

53 Strachan Avenue (Entrance Address 805 Wellington Street West) - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property, Demolition of Heritage Attributes and Demolition of a Building under Sections 33 and 34(1)1 and 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: June 26, 2026

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis

Wards: Ward 10 - Spadina Fort York

SUMMARY

This report recommends City Council approve the alterations and demolitions proposed under Sections 33, 34(1)1 and 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the Part IV designated heritage property known as Strachan House at 53 Strachan Avenue and the demolition of a building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West, as well as grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

The City-owned property contains the former Strachan House, one of the largest planing mills in Canada in 1888 when built for John B. Smith & Sons for processing rough-cut, seasoned lumber into smooth, finished dimensional lumber and millwork. After John B. Smith and Sons closed in 1967, the City leased the former factory building in 1989 to Homes First, who adaptively re-used it for supportive housing in 1996. Strachan House featured an innovative design by Levitt Goodman Architects based on an inclusive and collaborative process involving residents in its design. The property is currently vacant.

The subject application is associated with a City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application to redevelop the subject site as part of the Toronto Builds program with the goal of creating new affordable rental housing units on City-owned lands and re-establishing the supportive housing use on the site. The Official Plan requires that when a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is no longer required for its current use, the City will demonstrate excellence in the conservation, maintenance, and compatible adaptive reuse of the property.

The application proposes a 28-storey apartment building with 296 rental units (including 60 affordable rental units) at 53 Strachan Avenue, which includes conserving the Strachan House within the base of the redevelopment through the integration of its principal north and west facades and partial east and south facades by way of in-situ retention and dismantling and reconstruction. The 3-storey brick chimney smokestack located on the interior of the building is proposed to be reconstructed and other interior attributes that cannot be retained are proposed to be commemorated.

An 8-storey supportive housing building is proposed to replace the existing two-storey building known as the Maple Green Building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West. The Maple Green Building was not identified in the property's statement of significance.

The combined applications under the Ontario Heritage Act propose to conserve the cultural heritage value and attributes of the Strachan House in accordance with the existing policy framework. The heritage impacts of the development proposal are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis recommends that:

1. City Council approve:

a. The alterations to the designated heritage property at 53 Strachan Avenue, in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 28-storey mixed-use building, with such alterations substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated May 29, 2026 by DTAH Architects Limited and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by RDH Building Science dated May 29, 2026, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

b. The demolition of heritage attributes of the designated heritage property at 53 Strachan Avenue, specifically Strachan House, in accordance with Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 28-storey mixed-use building, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated May 29, 2026 by DTAH Architects Limited and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by RDH Building Science dated May 29, 2026, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

c. The demolition of a building on the designated heritage property at 53 Strachan Avenue, more specifically the Maple Green Building at entrance

address 805 Wellington Street West in accordance with Section 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 53 Strachan Avenue, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and its consent to the demolition of heritage attributes at designated heritage property at 53 Strachan Avenue under Part IV, Section 34(1)1 and demolition of a building on a designated heritage property under Part IV, Section 34(1)2 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following conditions:

a. That the related Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment permitting the proposed alterations has come into full force and effect.

b. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 53 Strachan Avenue, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing heritage building, and excluding a building permit to demolish the Maple Green Building at the entrance address 805 Wellington Street West, as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the leaseholder of the City-owned property shall:

1. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 53 Strachan Avenue, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated May 29, 2026 by DTAH Architects Limited, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning; and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared by RDH Building Science dated May 29, 2026, all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Provide 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 prepared by RDH Building Science dated May 29, 2026 for the property at 53 Strachan Avenue, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the heritage property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such a plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager Heritage Planning.

4. 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.

5. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

6. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plans required in Recommendation 2.b.2, 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.

7. 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 and Interpretation Plans.

c. That prior to the issuance of a building permit to demolish the Maple Green Building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West, the owner shall:

1. Provide a Mothballing Plan prepared by a qualified heritage consultant for the building at 53 Strachan Avenue, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such protections to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager Heritage Planning..

d. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.b.7, 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 and Interpretation Plans and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

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

3. City Council authorize the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the lessee in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

4. City Council authorize the City Solicitor and City staff to take all necessary actions to implement City Council's decision.

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

On August 25, 2014, City Council adopted the South Niagara Planning Strategy that envisioned the South Niagara Area as a mixed-use community, complementary to the existing Niagara Neighbourhood. The Strategy included securing the preservation and adaptive reuse of the area's heritage resources, in a manner that respects and transitions to the existing neighbourhood, as well as the adjacent Fort York National Historic Site. The Strategy identified 53 Strachan Avenue as a property with heritage potential.

At the same August 25, 2014, meeting, City Council directed staff to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on the potential to designate the property at 53 Strachan Avenue, including entrance addresses at 715, 801 A, and 805 Wellington Street West, under the Ontario Heritage Act, RSO 1990.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2014.PG35.4>

On December 16, 2020, City Council passed motion MM27.33 regarding a future City initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for the site of the subject property to permit the redevelopment of a new supportive housing facility, which contemplates maintaining the existing building at 53 Strachan Avenue. The member motion supporting this request recognized the potential heritage value of the former John B. Smith and Sons building and sought the inclusion of Heritage Planning in the consideration of the development of the property.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.MM27.33>

On December 17, 2024, City Council included the property at 53 Strachan Avenue on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE18.11>

On March 25, 2026, City Council stated its Notice of Intention to Designate the property at 53 Strachan Avenue under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

<https://secure.toronto.ca/nm/api/individual/fileSpace.do?f=7212>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Property

The subject property at 53 Strachan Avenue is individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act through Designation By-law 521-2026 and is located at the southern edge of the West Queen West neighbourhood in the South Niagara Area on the southeast corner of Wellington Street West and Strachan Avenue, directly north of the Metrolinx West Subdivision rail corridor.

