

164-166 Isabella Street and 168 Isabella Street - Alterations to Designated Heritage Properties Under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: June 15, 2026

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 13 – Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the designated heritage properties at 164-166 Isabella Street and 168 Isabella Street under Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, in connection with a proposed development of the subject property, and that Council grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

The property contains 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street. 164-166 Isabella Street was constructed in 1887 by James Hewlett and the property is a semi-detached residence that appears as a single grand residence. Designed in the late-nineteenth century vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style, the properties feature symmetrically organized gables bays and a steeply pitched and complex roofline. On November 12 and 13, 2025, City Council stated its intention to designate the heritage properties at 164-166 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Act. On February 4, 2026, City Council passed By-law 87-2026, designating 164-166 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

168 Isabella was constructed in 1892 by Jeremiah Bedford in the Queen Anne style as a single-family residence. On February 4, 1991, City Council passed By-law 1991-0089, designating 168 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The proposed development application for the subject site includes the relocation of the heritage buildings on the development site and the construction of a 70-storey residential tower. Heritage Planning staff are satisfied that the proposed alterations conserve the subject heritage properties and are consistent with the existing policy framework. The impacts to the heritage properties are appropriately mitigated through the overall conservation strategy associated with the proposal.

164-166 and 168 Isabella Street – Alterations and HEA

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the alterations to the designated heritage properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street in accordance with Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for the construction of a 70-storey residential tower with such alterations to the designated properties substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated June 2, 2026, prepared by Studio JCI., and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated September 19, 2025 with revisions March 27, 2026 and June 2, 2026, prepared by GBCA Architects and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with a Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the conditions as set out below.
2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, in accordance with Part IV, Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act, are subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella 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 building as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:
 1. 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 for the properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
 2. Execute and register on title a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated June 2, 2026, prepared by Studio JCI, and the Heritage Impact Assessment dated September 19, 2025 with revisions March 27, 2026, and June 2, 2026, prepared by GBCA Architects all on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.a.1, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, including execution and registration of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
 3. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the heritage properties will be sensitively illuminated to enhance their 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. Provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

6. Submit a Signage Plan for the designated properties retained within the proposed development to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

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

8. 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 for 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street.

b. That prior to the release of an existing Letter of Credit 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 have been completed in accordance with the approved 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 properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street.

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 18, 1976, City Council included the property at 168 Isabella Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

On January 15, 1991, City Council included the properties at 164 and 166 Isabella Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register

On February 4, 1991, City Council passed By-law 1991-0089, designating 168 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/pre1998bylaws/toronto%20-%20former%20city%20of/1991-0089.pdf>

On November 12 and 13 2025, City Council stated its intention to designate the heritage properties at 164-166 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH25.15>

On February 4, 2026, City Council passed By-law 87-2026, designating 164-166 Isabella Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2026/law0087.pdf>

BACKGROUND

Site and Context

The development site, 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, is located on the north side of Isabella Street near the northwestern intersection of Sherbourne and Isabella Streets just west of the area known as St. James Town. The subject property includes the following heritage properties:

- 164-166 Isabella Street – A semi-detached two-and-one-half storey brick house dating to 1887-88 as a representative example of semi-detached residences designed in a late-nineteenth century vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style to appear as one grand single-family residence. The property features symmetrically organized gables bays and steeply pitched complicated roofline. The property's full Statement of Significance and list of heritage attributes can be found in Designation By-law 89-2026.

- 168 Isabella Street – A two-and-one-half storey brick house dating to 1891-92. The house represents late 19th century Queen Anne styling. The property's full architectural description can be found in Designation By-law 89-91.

On April 17, 2026, a Heritage Permit application was made to allow for alterations to the heritage buildings on the subject site. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared by GBCA Architects, dated September 19, 2025 with revisions March 27, 2026, and June 2, 2026 was submitted to support the development application.

Proposal

The development application proposes the construction of a 70-storey residential tower integrated with the existing heritage resources on site to be relocated closer to the sidewalk. Residential units are proposed in the tower component, and the heritage resources will accommodate residential amenities.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The subject property is considered adjacent to the following property that is Listed on the City's Heritage Register:

556 Sherbourne Street – a house constructed in 1891 with a 1914 addition. The property was listed on the Heritage Register June 17 and 18, 1991.

Heritage Planning Policy 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) (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.

City of Toronto Official Plan

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan. The Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. The following Official Plan policies apply to the proposed 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 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 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street – Alterations and HEA

cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City.

