

8 Robert Street- Alterations to a Designated Property under Part V, Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act- Approval

Date: June 15, 2026

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 11- University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve alterations to the heritage property at 8 Robert Street under Part V, Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act in connection with the construction of a two-storey roof addition (with mechanical penthouse) to allow the conversion of this former chapel building into a four-unit residential building. The alterations include removal of most of the roof, conservation of all four elevations and the solid wood entrance door at the front, restoration of the six original stained-glass windows, and exterior paint removal.

The subject property is located on the west side of Robert Street, north of College Street, and at the southern edge of the Harbord Village Phase II Heritage Conservation District (HVPIIHCD). It contains the one-storey former Christian Workers' Church which was constructed in 1915 and is currently vacant. 8 Robert Street is one of only two contributing non-residential properties in the HVPIIHCD.

The HVPIIHCD Plan notes that the value of this HCD "lies in the large number of original Victorian buildings with the majority of their heritage attributes present or capable of being restored" and it is the "consistency" in the character of the houses that make the area unique. The proposed two-storey roof addition does not conform with the guidelines in the HVPIIHCD Plan which states that additions should be located at the rear of properties and should be lower than the ridge of the existing roof. Staff are however supportive of the proposed addition which is set back 0.6-1.2 metres behind the front gable to give visual prominence of the front gable from the public realm. The subject property is a non-residential, one-storey church-form building at the southern edge of the HCD and the proposed roof addition would not disrupt the consistent 2.5-3-storey character of the houses that characterise the district. It also meets the general intent of the HVPIIHCD Plan to conserve the heritage fabric of the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the heritage property at 8 Robert Street, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, substantially in accordance with plans and drawings dated April 7, 2026, prepared by Yimby Studio and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared by GBCA, dated May 29, 2026, on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to the following:

a. the Owner shall:

1. 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 for 8 Robert Street prepared by GBCA, dated May 29, 2026, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning;
2. provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the property at 8 Robert Street, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such a Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and
3. provide an Interpretation Plan for the property at 8 Robert Street, 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 8 Robert Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual of minor works for the property as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 1.a.1 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; and
2. 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 and Interpretation Plan; and

c. that prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 1.b.2. 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.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

The Harbord Village Phase II Heritage Conservation District (HVPIIHCD) Plan was adopted by Council on November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009.

[Agenda Item History - 2009.TE29.15](#)

The HVPIIHCD Plan came into force and effect under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 22-2011) in 2011.

BACKGROUND

Heritage Properties

Located within the Harbord Village Phase II Heritage Conservation District (HVPIIHCD), the subject property at 8 Robert Street is a contributing one-storey church-form building constructed in 1914-15 by George Aldridge. The HVPIIHCD consists primarily of houses designed in the Second Empire, Victorian Bay n' Gable and Annex styles between 1880 and 1900. 8 Robert Street, which is situated at the southern entrance into the HCD, is one of only two non-residential contributing properties in the HVPIIHCD.

According to the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by GBCA and dated May 29, 2026, the church is vernacular with some Gothic elements. The church features a symmetrical front elevation containing six original stained-glass Gothic arched windows with trefoil transoms, a masonry portico, original wooden door with a large tripartite transom and three centrally placed louvres located directly below a small spire. The church is setback from the property line, flush with the adjacent houses to the north and the front lawn is boarded by a low metal fence.

The building is primarily constructed of buff brick, with stone accents. All four elevations, however, including window surrounds (sills and lintels) are predominantly clad in a cream-coloured stucco. The side and rear elevations are entirely covered in stucco, except for a small portion of the southern return wall. The front portico is also constructed of brick and partially clad with stucco. On the front elevation, the upper half is clad in stucco, while the lower half contains exposed buff brick. The masonry on the lower portion of the portico, which does not have a stucco cladding, has recently been painted white without the required approval under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Development Proposal

The proposal is for a two-storey roof addition with mechanical penthouse on top of the existing one-storey church-form building. The addition will result in an overall building height of 16.06 metres, an increase from the approximately 7-metre-high building that currently exists on the lot. The addition will be set behind the front gable by 0.6-1.2 metres. The 0.6 metre step-back on the northern portion of the development is proposed to accommodate a third-floor terrace.

