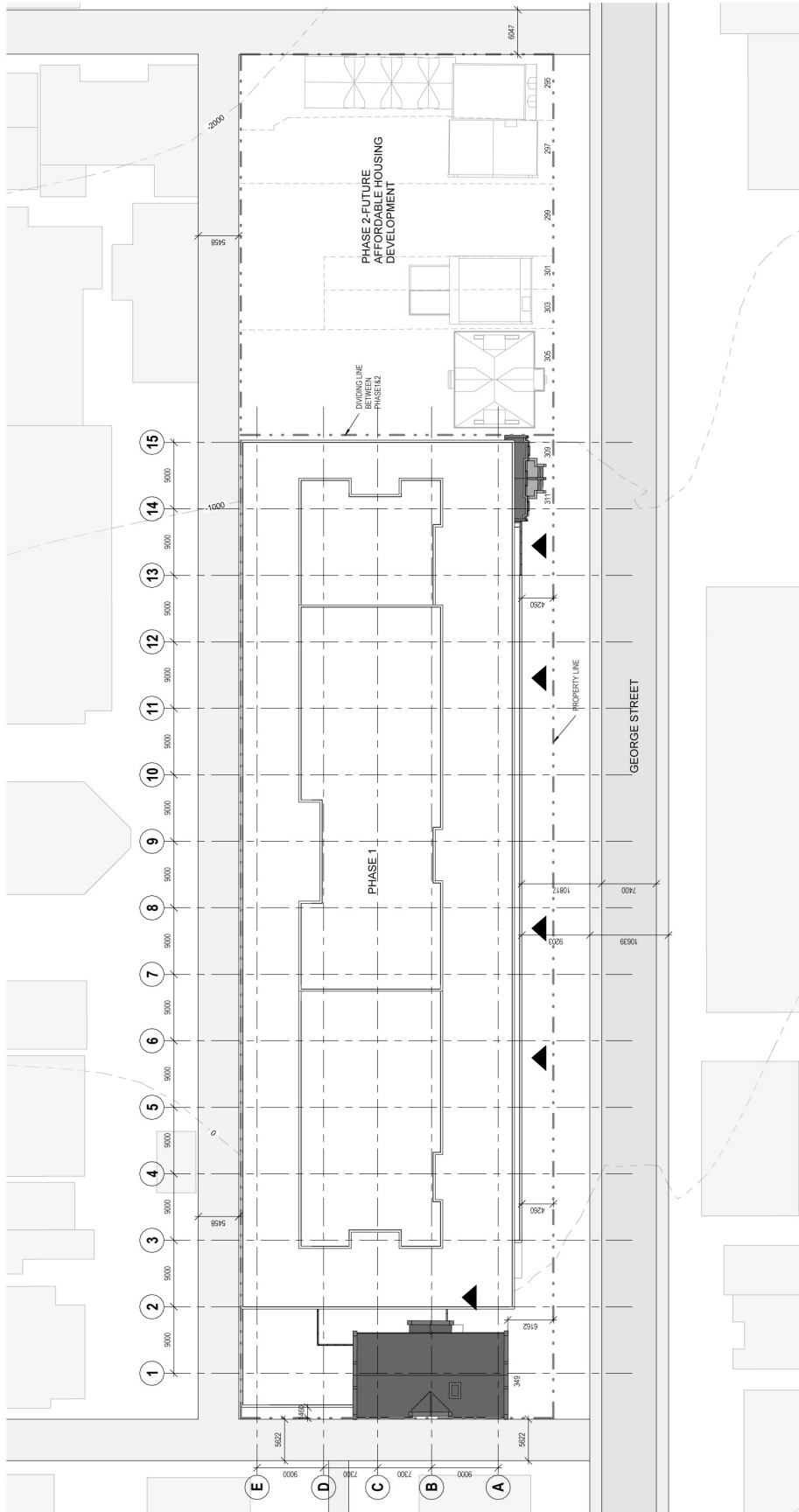


Not to scale
Date: 01/29/2025

Attachment 8: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment

