



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 15.4.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**February 6, 2024**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

-ORIGINAL SIGNED-

**SUBMITTED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
For Brian MacDonald, Chair, Heritage Advisory Committee

**DATE:** January 17, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Case HRTG-2023-01146: Substantial Alteration to the Municipally Registered Heritage Property at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax**

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### **ORIGIN**

January 17, 2024 meeting of Heritage Advisory Committee, Item 9.1.1.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council approve the proposed substantial alteration to the municipally registered heritage property at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax, as set out in the staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Heritage Advisory Committee received a staff recommendation report dated January 8, 2024 to consider approving the proposed substantial alteration to the municipally registered heritage property at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Heritage Advisory Committee considered the staff report dated January 8, 2024 and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Heritage Advisory Committee is comprised of 6 citizen members and 2 Councillors. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated January 8, 2024.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated January 8, 2024.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.497.7548

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P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 9.1.1**  
**Heritage Advisory Committee**  
**January 17, 2024**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee

**-ORIGINAL SIGNED-**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline Hamilton Executive Director of Planning and Development

**DATE:** January 8, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Case HRTG-2023-01146: Substantial Alteration to the Municipally Registered Heritage Property at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax**

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**ORIGIN**

An application by Ecogreen Homes to substantially alter the municipally registered heritage property located at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Heritage Property Act*, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 199

17 (1) Municipal heritage property shall not be substantially altered in exterior or public-building interior appearance or demolished without the approval of the municipality.

By-law H-200, the Heritage Property By-Law

4. The Committee (HAC) shall, within the time limits prescribed by Council or the Act, advise the Region respecting:
  - (c) applications to substantially alter the external appearance of or demolish a municipal heritage property.
  
12. Applications for alteration of a registered heritage property shall be evaluated in accordance with the Standards for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, 2nd Edition as set forth in Schedule 'B-1'. The Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, 2nd Edition shall be used to interpret and apply the Standards.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the proposed substantial alteration to the municipally registered heritage property at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax, as set out in this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

The property at 2539 Agricola Street (the 'subject property') was added to the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality in 2020. The registration recognized the heritage value of the circa 1900-1905 Halifax-Box style dwelling (known as 'Open Mic House'; PID 00169516) located at 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax. Ecogreen Homes, on behalf of the current property owners, has applied to enter into a development agreement (HRM Planning Case 24359) for 2537 and 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax (Map 1). The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the Open Mic House and construct a 27.3-metre mixed-use addition at the rear. The alterations to the Open Mic House and the creation of a new mixed-use addition are substantial and will require approval by Council in accordance with the *Heritage Property Act*.

### **Existing Site Context**

The subject site is located on the east side of Agricola Street, to the north of Charles Street and south of North Street in Halifax's North End (see Map 1). It includes the registered heritage property (2539 Agricola Street) and the adjoining unregistered lot (2537 Agricola Street), which are to be consolidated as a condition of the development agreement.

The subject site will consist of the following:

	Lot Area	Frontage
2539 Agricola Street	278.71 sqm	9.14m
<u>2537 Agricola Street</u>	<u>250.84 sqm</u>	<u>8.23m</u>
Total	529.55 sqm	17.37m

The heritage building on the site is a Halifax-Box style house, the heritage value of which has been summarized in Attachment A. The surrounding neighbourhood contains a mix of commercial and residential uses in buildings of various ages and scales.

### **HRM Planning Case 24359**

This application is associated with a concurrent planning application for a heritage development agreement, known as HRM Planning Case 24359, to redevelop the lands outlined on Map 1. The proposed development (see Attachments B and C) includes the construction of a 27.3m tall mixed-use (residential and commercial) addition to the rear of the registered heritage building and the rehabilitation of the Open Mic House. Case 24359 will return to the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) later for recommendation before proceeding to Halifax and West Community Council on the development agreement application.

### **Requested Substantial Alterations**

The applicant is proposing to make alterations both substantial and non-substantial to the Open Mic House to rehabilitate the dwelling for re-use. An overview of the substantial alterations requested is provided below and expanded upon in Attachment B:

- Removal of the existing rear addition (circa 1911-1918) and removal of the rear portion (46%) of the building to facilitate the construction of a 27.3m tall, mixed-use addition;
- Replacement of the existing unsound brick and rubblestone foundation with a new poured-concrete foundation faced in reclaimed brick to ensure structural integrity;
- Replacement of the modified front door with a new front entry featuring materials, design, and detailing appropriate to the age and style of the building and based on physical and documentary evidence of similar dwellings (wooden door with wood-framed transom and sidelights); and
- Installation of a second-storey side-entrance featuring materials, design, and detailing appropriate to the age and style of the building, to provide access to the second-storey balcony of the new mixed-use addition.

The applicant's conservation work will be guided by the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (hereinafter referred to as the '*Standards and Guidelines*') and by

historical photographs and physical evidence of similar buildings. As noted in the Heritage Impact Statement (Attachment B) the culturally significant use of the Open Mic House as a live music venue will be reinstated as part of the commercial activities of the completed development.

### **Substantial Alteration Legislation**

In accordance with Section 17 of the *Heritage Property Act*, a substantial alteration to a municipal heritage property requires Regional Council approval. The *Heritage Property Act* defines a substantial alteration as “any action that affects or alters the character-defining elements of a property”. The character-defining elements of a property are defined as “the materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings that contribute to heritage value and that must be sustained in order to preserve heritage value.”

Heritage value is defined as “the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations and embodied in character-defining materials, forms, locations, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings.” Therefore, a determination on the appropriateness of a substantial alteration lies in its effect on the property’s unique heritage value and character defining elements.

### **Heritage Value & Character-Defining Elements**

To determine the appropriateness of a substantial alteration, a full understanding of the building’s heritage value and character defining elements is required. As a point of reference, staff have prepared a heritage building summary which outlines the heritage value and character defining elements for the principal dwelling (Attachment A). This summary was created using the historic information contained in HRM’s heritage property files and the applicant’s heritage impact statement (Attachment B).

The *Standards and Guidelines* are used to perform an analysis of the appropriateness of a substantial alteration’s impact on a property’s heritage value and character defining elements. The *Standards and Guidelines* help to ensure that careful consideration is given to how the proposed alterations may affect the heritage values and character defining elements of the building.

The applicant intends to repair existing elements where possible and replace in-kind, where necessary, and the applicant will ensure that the new addition to the rear of the Open Mic House is compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the Open Mic House, so as not to detract from its heritage value, as directed by the *Standards and Guidelines*.

### **Non-Substantial Alterations**

The applicant will undertake several alterations that are subject to staff approval during the permitting process but are not subject to consideration by HAC or Regional Council as it involves maintaining, repairing, or replacing existing features of the principal dwelling, in a manner that maintains or improves the heritage integrity of the dwelling without substantially altering the character-defining elements. The proposed non-substantial alterations are summarized below:

- Retention and repair or replacement in-kind (as needed) of the existing architectural detailing, including brackets, frieze, soffits, fascia boards, corner boards, and window trims/surrounds where damage or rot exists;
- Retention and repair of the existing bay window structure and recladding of its interstitial bell roof with wood shingle cladding;
- Replacement of the modified front porch and steps with new front steps of a style appropriate to the age and style of the building;
- Replacement of the modified front windows with wood-framed windows of design and detailing appropriate to the age and style of the building;
- Removal of existing exterior light fixtures and installation of new exterior light fixtures; and

- Recladding of the whole heritage building with wood-shingle cladding of an appropriate scale for the age and style of the building.

### **Regulatory Context and Approval Process**

In addition to the substantial alteration, the applicant is also pursuing a development agreement, in accordance with to Policy CHR-7 of the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS)* and Section 485 of the *Regional Centre Land Use By-law*. The applicant's development agreement application requires a public hearing and approval from Halifax and West Community Council. If Community Council approves the development agreement application, the proposed development must meet the development agreement's conditions to receive a development permit.

If Regional Council refuses the requested substantial alteration to the heritage property, the owners may choose to alter the heritage property three years from the date of the application, but not more than four years after the date of the application, in accordance with Section 18 of the *Heritage Property Act*. Should the substantial alteration plans be revised, a new substantial alteration application will be required, which will start a new three-year waiting period.

### **DISCUSSION**

The overarching term for protecting historic places in Canada is conservation, which is described by the *Standards and Guidelines* as "all actions or processes aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of an historic place to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life". Conservation may specifically involve preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or a combination of these actions. Applying the *Standards and Guidelines* to the development proposal requires an understanding of the approach to the project, and the character defining elements and heritage values for the property.

In this case, rehabilitation is the primary approach being proposed. Rehabilitation involves the sensitive adaptation of an historic place providing a continuing or compatible contemporary use, while protecting heritage value. Rehabilitation can include the replacement of elements or components of the building with an accurate replica or a new design compatible with the style, era, and character of the historic place. Rehabilitation projects are evaluated using general Standards 1 through 9, and three additional Standards 10 through 12 which relate specifically to rehabilitation.

The existing character-defining-elements of the Open Mic House are proposed to be retained and rehabilitated as necessary. New complementary elements will be introduced where unsympathetic modifications have previously been made, and the proposal will enable a compatible contemporary use of the Open Mic House, ensuring its longevity and enabling its culturally significant function as a live-music venue to continue.

Staff have completed an evaluation of the proposal using the *Standards and Guidelines*, and the results are summarized in Attachment D.

### **Substantial Alterations**

The proposed substantial alterations are necessary to ensure continued use of the Open Mic House (as proposed under planning case 24359). Impacts have been considered and are addressed in the applicant's submissions (Attachments B & C).

The subject property's heritage value is essentially linked to the Open Mic House. The two storey, Halifax Box style dwelling was constructed circa 1900-1905. Many original character defining elements of the building remain; however, some unsympathetic modifications, such as the replacement of original wood windows with vinyl windows and the replacement of the original front entry and door with an unsympathetic entry design have somewhat damaged its integrity.

Staff advise that the proposed removal of the small, circa 1914-1918 rear addition and the rear portion of the building is acceptable. The heritage significance of the property relates mostly to the features at the front of the dwelling (the character-defining elements). The sides and rear of the dwelling would have, in their time, been obscured by neighbouring homes, and their features have been designed accordingly to be simple, unremarkable, and could not reasonably be argued to be character-defining. Furthermore, the majority (54%) of the dwelling's footprint will be retained. By retaining this front 54%, the general form of the Halifax Box style is conserved, and the site can then facilitate the new addition to the rear, which will provide a new compatible use for the property and will fund the rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of the Open Mic House.

The new, mixed-use addition was designed to be compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the Open Mic House through the new addition's set-back, materials, colour choices, and design cues (see design concepts in Attachments B and C, as well as the staff evaluation in Attachment D). The basic massing of the new addition is set back behind the Open Mic House to enhance the prominence of the Open Mic House, and this combined with the new addition's neutral colour scheme and unobtrusive design helps to subordinate the new addition.

