

405 Sherbourne Street - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: December 29, 2025

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Toronto Centre - Ward 13

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the designated heritage property municipally known as 405 Sherbourne Street under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, in connection with a proposed development of the subject property. The Zoning By-law Amendment application is subject to a Heritage Permit application under the Ontario Heritage Act, as the subject site is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District.

The proposed development application for the subject site contemplates the construction of a 35-storey mixed-use building, replacing an existing surface parking lot. This is a City-owned property that is part of the City Council directed Toronto Builds (formerly Housing Now) initiative to develop housing, including affordable housing, on City-owned land.

In July 2021, City Council approved a Zoning By-law Amendment Application to permit a 25-storey mixed-use building on the subject site. The new Zoning By-law Amendment application has been submitted to allow for additional density on the site and to permit a built form that allows for additional two and three-bedroom units to be provided.

The impacts of the proposed development on the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District are appropriately mitigated through the compatible design of the new construction. The proposal will serve the public interest by providing 301 new rental housing units (including up to 90 affordable housing units) and 229 square metres of community space on the ground floor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the heritage property at 405 Sherbourne Street, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to allow for the construction of a 35-storey mixed use building, with such alterations substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated December 15, 2025, prepared by architects-Alliance and Allison Brooks Architects, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated March 9, 2021, and revised November 20, 2025, and December 19, 2025, subject to the following additional conditions:

- a. that prior to Site Plan Approval for the proposal, for the property located at 405 Sherbourne Street, the owner shall:
 1. provide final site plan drawings, including a detailed landscape plan, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and
 2. 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; and
- b. that prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 405 Sherbourne Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing parking lot as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:
 1. provide building permit drawings, including a description of materials and finishes, and the approved Landscape Plan, to be prepared by the project architect and a qualified heritage consultant 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 December 11, 12 and 13, 2007, City Council authorized the establishment of the Cabbagetown Northwest area as a Heritage Conservation District and has authorized the adoption of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan (through By-law 325-2008).

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2007.TE11.3>

On May 28, 2020, City Council adopted CC21.3 Creating New Affordable Housing Opportunities through Phase Two of the Housing Now Initiative. The report recommended Council's approval of six additional sites to the Housing Now Initiative. The six new sites in Phase Two are estimated to create between 1,455 and 1,710 new residential units including an estimated 1,600 purpose-built rentals, of which an estimated 620 will be affordable rental units.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC21.3>

On June 29 and 30, 2020, City Council adopted PH 14.3 Housing Now Initiative – Annual Progress Report. The Report provided Council with the first annual update on the Housing Now Initiative including the early successes, lessons learned and latest status of the Phase One Sites. The report recommended enhancements to the Housing Now Initiative that will improve the lives of future residents of the sites.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH14.3>

On July 14, 15 and 16, 2021, City Council approved the proposed alterations to the heritage property at 405 Sherbourne Street, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to allow for the construction of a new mixed-use building on the site.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.PH25.4>

On May 21 and 22, 2025, City Council adopted PH21.4 Toronto Builds - A Policy Framework to Build More Affordable Rental Homes on Public Land. This report established a set of policies to deliver a range of new rental homes on public land including 405 Sherbourne Street (formerly Housing Now site).

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH21.4>

BACKGROUND

Site and Context

The subject property, 405 Sherbourne Street, is located on the east side of Sherbourne Street (south of Wellesley Street East and north of Carlton Street). The property is currently a 110-space Green P parking lot operated by the Toronto Parking Authority that has frontage on Sherbourne Street and Bleecker Street.

The subject property is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The subject site is adjacent to 3 heritage resources designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, located in the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District: 82 Bleecker Street (Samuel Trees Terrace, c. 1885), 391 Sherbourne Street, and 413 Sherbourne Street.

Development Proposal

A City-initiated Zoning By-law Amendment application was submitted for 405 Sherbourne Street and was deemed complete on November 26, 2025. The application proposes a 35-storey (120.1 metres, including mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building with approximately 301 residential units and 229 square metres of non-residential ground floor area at grade intended to be used for a community use.