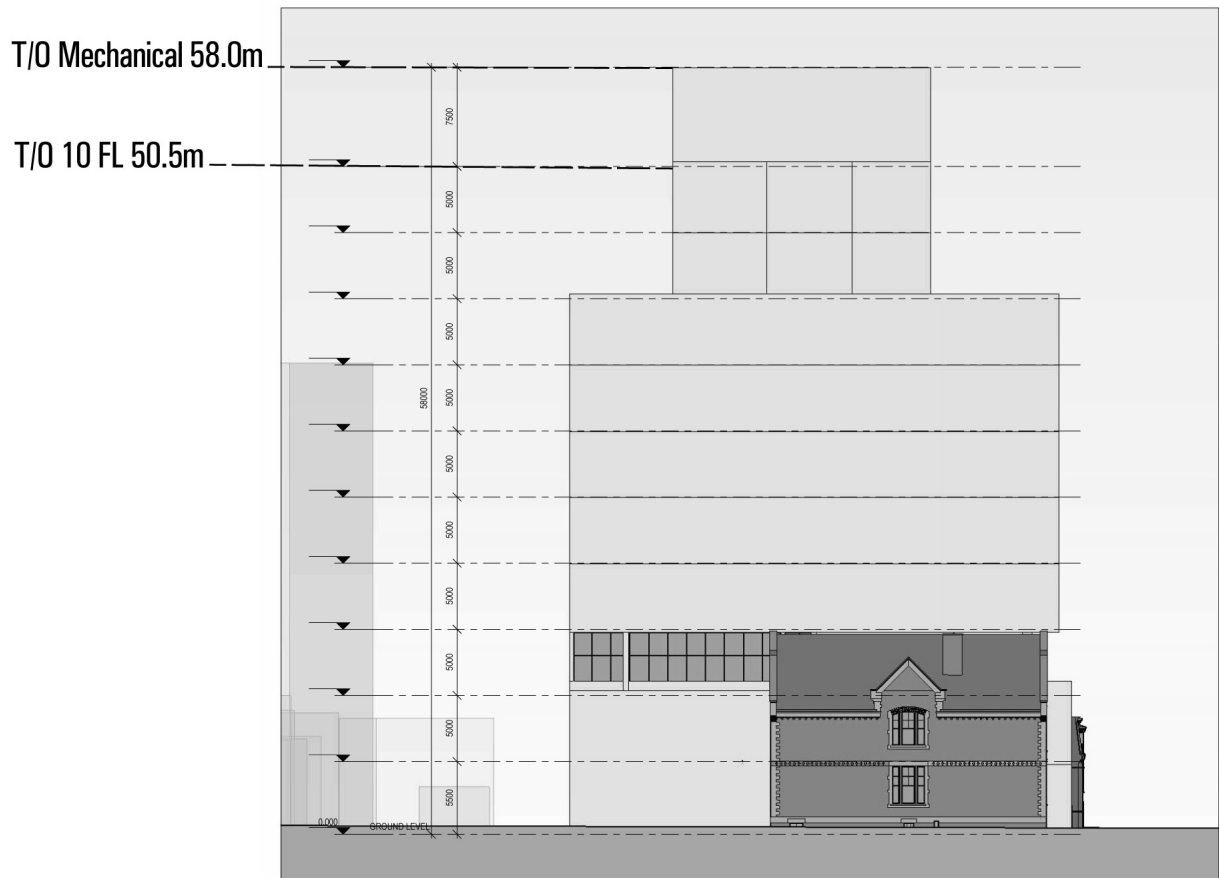
The draft by-law amendment will be made available on or before the April 3, 2025, Toronto and East York Community Council meeting.