The new front entrance with sidelights and transom will correct earlier unsympathetic modifications, improving the heritage building's integrity by introducing new features based on physical and documentary evidence of other buildings of the same era and style. This rehabilitation of the front entrance will be documented to ensure historical honesty and can be reversed without negatively impacting existing character-defining elements. The new second-storey side balcony entrance will feature materials, design, and detailing appropriate to the age and style of the building and will facilitate the new compatible commercial use of the Open Mic House and the reinstatement of its culturally significant function as a live-music venue, thus providing a net improvement to the heritage integrity of the building.

### **Conclusion**

Staff believe that the proposed alterations to the Open Mic House are acceptable. The removal of the small, circa 1908-1911, rear addition and the rear portion of the house will not adversely affect the property's character-defining elements. The property's existing character-defining elements will be retained and conserved and the new addition to the rear has been designed to minimize its impact on the Open Mic House through its setbacks, massing, and materials. As the majority of the Open Mic House will be retained and rehabilitated, the overall effect will be one of enhancing the building's heritage value, integrity, and long-term viability.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The HRM costs associated with processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2023/24 operating budget for Cost Centre C340 – Culture, Heritage, and Planning Information Services. HRM is not responsible for construction and renovation costs.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community engagement process for a substantial alteration is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend that Council approve the proposed substantial alteration with conditions and in so doing should provide reasons for the conditions based on applicable conservation standards.

2. The Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend that Regional Council refuse the proposed substantial alteration to 2539 Agricola Street, Halifax. This is not recommended as staff advise that the proposed substantial alteration be approved for reasons outlined in this report.

Note: The *Heritage Property Act* does not include appeal provisions for decisions of Council regarding substantial alterations, however, if the substantial alteration application is refused, section 18(3) of the *Heritage Property Act* provides that the owners would be permitted to proceed with their proposal three years from the date of the application.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Map 1	Location Map
Attachment A	Heritage Building Summary
Attachment B	Heritage Impact Statement, Plans, Elevations
Attachment C	Materials Palette
Attachment D	Standards & Guidelines Heritage Staff Evaluation

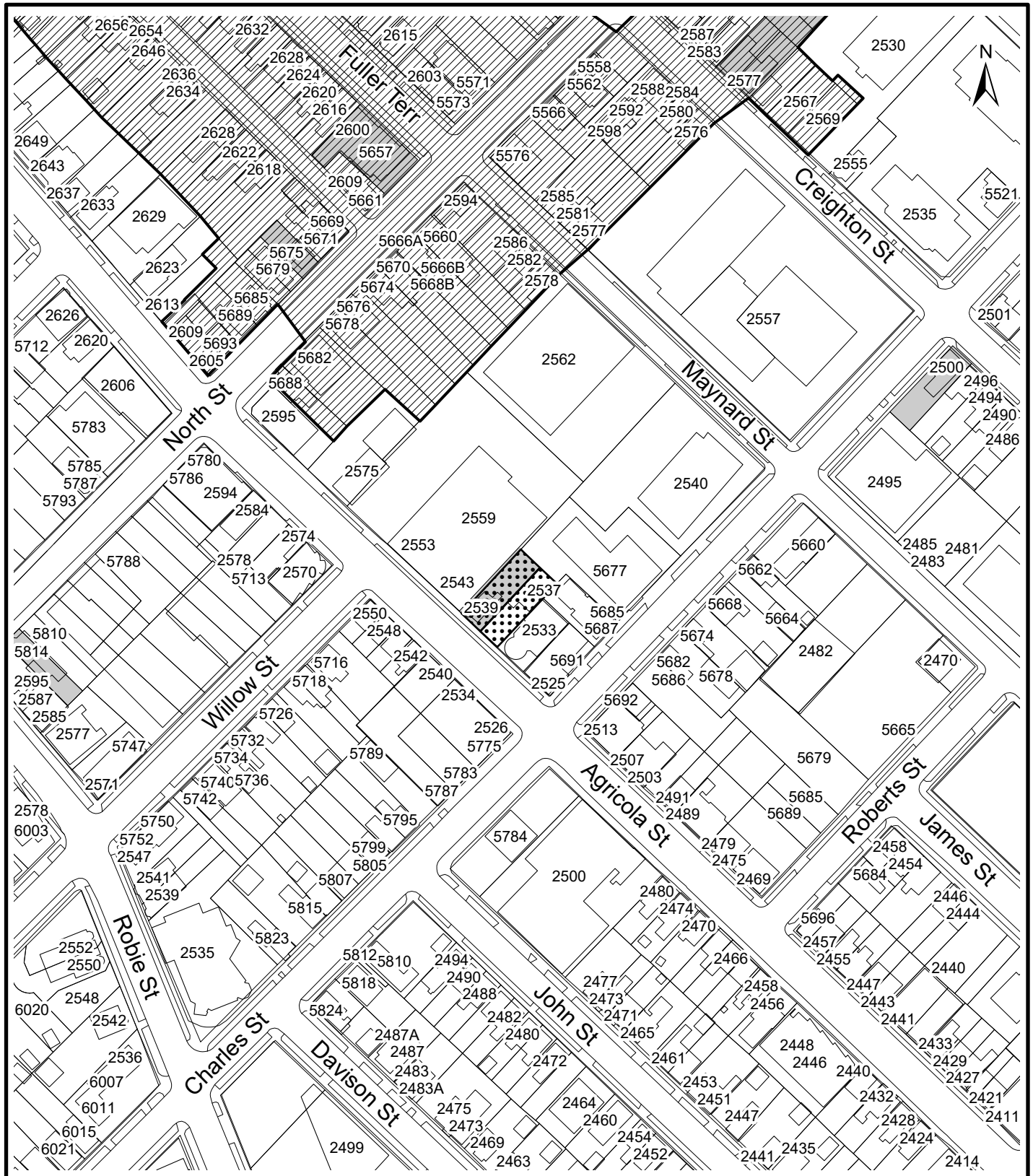
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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Carter Beaupre-McPhee, LPP, MCIP, CAHP, Heritage Planning Researcher, Strategic Projects, 902.719.9604




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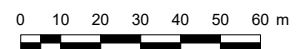


### Map 1 - Location Map

2537-2539 Agricola Street, Halifax

-  Registered Heritage Property
-  Subject Properties
-  Proposed Bloomfield Heritage Conservation District Boundary

**HALIFAX**



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

# ATTACHMENT A - HERITAGE BUILDING SUMMARY

## OPEN MIC HOUSE, 2539 AGRICOLA STREET, HALIFAX (c.1905)



### Character-Defining Elements:

- Two-storey “Halifax Box” style dwelling
- Asymmetrical front façade
- Bracketed cornice with plain frieze
- Two-storey bay window with interstitial bell-roof and matching bracketed cornice with plain frieze
- Simple wooden window trims
- Corner boards
- Wood-shingle cladding
- Near-flat roof
- Culturally significant use as a live-music venue

### Heritage Value:

The Open Mic House (2539 Agricola Street, Halifax) was added to the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality in 2020. The property’s heritage value is embodied in the 2-storey Victorian Plain (Halifax Box) dwelling which was constructed circa 1900-1905 and first occupied by William Oxner (employee of the Intercolonial Railway), his wife, Mary Oxner, and Joseph Locke (labourer). The property has alternated between housing rental tenants and owner-occupiers. It has a longstanding history as a home for tradespeople and the working classes, with occupants including a marine engineer, carpenter, assistant engineer at Nova Scotia Technical College, fisherman, elevator operator and clerk, fireman, rabbi, mechanic, airline attendant, foreman, and so on.

Much of Agricola Street was badly damaged in the Halifax Explosion, but the subject property’s location south of North Street likely aided its survival. It is now a rare remaining example of the “Halifax Box” style on Agricola Street. The builder responsible for the construction of this dwelling is unknown, but based on the style, the home was likely built by a local construction firm. One such example is the firm of Rhodes & Curry, which was located nearby at the corner of Robie Street and McCully Street and was the largest contractor in the Maritimes at the time.

In more recent years, the property has earned the colloquial name “Open Mic House” for its culturally significant function as a hub for the local arts community and a venue for live music events. Beginning in 2008, the Open Mic House held weekly live music events, initially hosted by award-winning local musicians and Open Mic House residents, Ben Caplan and Jacques Mindreau, and attracting many noteworthy local artists. The cultural contributions of the venue as a performance space have been recognized by both local media and the provincial government.

# ATTACHMENT B - HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT, PLANS, ELEVATIONS



## Heritage Impact Statement 2539 Agricola St

CLIENTS  
Bruno Ruffinengo, Karen Schnare  
and Grant Ruffinengo

Prepared by  
EcoGreen Homes  
2159 GOTTINGEN STREET  
HALIFAX, NS B3K 3B5  
902-412-2329  
[info@ecogreenhomes.ca](mailto:info@ecogreenhomes.ca)



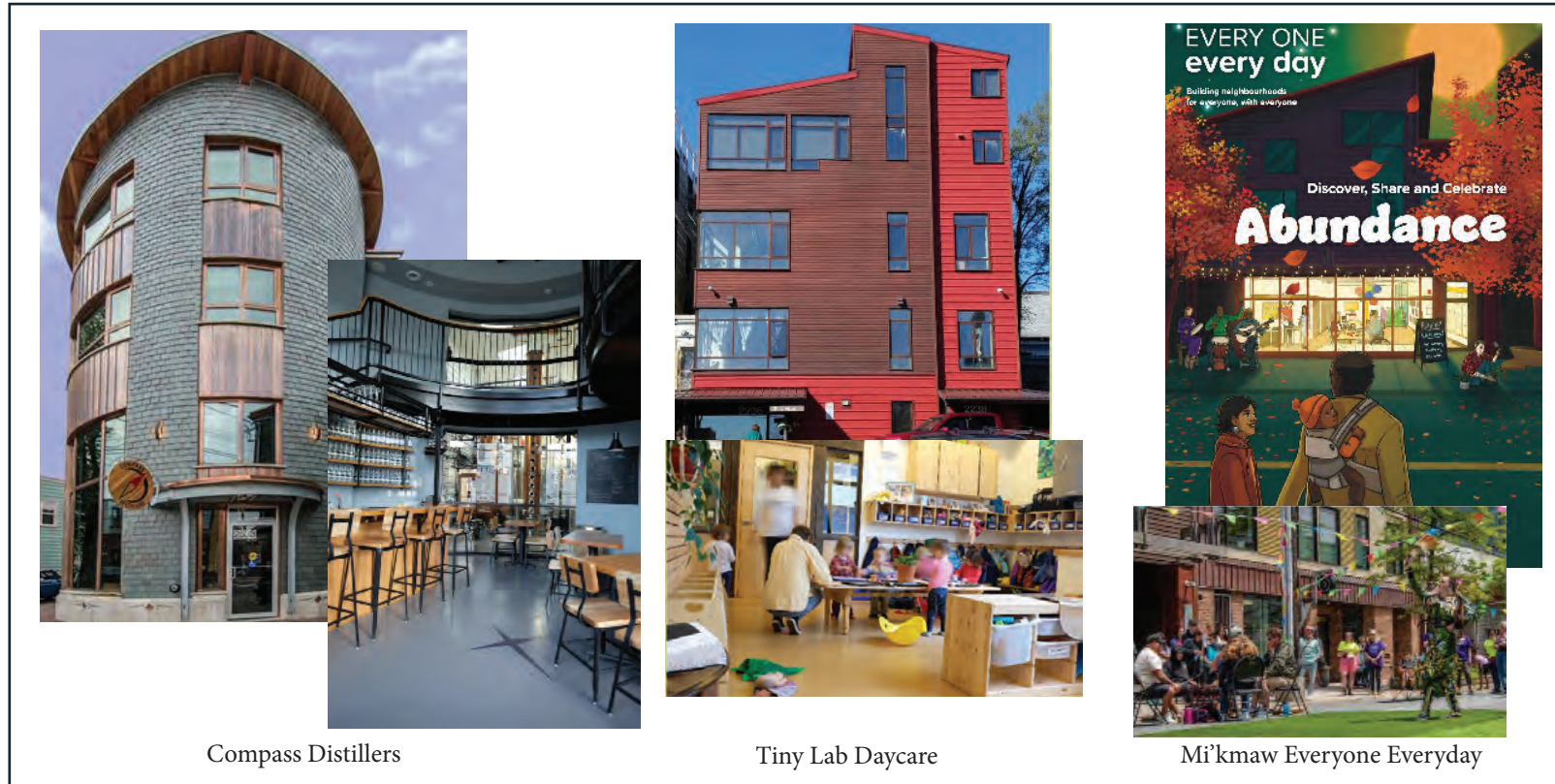
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03. Heritage Character Defining Elements of 2539 Agricola.
- 04 Heritage and HRM Planning Objectives and Project Benefits
- 05 The Neighborhood Development and Scale.
06. Considerations of “As of Right Development”.
07. Proposed Heritage Restoration Strategy.
08. Summary Statement & Recommendations.
- 09 Appendices- Site Plan,Elevations, Landscape Plan Lighting Plan, Bibliography.