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

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

3.1.6.27 - 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.

3.1.6.29. - Heritage buildings and/or structures located on properties on the Heritage Register should be conserved on their original location. However, where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register a heritage building may be relocated within its property or development site where:

- a) the heritage building or structure is not attached to or adjoining another building or structure;
- b) the location, orientation, situation or view of the heritage building is not identified in the Official Plan or as a cultural heritage value or attribute of the property, and/or the proposed relocation will not negatively affect the cultural heritage values or attributes of the property;
- c) the portion of the heritage building or structure that contains the identified cultural heritage values and attributes is being conserved in its entirety and will not be demolished, disassembled and/or reconstructed;
- d) the relocation on site does not conflict with any applicable Heritage Conservation District plans;
- e) a Heritage Property Conservation Plan is submitted that demonstrates that the removal and relocation of the building or structure within its existing property will not pose any physical risk to the heritage building and/or structure, its cultural heritage values and attributes, to the satisfaction of the City; and
- f) these and any other related conditions are secured in a Heritage Easement Agreement prior to removal and relocation on site.

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 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

Heritage Planning staff have reviewed the most recent Heritage Impact Assessment (dated June 2, 2026) submitted in support of the proposal for conformity with the Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, and the City's Official Plan heritage policies.

Proposed Development

The development application proposes a 70-storey residential building. The tower would be integrated with the existing heritage resources at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street. The proposal includes a minor relocation of the existing heritage buildings closer to the sidewalk. The heritage buildings will be retained and repurposed to accommodate residential amenities, including the vestibule and hall of 168 Isabella Street, which will be retained and conserved.

The proposed tower is located approximately 6 metres from the west elevation of 164-166 Isabella Street, and a two storey reveal above the heritage buildings is proposed to be set back by 10 metres from the front elevation of 164-166 Isabella Street, and 13 metres from the front elevation of 168 Isabella Street. The building stepback reveals the roof forms of both buildings. Above the reveal, the massing incrementally steps forward in 2-metre increments.

At 164-166 Isabella Street, part of the west wall, including a portion of the rear (north) wall, will be documented, dismantled and reconstructed. The front portion of the east elevation will be conserved, including the first bay shape, and other features on this elevation will be removed to support the new configuration of interior space. The front façade (south) elevation originally included a verandah, which will be reinstated in a contemporary design informed by archival photographs after the removal of a later one-storey addition.

At 168 Isabella, the front portion of the west elevation will be conserved, including the large window opening that contains a stained-glass transom facing the hall inside. The remainder of the west wall will be removed to integrate with the new spaces. The front portion of the east elevation will be conserved, including the massing related to the vestibule entrance. The bay shape on the east elevation will be modified to remove a projection and reduce the overall width of the building. The front façade (south) elevation will remain similar in appearance and includes the restoration of the original wood balcony on the third floor based on archival evidence.

The proposal will have a significant impact on the scale, form and massing of the existing heritage buildings on the site, including alterations to heritage attributes. Through the development application process, the design has been significantly revised to mitigate the impacts on the heritage properties and improve the conservation strategy. In this final revision, certain massing and projections originally proposed above the heritage buildings have been removed and new construction is located further from the street, allowing for improved conservation of the relocated heritage structures. The tower is primarily located behind the roof slope of 168 Isabella Street, conserving the three-dimensional character of both buildings, especially as experienced at the pedestrian level.

Conservation Strategy

The conservation strategy for the development involves the minor relocation of the heritage buildings at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street. The overall conservation treatment will be of rehabilitation and restoration. 164-166 Isabella Street is proposed to include a new door opening at grade to permit a barrier-free entrance along the west elevation and will be of contemporary design to be distinguishable from the original fabric. The paint on the masonry at 164-166 Isabella will be removed to reveal the original bricks. Non-original flat-roof dormers will also be removed to restore the original appearance of the roof. At 168 Isabella, the 3rd floor balcony will be reinstated to restore the original appearance of the south elevation, and the interior vestibule and hall will be restored based on archival documentation and incorporated into the residential amenity space.

Further conservation treatments proposed will include repair to heritage attributes, replacement windows with complementary new wood units based on archival photos, salvage stained-glass, replicate missing woodwork features based on archival evidence, remove non-historic one-storey massing on 164-166 Isabella (in location of the original verandah) to facilitate design and construction of a new verandah.