The Conservation Strategy includes the following:

- Restoration of the six original stained-glass windows at the front of the property. This may include temporarily removing them for repairs to take place offsite. If repair is not possible, replacement windows or window components may be required (these will be designed to match the originals). The lower component of two of the windows will be altered to provide an operable sash. Details of window repairs and alterations will be included in the required Conservation Plan
- Masonry repairs (repointing, using lime-based mortar to match existing, replacing masonry units as required etc.)
- Gentle paint removal from stone masonry on the portico
- Conservation of the wooden door

Alterations include the following:

- Removal of a portion of the roof to allow for the construction of a two-storey addition
- Removal of the small "spire-like" feature from the front of the roof
- A two-storey addition plus mechanical penthouse. The second storey is proposed to be approximately 2.69-metres high, the third storey 3.81-metres high, and the mechanical penthouse 3.06-metres high
- Replacement of metal fence with a new metal fence of a similar height and profile
- Replacement of wooden louvres with wooden-framed window in existing opening
- New windows in the side and rear elevations that are not visible from the public realm

- A new escape staircase and doors are proposed on the rear of the existing building. This will not be visible from the public realm.

There is no related planning application for this proposal.

Heritage Planning Framework

City of Toronto Official Plan

The Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. Relevant policies are listed below:

3.1.6.5.: Proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City. Where a Heritage Impact Assessment is required in Schedule 3 of the Official Plan, it will describe and assess the potential impacts and mitigation strategies for the proposed alteration, development or public work.

3.1.6.6.: 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.

3.1.6.32.: Impacts of site alterations, developments, municipal improvements, and/or public works within or adjacent to Heritage Conservation Districts will be assessed to ensure that the integrity of the districts' heritage values, attributes, and character are conserved. This assessment will be achieved through a Heritage Impact Assessment, consistent with Schedule 3 of the Official Plan, to the satisfaction of the City."

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 Official Plan can be found here: [Toronto Official Plan - Chapter 3 - Office Consolidation](#)

Harbour Village Phase II Heritage Conservation District (HVPIIHCD) Plan

The HVPIIHCD (By-law 28-2011) states that the value of the HCD "lies in the large number of original Victorian buildings with the majority of their heritage attributes present or capable of being restored." It also says that it "is the relative completeness of the "sets" (of houses), the consistency of their character and the continuous streetscape settings that make the area unique and warrants protection under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act."

The HVPIIHCD emphasises the restoration and conservation of the district's heritage fabric. Relevant guidelines from the HVPIIHCD Plan are listed below:

9.3 General principles

- Skylights, mechanical equipment and other visible service elements are not permitted.

9.4.5- Windows

- Do not remove repairable or operating original wood or stained-glass windows;
- Every effort must be made to preserve stained glass features, using qualified craftsmen to execute work; and
- If determined that the original windows cannot be restored, or if already lost, replacement windows must match size, proportion, division, and location of originals, and materials.

9.4.6- Doors

- Maintain original wood doors wherever possible; and
- Retain transom windows.

9.5.1- Fences

- Transparent fences such as decorative iron work are preferred. The maximum height for solid wood picket fences is 3 feet; transparent ironwork fences is 5 feet. Lower fences are preferred.

9.7- Additions

- Additions and alterations which erode the heritage features or character of contributing buildings will not be permitted;
- Additions must not overwhelm the original building; and
- Additions at the rear of properties must not be higher than the ridge of the main roofline of the property as seen from any point on the public sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. Additions which are visible from the street or public sidewalk should be compatible in material, window and door openings and general proportion with the main building.

The HVPIIHCD Plan can be found here: [Nasmith HVHC-2\(1-5\) v4.indd](#)

Parks Canada Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto.

The Parks Canada Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada can be found here: <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

COMMENTS

The applicant proposes rehabilitation as the primary conservation strategy for the development site. The building is proposed to be retained in situ, and repairs will be undertaken to important elements including the windows and doors to increase their performance and longevity.