The property contains Strachan House, a large scale, brick, 3-storey factory building constructed in 1888 and enlarged between 1899 and 1901. The property also includes the Maple Green Building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West, a 2-storey brick stable constructed in 1901 and Wellington Park located at entrance address 801 Wellington Street West. The Maple Green Building and Wellington Park are not included in the property's reasons for designation.

Strachan House has design and physical value as a representative example of a late-19th century factory building. The property's large scale, organized into 21 bays along Wellington Street West and 5 bays along Strachan Avenue, heavy rectangular massing, and thick masonry walls featuring brick piers and segmental arched openings, are characteristic of this typology. Constructed in 1888, it is one of the earliest examples of this typology in the area. Along with the Wellington Destructor at 677 Wellington Street West and the Part IV designated National Casket Company Factories at 89-109 Niagara Street to the east, Strachan House is one of the few remaining large scale industrial buildings that once lined the railway corridor between Bathurst Street and Dufferin Street. Strachan House has historical value for its direct association with the development of the area between Bathurst Street and Dufferin Street along the railway corridors into one of Toronto's most significant industrial areas from the late-19th to mid-20th centuries. This is reflected in its large scale, heavy 3-storey massing, and large-scale painted signage reflecting its use as the John B. Smith & Sons planing mill and offices from 1888 until 1967.

The property has historical value as it yields information about the land and its relationship to Fort York along the western side of Garrison Creek, a portion of the Ordinance Reserve, and the conveyance of the property to the City of Toronto in 1858. Strachan House also has historical value as it yields information about the industrial development of the surrounding area. Along with the Wellington Destructor at 677 Wellington Street West and the Part IV designated National Casket Company Factories at 89-109 Niagara Street to the east, and Liberty Village to the south, the property formed part of one of Toronto's most significant industrial areas.

Strachan House is further valued for its direct association with Homes First (formerly Homes First Society), which has been providing supportive housing to vulnerable people in Toronto since 1983. After leasing the former John B. Smith & Sons planing mill in 1989, Homes First converted the building into Strachan House in 1996. Representing an innovative approach to the creation of supportive housing pioneered in its earlier StreetCity project, the design of Strachan House involved the collaboration and direct participation of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Strachan House also has value for its association with Levitt Goodman Architects (now LGA Architectural Partners). Founded in 1989 by Janna Levitt and Dean Goodman, LGA Architectural Partners is widely recognized for its community-minded approach to design. This is evidenced in Strachan House's adaptive reuse, which was designed in collaboration with residents, incorporating interior features such as a town square and main street. Along with the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Architecture for Strachan House (1999), the practice has also been awarded the RAIC Award of Excellence for Innovation in Architecture for 25 Leonard Avenue (2007), a social housing building; and the OAA Design Excellence Awards for the Toronto Public Library

Scarborough Civic Centre Branch (2016) and Eva's Phoenix (2017), which provides long-term shelter, education and skills training to youth aged 16-24.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. Strachan House was constructed between 1888 and 1901 as a planing mill for the John B. Smith & Sons where its location alongside the rail corridor provided access to the company's sawmill and timber rights in northern Ontario.

The property's full list of heritage attributes can be found in Attachment 4.

Development Proposal

The subject application is associated with a City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application to redevelop the subject site as part of the Toronto Builds program with the goal of creating new affordable housing units on City-owned lands.

The application proposes a 28-storey apartment building with 296 rental units (including 60 affordable rental units) at 53 Strachan Avenue, which includes conserving the Strachan House within the base of the redevelopment through the integration of its principal north and west facades and partial east and south facades by way of in-situ retention and dismantling and reconstruction.

An 8-storey building with 81 supportive housing units is proposed to replace the existing two-storey building known as the Maple Green Building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West. No development is proposed in the existing park located at 801 Wellington Street West (Wellington Park).

Heritage Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Act

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario. It states that municipalities must have regard for matters of provincial interest. Section 2(d) specifically refers to "the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest" and 2(r) "to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place."

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- The efficient use and management of land and infrastructure.
- Ensuring the sufficient provision of housing to meet changing needs including affordable housing.
- Ensuring opportunities for job creation.
- Ensuring the appropriate transportation, water, sewer, and other infrastructure is available to accommodate current and future needs.

- Protecting people, property, and community resources by directing development away from natural or human-made hazards.
- Conservation of cultural heritage and archaeology.

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the [Planning Act](#) and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

Policy 4.6.1 of the PPS directs that "Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved." "Conserved" is defined in the PPS as the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.

Policy 4.6.2 states that "Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless the significant archaeological resources have been conserved."

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.

Provincial Plans are intended to be read in their entirety and relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.

Toronto Official Plan

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan. The Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. The following Official Plan policies apply to the proposed alterations:

3.1.6.4: "Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

3.1.6.5: "Proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City."