The details of the conservation and restoration work will be set out in a Conservation Plan to be completed to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register, a heritage building may be relocated within its property or development site where certain criteria, described in Official Plan policy 3.1.6.29, is met. Heritage Planning staff are satisfied that the proposed conservation strategy complies with the intent of the Official Plan policy and introduces additional mitigation measures to reduce the impacts of the new construction on the heritage buildings, allowing them to maintain their three-dimensional integrity, scale, form and massing, and perception as two house form buildings.

The buildings are to be positioned further south on their original lots in two sequences, but their final location will conserve their orientation to the street.

Adjacent Heritage Resources

The HIA states that the development will not have any negative impacts on the heritage values of the adjacent Listed property at 556 Sherbourne Street. Heritage Planning staff agree with the assessment that the proposal does not negatively impact the relationship between the development site and the adjacent heritage property or alter its cultural heritage value.

Conservation Plan

Official Plan policy 3.1.6.29 (e) states that when a heritage building is relocated, a Conservation Plan will be submitted that demonstrates that the removal and relocation will not pose any physical risk to the heritage building and/or structure, its cultural heritage values and attributes, to the satisfaction of the City. Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the applicant should be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the HIA prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning. The Conservation Plan should detail all of the recommended interventions and conservation work including any recommended restoration work, the proposed on-site relocation process (including the use of an interim location as coordinated through the construction phasing plan), a detailed plan describing how the heritage buildings at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street will be protected during construction, and 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, the applicant should be required to submit an Interpretation Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Heritage Lighting Plan

Staff are recommending that the applicant be required to provide a Heritage Lighting Plan. The Heritage Lighting Plan should provide details of how the heritage properties will be lit so that their unique heritage character is highlighted.

Landscape Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to provide a final Landscape Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Signage Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, 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 properties, including the appropriate type, scale, location, and number of signs.

Heritage Easement Agreement

Official Plan policy 3.1.6.29 (f) states that when a heritage building is relocated, conditions are secured in a Heritage Easement Agreement prior to removal and relocation on site. Staff is therefore recommending that the owner enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement to secure the long-term protection of 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning staff are supportive of the proposed alterations to the designated heritage properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street in the context of the conservation and mitigation strategies proposed for the subject site. Heritage Planning staff support the relocation strategy and conservation strategy and are satisfied that the proposal has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, and character of the properties.

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 grant authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

CONTACT

Jennifer Guerin
Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning
416.338.9458
jennifer.guerin@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 2 – Aerial Map

Attachment 3 - Photographs

Attachment 4 - Selected Drawings

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

164-166 and 168 Isabella Street



Location Map showing the development site in red with the property at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, located on the north side of Isabella Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

164-166 and 168 Isabella Street

ATTACHMENT 2



Aerial photograph showing the properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street, outlined in red. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown. (City of Toronto Mapping, 2025)

PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 3

164-166 and 168 Isabella Street



South (principal) elevations of the properties at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street. (GBCA, 2025)



Looking northeast on Isabella Street. Subject site is in the middle of the photo. (GBCA, 2025)



Archival photo of 164-166 and 168 and 170 Isabella Street. (CTA, 1959)



Archival photo of 164-166 Isabella Street. (TPL, 1960)



Drone view of 164-166 Isabella Street. (Elysium, 2025)