The proposed development also provides enhancements to the public realm through the creation of a landscaped mid-block connection between Sherbourne Street and Bleecker Street.

The proposal includes a total of 13 vehicular parking spaces and 331 bicycle parking spaces. Access to the underground garage is proposed to be from Bleecker Street via a private driveway. One Type “G” loading space will be located at the southeast corner of the property, through a private driveway accessed from Bleecker Street.

Heritage Planning Policy Framework

Cultural heritage resources are protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2024). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

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(r) specifically refers "to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place."

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Policy Statement 2024 (PPS), issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act, provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. Key objectives include:

- building strong communities
- wise use and management of resources
- protecting public health and safety

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, use and/or management of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the Ontario Heritage Act."

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.

City of 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 development:

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.

3.1.6.33 - Heritage Conservation Districts should be managed and conserved by approving only those alterations, additions, new development, demolitions, removals and public works in accordance with respective Heritage Conservation District plans.

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan/guidelines/official-plan/>

Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District

The property at 405 Sherbourne Street is located within the boundaries of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. At its meeting of December 11, 12 and 13, 2007, Toronto City Council adopted the recommendation to designate the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under Part V of the

COMMENTS

Heritage Planning staff have reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment (dated March 9, 2021, and revised November 20, 2025, and December 19, 2025) submitted in support of the proposal for conformity with the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the City's Official Plan heritage policies.

Staff are satisfied that the proposed development will sufficiently conserve the cultural heritage value of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. The proposed development conforms to the built-form guidelines for new building construction outlined in the District Plan. The proposed base has been designed to be compatible with the height of adjacent heritage properties in the District, and references the heights, horizontal datum lines and the rhythm of vertical elements of adjacent heritage properties on both street frontages. The tower step-backs facing both Sherbourne Street and Bleecker Street help to maintain the heritage character of Bleecker Street.

At this stage in the approvals process, the City has initiated the re-zoning of the site to secure approval for the proposed scale, form and massing of the building. Following approval of the proposal to amend the Zoning By-law, any further refinements to the built form and design will be secured through the Site Plan Control Process and heritage staff will work within the planning process to ensure that the final design remains in conformity with the applicable policies and guidelines.

Scale, Form and Massing

The proposed development is subject to the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan, particularly the guidelines for new building construction (Section 6.5). These guidelines provide direction for the scale, form and massing of the proposed building, as well as height, width, proportion, relationship to the street, and roofs.

- **6.5.2 New building height** - The height guidelines state that the "building height of new structures should maintain the building height of adjacent properties." The tower portion of the proposal exceeds the height of adjacent properties; however, the proposed height of the base building maintains the height of adjacent properties. Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed building height of 35 storeys is consistent with the previously approved plan for the site as well as the planned context of the surrounding area. Additionally, the base building will form the streetwall as the tower has stepbacks above the base. The base building is proposed at a height of 11.50 metres to relate to the low-scale heritage context on both the Sherbourne Street and Bleecker Street frontages.

The adjacent buildings are of varied height and the base respects these buildings. At Bleeker Street, three townhouse units with alternating heights and depths further reduce the scale to two storeys similar to the height of the row houses to the north.