3.1.6.6: "The adaptive re-use of properties on the Heritage Register is encouraged for new uses permitted in the applicable Official Plan land use designation, consistent with the "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada."

3.1.6.8. "When a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is no longer required for its current use, the City will demonstrate excellence in the conservation, maintenance and compatible adaptive reuse of the property."

3.1.6.9. "When a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is sold, leased or transferred to another owner, it will be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. A Heritage Easement Agreement will be secured and monitored, and public access maintained to its heritage attributes, where feasible."

3.1.6.26: "New construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and to mitigate visual and physical impact on it."

3.1.6.27: "Where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register, the conservation of whole or substantial portions of buildings, structures and landscapes on those properties is desirable and encouraged. The retention of façades alone is discouraged."

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

Standards and Guidelines

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards and Guidelines") is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and the conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto. The General Standards (1-9) the Standards for Rehabilitation (10-12), and the Standards for Restoration (13-14) apply to this project.

The Standards and Guidelines can be accessed here:
<http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

COMMENTS

Heritage Planning staff have reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by RDH Building Science and materials submitted in support of the proposal for conformity with the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, the City's Official Plan heritage policies and the Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Conservation Strategy

The application proposes a rehabilitation treatment to conserve the Strachan House. Due to the overall poor condition of the existing structural elements and requirements for new programming, targeted in-situ retention of the north facade is proposed.

Dismantling and reconstruction of the full west and partial east and south facades is also proposed, allowing portions of each elevation of the heritage building to be experienced from the public realm and along the rail corridor. The retained facades will be restored based upon archival documentation, with alterations to select window and door openings proposed to accommodate the new residential use, employing a minimal intervention approach.

The new tower and podium that attaches to the southeast has been designed to reinforce the prominent scale, form and massing of the original Strachan House using setbacks and stepbacks. These, along with a simple three-storey transition above the heritage building, assist in mitigating the physical and visual impacts of the tower above. The new construction is proposed to be compatible with, distinguishable from and subordinate to the existing Strachan House.

The conservation strategy includes several positive mitigation measures that will rehabilitate Strachan House and significantly enhance the public realm, including: the re-establishment of brick masonry bays along Wellington Street West previously covered with Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS); careful removal of the existing unsympathetic paint coating; repairs and repointing of masonry; restoration/reinterpretation of existing ghost signs; removal of vinyl windows and replacement with heritage-appropriate replicas; reconstruction of the interior 3-storey brick smokestack within the non-residential/amenity atrium that is visible from the public realm; and commitment to commemorate interior heritage attributes to be demolished, including elements associated with the 'Town Square' interior design. Finally, the project will explore the feasibility of salvage and re-use of historic masonry and extant heavy timber construction materials.

Given the current condition of the building, the Heritage Impact Assessment recommends several shorter-term actions to prevent further deterioration and to protect the building prior to construction. A draft "Mothballing Plan" was submitted with the Heritage Permit application.

Proposed Alterations and Demolition of Heritage Attributes

Table 10.1 within the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application details the proposed alterations and demolitions to heritage attributes as found in the property's designation by-law.

North and East Elevations

The north principal elevation (18 of 21 total bays) along Wellington Street West is proposed to be retained in-situ. The cement panel-clad annex addition, which is not a heritage attribute, is proposed to be demolished. The three easternmost bays, which have been impacted by later alterations and EIFS, are proposed to be deconstructed and restored to their original masonry condition. One bay of the original east exterior wall (previously altered and covered by the annex addition) is proposed to be reconstructed to match its original condition. This will allow the three-dimensionality of Strachan House to remain legible from the public realm.

Where ground floor openings are altered to serve as doors, windows will be lowered and converted only as necessary to accommodate the new uses. The width of the historic openings and original arch profiles will be maintained. The existing vinyl windows are proposed to be replaced with modern replica windows that closely match the original based upon archival documentation. Door and window specifications will be secured through the Conservation Plan.

Masonry repairs are expected to include removal of the top layers of exterior paint coating, selective brick replacement and extensive mortar repointing. The painted signs on the north elevation between the first and second storeys are heritage attributes and are proposed to be restored. Repainting is the anticipated approach however other options will be considered to reflect a creative layering of the building's full history and secured in the Conservation Plan.

A new canopy structure is proposed above the new main entrance on the north elevation. Further details of this canopy will be detailed in the Conservation Plan and designed to be compatible with the industrial character of the building and minimize physical impact.

The projecting three-sided bay window at the first storey of the westernmost bay is proposed to be demolished and altered to match the original windows found elsewhere on the building. While this feature is identified as a heritage attribute, further investigation through the Heritage Impact Assessment determined the existing window and its material are not original, as such staff are not concerned with the proposed change.

West and South Elevations

Due to its condition and extent of brick replacement that would be required, the full extent of the west elevation fronting Strachan Avenue and 8 bays of the south elevation along the rail corridor are proposed to be deconstructed and rebuilt in the same location to match the original walls. To the extent possible these elevations will be re-built with the original salvaged bricks. Later alterations, such as enlarged rectangular window profiles will be restored to match the original segmental arched profiles. Where ground floor openings are altered to serve as doors, windows will be lowered and converted only as necessary to accommodate the new uses. The width of the historic openings and original arch profiles will be maintained. The existing vinyl windows are proposed to be replaced with modern replica windows that closely match the original based upon archival documentation. The matching projecting three-sided bay window at the first storey of the northwesternmost bay is also proposed to be demolished and changed to match the original windows found on the building. Doors and windows specs will be secured through the Conservation Plan.