# 01 Introduction

EcoGreen Homes has been retained by the Ruffinengo family, owners of 2537 and 2539 Agricola Street, to design a new development and to prepare this Heritage Impact Statement as part of a mixed-use Heritage Development Agreement.

The objective of this report is to discuss the heritage significance of 2539 Agricola St, to outline how it will be restored as part of a new development, to explain the rationale for proposed substantial alterations, to show what the alternative “as of right” impact would be and to show how the proposed changes are in compliance with both Canada Heritage Standard Guidelines and HRM planning objectives.



**Fig. 1** Showing some of EcoGreen Homes community enhancement projects.

EcoGreen Homes has decades of experience designing, restoring, and re-purposing heritage properties as well as creating new buildings. Our completed design/build projects in the North End, such as the neighboring Compass Distillers, and 2169 /2165/2157 Gottingen combine innovative design with expert craftsmanship, energy efficiency, and community building. Our tenants include the Mi’kmaw Everyone Everyday space, A Tiny Lab Daycare, The Centre for Art Tapes, Ratinaud, Dime Salon and the tech company Outshine

## 02 Existing Buildings, Current and Historical Context.

The site contains two PIDs with two buildings, 2539 Agricola St, a recently registered Heritage building “The Open Mic House” and 2537 Agricola St, “Carlo Auto” shown below in figure 2. Built in the 1980s, Carlo Auto is a one-story masonry unit building built as an automotive garage with little historical or architectural value. As such its conservation is not being considered for this project. It is an example of older small-scale North End Halifax industrial uses that are now making way for the increase of residential density in this area of the city. Both properties exist in a COR commercial zone designation. (Fig 3.)

The site is situated on Agricola Street, north of the common with easy access to the MacDonald Bridge. This immediate block from Charles to Willow Street contains a mix of uses including residential, retail, offices, bar, restaurant and minor industrial. This block also has a quite remarkable mix of historic and new buildings. It is exceptionally lively and is often frequented by both Halifax locals and tourists alike. The block also has a feeling of spaciousness in part due to the current parking lot in front of “Carlos Auto”.



**Fig. 2** Showing 2537 Agricola St, “Carlos Auto”



**Fig. 3** Existing apartments behind shown in pink. New development of Maynard Lofts shown in blue, Site shown in green.

The immediate properties surrounding the site on this block from Charles to Willow Street include Compass Distillers, Boyd’s Pharmacy, Envie Vegan Restaurant, Local Source Grocery, The Stillwell Freehouse, The Agricola St Brasserie; 2542-2550 Agricola St known as the “four sisters”, Cycle Smith, Nurtured, a children’s shop, a Nova Scotia Liquor Store, residences and office spaces. Across the street on the corners are Chapman’s Auto on the south and Geoff Keddy’s designed “Time/Space” building on the north.

Surrounding this block are tracts of heritage Victorian houses dating from the late 1800’s (Fig 4.). Many of these houses have or are being torn down for larger scale industrial use such as Colonial Honda, or new multi-story developments seen in figure 22. The owners wish to retain the heritage house as the front of a new development while keeping its current music -related use.

While no early photographs exist of 2537 or 2539 Agricola St, maps of the city in 1914 display residential houses on both properties. These formerly had 115 and 113 as civic addresses and were changed to 2539 and 2537 Agricola St respectively. An 1878 map shows the lands where 2539 was constructed as vacant. However, both the 1914 and 1878 maps show a residential house on 2537 Agricola St., demolished to make way for Carlos Auto. The remaining 2539 residence, like the other houses that existed along this block and as well as all the stores, has no setback from the sidewalk.



**Fig. 4** Above Atlas of Halifax showing future property outlined. (Hopkins 1878)

2539 Agricola Street is an example of what is known locally as a “Halifax Box”. When comparing the 1914 map to another from 1878, it appears another Box to the north of 2539 was constructed around the same time and featured a similar outline. However it was previously demolished and is now the home of the NSLC, Cycle Smith and Nurtured. It is interesting to note the NSLC building is only one meter away, and hides most of the north side of 2539 as shown in the photo to the right (Fig. 5)

Based on the shape from the map, it appears 2539’s neighboring building also featured a bay window, suggesting a street wall that existed in the 1900s typical of this area of north end Halifax at that time. Occupying the corner of Agricola and Charles currently is the Boyd’s Pharmasave building, formerly known as “Smiths Bakery” since the early 1900s but recently renovated. It is not a typical Halifax Box 2539 therefore is the only surviving intact Halifax Box in this block.

The following page shows the site’s surrounding area. Because of its walkable proximity to open spaces, to other shopping areas including Sobeys and to downtown, it is an appropriate site for increased residential density, a current goal of the HRM Centre Plan. It is a desirable area to live in, convenient for walking or using public transit.



**Fig. 5** Showing “Open Mic House”, in relation to adjacent buildings. notice that the NW side of the house is hidden by Nurture store.





Fig. 6 Showing site in urban context. Downtown and North End Shopping are easily walkable.

The “Halifax Box” street wall as experienced by pedestrians includes only the front portion or façade and roof line height as these were primarily the only part of these buildings visible both in Victorian times and today as well. Halifax Boxes were constructed most often as town or row houses or with minimal distance between duplex and detached boxes. The heritage features and details are found only on the front facade. One recognizes them more as an actual three dimensional “box form” only when they stand alone which was not typical. A good neighborhood example that illustrates this principle is found just around the corner on Charles Street as one walks to-wards Robie Street. 5795, 5797 and, 5799 Charles are also Halifax Boxes dating from the late 1800’s.

5799 is detached while 5797 and 5799 are duplexes where only the front façade is visible ( See Fig. 7) .



**Fig. 7** Showing. 5795(gray), 5797 (yellow) and, 5799 (green) Charles St where only the front portion of this houses are visible

The occupancy records spanning from 1905-2021 present an unremarkable history of dwelling that housed working class families of Halifax's North End. While there is no evidence of specific historic events occurring on the property, the house itself has existed in the backdrop of major events and trends of Halifax's development in the 20th century. Being "unremarkable" as far as its inhabitants goes, is actually noteworthy as many of the North End Halifax Boxes were home to working class citizens. Historical value often relies on having had remarkable inhabitants. As such, 2539 is a good example of nothing remarkable beyond the working class people who helped build Halifax. This Box is also perhaps an example of affordable housing of its time.

Next door at 2533 Agricola, there existed another similar Halifax Box, home to Nauss bicycle until 2017 (Fig. 8). This box was much plainer as one can see in the attached photos. It was in very bad repair after many alterations during the course of its industrial use. 2539 however is mostly original and retains its heritage details.

2533, unlike 2539, was formerly home to a "significant" local historic person, Major Theakston, and his family. While Major implies a military background; it is here not the case as his name was simply Major. Major Theakston was well known as the leader in the late 1800's and early 1900's of the Temperance Movement in Halifax. Major constructed a "Temperance Hall" on what is now the Compass Distillers property.

Ironically the author and his company, EcoGreen Homes, demolished this temperance leader's residence to build Compass Distillers which produce and have retail sales of spirits, along with a bar. The Compass Tower has become one of this city's landmarks. During the summer, tourist buses stop there daily. The tower structure is actually built as a compass oriented true north and has real slate and copper siding.



**Fig. 8** Former Halifax box at 2533 Agricola St "Nauss Bicycle" demolished to build Compass Pag.9

While the Halifax Box style of housing was once prevalent on this portion on Agricola St, the Halifax Explosion, Urban Decay in mid 20th century, and Urban Renewal spanning the latter half of the 20th century to the present has led to the demolition of much of these residential buildings. Surviving these factors relatively untouched and in good structural shape makes 2539 somewhat rare and therefore a valuable piece of Agricola streets' history.



**Fig. 9** Showing Atlas of Halifax with future property outlined ( Hopkins, H. W. 1878).  
A 1914 Goad Atlas of Halifax (below) shows the now-constructed 2539 Agricola St

**Fig. 10** Agricola Street in the 1940's with Victorian buildings of the time. Note mostly only facades are visible with some portion of sides showing

### 03. Heritage Character Defining Elements of 2539 Agricola

Examining local neighborhood examples of the Halifax Box can help illuminate the defining elements of 2539 Agricola. 5516 North St and 2548 Gottingen St. are both registered historic properties designed by Halifax architect Henry Frederick Busch. ( Figures 11-12) Like 2539 Agricola St, these houses are styled in the Halifax Box derivative of Late Plain Victorian architecture, with similar front facades featuring an asymmetrical bay window and wood trim details. Both are clad with wood shingles, with no detailing except on the front façade. Please note again that only the front facade and a small portion of the sides are visible from the street. 2539 is a more modest example from this era and perhaps somewhat narrower.



**Fig. 11** Showing a remaining example of Halifax Box 2548 Gottingen St.



**Fig. 12** Showing a remaining example of Halifax Box 5516 North St.

Similarities shared by these Halifax Boxes helped us to identify the “Heritage Defining Characteristics” of 2539.

**These include:**

- Two-story wooden construction with a taller first story and less tall second story.
- A first story elevated from the sidewalk about 50 cm with detail over the front door.
- A low-sloped roof with a high point or ridge line about halfway back.
- Situated close to the sidewalk with minor setback from front property line both at front and sides.
- A front elevation featuring an asymmetrical three-faceted two story bay window on both levels, larger on the main level and smaller on the second level.
- Bay windows framed by bracketed wooden painted corbels.
- A detailed molded frieze board or cornice at the roof line on the front elevation only.
- Simple wood shingle cladding with small exposure .
- Simple side facades with wood shingles and no ornamentation.
- A stone and/or brick foundation.
- Raised entrance with wooden steps up from street to entrance and two railings.
- Single hung windows without interior grills.
- Box form visible only at front typically

The following figures 13 and 14 show the front facade of the 2539 Open Mic House vertical and horizontal elements outlined for clarity. These elements were used to help shape and proportion the design of the new building as Conservation Standard 11 dictates.

