

# **509 Parliament Street (Carlton Theatre) - Alterations and Demolition of Heritage Attributes of a Designated Heritage Property under Section 33 and 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement**

Date: October 28, 2025

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Toronto-Centre - Ward 13

## **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council approve an application under Section 33 and Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to alter and demolish heritage attributes of a designated heritage property at 509 Parliament Street (the Carlton Theatre), in connection with a Zoning By-law amendment application on the subject property, and that Council grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

The subject property contains a one-storey brick masonry building constructed in 1929 as a movie theatre. The property is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Toronto City Council adopted Designation By-law 103-2024 on February 7, 2024; however, the Designation By-law is currently under appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal and is not in force and effect.

On March 21, 2023, the City received a Zoning By-law amendment application related to the proposed development of the subject property to permit a 10-storey mixed-use building. The proposed development includes the in-situ retention of the west (primary) elevation of the theatre along Parliament Street. A Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, was submitted to support the development application.

Through revisions to the application, Heritage Planning staff are satisfied that the proposal conserves the designated heritage property and is consistent with the policy framework. The heritage impacts of the development proposal are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve:

a. The alterations to the designated heritage property at 509 Parliament Street under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 10-storey mixed-use building, with such alterations to the designated heritage property being substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings prepared by RAW Architects Inc., dated June 18 2025, and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with an approved Conservation Plan and drawings satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

b. The demolition of heritage attributes of the existing designated heritage property at 509 Parliament Street accordance with Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 10-storey mixed-use building substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings prepared by RAW Architects Inc., dated June 18 2025, and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with an approved Conservation Plan and drawings satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and subject to conditions as set out below.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 509 Parliament Street, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and its consent to the demolition of heritage attributes at 509 Parliament Street, under Part IV, Section 34(1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act are also subject to the following conditions:

a. The related Zoning By-law Amendment requiring the proposed alterations has been enacted by the City Council and has come into full force and effect.

b. Prior to the introduction of the Zoning By-law Amendment bill to City Council, 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 509 Parliament Street, prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

2. Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 509 Parliament Street substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings prepared by RAW Architects Inc., dated June 18

2025, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.1, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

3. Withdraw their objection to the designation of the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the Ontario Land Tribunal.

c. That prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 509 Parliament Street, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing heritage buildings, as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Have entered into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City required in Recommendation 2.b.1 for the property at 509 Parliament Street including registration on title of such agreement, to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

2. Have obtained final approval for the necessary Zoning By-law Amendment, and such Amendment has come into full force and effect.

3. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.1 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.

4. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the heritage property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance their heritage character 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. 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.

6. Submit a Signage Plan for the subject property, 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 Plan and Interpretation Plan.

8. Withdraw their objection to the designation of the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the Ontario Land Tribunal.

d. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.c.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 Plan and Interpretation Plan 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 City Solicitor to introduce the necessary Bill in Council authorizing the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement for the heritage property at 509 Parliament Street.

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

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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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**

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On March 29, 30 and 31, 2023, City Council included the property at 509 Parliament Street on the City's Heritage Register.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH2.12>

On October 11 and 12, 2023, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act through Designation By-law 103-2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH6.7>

On February 6 and 7, 2024, City Council affirmed its decision to state its intention to designate the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act as set out in City Council Decision Item PH6.7 on October 11 and 12, 2023, in response to an objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate the property at 509 Parliament Street on behalf of the property owner.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.CC14.11>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Heritage Property**

The development site, 509 Parliament Street, is located mid-block on the east side of Parliament Street, north of Carlton Street and south of Winchester Street. The property contains a one-storey brick masonry building (originally known as the Carlton Theatre) designed in a Classical Revival style in 1929 by Herbert G. Duerr. In 1955-1956, the subject property was purchased by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and converted into a recording studio for radio and television programming, serving local and national audiences. In 1995, the subject property became the home of the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre (later the Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre).

The subject property has cultural heritage value as a representative example of restrained and understated Classical Revival-style architecture. The theatre building contributes to the continuous street wall and historic main street character of Parliament Street. The significance of the property is further associated with the building's survival as the only purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in recognizable form. The property is significant for its association with an architect known for his theatre designs.

The subject property is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Designation By-law is currently under appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal and is not in force and effect.

### **Adjacent Heritage Properties**

The development site is adjacent to the boundaries of the Cabbagetown-Metcalf Heritage Conservation District, enacted by City Council in February 2002 through By-law 110-2002. The District boundary comprises the residential area located east of Broadcast Lane, to the east side of Sackville Street, and from the north side of Amelia Street to the south side of Carlton Street.

Across Broadcast Lane to the east, the subject property is considered adjacent to 254 Carlton Street, a property designated under Part V of the OHA as part of the Cabbagetown-Metcalf HCD. The property contains a Second Empire stucco-clad cottage with a mansard roof known as the Alexander McLean House.

### **Proposal**

The development application for the subject property at 509 Parliament Street proposes a new 10-storey mixed use building on the site, comprising commercial uses and lobby

space at grade and 9 levels of residential uses above. The principal (west) elevation of the existing theatre building is proposed to be retained in-situ as the base of the new proposed building. The infilled storefront openings in the theatre building will be reinstated based on documented evidence. The original ticket box office and flanking entrance doors with transom window above will also be reinstated. Bulbed wall sconces and new poster boxes referencing the originals will be designed as interpretive elements to complement and enhance the legibility of the 1920s theatre typology.

The infilled storefront openings in the theatre building will be reinstated, and a contemporary single-storey bay will be added to the southern end of the retained building fabric. New construction is proposed to be set back 3.9 metres behind the retained theatre building along Parliament Street at floors three through five, with additional setbacks above.