The remnants of the painted John B. Smith & Sons sign on the south elevation is a heritage attribute that is highly visible from the adjacent rail corridor and reflects the layered history of the site and area. It will be removed through the deconstruction of the rear wall. The impact of the loss of this heritage attribute is being mitigated by the proposal to creatively reinterpret the lost signage on the exterior walls of the new addition. Consideration will be given to strategies such as 'ghost lettering' with textured

or inset masonry at the new exterior walls and details will be secured in the Conservation Plan.

Interior Attributes

The existing 3-storey brick smokestack is a heritage attribute located within the northeast portion of the Strachan House. It dates to 1888 and was retained within an atrium as part of the 1990s adaptive re-use. For structural reasons the unreinforced masonry smokestack is proposed to be deconstructed and rebuilt in the same location with a new reinforcement structure. The reconstructed 3-storey smokestack will form part of a new 3-storey entrance atrium and will be visible from the public realm through the windows as seen from Wellington Street West and the future midblock connection.

The remainder of the heritage attributes related to the innovative Levitt Goodman Architects interior 'Town Square' design, including the full height atrium with staircase and balconies, are proposed to be demolished to accommodate the new construction and residential uses. The impact of the demolished attributes on the heritage values of the site is proposed to be mitigated through commemoration within the new development, including graphic and textual representation to be secured through an Interpretation Plan.

The building's interior brick and beam construction featuring heavy timber floor and roof framing are attributes that are also proposed to be demolished. The Heritage Impact Assessment identifies the potential to explore the salvage of these building materials wherever possible for non-structural uses, and if determined possible, to be secured through the Interpretation Plan.

New Construction

The new podium and tower have been designed to reinforce the large rectangular plan and scale, form and massing of the original Strachan House on its Wellington St West, Strachan Ave and rail corridor frontages, using setbacks and stepbacks.

A 3-storey atrium addition is proposed at the northeast corner of the Strachan House, marking the new building entrance and providing visibility to the reconstructed smokestack on the interior. The new 6-storey podium addition attaches to the northeast portion of Strachan House and is setback to maintain a substantial portion (8 bays) of the south elevation and one bay of the east elevation. The new massing is stepped back 4m from the Wellington St West facade and 29m from Strachan Ave, allowing the Strachan House to retain its prominence at this intersection.

The new construction is proposed to be clearly contemporary in its design, while being compatible with the character of Strachan House. A change in material above the third storey further establishes a datum with the 3-storey Strachan House. The upper 3-storeys of the podium have no balcony projections and serve as a simple reveal directly above the heritage building. Cladding materials will be secured through the Conservation Plan to ensure the new construction is compatible with, distinguishable from and subordinate to the Strachan House. Amenity space is proposed on the roof of

the heritage building and its glazed railing is proposed to setback behind the parapet to be minimally visible from the public realm.

Proposed Demolition of a Building

The existing two storey building known as the Maple Green Building at entrance address 805 Wellington Street West is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new 8-storey supportive housing building to the east of Strachan House, separated by a mid-block connection. The Heritage Impact Assessment notes the applicant is exploring the potential for its deconstruction for material salvage. This building is not included in the property's reasons for designation and does not contain any heritage attributes. As such, staff is not opposed to its demolition and encourage the applicant's endeavour to pursue deconstruction.

Conservation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant should be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Mothballing Plan

"Mothballing" as a practise involves a plan for the temporary closure of a building with measures to stabilize, secure and protect it from vandalism and weather, while it remains vacant. The applicant has submitted a draft Mothballing Plan with the Heritage Permit application. Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant should be required to submit a final Mothballing Plan for the currently vacant Stachan House building prior to the demolition of the Maple Green Building. This would be prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and would ensure the heritage property is appropriately secured and structurally supported while a development partner is sought for the project delivery.

Interpretation, Signage and Lighting Plans

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant should be required to submit a heritage Interpretation Plan, a Signage Plan and a Heritage Lighting Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

The Interpretation Plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the heritage building to users and visitors of the property. Staff are recommending the Interpretation Plan include a strategy for the commemoration of the interior heritage attributes associated with the former award-winning adaptive re-use as a supportive housing facility. The Plan should also include details of the creative reinterpretation of the ghost signs and details of the re-purposing of any salvaged brick and beam construction materials used for interpretive means.

The Signage Plan should provide parameters for new signage to ensure that the heritage values, attributes and character of the building is conserved.

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

Heritage Easement Agreement

Staff is recommending that the City enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the future lessee to secure the long-term protection of the heritage building at 53 Strachan Avenue.

CONCLUSION

The redevelopment of this City-owned heritage property will see the conservation of the currently vacant Strachan House building, while achieving a development that includes much-needed affordable housing and re-establishes the long-standing supportive housing use on the site.