Another aspect of its heritage is the cultural use as a music venue. Since the early 80’s, many local and somewhat famous musicians have performed inside during the weekly Monday “Open Mic” coffee house style evenings Conserving this historical cultural use meets Conservation Standard 2 and 7.



**Fig. 13** Horizontal elements showing characteristics of the Halifax Box style. The frieze features ornamental cornice brackets to accentuate the roof lines.



**Fig. 14** Vertical Elements Showing characteristics of the Halifax Box style.



Proposed elevation with the heritage house in front of the new building. The dotted lines show the vertical and horizontal extensions of the proportion found in the Open Mic House. New parking garage entrance to right has period style doors.

**Fig. 15** Vertical and Horizontal Elements characteristics of the Halifax Box style extended in new facade



## 04 Heritage and HRM Planning Objectives & Benefits of the Development

In our conversations in 2019 with Halifax heritage planners, the idea of a Heritage Development Agreement for the subject property was discussed as the owners of the property wished to retain a portion of the “Open Mic House” as historical compliment to the surrounding area. EcoGreen Homes made application then to register 2539 as a heritage property. We are pleased our application was successful and that the house is now registered. The registration of this home contributed to the planning objectives of HRM by retaining a heritage property, which is not the norm for a development in this area.

The Ruffinengo family, who are of Italian origin, wish to transform part of the Carlos Auto parking lot into open space “piazza” in front of a new mixed-use building. The piazza is intended to be used both as an outdoor dining space for a new commercial restaurant and for seating for the Open Mic outdoor musical events that regularly occur on summer weekends.

Creating the piazza and also the ensuing setback of the development by retaining the majority portion of the Open Mic house contributes to the spaciousness of the public right of way; as such they are public benefits. Retaining the majority of the heritage house is in line with the intention of HRM heritage planning. The build-able footprint of the new mixed used building will be significantly reduced by both retaining the majority of the “Open Mic House” and the creation of the piazza. This is the rationale for the request for additional reasonable height for the new development. (Fig. 16)

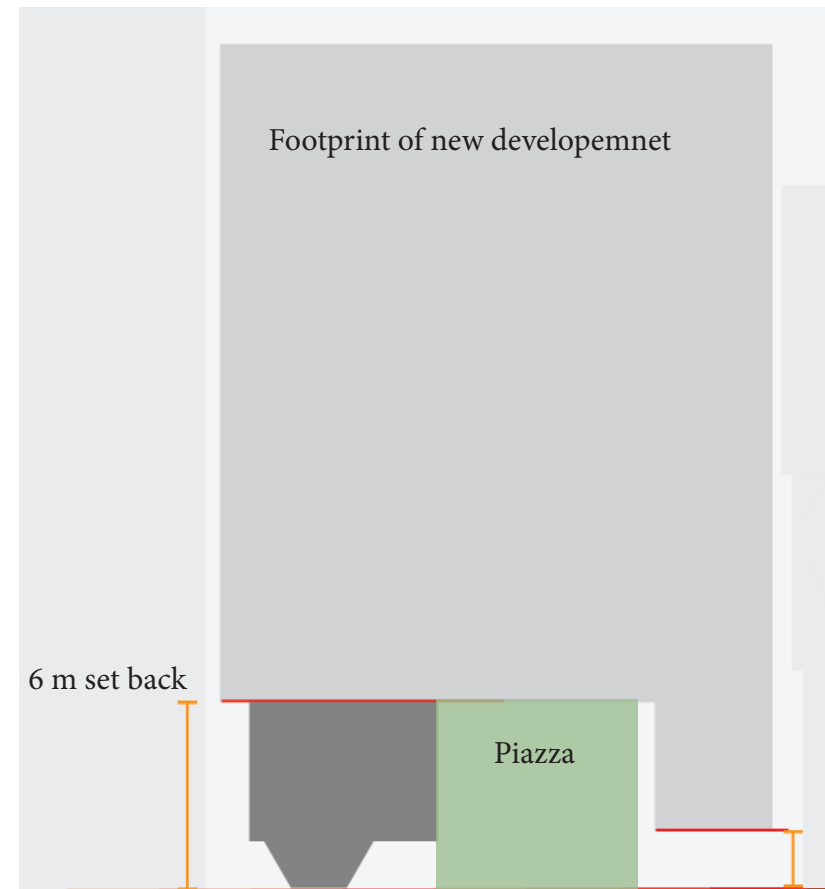


Fig. 16 Showing 6 meters setback, Open Mic House, and piazza in green.

These diagrams attempt to show the indirect benefits for surrounding businesses. Patrons from the restaurants and bars across the street will be better able to both see and hear the musical events to be staged on the new balcony. Patrons enjoying the view and sounds of musical events in warmer weather will have the feeling that the street forms an “integrated whole” even though the musicians are across Agri-cola. Our street study showed us the new balcony adjacent to the new side doors is the best location for the stage area and will provide excellent sight lines for this whole block.( Fig. 17)



**Fig 17.** Showing View to the “Open Mic House” from restaurants across street and from the north

The setback proposed of the new main building is more than six meters. Given the size of these two lots and the width of Agricola Street, this is very significant. The setback will create spaciousness for the Agricola street-scape. This is inviting for the public and thus aligned with HRM planning objectives. The typical setback under current bylaws defines the street-wall at the curb and is thus more imposing. One can experience this by standing in front of the new development at 2440 Agricola St, as one example. Simply put, current as of right developments do not create the same degree of spaciousness for the street scape. ( See Fig. 18)



**Fig 18.** Photo of current development at 2440 Agricola St

The owners envision 2539 Agricola being commercially used by a music related non-profit organization. Their wish is to also continue the current use of the “Open Mic House”, for free musical weekly gatherings. This also contributes to HRM planning objectives by preserving and enhancing local cultural events.

Standard 5 states” find a use for an historic place that requires minimal intervention.” The addition of a door opening on the side of the heritage house will allow the second floor balcony to become the new “stage” for musical events. As no significant historical features are found on the side, it is a good example of minimal intervention while creating a new use. This preserves the current cultural use and also enhances visitors experience meeting HRM MPS objectives. Patrons across the street who already stay to drink and eat during the musical evenings will have much better sight lines and acoustic experience as the performances will occur on the “stage balcony”. The following page shows the side door opening to the adjacent new balcony (Fig 19).

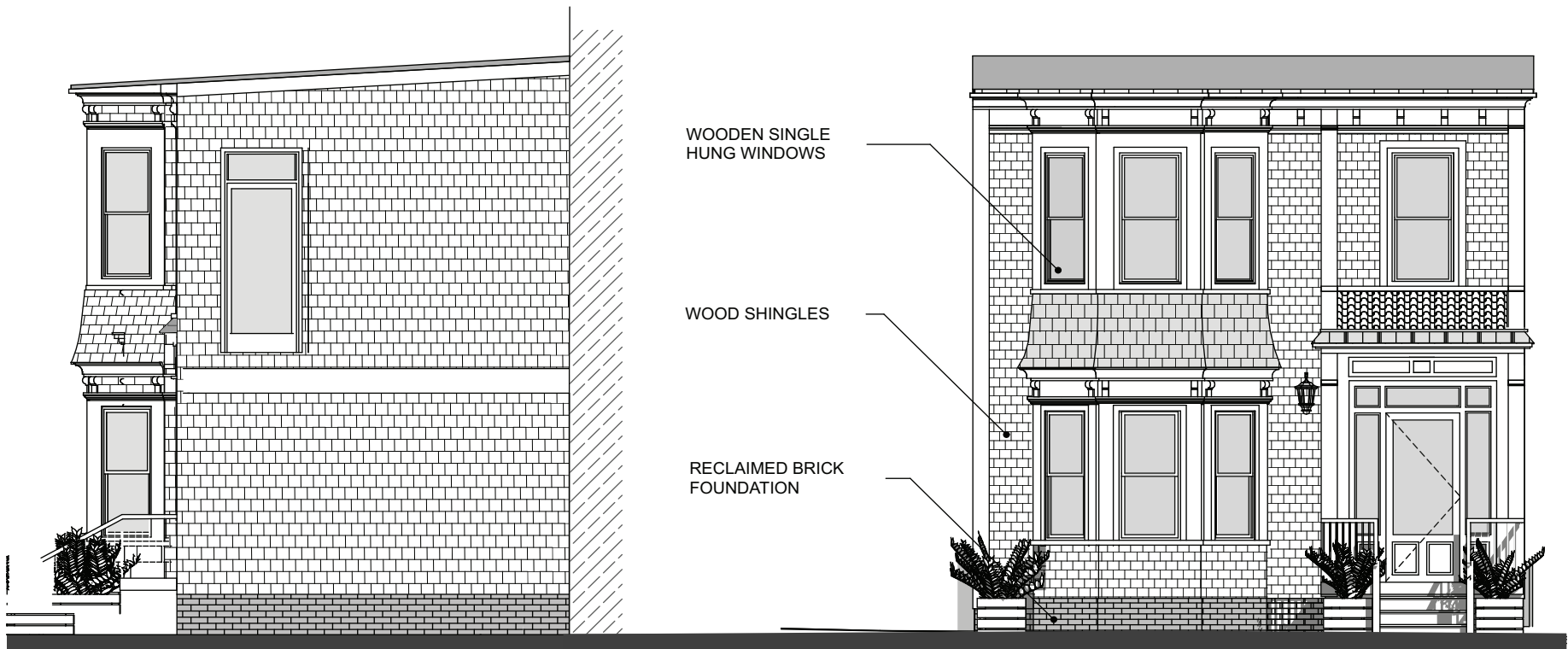


**Fig 19.** “ The Open Mic House” with new side door opening to the balcony stage and seating area and the piazza below. Note the “Box Form” is easily visible.

As the last remaining Halifax Box on this short block of Agricola Street, it is important from a heritage perspective to preserve and restore the house's key heritage features. The majority of the 2539 "box form" of the existing structure is proposed to be retained and restored including all of the heritage defining features found at the front of this building. We will be able to retain 54% of the front portion and still have room behind for the new building development. This adheres to many of the Standards of the Conservation Standards and Guidelines as it preserves all of the character defining elements of the heritage house. All of the wooden details on the house's front façade are largely intact but damaged or rotten. It will be possible to recreate and restore them as original. The conservation efforts will also comply with Standard 3. All the restoration will be documented.

### SIDE ELEVATION

### FRONT ELEVATION



**Fig. 20** Shows elevations of the proposed retained Heritage House

The new building behind is designed to compliment proportions found in 2539, complying with Standard 11. The new building has a neutral color palette to help it appear subordinate to the heritage property. The concrete siding board proposed is European, very dense and unlike the north American made Hardie plank, has a very long-life span expectancy. The proposal extends and integrates the cornice and frieze line into the new structure and repeats this feature rhythmically higher, corresponding to Standard 11. Also in compliance with Conservation Standards 3, 4 and 5, conserving the majority of the house, the box form will be visible. Standard 11 states additions to a heritage buildings should be physically and visually compatible, subordinate, and distinguishable from the historic place. This has been carefully contemplated in the new facade behind.