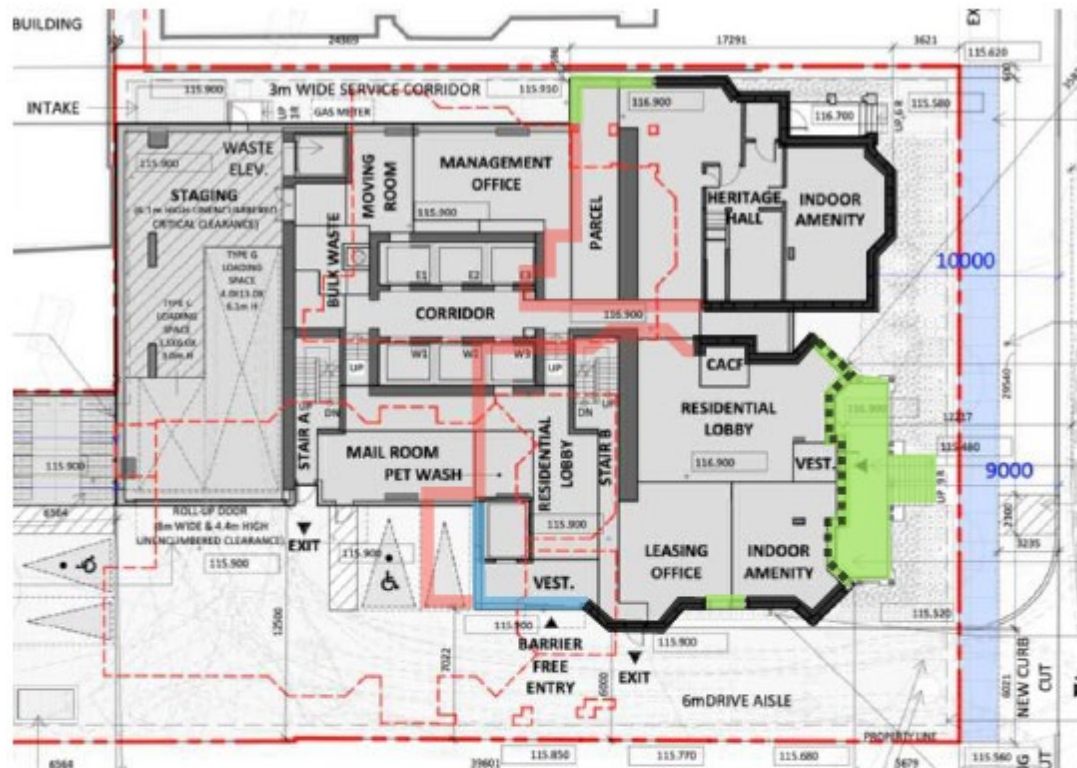


View of 164-166 Isabella Street, showing non-original addition. (GBCA, 2025)