The Harbord Village Residents Association HVRA noted that the application was generally appropriate, however, if possible, the following improvements should be implemented:

- greater setbacks
- stained glass window conservation (the initial proposal contemplated conservation of two of the six windows)
- if the wooden door requires removal, a sympathetic replacement door with glazing should be installed.

After speaking with staff, the applicant agreed to revise their application to include the restoration and reinstatement of the six-stained glass windows, to comply with the guidelines for original windows in the HVPIIHCD Plan. The revisions also included the retention of the existing, non-original entrance door and transom.

The proposal does not comply with the HCD requirement that additions should be at the rear and be no higher than the ridge of the main roofline. The proposed roof addition will be highly visible from the public realm within the HCD. It will be 13 metres tall with a 3 metre high mechanical penthouse above, making this the tallest building in the HVPIIHCD. It will also be a storey higher than the adjacent buildings within this HCD.

Staff sought a reduction in the overall height of the building by lowering the height of the 3.8 metres high third floor to that of the 2.69 metres high floor below. The applicant did not wish to make this change and considers that the new massing is comparable in height to the buildings immediately to the south and east that are outside the HCD. The Ontario Heritage Act requires an assessment of the proposals solely in relation to the HVPIIHCD Plan and not in relation to areas outside the HCD.

Staff consider that a reduction in height of the roof addition would be an improvement but that this would not significantly alter the visibility of the roof addition from the public realm within the HCD. The HVPIIHCD has an "eclectic diversity of built form" but it is the "repeating patterns of height, massing, scale and density" that gives the area its strong sense of place. The subject property is a unique single storey non-residential building at the southernmost edge of the HCD. Therefore, although highly visible the roof addition will not interrupt the otherwise consistent building heights that characterises this HCD. The addition is stepped back from the front gable and a small part of the pitched roof of the former church would remain. This will give visual prominence to the former church when viewed from the public realm.

In terms of design, the addition is distinguishable from the church-form base. The windows on the addition have a similar width to those on the base, which creates a

complementary condition. In the HIA, the heritage consultant states that the addition will be clad in sheet metal and will be a contemporary design that is compatible with the heritage building. Staff will review further details of the design and materiality as part of the required Conservation Plan.

The church remains legible as a three-dimensional structure, with the front, side and rear walls, and a portion of the roof conserved in situ. The proposal also includes a comprehensive program of restoration to the front façade of the former church building that includes restoration of the stained glass windows. Staff consider the proposal to meet the general intent of the HVPIIHCD Plan that seeks to conserve the heritage fabric of Harbord Village. It would also not undermine the sense of place created by the repeated patterns in heights, massing and scale of the houses within the HCD.

Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant will be required to submit an Interpretation Plan for the proposal to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Interpretation Plan should include the history and cultural heritage value of this former Christian Workers' Church.

Landscape Plan

Staff are recommending that the applicant be required to provide a Landscape Plan that will enhance this property and comply with the landscape and streetscape provisions of the HVPIIHCD Plan.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning staff support the proposed conservation strategy for and alterations to the Part V designated property at 8 Robert Street under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The proposal includes conservation of all four elevations, and stepbacks from the heritage base building. Staff are satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the provisions of the HVPIIHCD Plan and other applicable objectives and guidelines. It is therefore recommended that City Council approve the application under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