Staff are of the opinion that the redevelopment has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the heritage property in line with the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies, and that the impacts of the proposed alterations and demolitions are appropriately mitigated through the conservation strategy. Staff are supportive of the application and will continue to work collaboratively with all partners to deliver this important City-led project.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 2 - Photographs

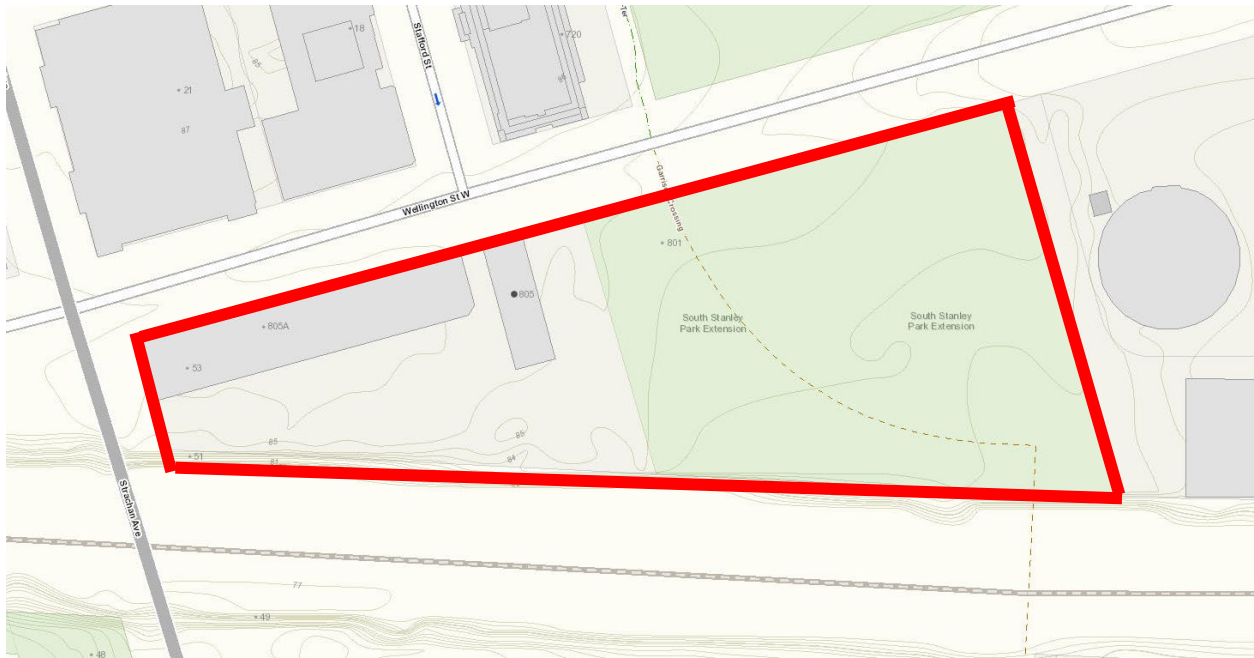
Attachment 3 - Selected Drawings

Attachment 4 - Statement of Significance

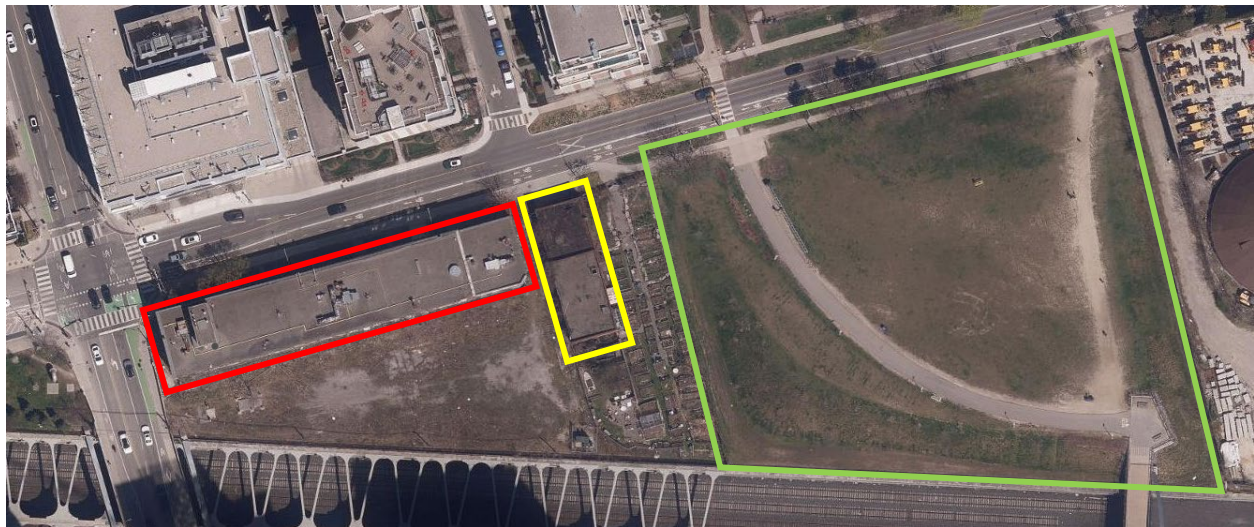
LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

53 STRACHAN AVENUE



This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline marks the location of 53 Strachan Ave (City of Toronto iView Mapping, annotated by Heritage Planning, 2026).



Aerial image of the property showing Strachan House at 53 Strachan Ave/805A Wellington St W (red), Maple Green Building at 805 Wellington St W (yellow), and South Stanley Park Extension at 801 Wellington St W (green). (City of Toronto iView Mapping, annotated by Heritage Planning, 2026).

PHOTOGRAPHS
53 STRACHAN AVENUE

ATTACHMENT 2



Principal (north) and east elevations of Strachan House viewed from Wellington Street West (Heritage Planning, 2026).