## **Heritage Planning Framework**

Cultural heritage resources are protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Planning 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(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 (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; and 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.

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

### **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. Relevant policies include the following:

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 as 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. 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.

3.1.6.27 - 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 for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada**

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards and Guidelines") is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and 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

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The development application currently proposes the construction of a new, masonry-clad, 10-storey mixed-use residential building approximately 38.5 metres in height (including mechanical penthouse). The introduction of the proposed new building will alter the one-storey, long, polygonal form, scale and massing of the theatre building behind a short façade; however, the proposed construction introduces setbacks, step backs, and design measures to respect the heritage setting. As shown in the plans and architectural drawings prepared by RAW Architects Inc., dated June 18, 2025, new construction at Levels 2 to 5 will be set back approximately 3.5 metres from the primary elevation along Parliament Street, maintaining the flat roof form of the lobby portion of the building and the prominence of the building in the streetwall. Successive stepbacks are proposed above Level 5 to ensure the new building is visually subordinate when viewed from Parliament Street. To accommodate the new construction, the domed roof of the auditorium is proposed to be removed.

The new base building is proposed to be clad in a compatible and subtle brick palette, reinforcing the prominence of the retained heritage building. At Level 2, above the west elevation, the new construction will include contemporary material that is distinct from the masonry theatre building and new masonry construction above. The material will provide a visual buffer between the heritage building and the new building and maintains the theatre building's legibility so that it continues to read as a small-scale historic main street theatre.

Due to outdoor amenity space requirements, the proposed new construction involves the inclusion of terraces and balconies for each residential unit within the project. The applicant has confirmed that the size of the residential terraces on Level 2, behind the heritage parapet on the primary elevation, have been reduced to Ontario Building Code minimums to minimize the volume of the glass wind screen/guardrail. The wind screen is proposed to be glazed to limit visual impact. Additionally, the proposed new construction has been revised to incorporate inset balconies at Levels 3, 4, and 5 to avoid projecting into the stepback above the retained heritage building.

### **Conservation Strategy**

An HIA has been prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated June 20, 2025, that outlines a conservation strategy that proposes the in-situ retention of the entire west (principal) elevation of the designated heritage building at 509 Parliament Street in the base of the new development. As the property is located within a continuous row, no side elevations are visible. The heritage building will continue to contribute to the continuous street wall and continuity in the rhythm of the historic main street character in this area of Parliament Street. Its setback, mid-block placement, and low-scale architecture will be maintained.

The conservation strategy proposes the removal of unsympathetic alterations on the primary elevation of the Carlton Theatre. The arrangement of the original façade storefront and entrance openings will be restored based on documentary evidence. To retain the cultural heritage value of the building as a representative example of the

Classical Revival Style and to enhance the legibility of the building as a historic theatre, the conservation strategy proposes the reinstatement of missing typological elements on the principal elevation including glazed storefront windows, the original ticket box office with flanking doors and multi-paned transom windows above, bulbed wall sconce fixtures, canopy lighting, and poster boxes. A bronze material palette is proposed on the restored theatre elevation to emphasize elements of the building's historic character. The details of the restorations will be set out in a Conservation Plan to be completed to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

A façade-retention feasibility study prepared by Blackwell Structural Engineers, dated April 7, 2025, confirms that the proposed retention is structurally feasible and outlines a methodology for the construction period. The study also identifies the possibility to include retention of approximately 3.5 metres of the north and south perimeter building walls and the two existing walls on either side of the entrance vestibule. Opportunities to integrate additional reconstructed walls to complete the massing of the buildings will be considered as the design progresses and as interior requirements are better understood.

### **Demolition of Heritage Attributes**

To accommodate the new construction, the proposed development anticipates the demolition of interior heritage attributes which are not visible from the public realm including the three-part arrangement of the building and the elements of the original interior configuration. The proposed retail units along Parliament Street and the residential units above require floor area allocated to the functional elements of the project including a mail room, a garbage room, waste storage, elevators, and bike parking. To satisfy Solid Waste and Transportation Services, the applicant is also required to widen Broadcast Lane and to include a type G loading space. According to the heritage consultant, the original clear-span of the auditorium is no longer legible and the three-part arrangement of the building lacks integrity. The stage and auditorium seating have been removed, the raked floor leveled, and partitions have been added to break up the auditorium volume to smaller studio spaces.

As described in the HIA, pending a further study of condition, advancement of the interior design, and subject to a Conservation Plan, features original to the theatre are proposed to be salvaged and incorporated within the new interior design. Staff will work with the applicant at the Site Plan stage to seek opportunities to include partial demising walls within the interiors to demarcate the originals. The design of the interior will interpret the historic character and theatrical history of the subject property, with details to be confirmed in an Interpretation Plan.

### **Adjacent Heritage Resources**

The development site is adjacent to the boundaries of the Cabbagetown-Metcalf Heritage Conservation District. The HIA asserts that the proposed development is not anticipated to negatively impact the cultural heritage value of the adjacent designated heritage property at 254 Carlton Street (Alexander McLean House) and the Cabbagetown-Metcalf HCD.

The proposed 10-storey building will not alter the form, massing or any character-defining elements of the adjacent heritage building at 254 Carlton Street and will not impact the character or architecture of the District. The new construction does not pose significant shadow impacts to Metcalfe Street or any other low-scale historic streetscape in the District. The proposal will not pose adverse impacts to any of the Viewsheds identified in Section 7.2 (Existing Conditions) of the District Plan, as these views are limited to view termini caused by the offset grid of the street network within the District.

The building also contributes to defining and supporting the historic main street character of Parliament Street between Carlton and Winchester Streets, which includes several other properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. By retaining the principal façade and designing new construction that steps back and is distinct from the historic structure, the new proposal conserves the contiguous row of buildings on the east side of Parliament Street.