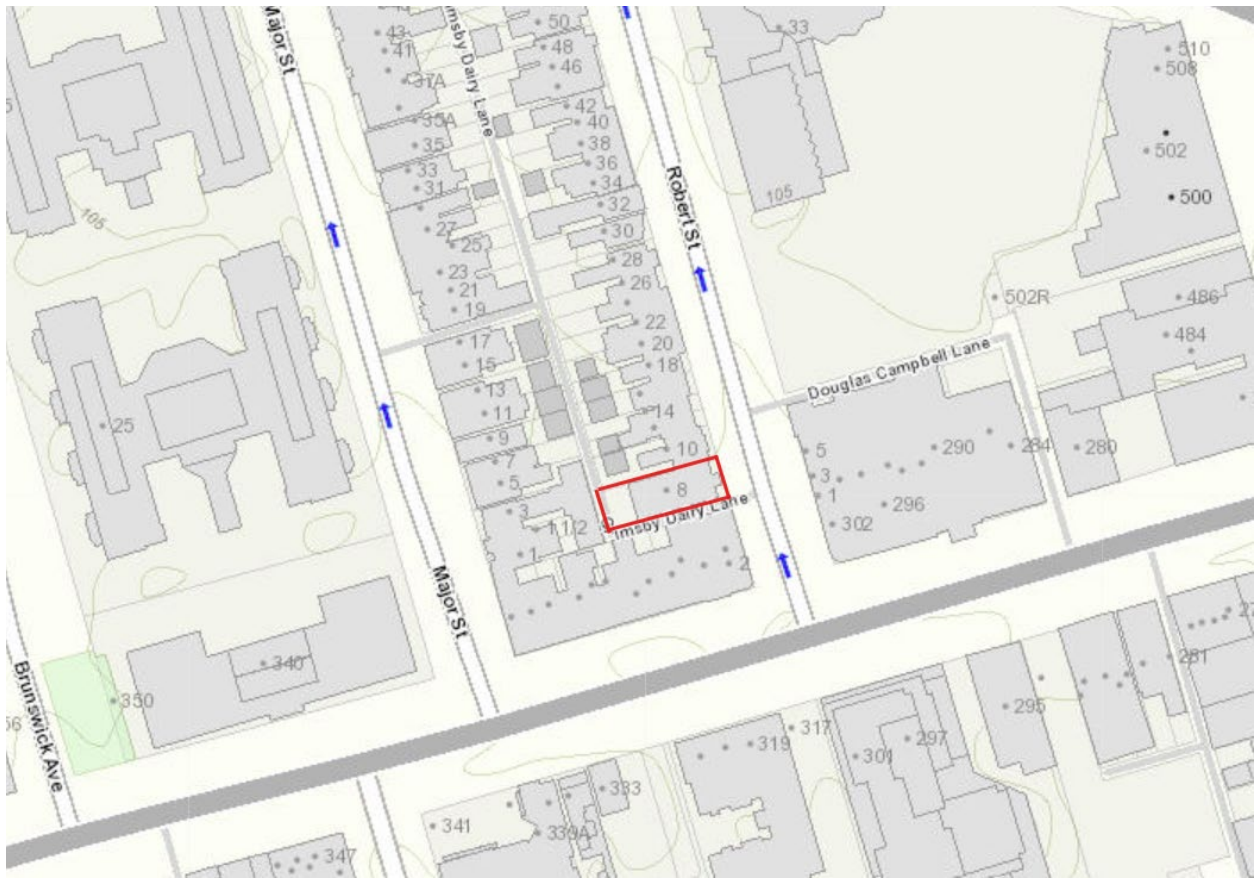
Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1- Location Maps
Attachment 2- Photographs
Attachment 3- Selected Drawings and Renderings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1



Location Map: 8 Robert Street is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).



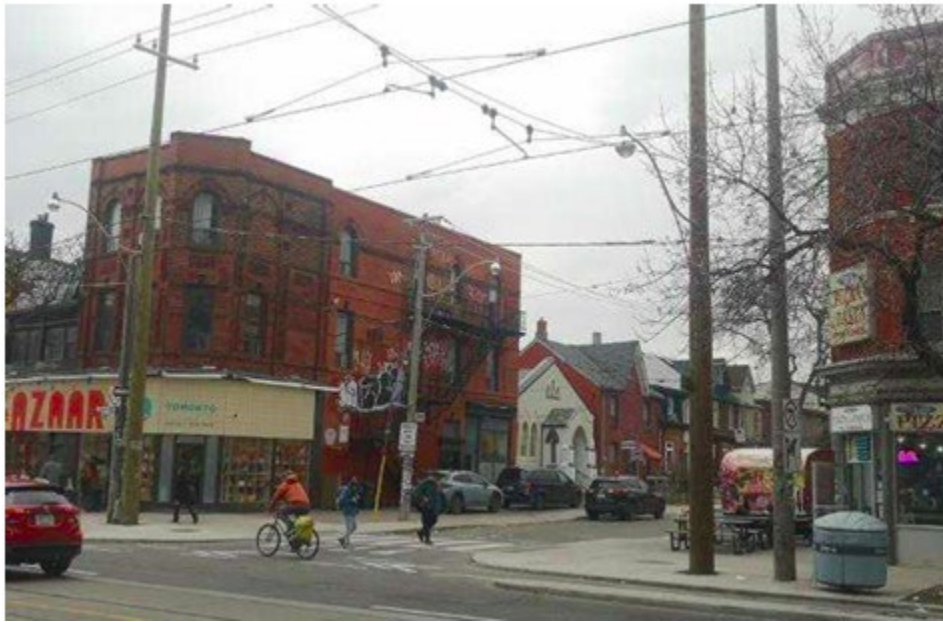
Location Map: 8 Robert Street is outlined in red, and the Harbord Village Phase II Heritage Conservation District is outlined in black (City of Toronto Mapping).