- **6.5.3 Width** - New infill development within the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District "should maintain the building width and side yard spaces of adjacent properties and the immediate streetscape". The width of the proposed building is larger than that of the adjacent heritage buildings; however, this impact has been mitigated through vertical articulation and the reinterpretation of historic bays along the Bleeker Street elevation. On the Bleeker Street frontage, the base building has integrated townhouse units which are generally aligned with the width and setbacks of the existing heritage townhouse units to the north of the site. The introduction of front doors opening to the street both helps to animate the public realm and helps reinforce the generally low-rise context of this portion of Bleeker Street.
- **6.5.4 Proportion** - This guideline relates to the conservation of the width relative to the height of adjacent buildings. For the reasons discussed, the proposal respects the width and height of adjacent properties, both along Sherbourne Street and Bleeker Street. The proposal will have an impact on the historic proportions of the area; however, this impact is appropriately mitigated through the lower height and compatible design of the base building. The stepbacks (5 metres on Sherbourne Street and 1 and 5.4 metres on Bleeker Street) ensure these street-scaled elements are prominent and harmonious with adjacent buildings. The introduction of detail to the elevation on Bleeker Street responds to the smaller scale and proportion found there.
- **6.5.5 Relationship to the street** - The District Plan directs that new residential infill should maintain the existing setbacks of adjacent properties. Consistent with this guideline, the proposed development has main facades that are parallel to Sherbourne Street to the west and Bleeker Street to the east. On the northeast corner of the building, the building face has been pulled back from the Bleeker Street lot line, allowing for an enhanced landscape zone for pedestrian circulation and amenity including the mid-block connection north of the building. At Bleeker Street, the setback matches the row houses to the north, which allows for the introduction of bays and recessed entrances which mimic the neighbouring condition. The Bleeker Street setback will have ornamental landscaping that complements the front yards and gardens to the north of the site.
- **6.5.6 Roofs on new buildings** – The proposed tower and base building have flat roofs. The District Plan guidelines states that flat or shallow pitch roofs are to be avoided in new construction; however, in the context of the overall proposal, Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed roof forms are acceptable and help distinguish new construction from the surrounding historic fabric. The proposed flat roofs are appropriate for the tower typology but diverge from the guidelines, which were intended for house form buildings. Flat roofs are found throughout the District on other apartment buildings.

Detailed Design

Should City Council approve the recommended Zoning By-law amendment to allow the proposal, the building envelope will be defined but detailed design will be determined at the Site Plan Control stage. Heritage Planning staff will be engaged in the Site Plan Control process to ensure that the final building design conserves the cultural heritage value of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District and is consistent with the policy framework, all substantially in accordance with the conditions contained within this report.

Heritage Planning staff will review the final design for consistency with the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan's guidelines for windows and entrances and exterior cladding.

- **6.5.7 Windows and entrances on new buildings** - The Heritage Conservation District Plan encourages new development to have a solid-to-void ratio that complements adjacent heritage properties with vertically oriented, rectangular windows and prominent recessed entrances. The base building will be designed to conform to these guidelines. In two locations, glass walls are proposed on the ground floor; however, they are proposed on the set back east and west elevations and will differentiate the amenity spaces in the building. They are not prominent features and do not conflict with the general intent to be compatible with the neighbourhood. Balconies are not present on street-facing elevations. Entrances on Sherbourne Street are proposed to be marked with brick arches near the street to be based on nearby precedents (including 355 and 383 Sherbourne Street).
- **6.5.8 Exterior cladding: materials and colours** - The proposed materials for the building are anticipated to be red brick and a contrasting light colour brick. Brick, stucco and wood cladding are identified as appropriate cladding types in the Heritage Conservation District Plan. Brick is the predominant historic cladding material in the immediate vicinity of the site and the materials of the new building will be compatible with the heritage character of the surrounding area.

Adjacent Heritage Resources

The HIA asserts that the proposed development will conserve the cultural heritage value of the adjacent designated heritage properties. Staff concur with this assessment. The design and contextual value are identified as contributing factors of the heritage buildings, and there are no anticipated heritage impacts. The extent of shadowing has been limited by the tower placement towards the south extent of the subject site.

Heritage Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan Approval for the proposed development, the applicant will be required to submit a Heritage Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The interpretation strategy will focus on the historic evolution of the site as described in the HIA.

Landscape Plan

Staff are recommending that the applicant be required to provide a final Landscape Plan that enhances the character of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning as a condition of the heritage permit. The Landscape Plan would demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the District Plan's guidelines for landscape conservation. The materials submitted with the City-initiated Zoning By-law amendment show that there will be a landscaped pedestrian mid-block connection to the north of the new building and, along Bleecker Street, the front yards will have new ornamental plantings. Existing trees on Bleecker Street will be maintained.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning staff are supportive of the proposed development of the heritage property located at 405 Sherbourne Street in the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District and recommend approval of the new design. The proposed alterations are appropriate within the context of the proposal and will create new affordable rental housing, while conserving the cultural heritage value of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. The proposed development responds to the adjacent built form and the broader heritage context. The building introduces a base building fronting onto Sherbourne Street and Bleecker Street designed to be consistent with the scale of the existing built form.