The essence of the Halifax Box as historical archetype in Halifax is found both in the front facade details and the visible box form. With the careful restoration of the many existing details and by using contrasting colours these details will be highly visible as they are found on the street front at the sidewalk. By stepping back the new development behind the renovated Open Mic house, the box form will be also be highly visible. The details and box form features will be enhanced both with the complimentary horizontal elements designed in the new balcony and the simple vertical elements found in the new facade behind.

Seeing all of these elements together and located on such a prominent and visible block of Agricola Street, we anticipate that the Open Mic House will be a showpiece informing the public of the importance of this period and style of local architecture. To further help educate the passersby, we have included a space for an informative plaque in the piazza.

The intended use of the new "balcony as stage" adjacent to the Open Mic House will further enliven the vibrant community on this block of Agricola. We envision evening weekend musical events on the "stage" will be able to be enjoyed by patrons of Compass, by the patrons of the new proposed restaurant in this development, and by patrons across the street at the restaurants located there.

In the North End, this project as proposed with the inclusion of the majority of the box is currently unique as far as we can tell. We believe it to be a model worthy of emulation as it aims to both restore and highlight significant existing heritage value while allowing a new development at the same time.

The images on the page following show the current "norms" of demolishing the entire box to make way for a new development. This approach has sparked genuine and well founded concerns of losing heritage stock of Halifax Boxes in the North End recently. The middle photo below shows the Heritage Trust meeting on this issue from this past September where these concerns were voiced.



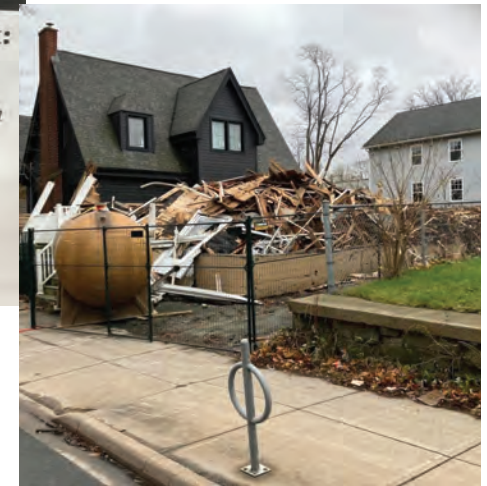
**Halifax's disappearing historic building stock:  
What's going on and what can we do?**  
A public meeting hosted by the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia  
Tuesday, September 13, 2022, 6:30–8:30 pm  
Halifax Central Library, Lindsay Children's Room

HERITAGE TRUST



Historic building on NRTH site-  
future use unknown-Gottingen St.

Historic building  
demolished November,  
2022 on Gottingen Street  
near Russell

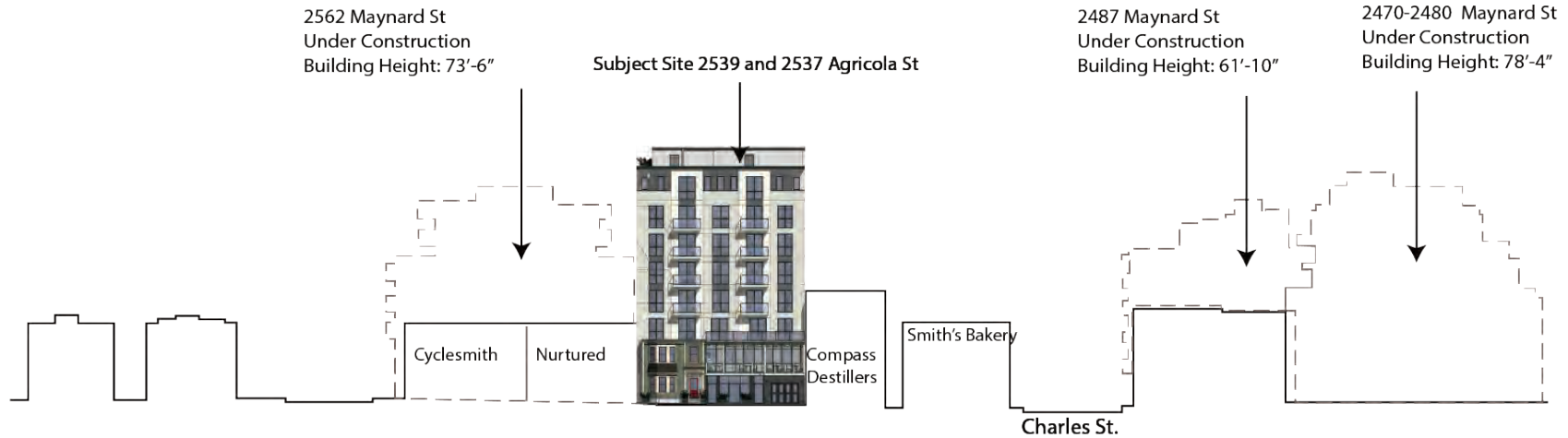


**Fig. 22** Shows new developments' typical approach to demolish these historical buildings, to make space for new developments. Halifax Heritage Trust addressed this issue during a public meeting this September, 2022.

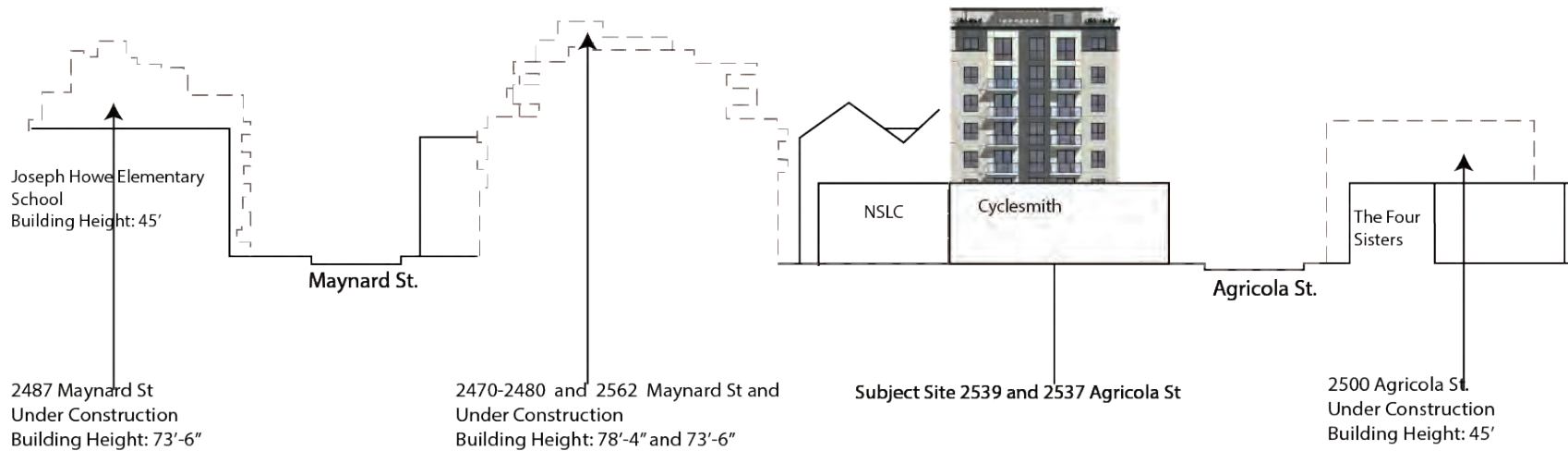
## 05 Neighborhood Developments and Scale

There are currently many new developments being constructed all around this site. The neighboring heights are similar as shown in the following two figures 23 and 24:

### Street Elevation facing Agricola Street



### Street Elevation facing Agricola Street



**Fig 23.** Showing Current Construction adjacent to 2539 Agricola Street



As one can see in the following image which shows the context of buildings under construction, the height proposed for the main building is of a reasonably similar scale. Further down on Robie and on Almon Streets, the new buildings are significantly higher.



**Fig. 24** The image above shows current developments in progress in relation to site

## 06. Considerations of “As of Right Development”

The owners contemplated “As of Right” development before registering the Open Mic house. This would have meant demolishing the heritage structure as is typically done in most of the North End developments under construction. In discussions with the Heritage planners, we decided to try to register the house on the understanding the owners would likely be able to make up the “space lost” by retention of the majority of the heritage home and creation of the piazza. While understanding this is not a “given” we have continued to work with staff to create this current proposal. The author would like to thank the Heritage Planners for their help and many positive suggestions which has led us to design an even better project.

This COR zone, allows 100% lot coverage which in this case is 5850 sq ft. The proposal not including the “Open Mic House” and the piazza has a foot print of 4250 sq ft. 73% of what is possible. The total gross floor area as of right could have been 29,220 sq ft. with commercial space on the ground floor and residential space on the floors above. The proposal as submitted contains approximately 32,000 sq ft of floor area, or about ten percent more than allowed as of right.

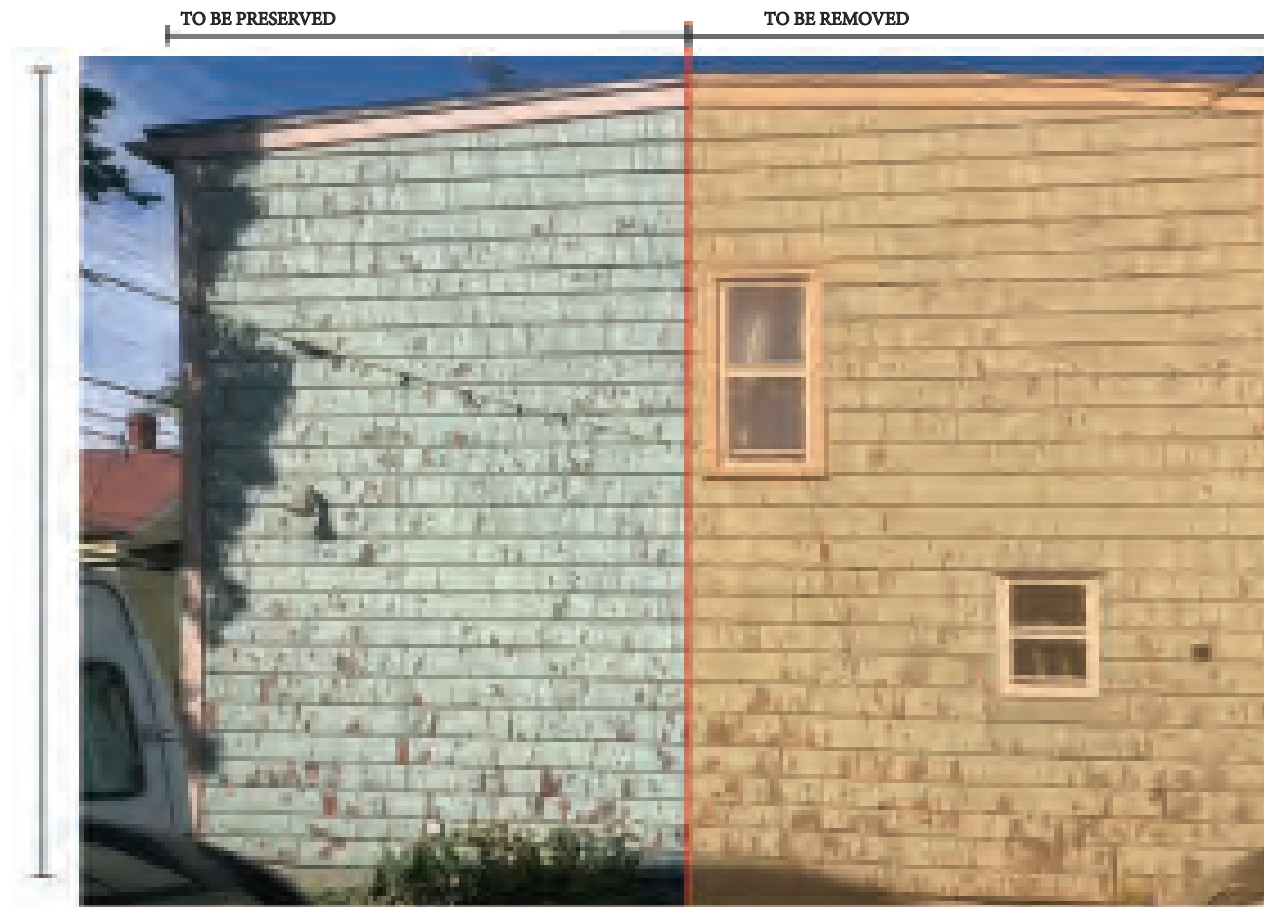
There are numerous public benefits with this proposal:

- The majority of the heritage structure will be restored and retained.
- The heritage form and details of the open Mic House will be highlighted.
- The public right of way will be enhanced by the piazza.
- The six meter set back will create spaciousness.
- All of these will add to the tourist attraction already evident in this unique block.

The “as of right” development, allows the owners to build almost the same amount of space, without any of these public benefits. The additional height requested, being very similar to other developments in the near surrounding area seems very reasonable given the preservation of a unique heritage house on the block. The “as of right” alternative as the norm would have completely demolished the house.

## 07. Proposed Heritage Restoration Strategy

This house is a two-story wood structure with brick and rubble stone foundation. Compared to stone heritage structures found in downtown, the proposed removal, subsequent restoration and conservation of The “Open Mic House” is fairly simple. Image 25 below shows the majority 54% of the front of the original house to be retained including the ridge. Our structural exploration of the house frame confirmed it will be easily possible to remove the rear without any risk of damage to the remaining portion. No heritage defining details are found in the area to be removed, and as stated earlier, the box form will be highly visible and prominent. The heritage value of the house is being maintained and “amplified” in a sense due to its placement on the site.



As the sides of the Halifax box form were normally never visible, keeping the majority of the house and restoring the front retains all key Heritage Defining Features. The joist structure of the house as drawn on page 27 makes the proposed removal fairly simple. As stated, the alternative to this would have been the complete demolition to make room for a conventional development.

**Fig 25.** Showing approximate retained and removed portions of the house

## Front Facade Restoration

As noted earlier, the characteristic heritage details are found on the front facade. Fortunately, all the trim, corbels and fascia are intact, however many are rotten. All can therefore be restored to original condition either by scraping, sanding and repainting as needed, or by recreating new pieces as original. A new period piece front door, with transom lite and transom will be installed, with new surrounding period trim as shown on our renderings. Sidelights will also be installed providing the structure will allow that space. The asphalt shingles of the bump will be removed and replaced with new painted cedar shingles matching the siding which will also be redone as discussed below. Other details are shown adjacent. (fig 26)



### DETAIL MODIFICATIONS TO WEST FACADE.

ASPHALT SHINGLES TO BE REMOVED.

PORCH ROOF TO BE REMOVED  
- NOT PART OF ORIGINAL BUILDING.

STEPS TO BE REBUILT.

UN SOUND FOUNDATION TO BE REMOVED  
THROUGHOUT BUILDING.

**Fig 26.** Showing Heritage Character Defining elements for restoration.

## Structure

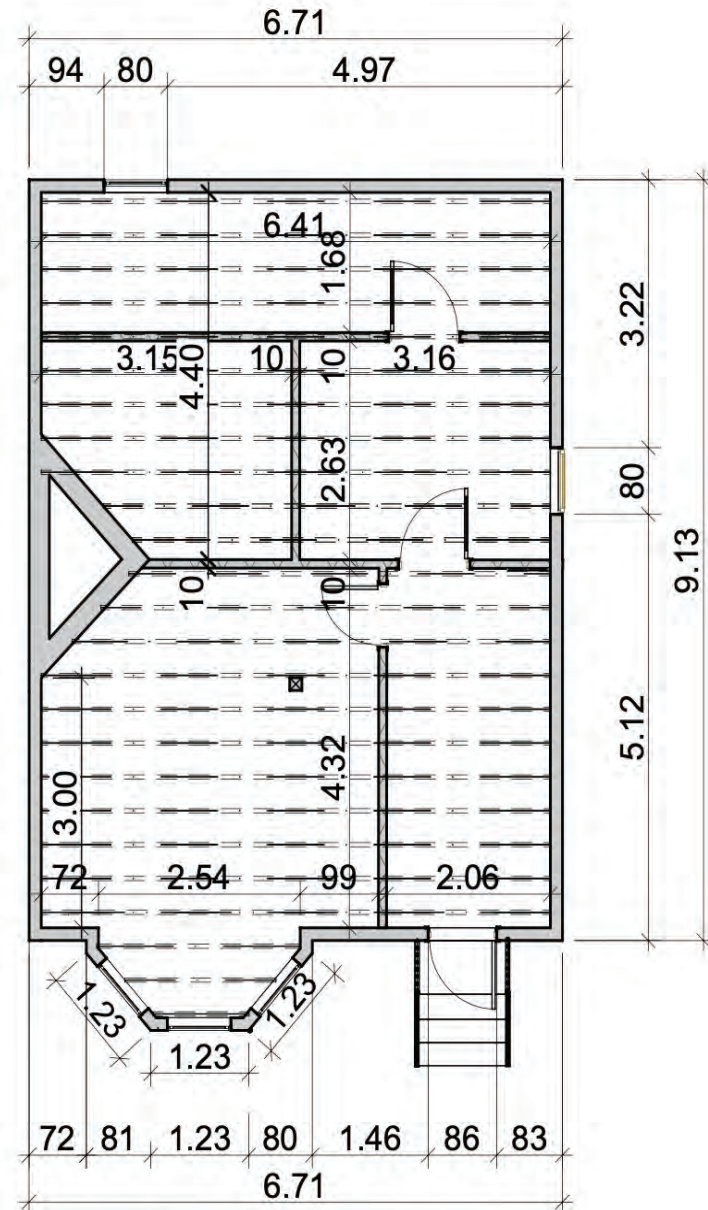
In our investigation of the of the existing structure of the house, we found that the floor joists run across the house on both the main and second floor. This makes it simple to retain the majority front portion of the house without compromising its structural integrity. The image shown here at right shows the existing main floor plans structure of the house. The second floor framing is identical except for the stair.

It is possible to cut the structure on any of the floor joists without compromising the remainder since all joists run across the width of the house. We tried to retain as much of the house as possible and still leave enough room behind for the new building. We found we could retain 54% but not more.

The house will be reinforced at the rear with a temporary new stud and plywood wall to prevent any possible damage or wracking during construction after consultation with our engineer. The temporary wall will be removed once the house is on new foundation and attached to the new structure behind.

The existing site measured structure of the main floor is shown at the right. The second floor joists are the same orientation and have the same spacing on centre. The image on the page following shows the structural section of the house with portions to remain and to be removed. The roof ridge beam will be retained to maintain the existing structural integrity. The brick and rubble stone foundation will be removed as portions are structurally unsound. Besides being unsound, it has been parged over and not being original offers little heritage value. Only about 50 cm of the foundation is visible. The house will be re-seated on a reclaimed brick veneer energy efficient foundation. The renovation will be documented once work begins.

Area = 63.6mft<sup>2</sup>



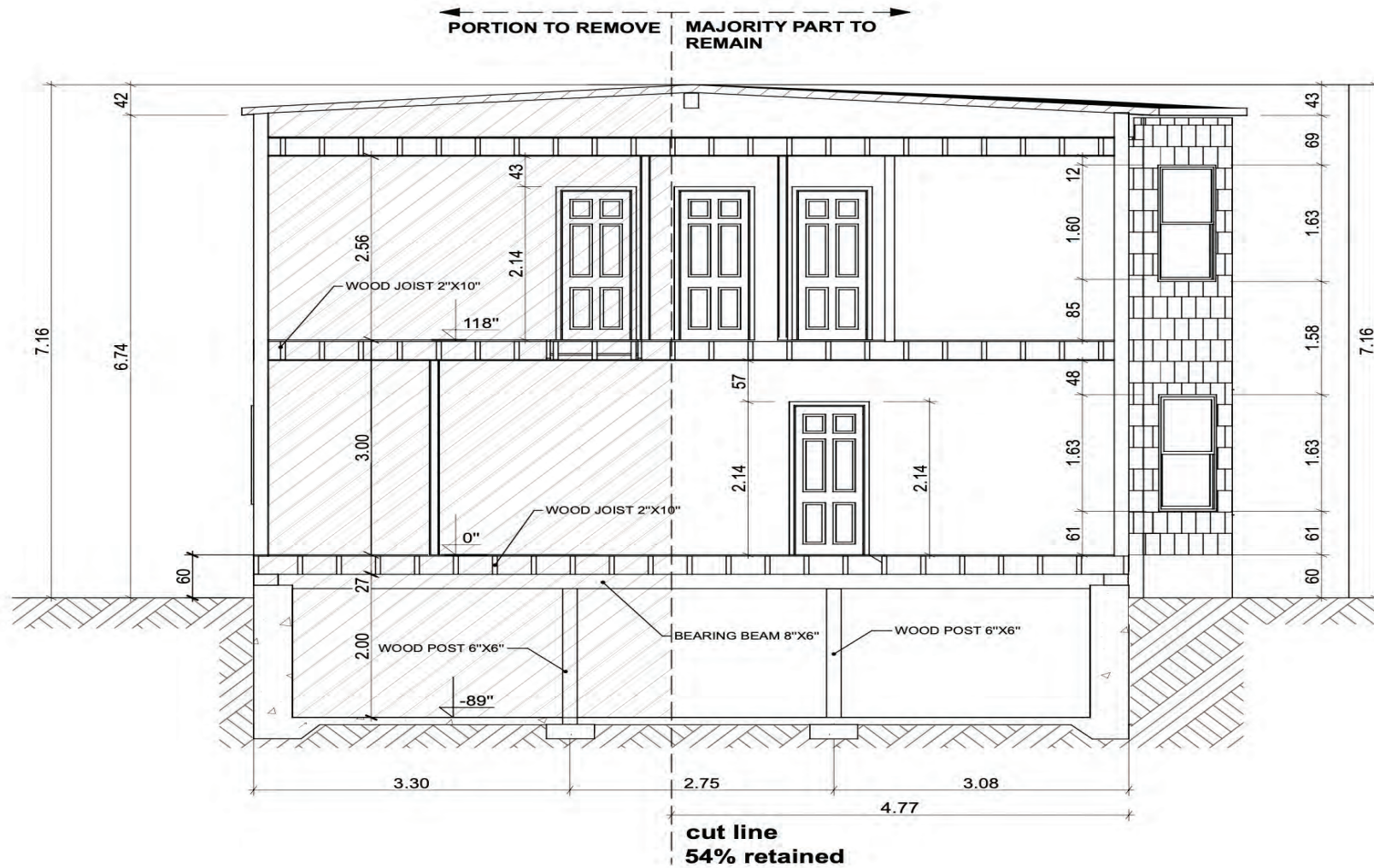
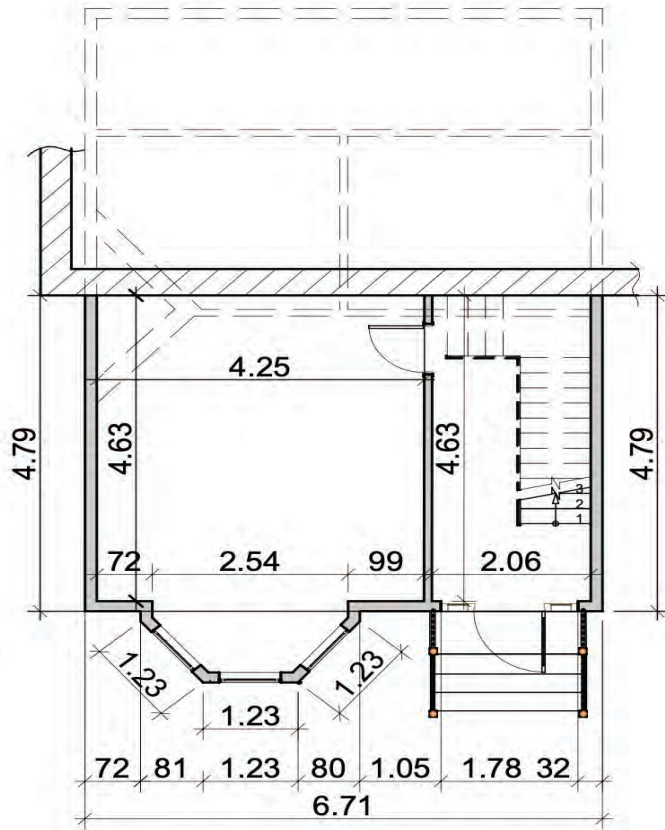


