

699 and 707 Yonge Street - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act - Refusal

Date: February 18, 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 refuse alterations to the property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the site.

The property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street contains a 3-storey brick row building constructed in 1887. The Brass Rail Tavern has operated at 699 Yonge Street since 1948. Both halves of the commercial row at 699 and 707 Yonge Street have been over-clad, obscuring the original brick walls underneath.

In conjunction with an Official Plan and Zoning Amendment application, the redevelopment proposes a 64-storey plus mechanical penthouse mixed-use building, which retains the façade of the heritage building and incorporates it into the three-storey base of the tower, with a stepback depth of 3 metres from the heritage façade on the Yonge Street (west) elevation.

The proposed 3-metre tower stepback from Yonge Street above the heritage building and the proposed treatment of the front elevation at the ground floor do not adequately conserve the property's cultural heritage values and attributes. Therefore, the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment does not conform with the policies of the Official Plan and does not conserve the cultural heritage values and attributes of the property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council refuse the application to alter the designated heritage property/properties at 699 and 707 Yonge Street under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 64-storey (217 metres, including mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building, in accordance with the plans and drawings dated September 15, 2022 prepared by DIALOG on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc. dated September 15, 2022 and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. If the owner appeals City Council's decision to refuse the application for alterations to the heritage property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, Council authorize the City Solicitor and the necessary City staff to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal hearing in opposition to the appeal.

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 December 13, 2023, City Council stated its intention to designate the properties at 699 Yonge Street and 707 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The decision document can be found here: [PH8.21 - 699 and 707 Yonge Street - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act](#)

As no objection was filed with the City Clerk, on February 7, 2024, City Council enacted Designation By-law 112-2024 designating the properties at 699 and 707 Yonge Street under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. By-law 112-2024 can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2024/law0112.pdf>

On July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council adopted a report recommending refusal of the application for the Zoning By-law Amendment (Application 22 205973 STE 11 OZ) for the lands municipally known as 699-707 Yonge Street, 1-17 Hayden Street and 8 Charles Street East for the reasons identified in the report (June 19, 2025) from the Acting Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.

BACKGROUND

Heritage Property

The property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act on February 7, 2024, through By-law 112-2024. Located on the subject property is a historic commercial row building, which originally featured four commercial units corresponding to addresses 699, 701, 703, and 705 Yonge Street that was divided into two pairs by a parapet firewall along the present-day property line between 699 and 707 Yonge Street. Both halves of the row have been over-clad, obscuring the historic brick walls beneath. Although the storefronts have been altered, the building retains its scale, form, and massing. Investigative testing conducted at 703-705 Yonge Street revealed that masonry detailing from the 19th-century remains beneath the over-cladding.

Development Proposal

The associated development application seeks to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit a 64-storey (217 metres, including mechanical penthouse) mixed-use building containing 514 dwelling units. The proposal retains the façade of the heritage building and incorporates it into the three-storey base of the tower.

Heritage Planning Framework

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, and
- 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.

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.

3.1.6.26 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 facades alone is discouraged.

3.1.6.28 The owner of a designated heritage property will be encouraged to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement where the City considers additional protection beyond designation desirable due to the location, proposed alteration, and/or the nature of that property.

Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (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.

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

COMMENTS

The subject proposal is for a 64-storey mixed-use building, which retains the façade of the heritage building and incorporates it into the 3-storey base of the tower. The tower has a 3-metre stepback from the heritage façade on the Yonge Street (west) elevation. The proposal also involves reconstruction of approximately 3-metre portions of the north and south return walls. The proposed 3-metre tower stepback from Yonge Street above the heritage building is insufficient to conserve its scale, form, and massing, which are heritage attributes of the property.

The heritage permit application proposes to remove and replace the existing building at 5 Hayden Street and remove the over-cladding at 699-707 Yonge, revealing the original façade. The application also proposes to remove the north, south and east elevations of 699-705 Yonge Street. Only the primary (west) elevation is proposed to be retained in-situ, with alterations to the north ground floor portion of the front façade to accommodate contemporary retail uses. The south ground floor portion of the front façade, which was once used for commercial purposes, is proposed to be recessed to accommodate an interior stairwell. This alteration to the ground floor does not conserve the rhythm of narrow storefronts along this portion of Yonge Street, which is also a heritage attribute of the property.