### **Conservation Plan**

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the owner 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. The Conservation Plan would detail all the recommended interventions and conservation work including any recommended restoration work, a detailed plan describing how the heritage building will be protected during construction, a schedule of short and long-term maintenance requirements and estimated costs for all conservation work.

### **Interpretation Plan**

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Site Plan approval, the applicant should be required to submit an Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The interpretation plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the Carlton Theatre building to users and visitors of the property.

### **Heritage Lighting Plan**

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of site plan approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a heritage lighting plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. This lighting plan should include details of how the Carlton Theatre building will be lit to highlight its unique heritage character.

### **Signage Plan**

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of Site Plan approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The recommended Signage Plan should provide details of the signage strategy for the heritage property, including the appropriate type, scale, location, and number of signs.

## **Heritage Easement Agreement**

Staff is recommending that the owner enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to secure the long-term protection of 509 Parliament Street.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Heritage Planning staff are supportive of the selective demolitions and alterations proposed for the designated heritage property at 509 Parliament Street in the context of the conservation and mitigation strategies proposed for the site. Heritage Planning staff support the retention strategy and are of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, and character of the heritage property.

Heritage Planning staff are satisfied the proposal meets the intent of the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies in conjunction with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Staff recommend that Council approve the proposed alterations and demolitions, and grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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- Attachment 1 - Location Map
- Attachment 2 - Photographs
- Attachment 3 - Plans and Drawings
- Attachment 4 - Renderings
- Attachment 5 - Statement of Significance

# LOCATION MAP

# ATTACHMENT 1

## 509 Parliament Street



Figure 1. Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 509 Parliament on the east side of Parliament Street between Carlton Street and Winchester Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 2. Aerial View (base image 2023) showing the location of the subject property outlined in red at 509 Parliament on the east side of Parliament Street between Carlton Street and Winchester Street. The approximate boundary of the subject property is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).

509 Parliament Street



Figure 3. Principal (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).

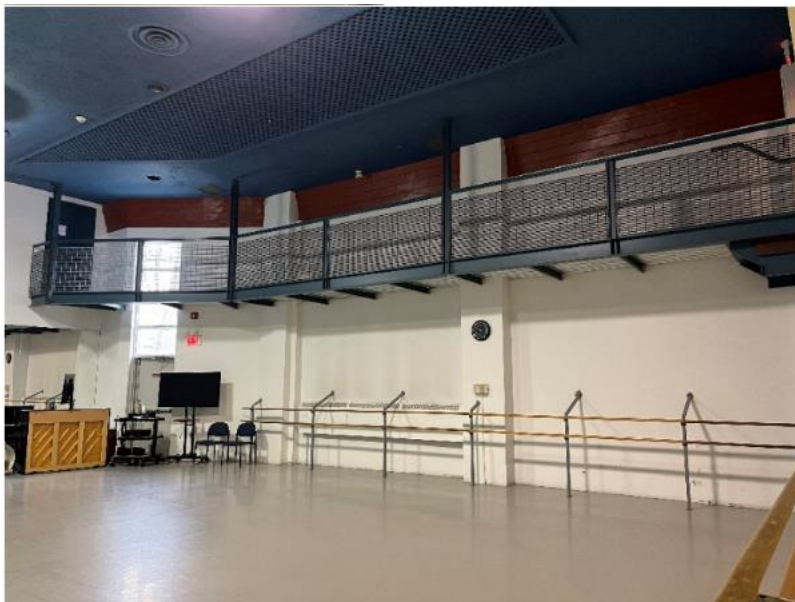


Figure 4. Interior view of 509 Parliament Street (ERA Architects Inc., 2022).



Figure 5. East elevation of 509 Parliament Street, looking southwest (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).