As such Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion the proposal is consistent with the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan and other applicable policies and guidelines. It is therefore recommended that City Council approve the application under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 2 - Photographs

Attachment 3 - Selected Drawings

Attachment 4 - Renderings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

405 Sherbourne Street



Figure 1. Location Map showing the property at 405 Sherbourne Street (outlined in red), located on the east side of Sherbourne Street between Wellesley Street East and Carlton Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

405 Sherbourne Street



Figure 2. 405 Sherbourne Street looking northeast (ERA Architects Inc., 2020).



Figure 3. 405 Sherbourne Street looking southeast (ERA Architects Inc., 2020)

SELECTED DRAWINGS
405 Sherbourne Street

ATTACHMENT 3

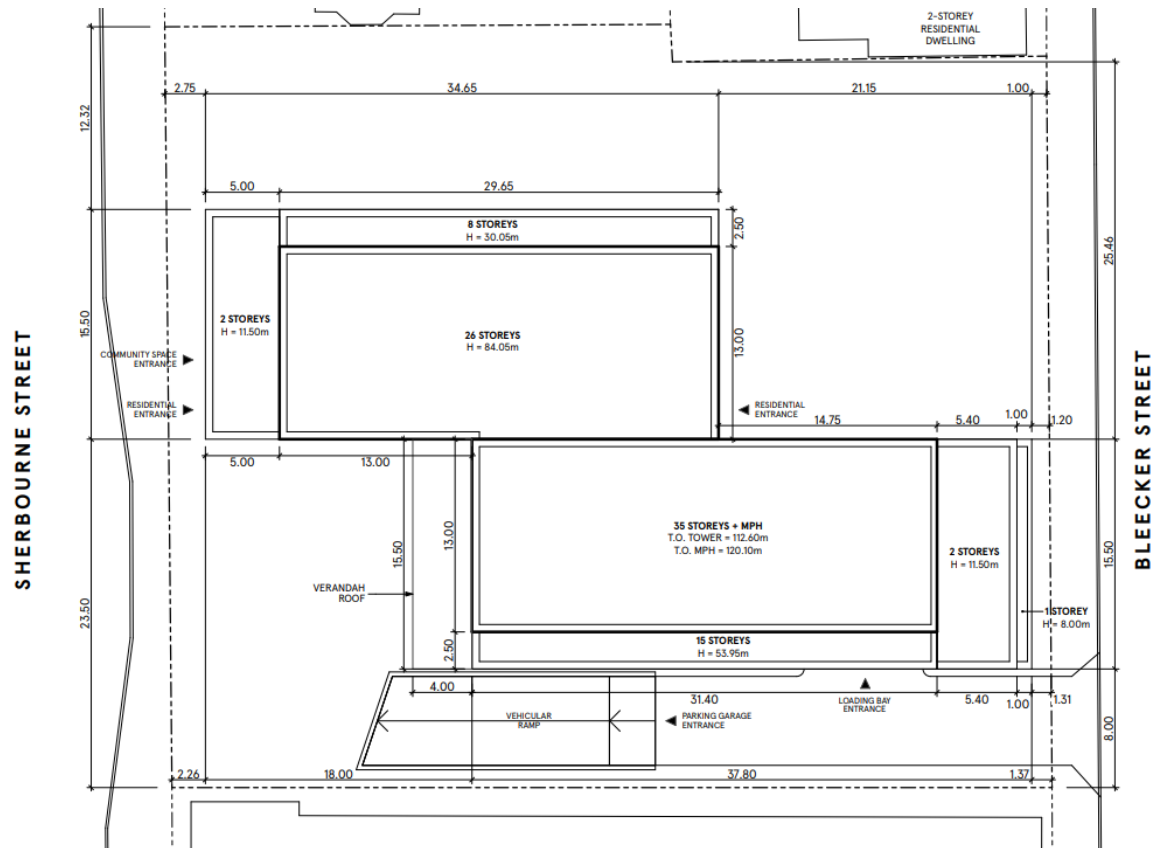


Figure 4. Proposed Site Plan for 405 Sherbourne Street (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., 2025).