SELECTED DRAWINGS

ATTACHMENT 4

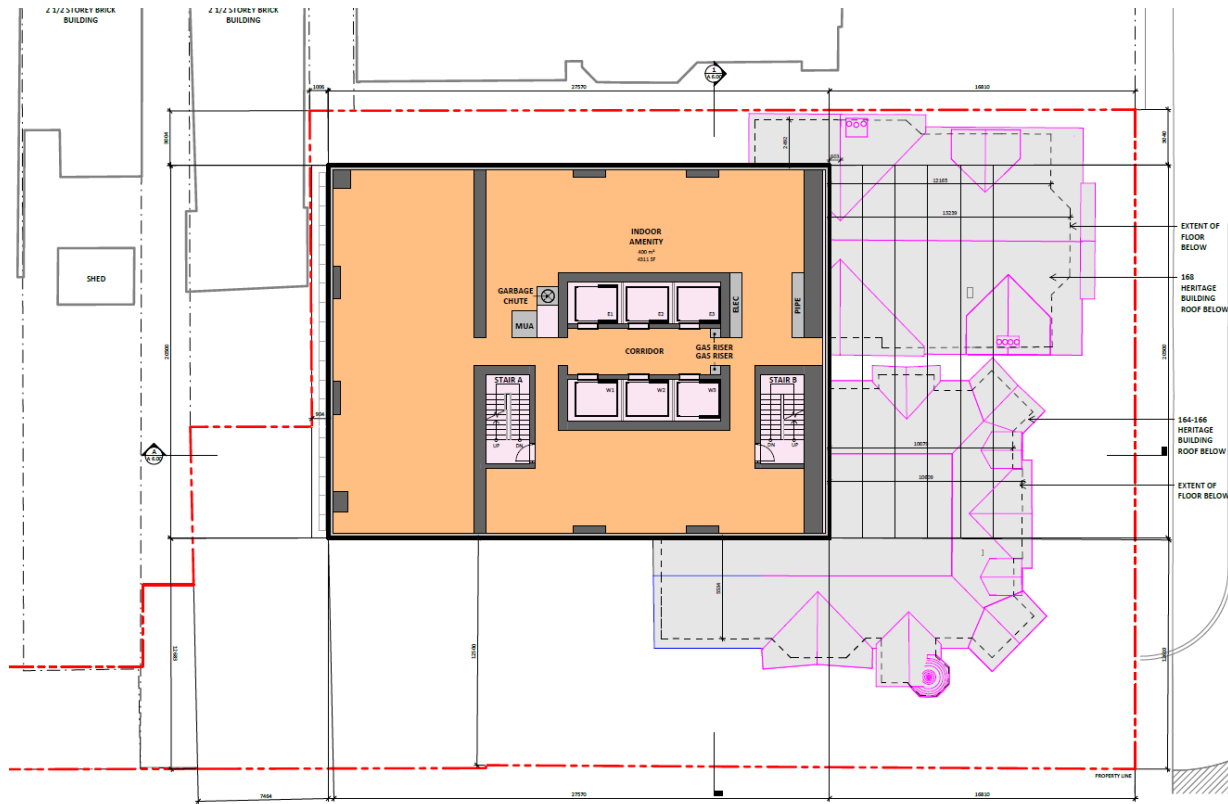
164-166 and 168 Isabella Street



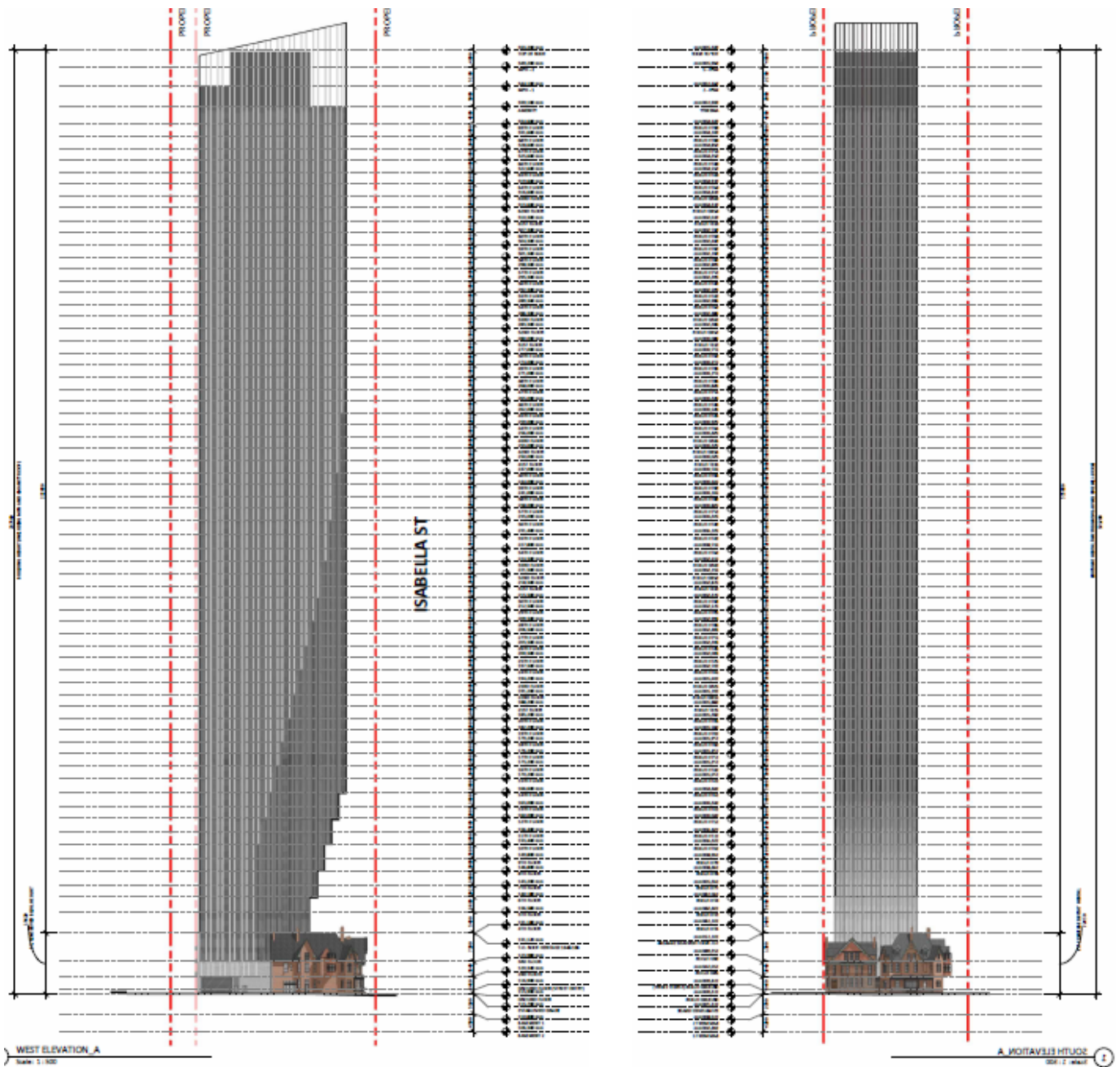
Site Plan showing an overview of the ground floor level. The red dashed outline shows the original placement of the heritage buildings in comparison to their final locations (Plan by JCI Studio with annotations by GBCA).