CONCLUSION

Staff do not support the proposed conservation strategy and alterations outlined in this report and in the Heritage Impact Assessment and are of the opinion that the proposal does not conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the Part IV designated heritage property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street. Staff are of the opinion that the proposal is not consistent with the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), and the City of Toronto's Official Plan Heritage Policies. Staff recommend that City Council refuse alterations to the property at 699 and 707 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map
Attachment 2 - Aerial Photograph
Attachment 3 - Photographs
Attachment 4 - Selected Drawings

LOCATION MAP
699 AND 707 YONGE STREET

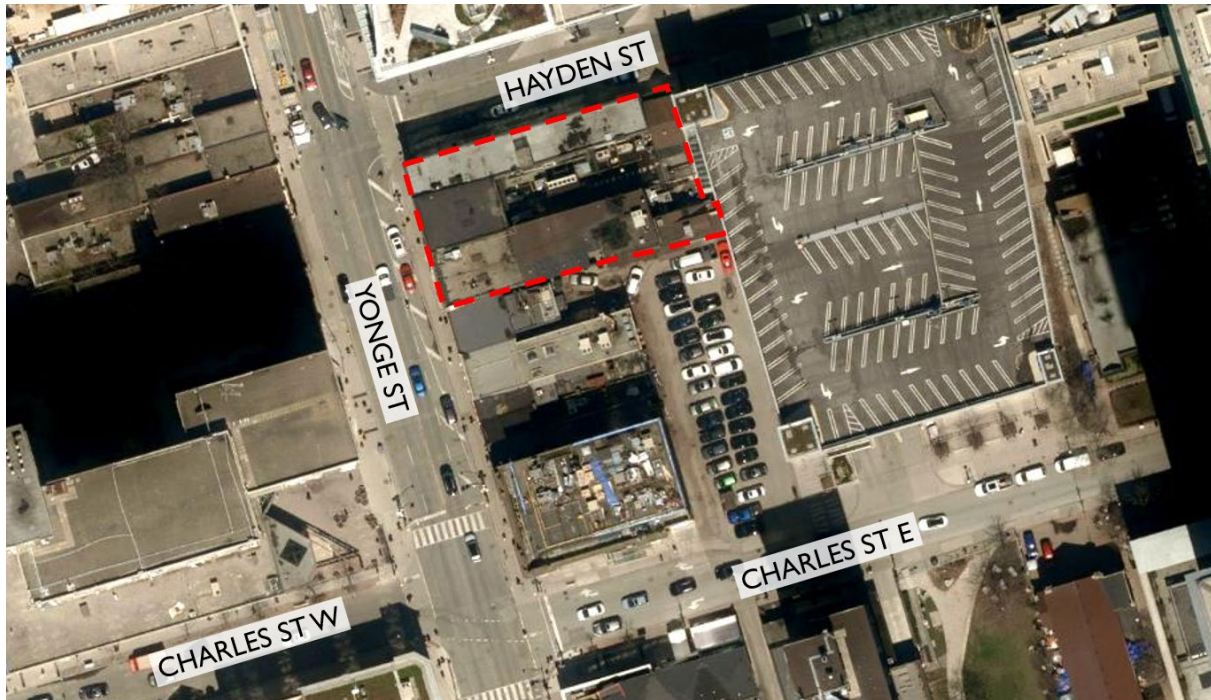
ATTACHMENT 1



Map showing the location of the subject properties outlined in red at 699 Yonge Street on the east side of Yonge Street between Charles Street East and Hayden Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
699 AND 707 YONGE STREET**

ATTACHMENT 2



Aerial View (base image 2022) showing the location of the properties on Yonge Street, south of Hayden Street. The approximate boundary of the properties is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).

Primary Address

707 Yonge Street

Entrance Address(es)

(17 Hayden St)

(707 Yonge St)



Partial north elevation 707 Yonge Street, with entrance addresses indicated (Heritage Planning 2023).



699 and 707 Yonge Street, viewed from the northwest (Heritage Planning, 2023).



699 and 707 Yonge Street, viewed from the southwest (Heritage Planning, 2023).



North elevation of 707 Yonge Street, including the house-form building at Hayden Street (Heritage Planning, 2023).