Attachment 9: Site Plan



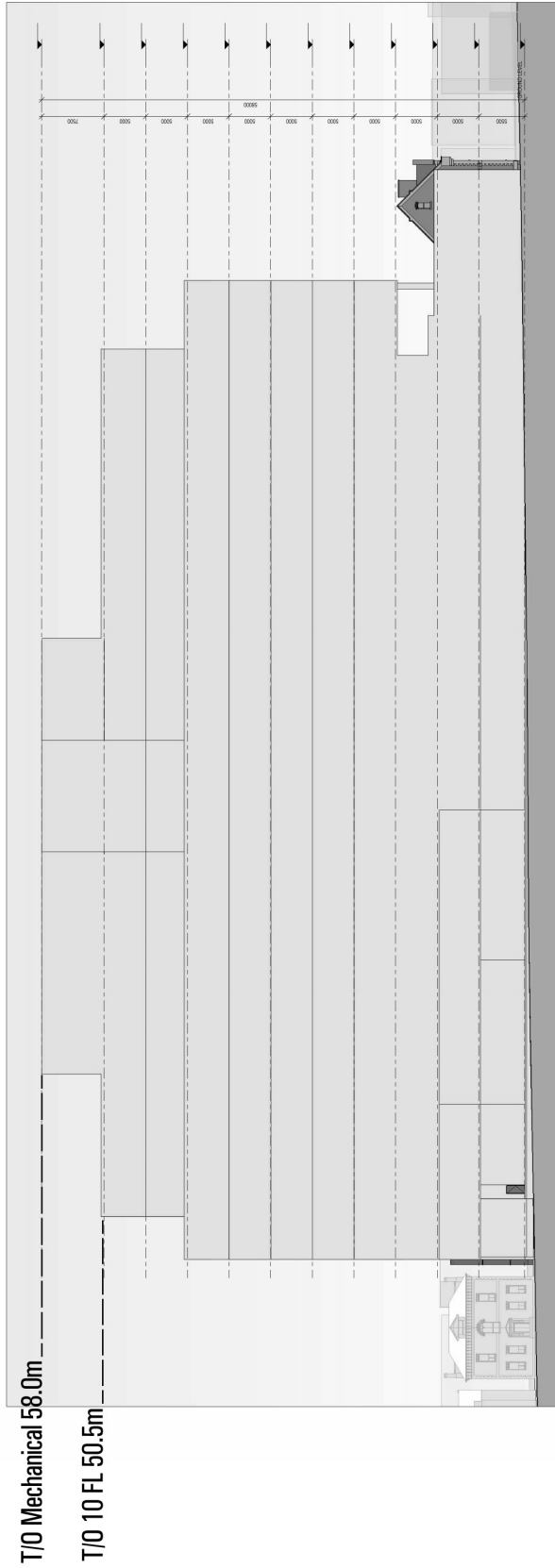
Site Plan

Attachment 10: North Elevation

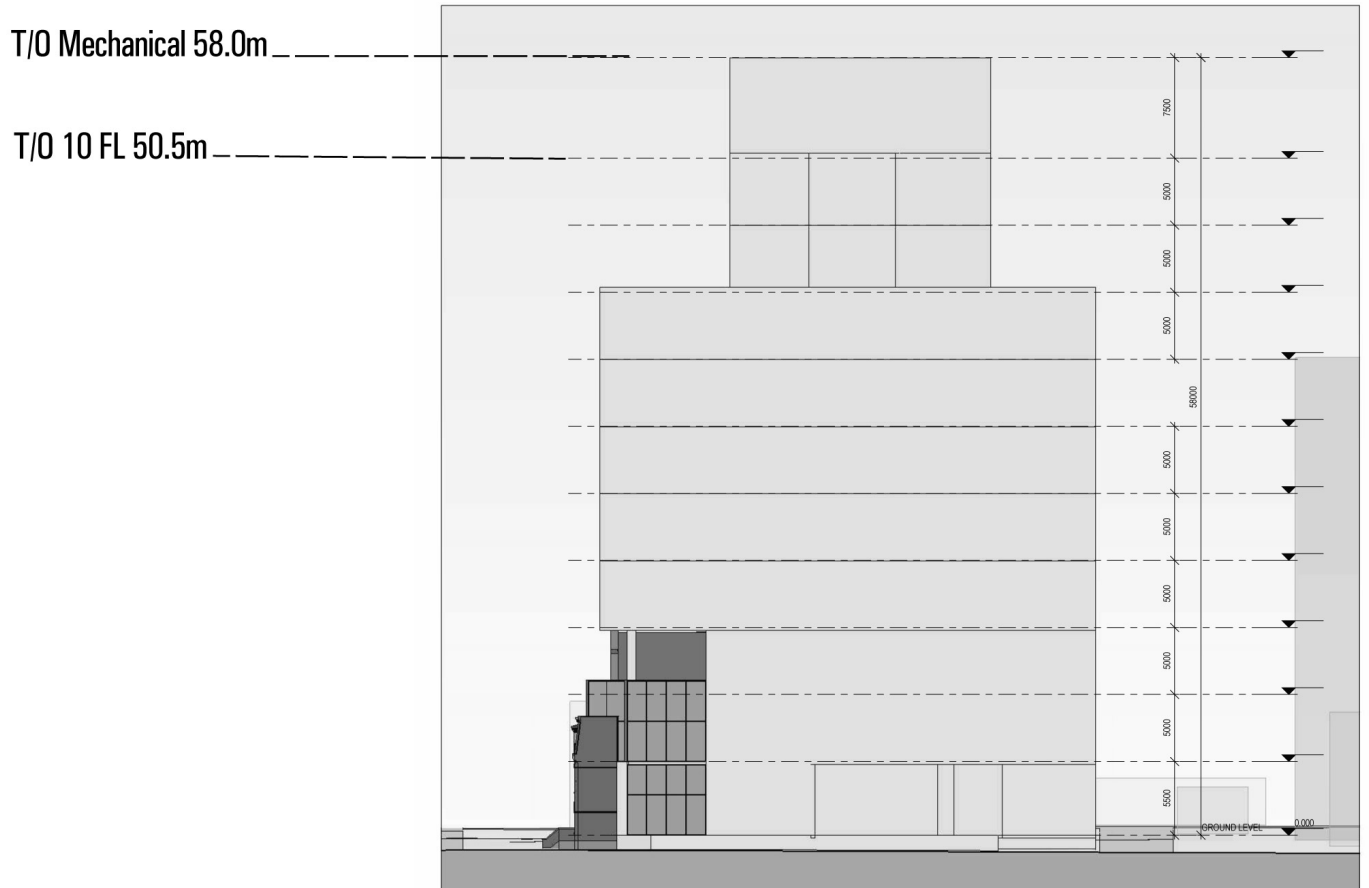


North Elevation