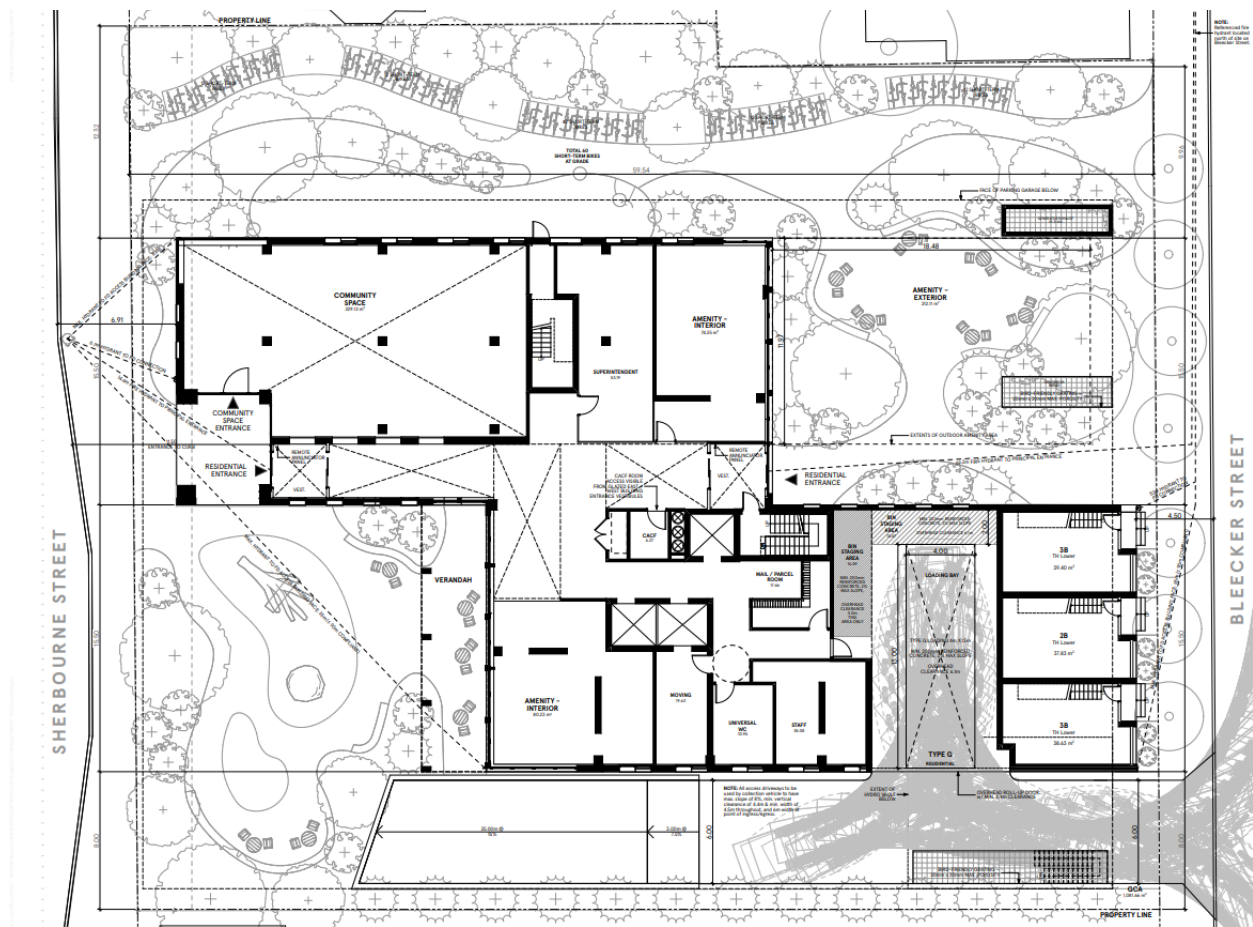


Figure 5. Proposed ground floor for 405 Sherbourne Street (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., 2025).