**ARCHITECTURAL PLANS & DRAWINGS**  
**509 Parliament Street**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

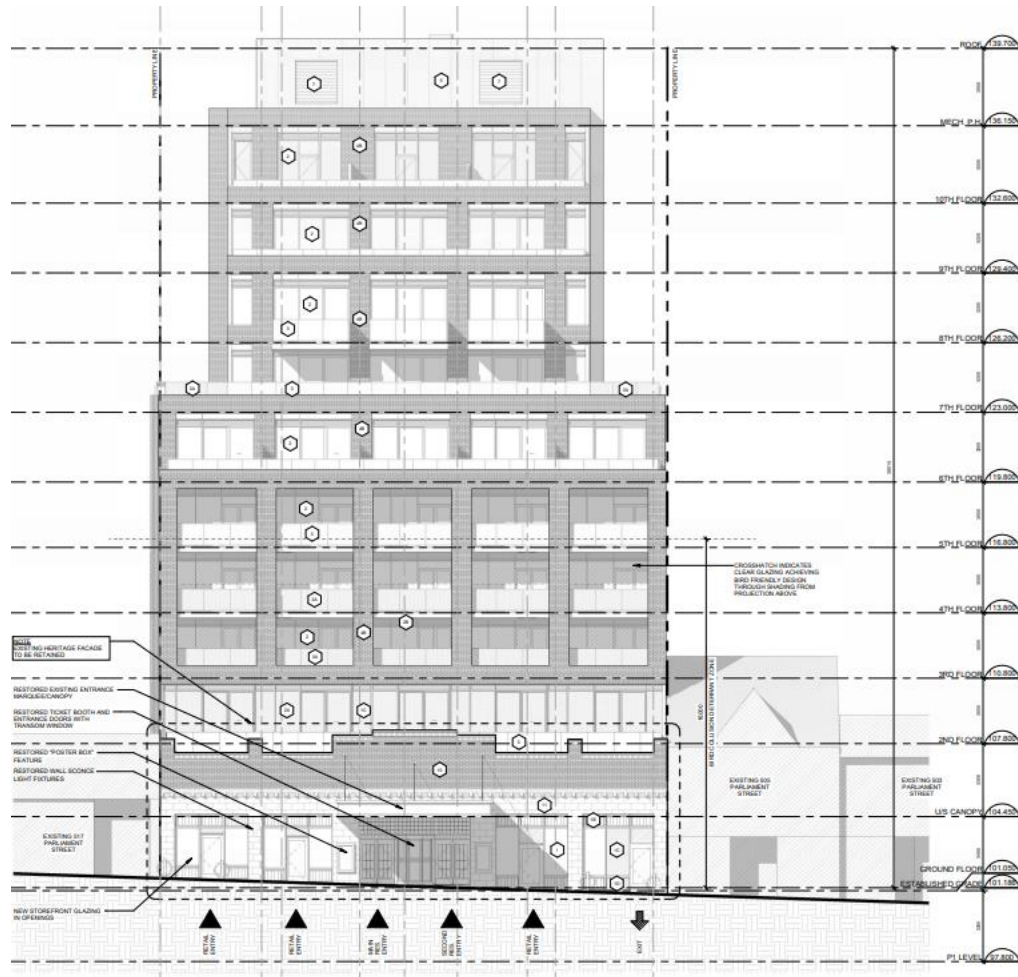


Figure 6. Proposed principal (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

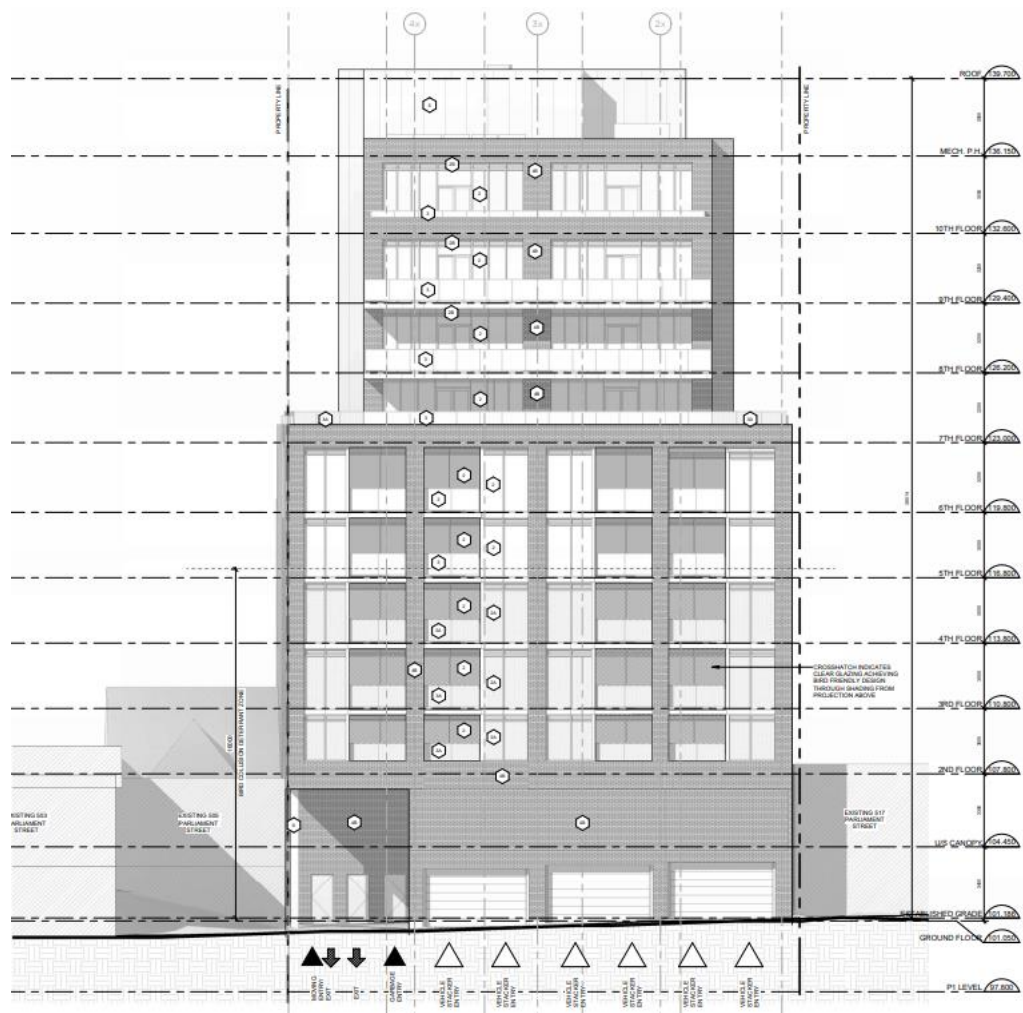


Figure 7. Proposed east elevation of 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