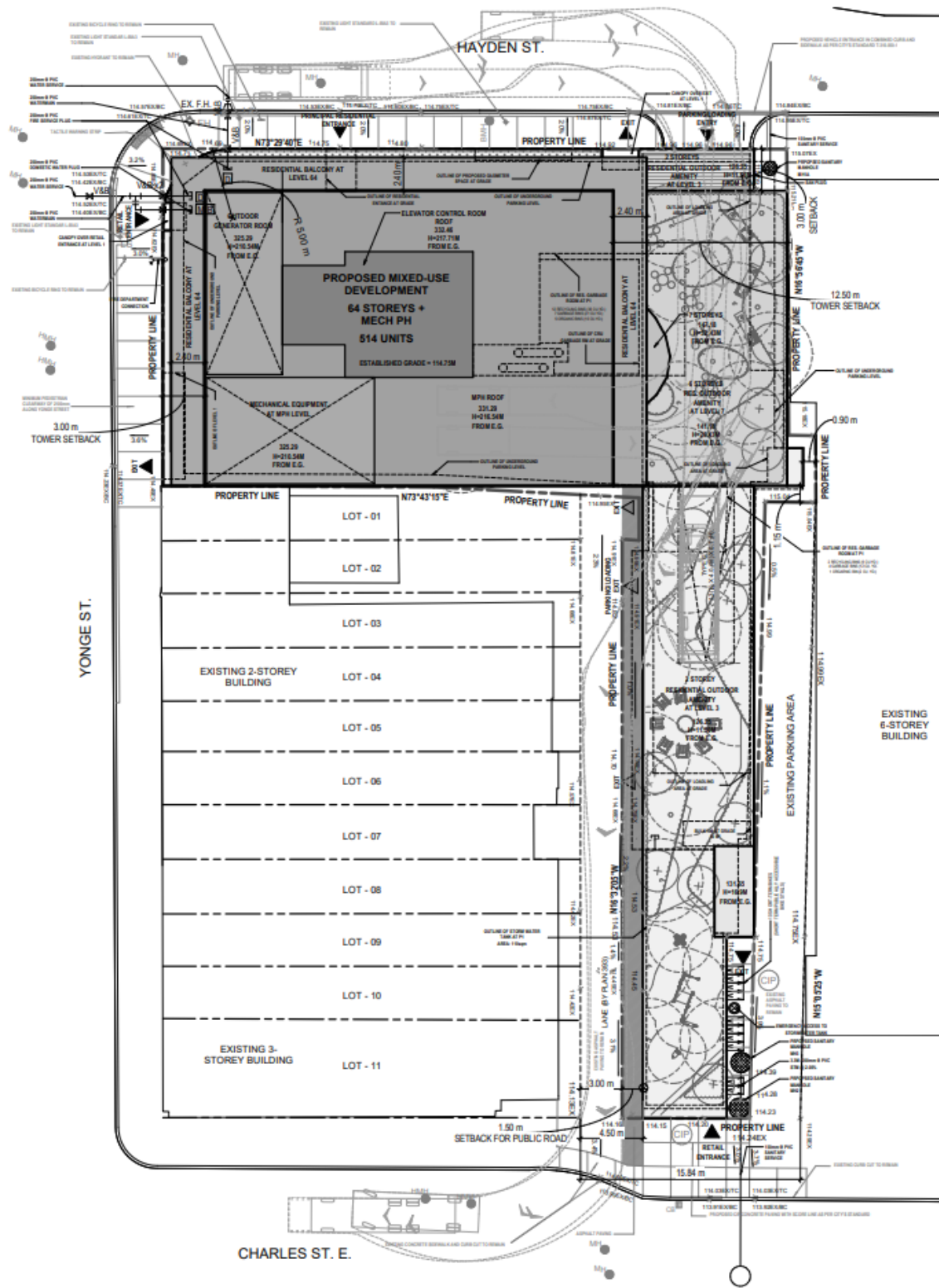
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