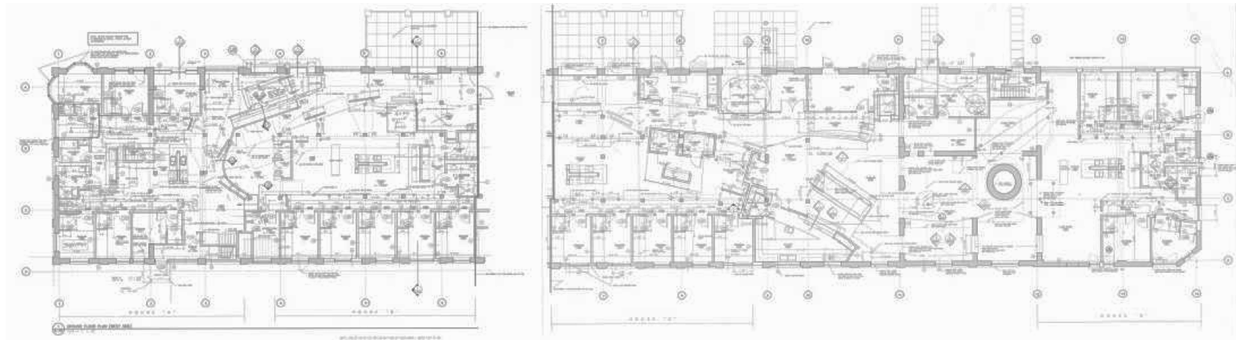
View looking northeast showing the principal (west) and south elevations of Strachan House (RDH Building Science, 2025).



Image looking northeast from Strachan Avenue and the rail corridor showing the rear elevation of Strachan House (Heritage Planning, 2026).



Interior photo of the 'Town Square' with smokestack (RDH Building Science, 2025).



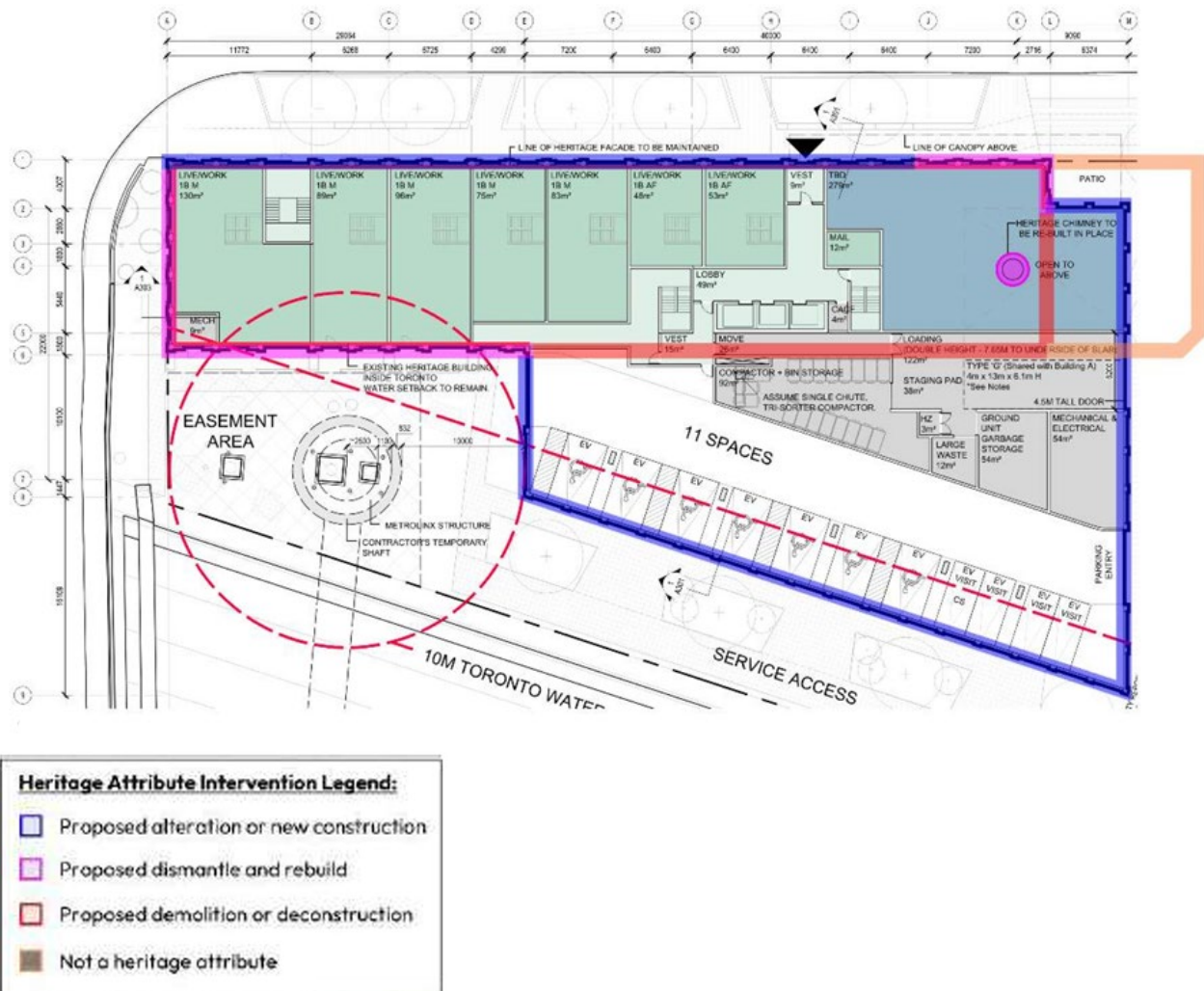
Ground floorplan from the adaptive re-use (Public Work Architects, 1995).