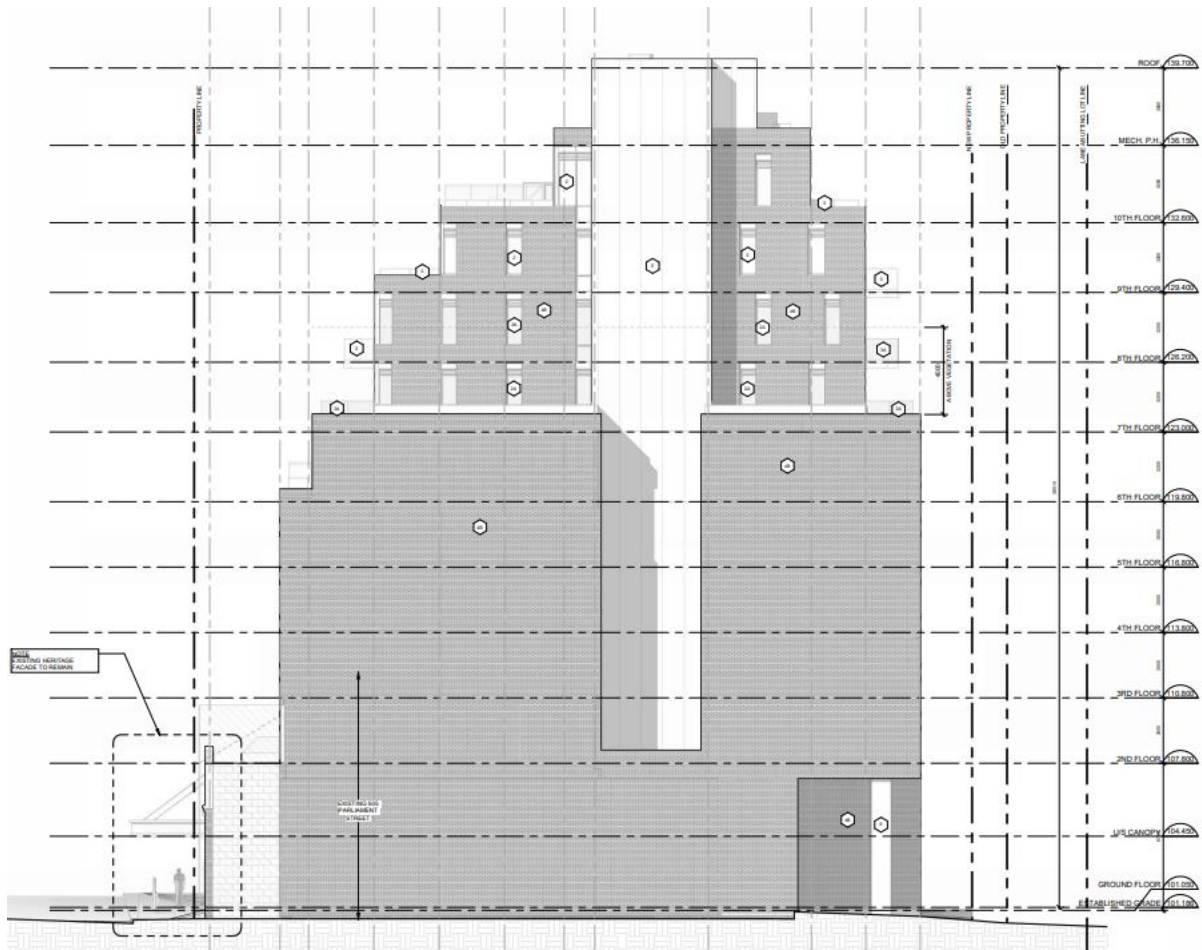


Figure 8. Proposed south elevation of 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

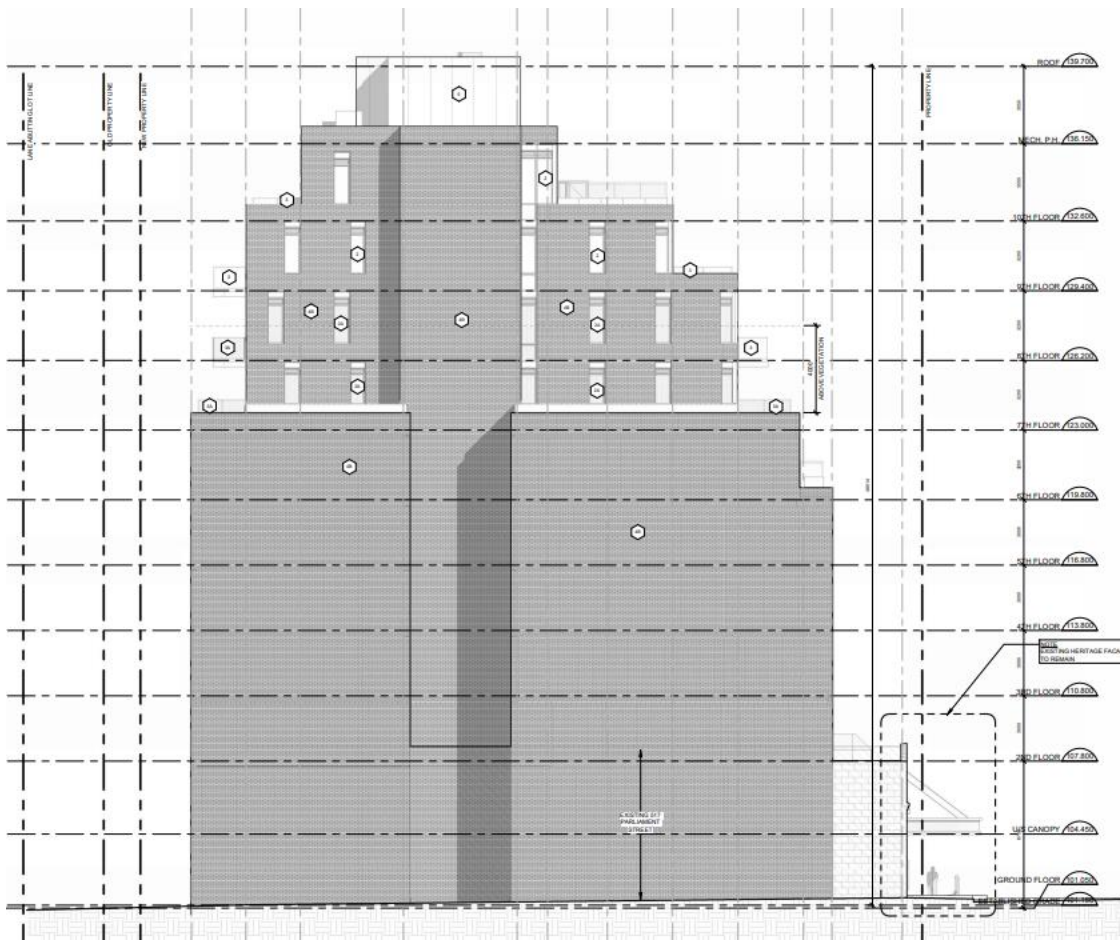


Figure 9. Proposed north elevation of 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