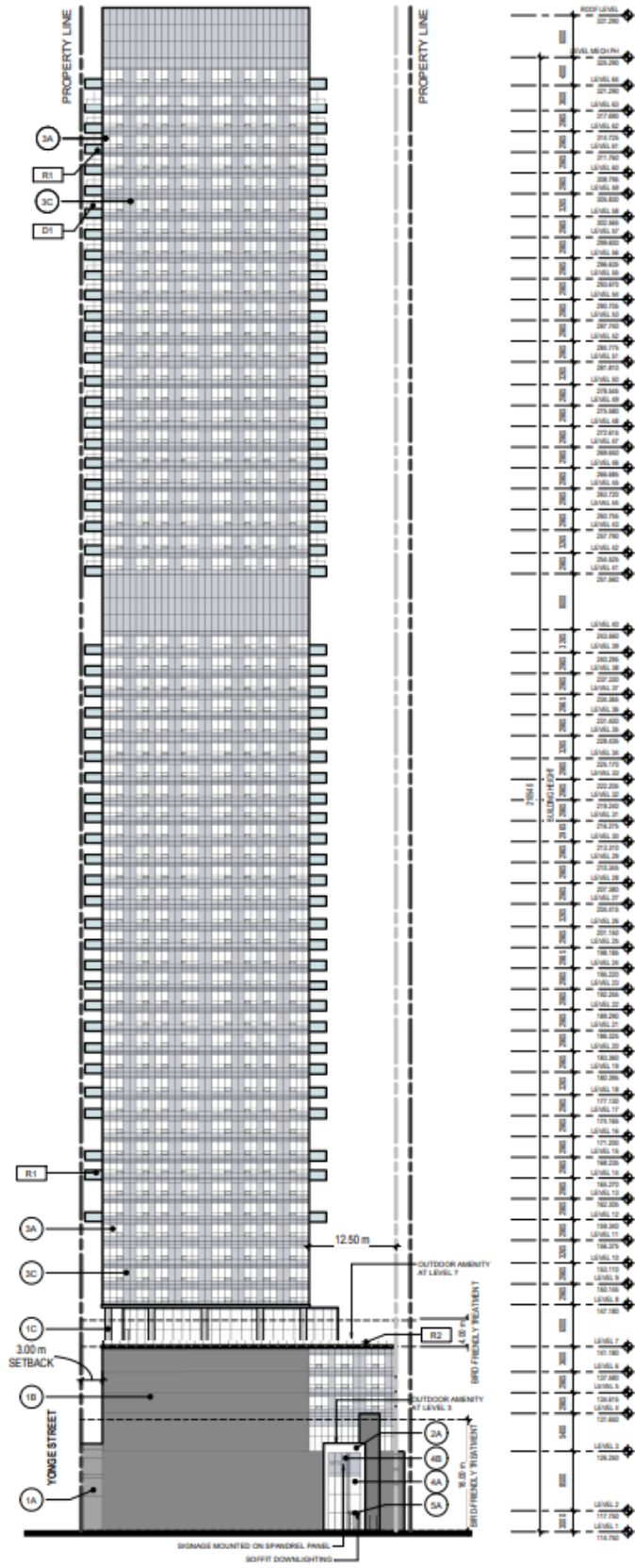
View of Hayden Street, looking east (Heritage Planning, 2023).