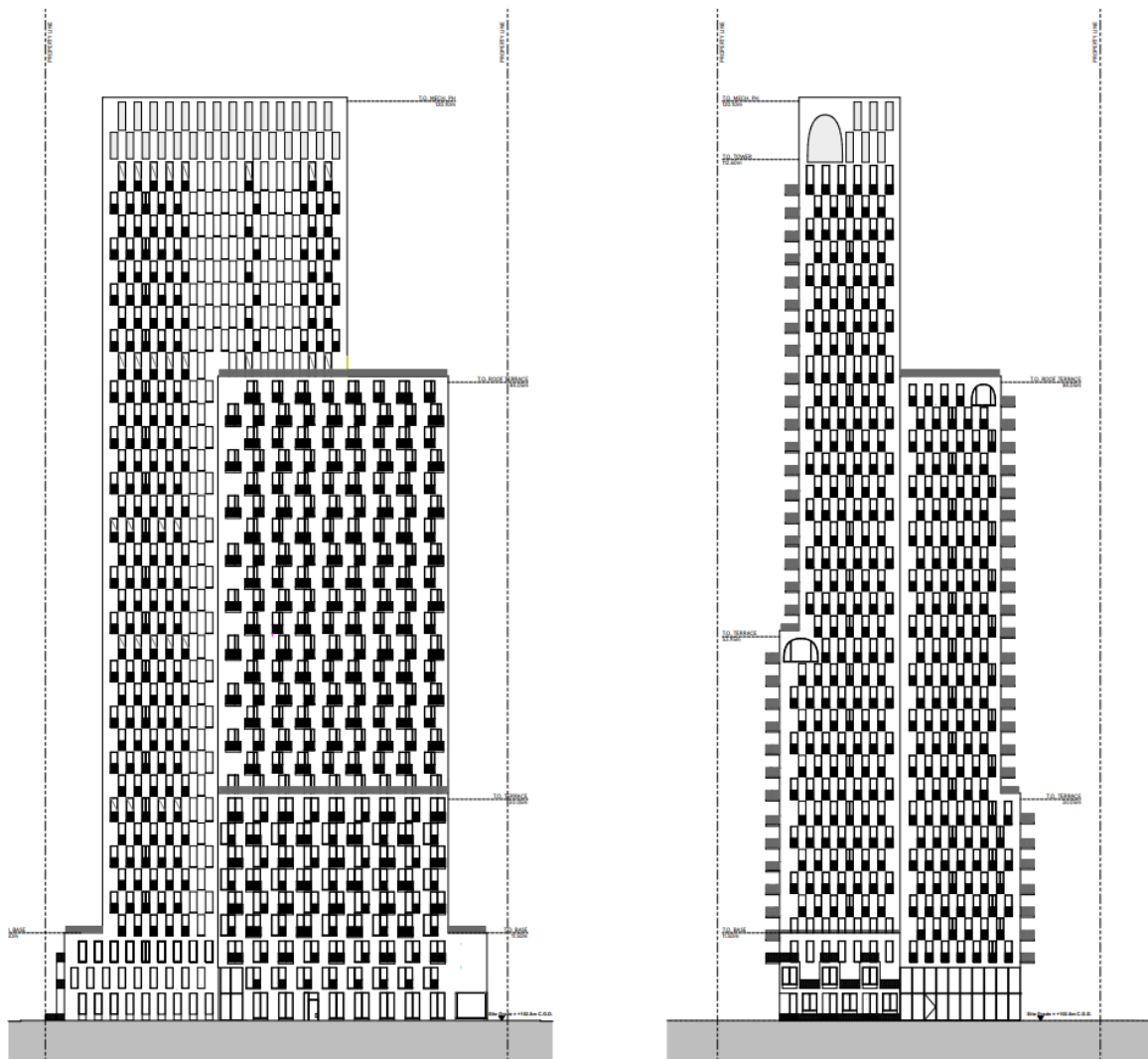


Figure 6. Proposed north elevation (left) and east elevation (right) of 405 Sherbourne Street (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., 2025).