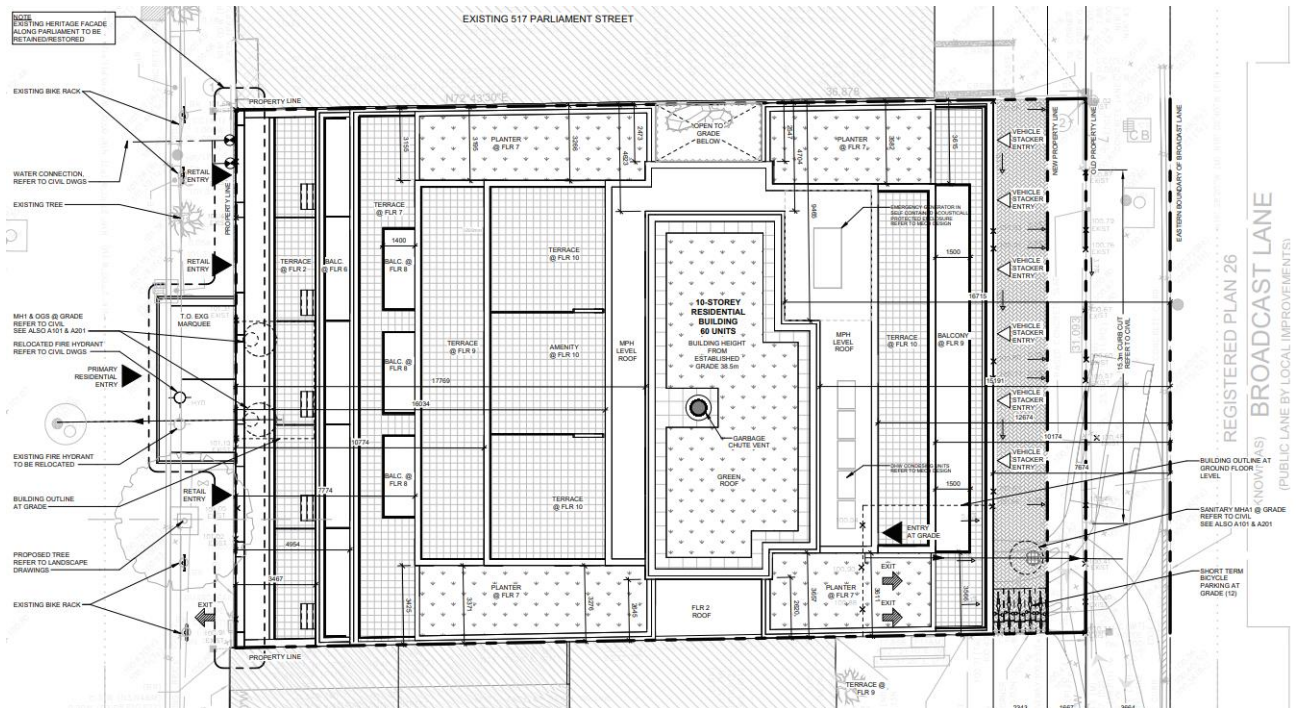


Figure 10. Proposed Site Plan for 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