Legend	
	physically retained walls
	at 164-166 Isabella, masonry walls above the ground level will be physically retained
	dismantled and rebuilt to match
	new construction altered from original design
	removed/ demolished walls

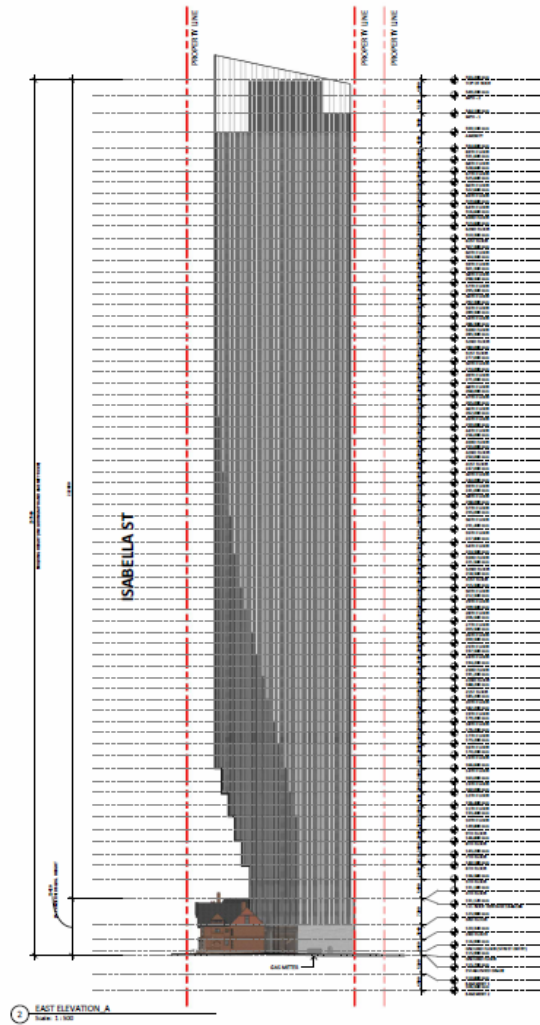
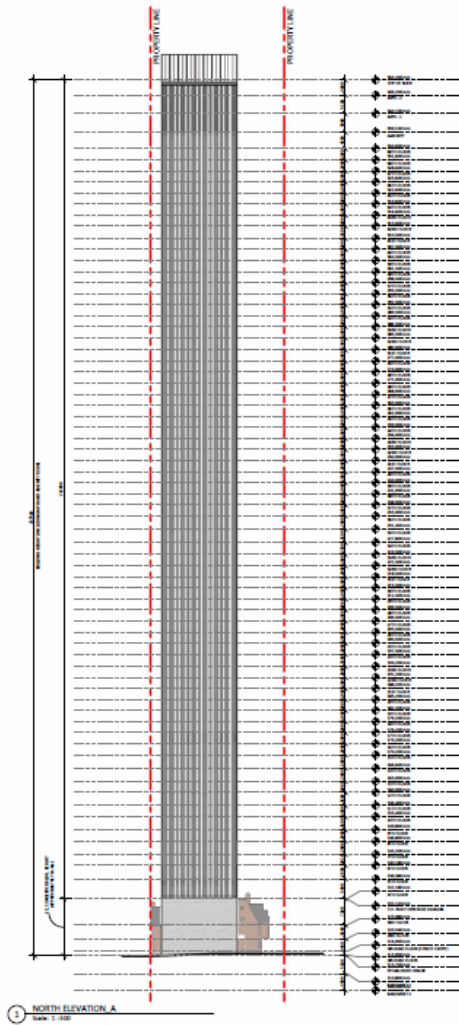
Proposed site plan for 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street for illustration purposes. (Studio JCI, 2026, annotated by GBCA)



Proposed 4th floor plan for 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street for illustration purposes. (Studio JCI, 2026) Pink outline shows the conserved roof forms at 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street.



Proposed west and south elevations 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street for illustration purposes. (Studio JCI, 2026)



Proposed north and east elevation 164-166 and 168 Isabella Street for illustration purposes. (Studio JCI, 2026)



Rendering of the relocated heritage buildings looking north (Studio JCI, 2026)



Rendering of the west elevation of the relocated heritage building at 164-166 Isabella Street (Studio JCI, 2026)



Rendering of east elevation of the relocated heritage building at 168 Isabella Street. (Studio JCI, 2026)



Rendering looking at the southwest corner of the proposal. (Studio JCI, 2026)



2 PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Perspective view of the proposal. (Studio JCI, 2026)