Attachment 11: East Elevation

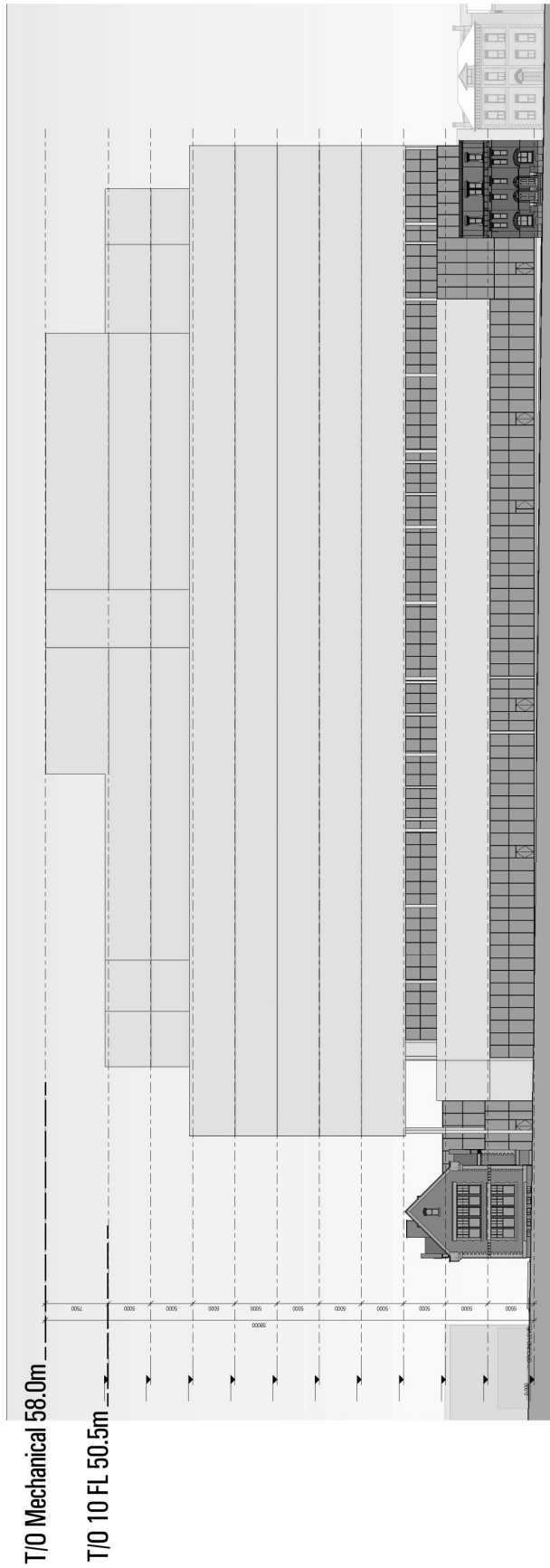


Attachment 12: South Elevation



South Elevation

Attachment 13: West Elevation



West Elevation