Front (east) elevation (HIA by GBCA, March 2026).



Rear (west) elevation (HIA by GBCA, March 2026).



Robert Street looking north (HIA by GBCA, March 2026).



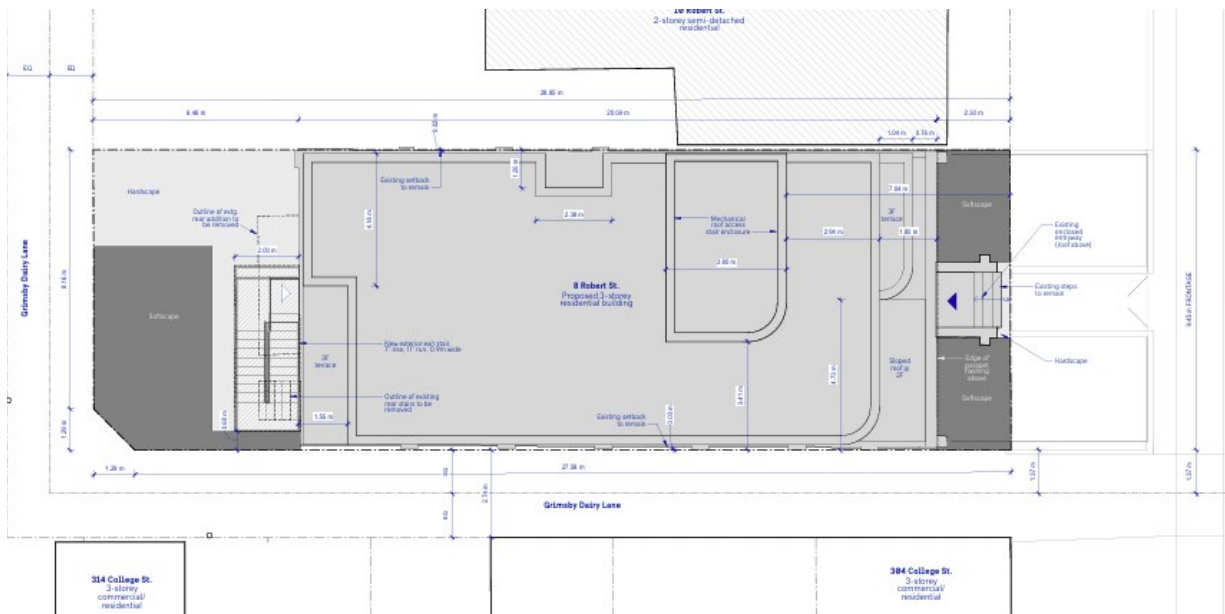
Overall front elevation showing proposed areas of interventions