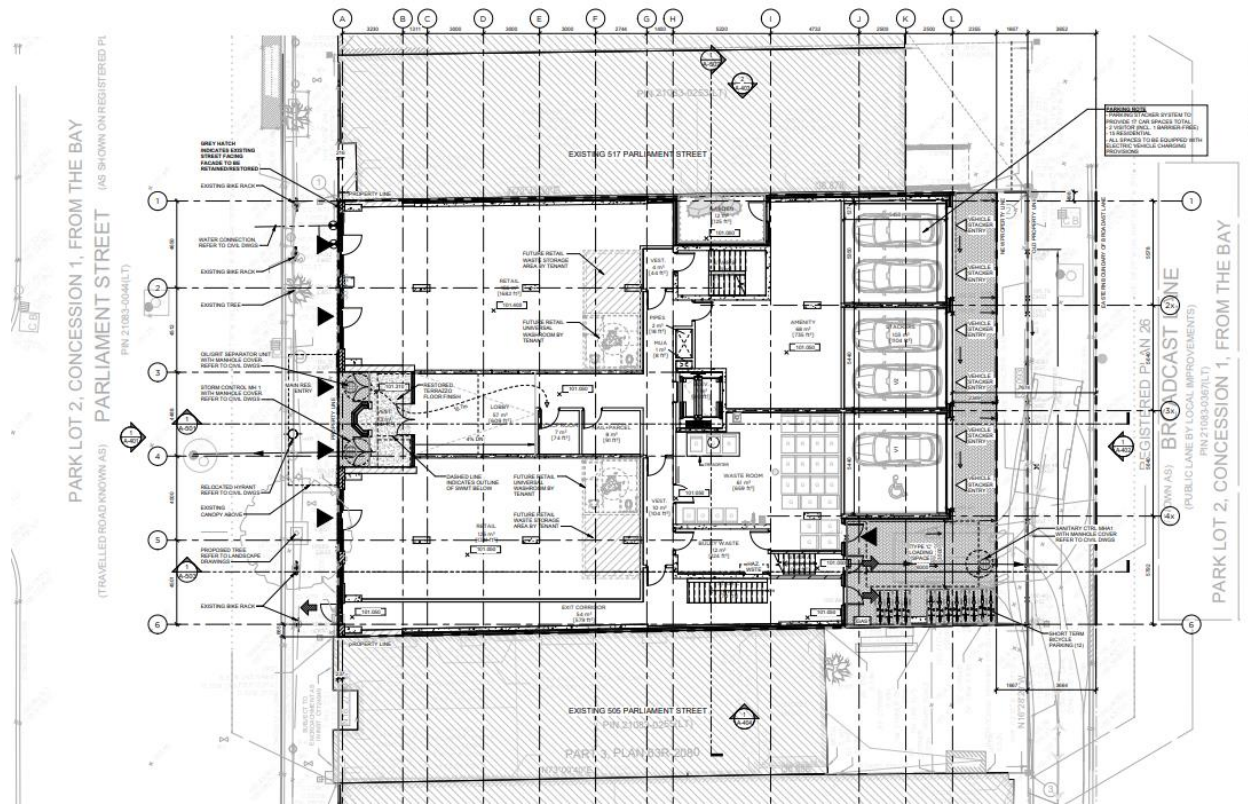


Figure 11. Proposed ground floor for 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

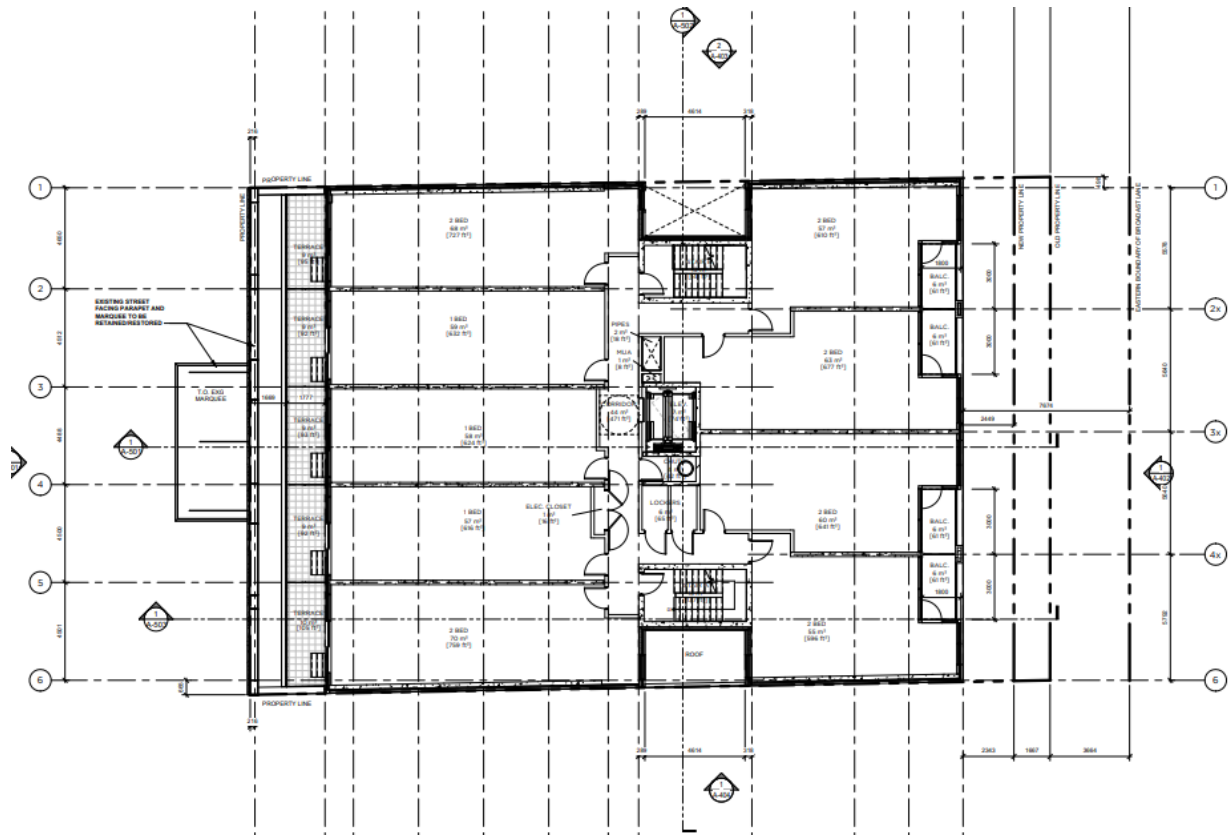


Figure 12. Proposed second floor for 509 Parliament Street (RAW Architects Inc., 2025).

509 Parliament Street



Figure 13. Proposed primary (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street, rendering looking east (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).



Figure 14. Proposed primary (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street, rendering looking northeast (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).



Figure 15. Proposed primary (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street, rendering looking northeast (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).



Figure 16. Proposed primary (west) elevation of 509 Parliament Street, rendering looking northwest (ERA Architects Inc., 2025).

**509 PARLIAMENT STREET**  
**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
**(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

**ATTACHMENT 5**

The property at 509 Parliament Street, is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/ associative and contextual value.