SELECTED DRAWINGS
699 AND 707 YONGE STREET

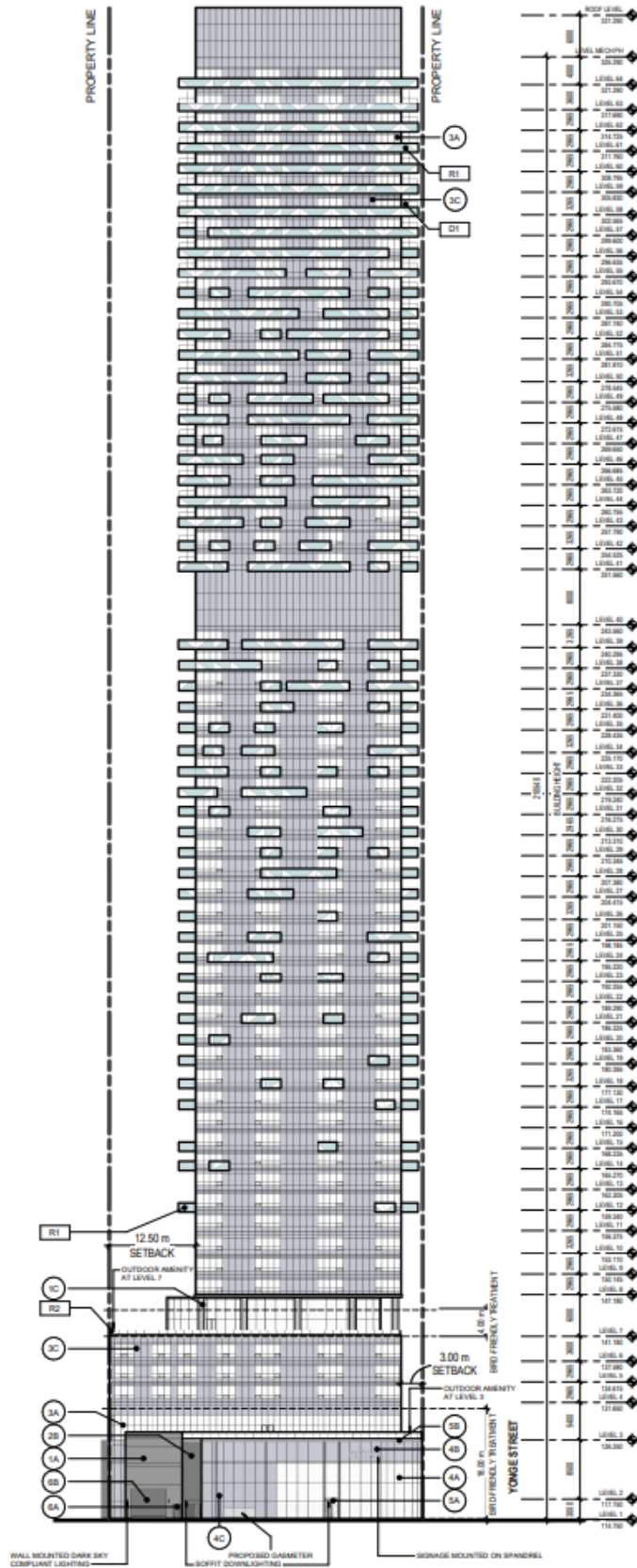
ATTACHMENT 4



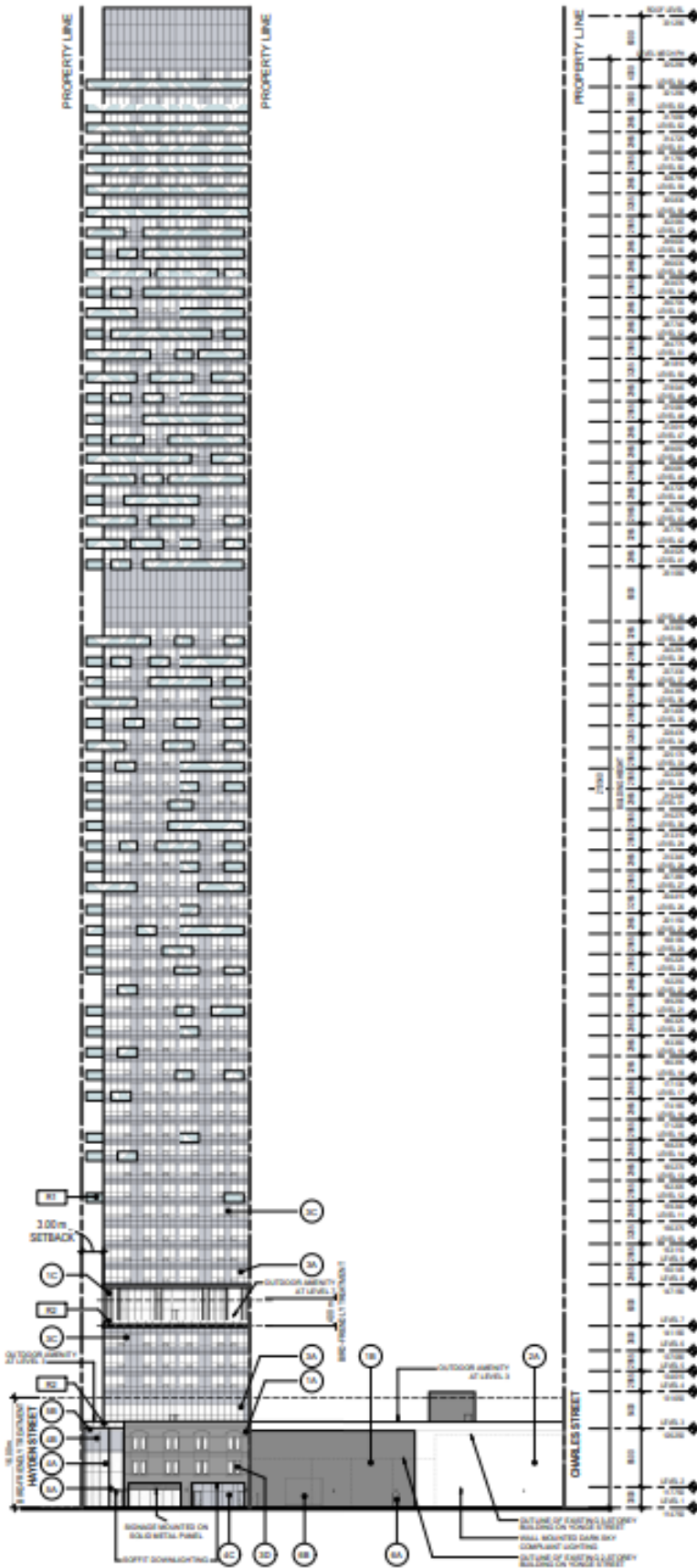
Site plan (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