Principal (north) elevation of Maple Green Building viewed from Wellington Street West which is not included in the Reasons for Designation (Heritage Planning, 2026).

SELECTED DRAWINGS 53 STRACHAN AVENUE

ATTACHMENT 3



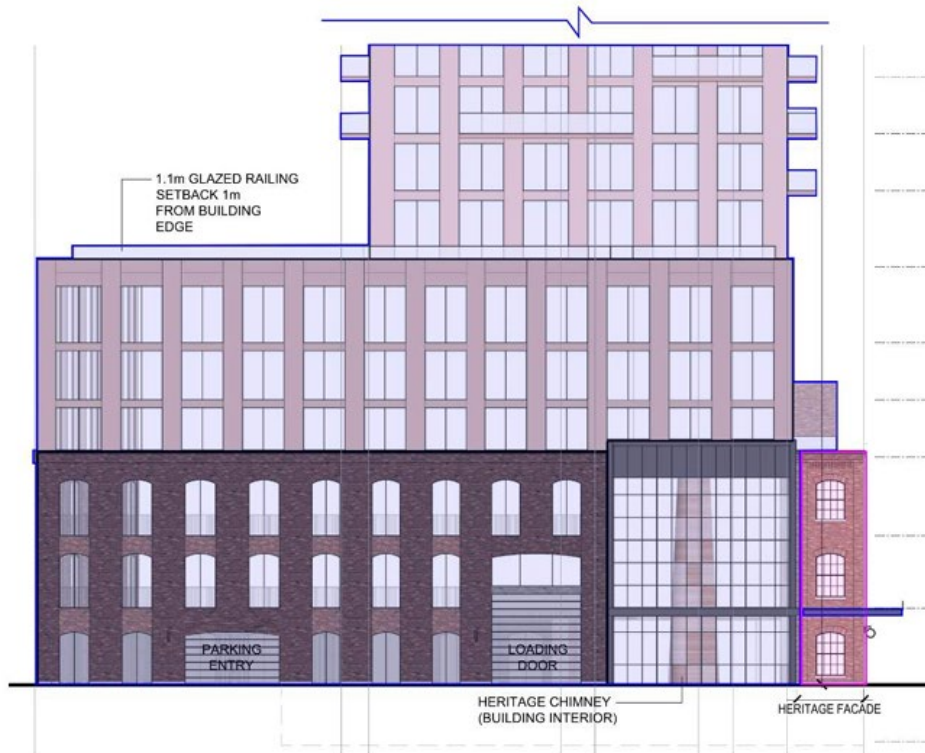
Proposed Ground Floor Plan showing the overall conservation strategy. For the complete application materials please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (DTAH annotated by RDH Building Science, 2026).



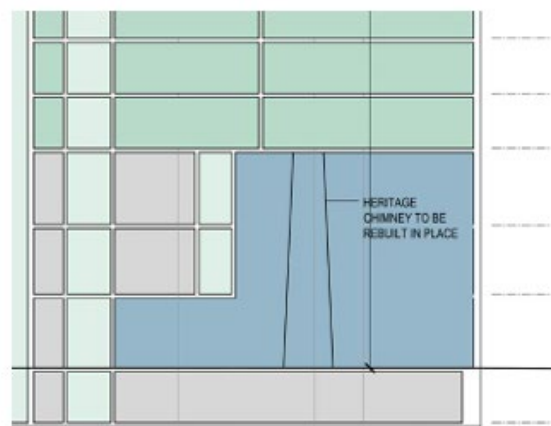
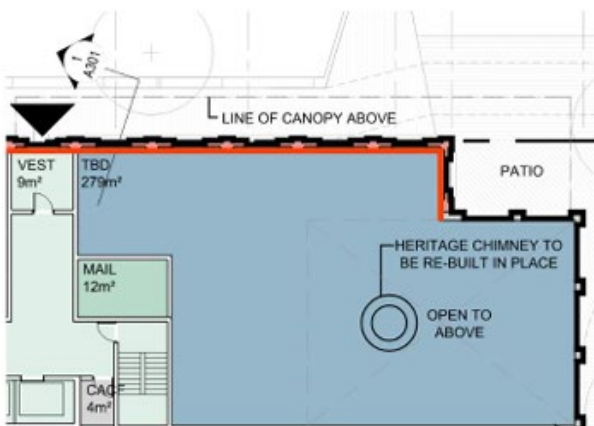
Proposed West Elevation. For the complete application materials please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (DTAH annotated by RDH Building Science, 2026).



Proposed South Elevation. For the complete application materials please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (DTAH annotated by RDH Building Science, 2026).



Proposed East Elevation. For the complete application materials please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (DTAH annotated by RDH Building Science, 2026).



Ground Floor Plan and Section Drawing showing the reconstructed smokestack. For the complete application materials please visit the [Application Information Centre](#). (DTAH annotated by RDH Building Science, 2026).