Legend

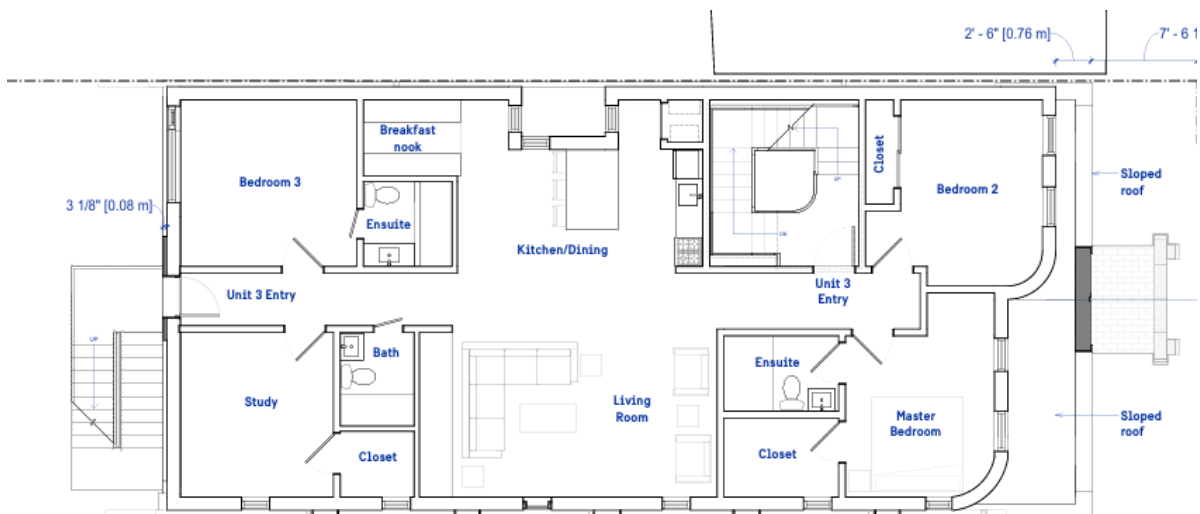
- Elements to be removed and replaced with new units
- Elements to be conserved (on site), repaired and refinished where required.
- Elements to be conserved (on site), repaired and refinished where required. May be considered for replacement with new units to match
- Elements to be conserved (off-site), repaired and refinished where required

GBCA

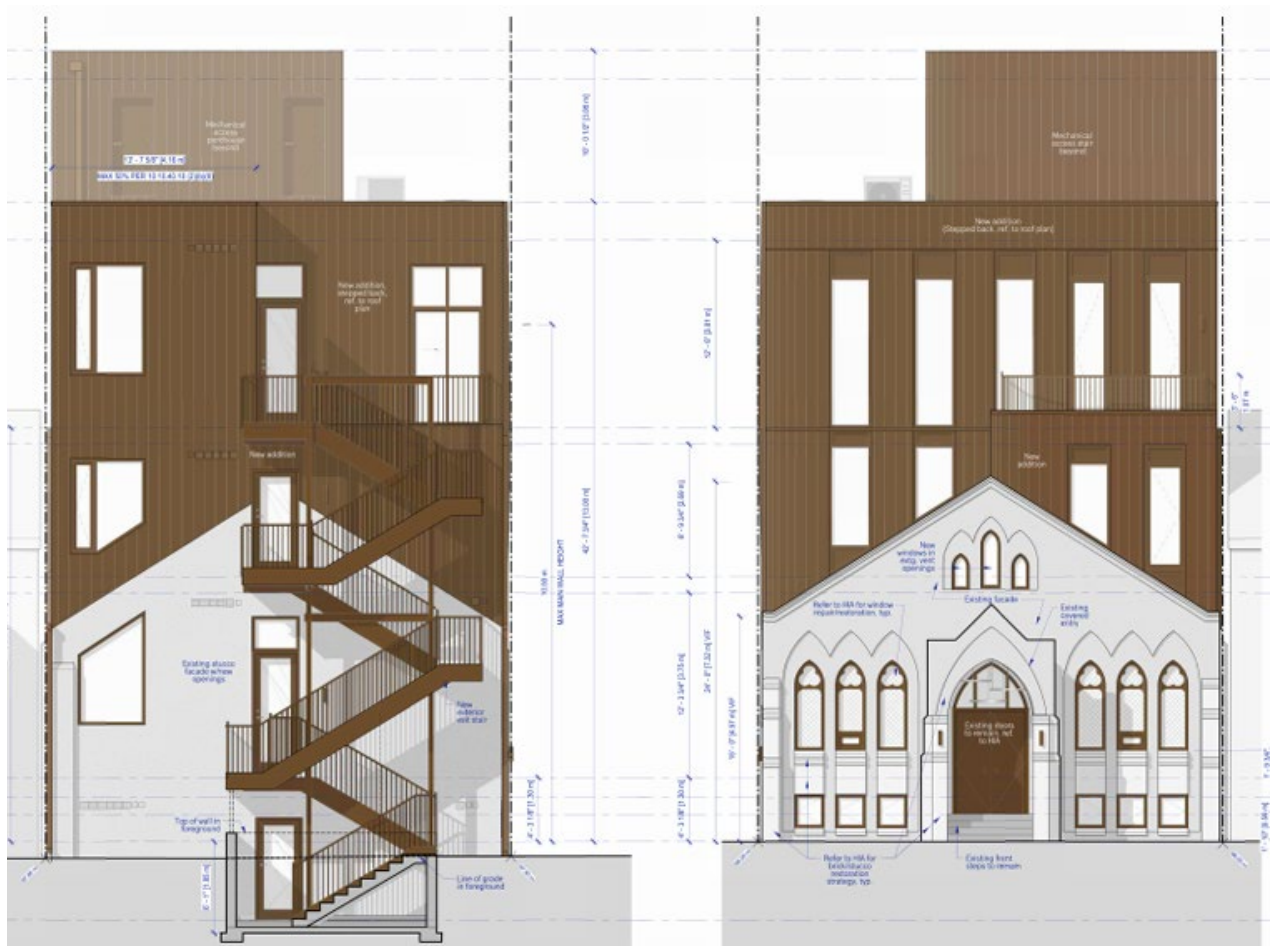
Proposed alterations (HIA by GBCA, May 2026).