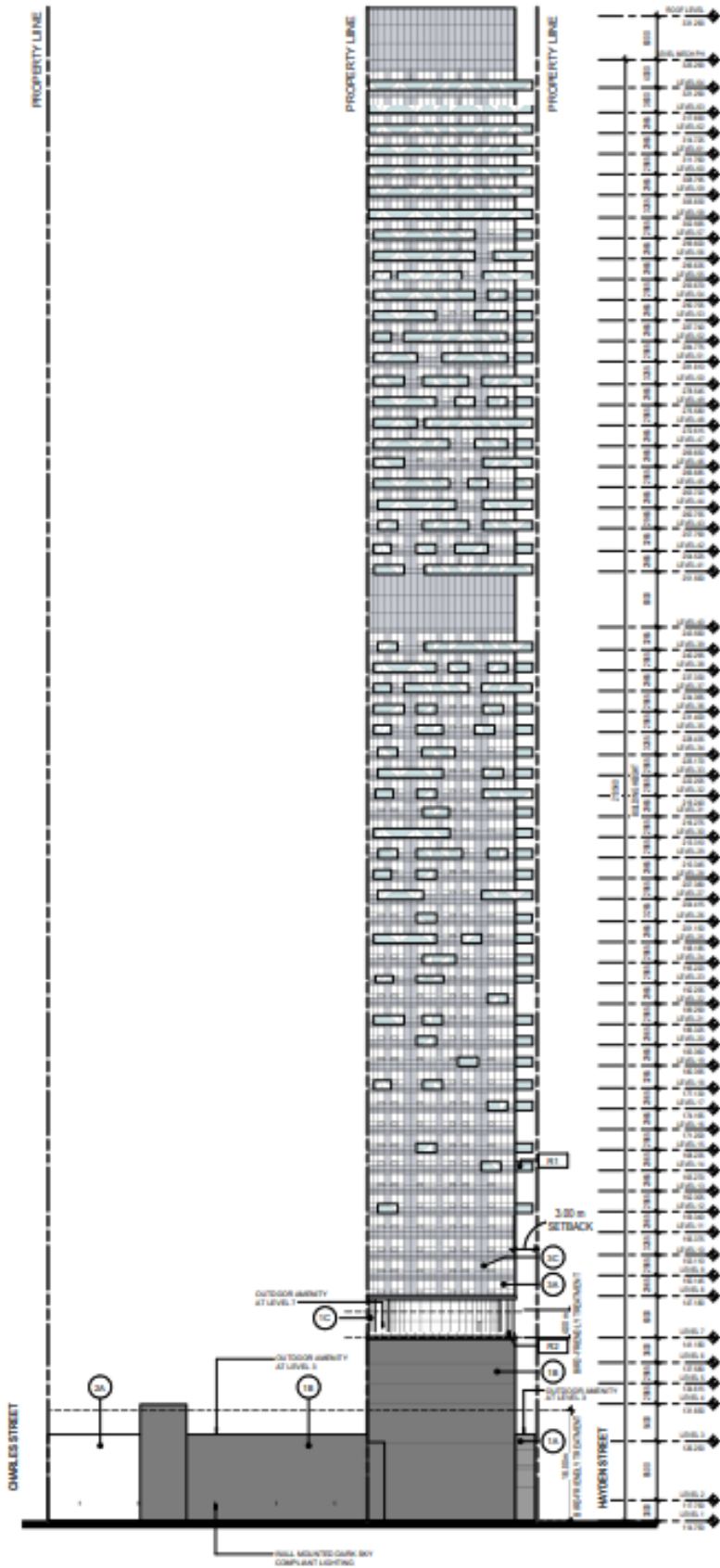
South elevation (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



North elevation (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



West elevation (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



West and east elevations (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



Detailed west elevation (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)



View looking southeast along Yonge Street (DIALOG, September 15, 2022)