Conceptual Rendering showing north and west elevations (DTAH, 2026).



Conceptual Rendering showing north and east elevations (DTAH, 2026).



Conceptual Rendering showing south elevation (DTAH, 2026).

53 STRACHAN AVENUE

Strachan House has design and physical value as a representative example of a late-19th century factory building. The property's large scale, organized into 21 bays along Wellington Street West and 5 bays along Strachan Avenue, heavy rectangular massing, and thick masonry walls featuring brick piers and segmental arched openings, are characteristic of this typology. Constructed in 1888, it is one of the earliest examples of this typology in the area. Along with the Wellington Destructor at 677 Wellington Street West and the Part IV designated National Casket Company Factories at 89-109 Niagara Street to the east, Strachan House is one of the few remaining large scale industrial buildings that once lined the railway corridor between Bathurst Street and Dufferin Street.

Strachan House has historical value for its direct association with the development of the area between Bathurst Street and Dufferin Street along the railway corridors into one of Toronto's most significant industrial areas from the late-19th to mid-20th centuries. This is reflected in its large scale, heavy 3-storey massing, and large scale painted signage reflecting its use as the John B. Smith & Sons planing mill and offices from 1888 until 1967.

The property has historical value as it yields information about the land and its relationship to Fort York along the western side of Garrison Creek, a portion of the Ordinance Reserve, and the conveyance of the property to the City of Toronto in 1858. Strachan House also has historical value as it yields information about the industrial development of the surrounding area. Along with the Wellington Destructor at 677 Wellington Street West and the Part IV designated National Casket Company Factories at 89-109 Niagara Street to the east, and Liberty Village to the south, the property formed part of one of Toronto's most significant industrial areas.

Strachan House has further value for its direct association with Homes First (formerly Homes First Society), which has been providing supportive housing to vulnerable people in Toronto since 1983. After leasing the former John B. Smith & Sons planing mill in 1989, Homes First converted the building into Strachan House in 1996. Representing an innovative approach to the creation of supportive housing pioneered in its earlier StreetCity project, the design of Strachan House involved the collaboration and direct participation of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Strachan House also has value for its association with Levitt Goodman Architects (now LGA Architectural Partners). Founded in 1989 by Janna Levitt and Dean Goodman, LGA Architectural Partners is widely recognized for its community-minded approach to design. This is evidenced in Strachan House's adaptive reuse, which was designed in collaboration with residents, incorporating interior features such as a town square and main street. Along with the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Architecture for Strachan House (1999), the practice has also been awarded the RAIC Award of Excellence for Innovation in Architecture for 25 Leonard Avenue (2007), a social housing building; and the OAA Design Excellence Awards for the Toronto Public Library

Scarborough Civic Centre Branch (2016) and Eva's Phoenix (2017), which provides long-term shelter, education and skills training to youth aged 16-24.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. Strachan House was constructed between 1888 and 1901 as a planing mill for the John B. Smith & Sons where its location alongside the rail corridor provided access to the company's sawmill and timber rights in northern Ontario.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of Strachan House:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure with its rectangular plan, three-storey height and flat roof
- The brick and beam construction featuring heavy timber floor and roof framing.
- The structures situation at the southeast corner of Wellington Street West and Strachan Avenue
- The principal (north and west) elevations, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers terminating at a stepped brick parapet with brick corbelling.
- The projecting three-sided bay windows the first storey on the westernmost bay of the north elevation and northernmost bay of the west elevation
- The east elevation, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers
- The north elevation's painted signs for "blinds", "boxes", "flooring" and other goods between the first and second storeys
- The south elevation's painted signs, including "John B. Smith & Sons" lettering in both black and white, that extend across the entire elevation between the second and third storeys

Historical and Associative

The following heritage attributes contribute to the historical and associative value of Strachan House:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure with its rectangular plan, three-storey height and flat roof
- The brick and beam construction featuring heavy timber floor and roof framing.
- The structures situation at the southeast corner of Wellington Street West and Strachan Avenue
- The principal (north and west) elevations, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers terminating at a stepped brick parapet with brick corbelling
- The projecting three-sided bay windows the first storey on the westernmost bay of the north elevation and northernmost bay of the west elevation
- The east elevation, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers

- The north elevation's painted signs for “blinds”, “boxes”, “flooring” and other goods between the first and second storeys
- The south elevation's painted signs, including “John B. Smith & Sons” lettering in both black and white, that extend across the entire elevation between the second and third storeys
- The interior 'Town Square' with its full height interior atrium with staircase, balconies and 1888 brick smokestack with iron doors

Contextual

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of Strachan House:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure with its rectangular plan, three-storey height and flat roof
- The brick and beam construction featuring heavy timber floor and roof framing.
- The structures situation at the southeast corner of Wellington Street West and Strachan Avenue
- The principal (north and west) elevations, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers terminating at a stepped brick parapet with brick corbelling
- The projecting three-sided bay windows the first storey on the westernmost bay of the north elevation and northernmost bay of the west elevation
- The east elevation, organized into bays featuring segmental arch openings with brick voussoirs framed by full height brick piers
- The north elevation's painted signs for “blinds”, “boxes”, “flooring” and other goods between the first and second storeys
- The south elevation's painted signs, including “John B. Smith & Sons” lettering in both black and white, that extend across the entire elevation between the second and third storeys