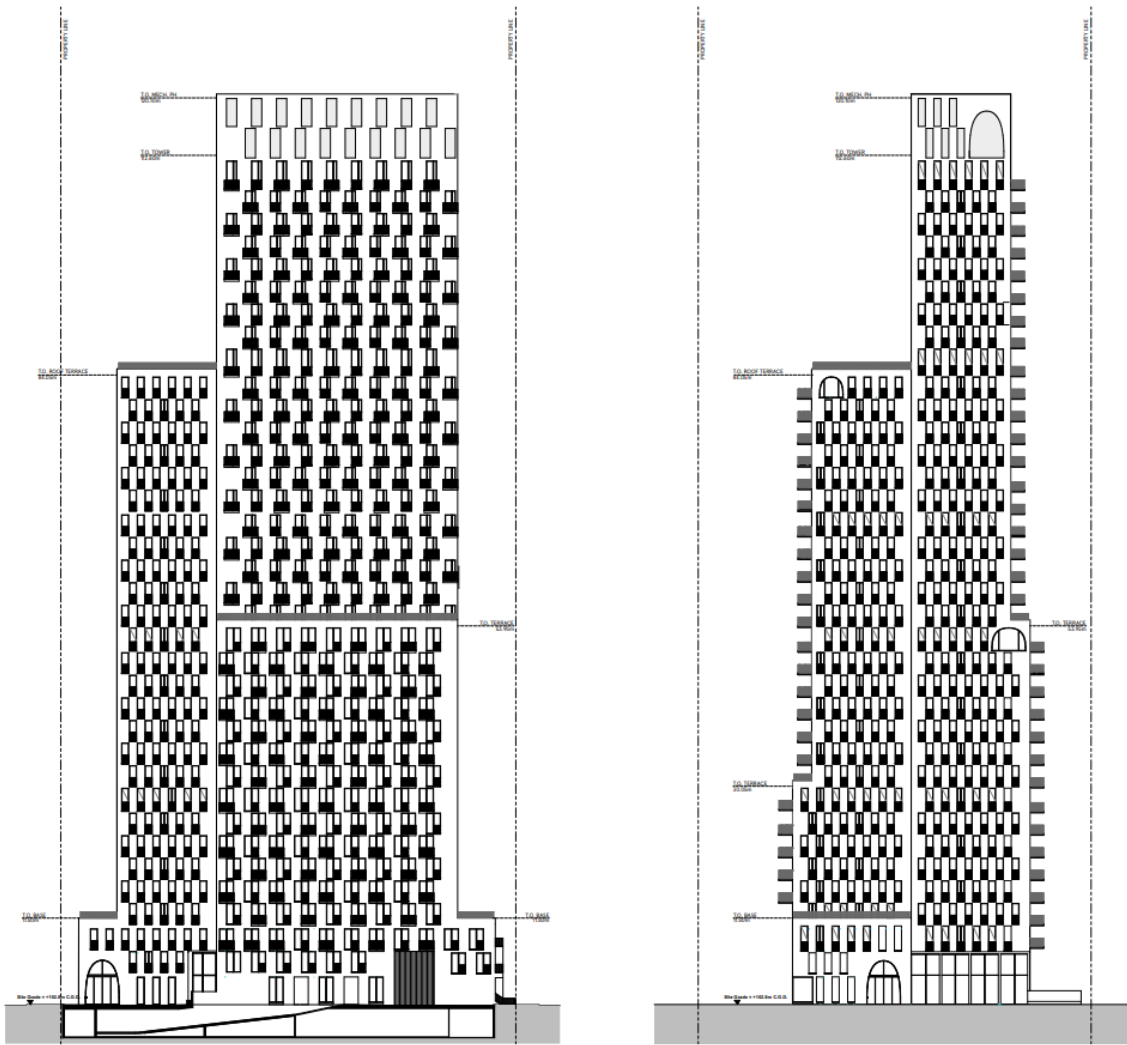


Figure 7. Proposed south elevation (left) and west elevation (right) of 405 Sherbourne Street (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., 2025).

405 Sherbourne Street



Figure 8. Proposed east elevation of 405 Sherbourne Street, rendering looking southwest along Bleecker Street (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., December 2025).



Figure 9. Proposed east elevation of 405 Sherbourne Street, rendering looking west (architects-alliance, Alison Brook Architects Inc., December 2025).