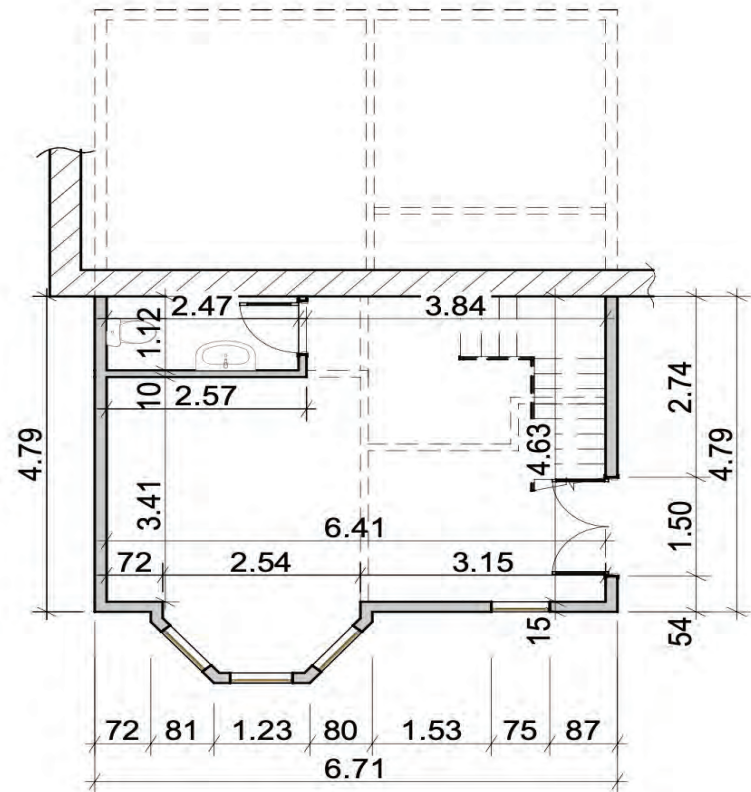
Fig 28. Showing removed and retained portions of Agrícola 2539

The images below show the proposed new floor plans creating an open space office on two floors. The new entrance to the side on the second floor is intended to be used for musical performers to access the stage/balcony of the new commercial restaurant venue.

**54% retained**



**54% retained**



**Fig. 29** Main floor to be retained and renovated

**Fig. 30** Second floor to be retained and renovated

## Details

The existing wood shingle siding is not original and the shingles are of too large a scale to be authentic for this age of home. Fig. 31 shows a similar house on Agricola Street, just after the Halifax explosion. We rely on this image for the scale of shingles as shown in our elevations following. The image is from the research report initiated by heritage staff to register the house. All the shingles on the Open Mic House will be re-placed with new pre-painted cedar shingles of this scale, including those shingles on the bump out.

The existing front porch will be rebuilt. The small roof over the front door will be removed as it was added recently by the owner's brother. A heritage style detail will be added over a new period style door with period transom and the area in front will be landscaped as shown in the following elevations and plans. If structural space allows sidelights will be added to the new front door.

The existing brick and rubble foundation is structurally unsound and will be replaced with a new foundation featuring reclaimed brick veneer. During this phase the house will be supported in consultation with our structural engineer. The heritage woodwork will be repainted as possible or repaired, or if needed replaced with new wood to appear as original.



**Fig. 31** Halifax Box House from explosion shows accurate scale of shingles. (Kitz, Janet, 1989).



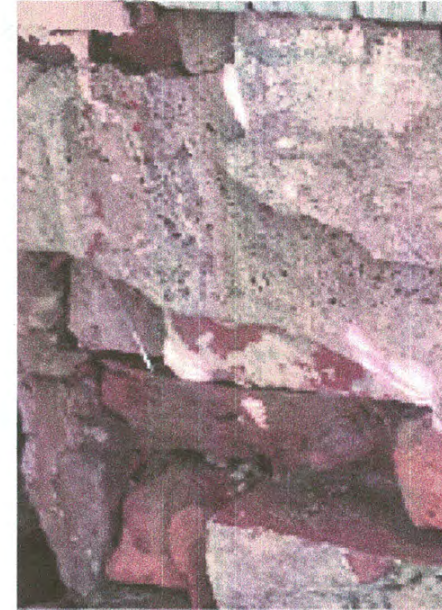


**Fig 32.** Showing “The Open Mic House” facade with complimentary extensions of horizontal elements into the new balcony using steel beams.

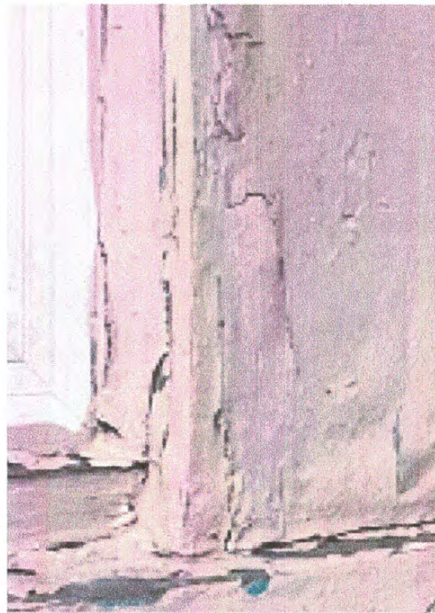
These photos show the existing damaged woodwork and foundation.



**Fig. 33** Wood work will be scraped and repainted if not rotten or replaced using the original patterns.



**Fig. 35** Foundation structurally unsound, stones/brick falling apart will be replaced with antique style bricks



**Fig. 34** The window trim is mostly rotten and will be replace. The vinyl Windows are outworn and will be replaced with triple glazed wood windows to look original



**Fig. 36** Soffits and corner boards will be repaired or replaced and repainted.

## 08. Summary Statement

We were guided in our design process by our research as part of the successful historic registration of 2539, by analysis of its particular heritage and structural features, by its current cultural use and by the Standards and Guidelines for Heritage Conservation in Canada. We were also guided by examining similar “Halifax Box” neighbourhoods in the North End and by first-hand experience actually living in the neighborhood.

It was interesting to realize through our research that the front facade holds most of the key Halifax Box heritage characteristics. By keeping the house in front of the new development, and giving it space with the creation of the piazza, the box form will be prominently visible. With a careful restoration of the front majority of the house, we maintain there is no loss of heritage value but rather the opposite, the creation of heritage interest.

Keeping the use of 2539 as the “Open Mic” house as musical venue complies with Standard 5. It is laudable that the owners wish to retain 2539 as the front-piece of the new development. During the summer weekends musicians perform outside in the parking lot of Carlos Auto. The whole street becomes a “performance space” in a way. People stand on the sidewalk listening or sit at Compass Distillers listening. Patrons sitting outside on the sidewalk of the Stillwell Freehouse, Envie, and the Brasserie with its roof patio also participate, watch and listen, despite being across this street with active traffic. This proposal will improve the acoustics and sightliness for these patrons as well as for those in the new restaurant. We maintain this will enhance the musical experience for all and is a public good that should be encouraged.

## Heritage Recommendations

Retain and restore as original the front of 2539 Agricola. Retaining the integrity of its key heritage features is in reasonable compliance with Canada Heritage Guidelines 1, 2 3, 6 and 7.

Being the street front for the new development will enhance its visibility and inform the public about the ‘Halifax Box’ as a heritage local neighborhood feature and complies with guideline 4.

Retain the existing front yard setback of 2539 as it respects the historical development of the property over time as per Standard 1 & 2.

Restore the front elevation with scaled shingles and period front door and a correct period detail over the front door as per Standard 14. Currently, that detail is missing.

Remove the Carlos Auto building as it is not historically significant and detracts from the historical significance of 2539 to strengthen compliance with Standard 4.

Include in the design of the new building some “key character defining elements” such as proportional changes of height and cornice lines. Ensure these elements respect the original building through their subordination. Make these elements simple in character and made of durable material per Standard 11

Create in cooperation with the City an informative heritage commemorative brass plaque near the sidewalk. Have this plaque explain the significance of 2539 as “Representative Halifax Box”, and explain the unique and ironic history found on the Compass Site adjacent as per Standard 4. If possible, rebuild the existing neighborhood book exchange kiosk and include some heritage features in its redesign.