**Description**

The property at 509 Parliament Street, also known as the Carlton Theatre, is located in Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood, on the east side of Parliament Street, mid-block between Carlton and Winchester Streets. It contains a one-storey, Classical Revival-style building constructed as a movie theatre in 1929-30. The property has served as a performing arts venue since 1995. Immediately behind the theatre to the east is the area comprising the Cabbagetown - Metcalf Heritage Conservation District. To the west, behind and on Parliament Street, the area comprises the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

Like the other theatres designed by architect Herbert Duerr in the 1920s, the 1929 Carlton Theatre is characterized and representative of restrained and understated Classical Revival-style architecture. The one-storey building features a symmetrical façade with a stepped and panelled red-brick parapet and ashlar artificial stone storefront detailing. A stylized dentil frieze atop the storefront in the artificial stone finish serves to further the classical character. While the infilling of the storefronts has affected the appearance of the façade, the configurations of the openings have been respected and the artificial stone storefront trim has been retained.

The conservative, classical aesthetic of exterior was also carried over into the interior with simple, clean finishes in the lobby and 1015-seat auditorium. The auditorium was relatively austere except for elegantly placed finishes in a combination of Art Deco and classical motifs. Such finishes include extant pilasters (piers) lining the walls, ornamented with Art Deco-style capitals and classical medallions, as well as a stylized cornice encircling the space, which also remains. The moulding which surrounded the screen is also intact.

The building's significance is further associated with its survival as the only purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in recognizable form. While such building types were once common - with Cabbagetown alone once having other purpose-built, neighbourhood theatres - these theatres have been irreversibly altered or demolished. Not only does the Carlton Theatre retain its façade and stylistic elements of its exterior and interior, but also the three-part structural form typical of traditional movie theatres in the early twentieth century with lobby at the front of the building, auditorium in the middle, and stage at the rear. A steel truss roof allows for a clear span of the auditorium space.

The building is significant for its association with Herbert Duerr (1891-1966), a Pittsburgh-born and trained architect who demonstrated a versatility in his range of work but became known for his theatre design. In 1924, with architect B. Kingston Hall, Duerr redesigned the Tivoli Theatre in Hamilton, which was designated as a heritage property in that city in 1990. In 1926 Duerr established his own firm in Toronto and that year designed the "Major" Theatre at Rogers Road and Rosethorn Ave. From the late 1920s through the late 1940s, Duerr designed at least a half-dozen theatres in the Toronto area as well as more than a dozen theatres elsewhere - mostly in smaller Ontario cities, but also in a couple locations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. While Duerr's earliest theatre works reflect both a conservative aesthetic mixed with more elaborate revival examples, by the mid 1930s Duerr had embraced a more modern aesthetic. Employing this aesthetic the Famous Players chain retained him as their corporate architect to design their theatres across Ontario. In addition to theatres, Duerr's work consisted of a variety of other type of building including apartment houses, stores, factories and warehouses. Surviving examples of Duerr's work in Toronto includes the 1937 Moderne style Creed Fur's Building at Davenport and Bedford Roads, which was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 1997.

The Carlton Theatre is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as an integral component of Cabbagetown's main street context and character, occupying a central location on Parliament Street. Like most community main streets in the early twentieth century, local movie theatres were integral entertainment venues, contributing to that neighbourhood and main street character, with the Carlton Theatre assuming that role on Cabbagetown's main street.

From 1931 to 1954, the Carlton Theatre was one of the entertainment venues and a social focal point of Cabbagetown at a time when attending movies was a popular form of entertainment. In addition to the Carlton, the community boasted five other theatres. Of these, only the Carlton survives in recognizable form as a purpose-built theatre. After its movie theatre use, the building remained a venue during the CBC's tenure for audiences attending concerts of the CBC orchestra, other live music programs, as well as broadcast productions such as the popular comedy show, the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

The building also contributes to defining and supporting the historic main street character of Parliament Street between Carlton and Winchester Streets, which includes several other properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. Across the street at 502-508 Parliament Street is row housing comprising four properties dating from 1879 and placed on the Register in 1975. To the north, the end of the block is occupied by the 1888 Lakeview (Winchester) Hotel, placed on the Register in 1975 and designated by bylaw in 1995. The theatre, with these low-scale structures, and others in the block, had by the 1930s formed a continuous street wall providing a continuity in the rhythm of these buildings.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design or Physical Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative example of the Classical Revival Style:

- The one-storey, long, polygonal form, scale and massing of the building behind a short façade
- The flat roof form of the lobby portion of the building and the domed roof of the auditorium
- The exterior materials of the front façade comprising artificial stone storefront surrounds laid in ashlar arrangement with dentil frieze and stepped and panelled parapet of red brick; the brick secondary facades
- The arrangement of the original façade storefront and entrance openings (now altered)
- Interior finishes including auditorium pilasters (piers) ornamented with Art Deco motifs and classical medallions; the auditorium's stylized cornice and screen-opening mouldings

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative but now rare example of a theatre type:

- The three-part arrangement of the building comprising lobby, clear-span auditorium, and stage/screen area.
- The elements of the original interior configuration including entrance vestibule, shallow interior lobby extending into corridors with stairways, and the extended ceiling height and open volume space of the auditorium

### **Historic and Associative Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street for reflecting the work or ideas of architect Herbert Duerr:

- The building's theatre typology reflecting Duerr's specialization in theatre design
- The Classical Revival-style of design characterizing Duerr's early theatre design in tradition period revival styles

### **Contextual Value**

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as being functionally and historically linked to its surroundings:

- The building's theatre typology and architectural character in contribution to the historic main street character of Parliament Street
- The building's setback, mid-block placement, and its low-scale architecture contributing to the continuous street wall and continuity in the rhythm of the historic main street character of the buildings in the 500 block of Parliament Street

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as defining, supporting and maintaining the historic character of the street:

- The building's placement relative to other listed and designated heritage buildings within the same block of Parliament Street and its adjacency to two Heritage Conservation Districts