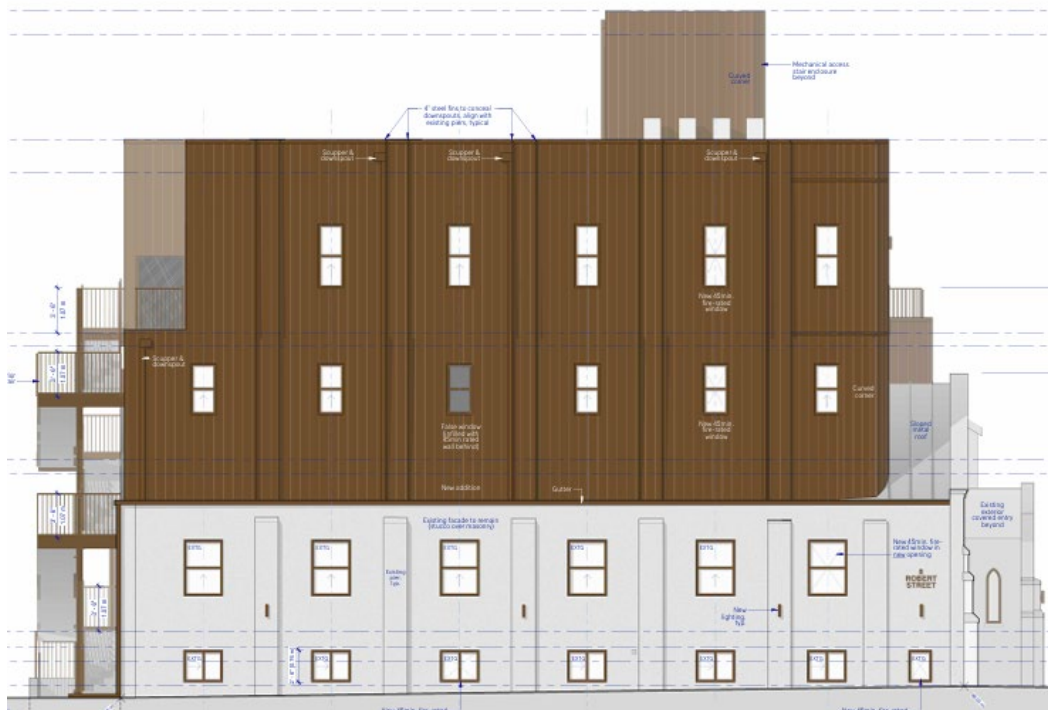
Proposed Site Plan (HIA by GBCA, May 2026).



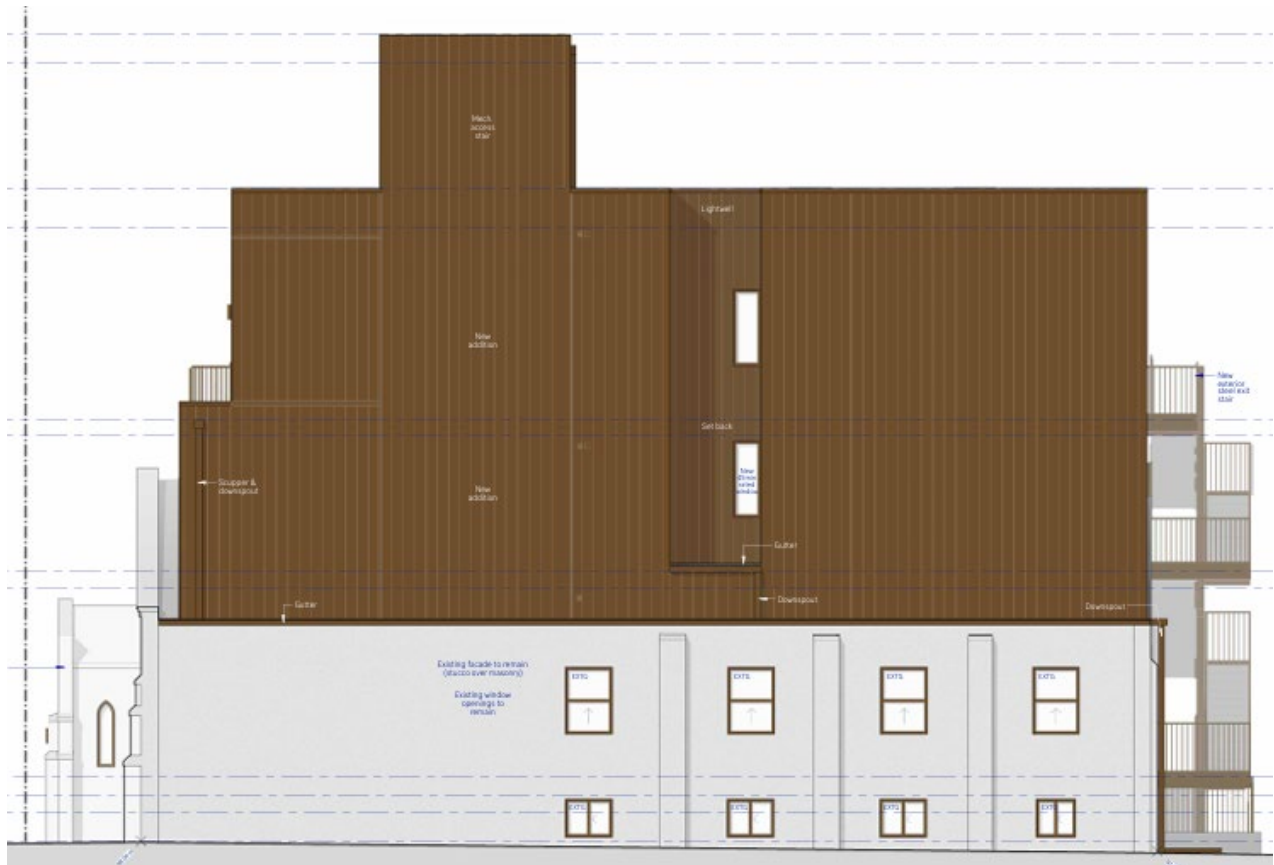
Proposed second floor plan showing the 1.8-metre and 0.76-metre stepbacks (HIA by GBCA, 2026).



Proposed rear and front elevations (HIA by GBCA, 2026).



Proposed side (south) elevation (HIA by GBCA, May 2026).



Proposed side (north) elevation (HIA by GBCA, May 2026).



Rendering of proposal at 8 Robert Street, looking north (HIA by GBCA, 2026).