3D View of “Open Mic House”

Site Plan

West Elevation

East Elevation

North Elevation

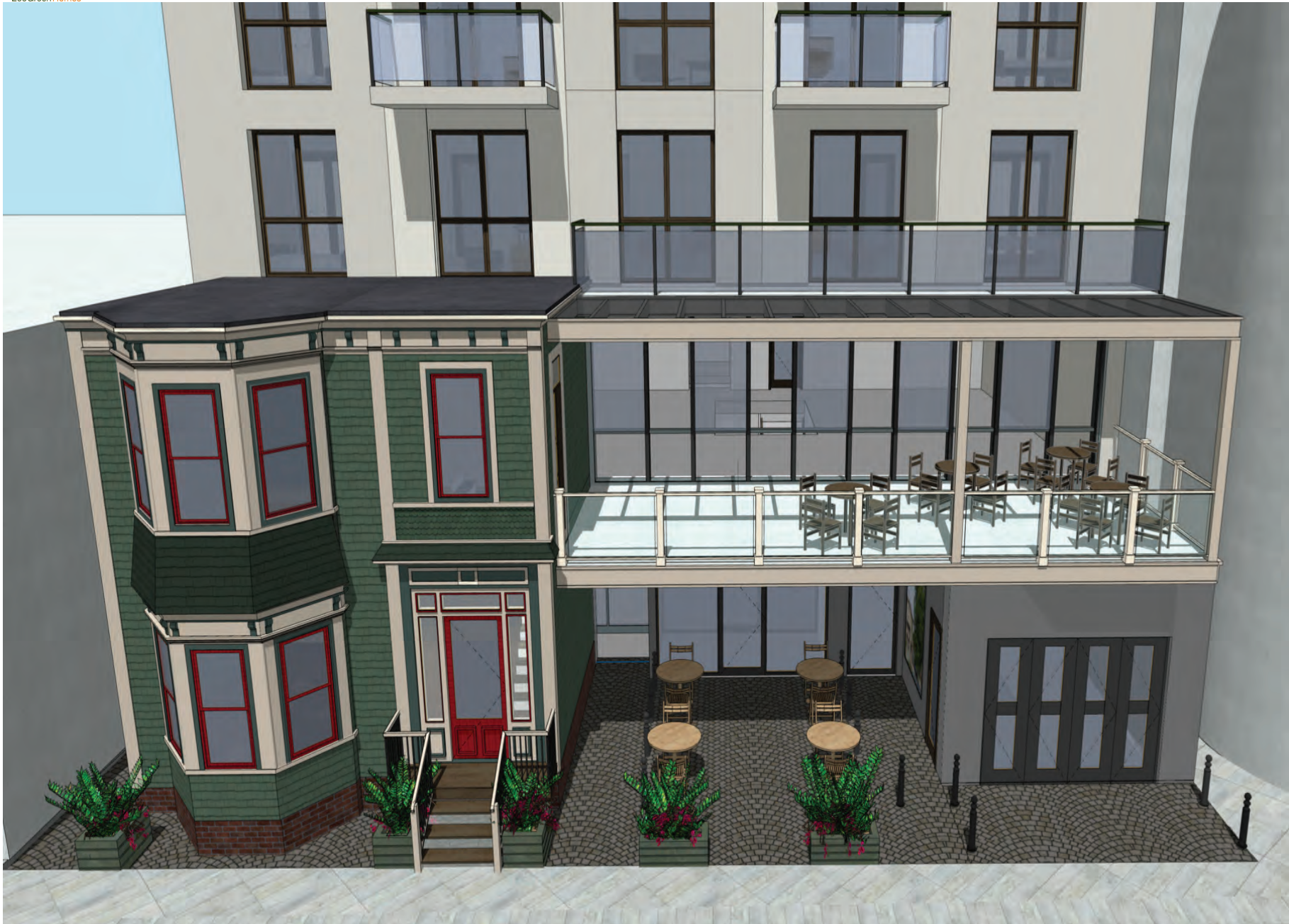
South Elevation

Landscape Plan

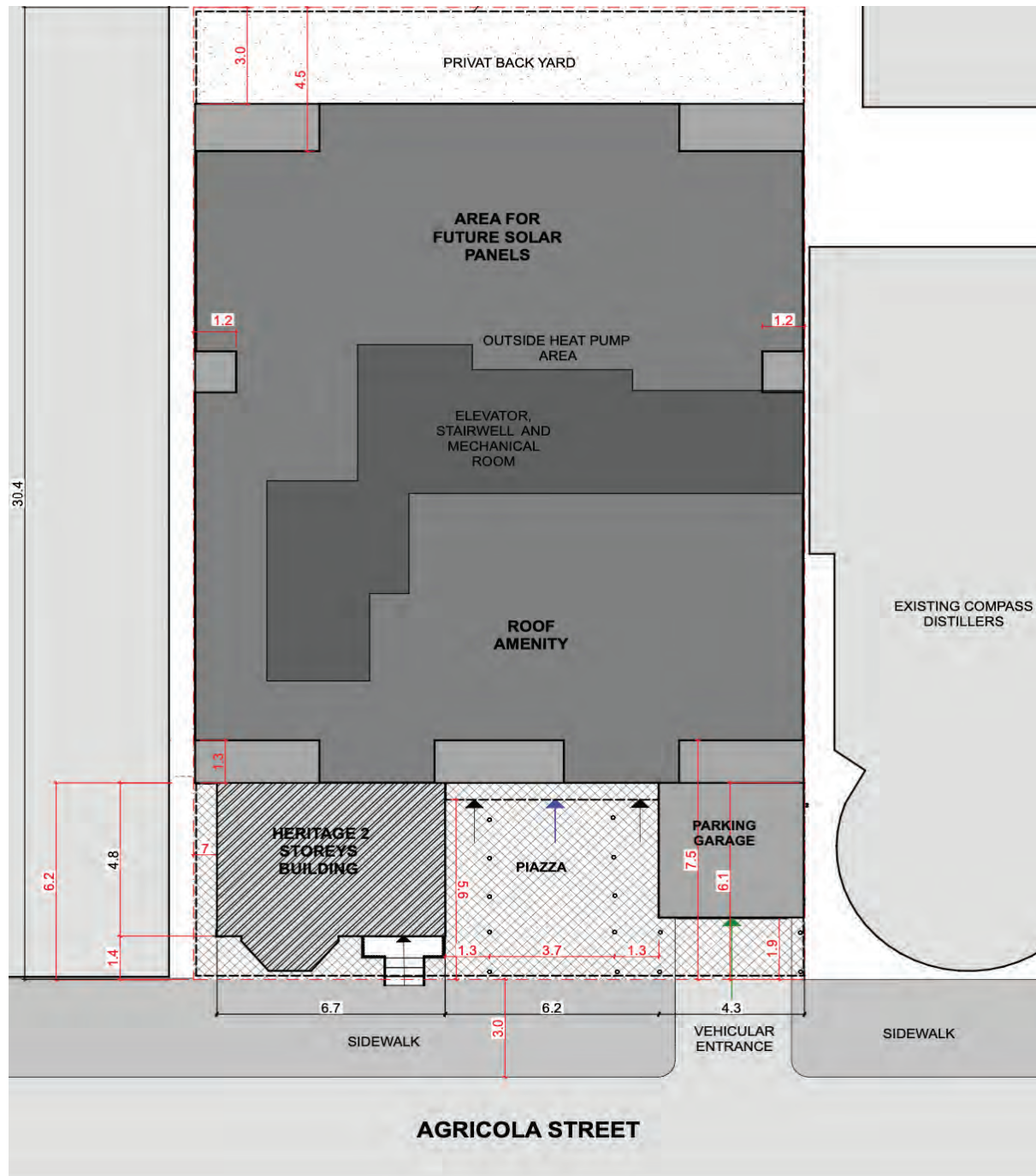
Lighting Plan

Roof top Plan

Bibliography



3-D View from the West



Site Plan

# WEST FACADE

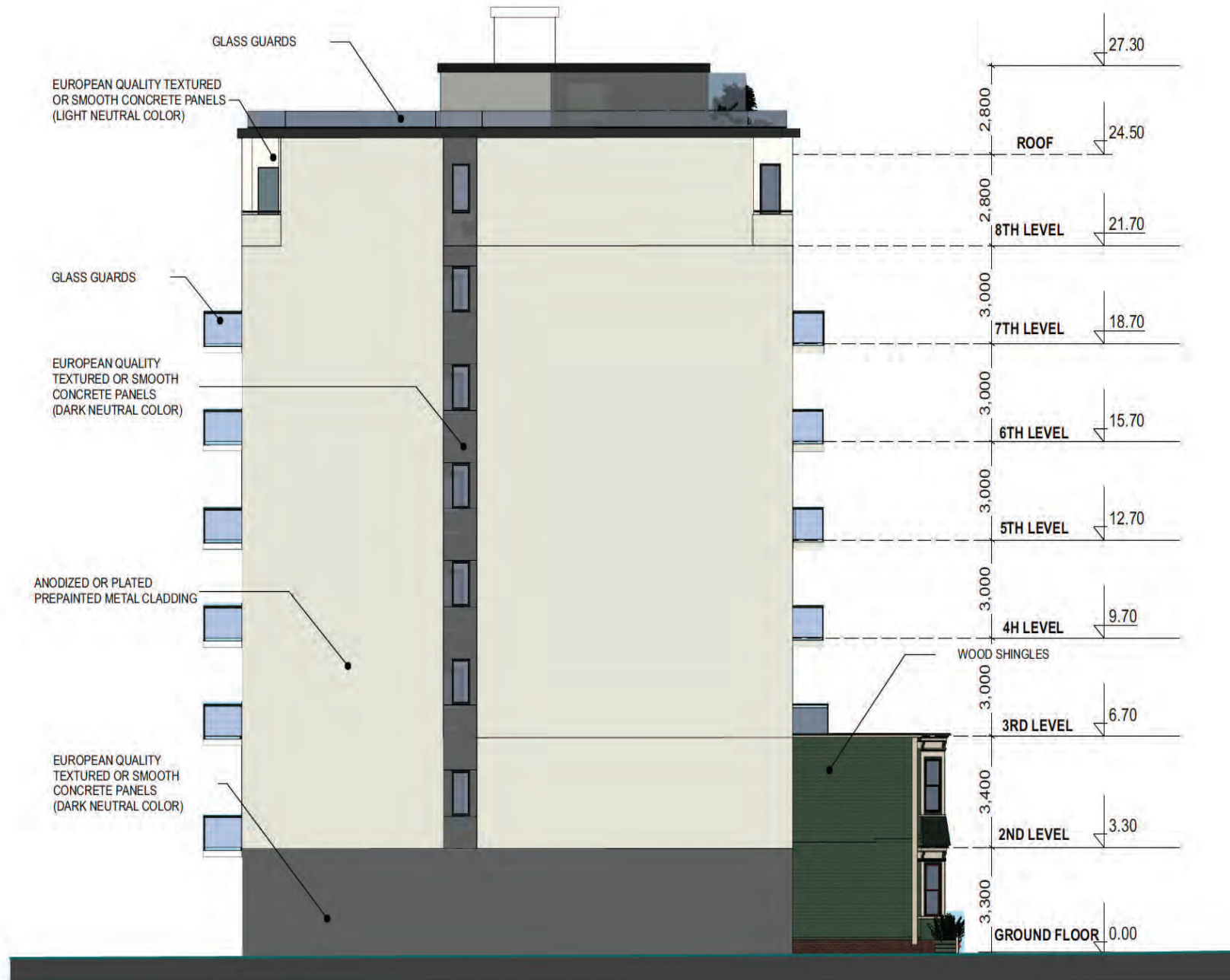


## EAST FACADE

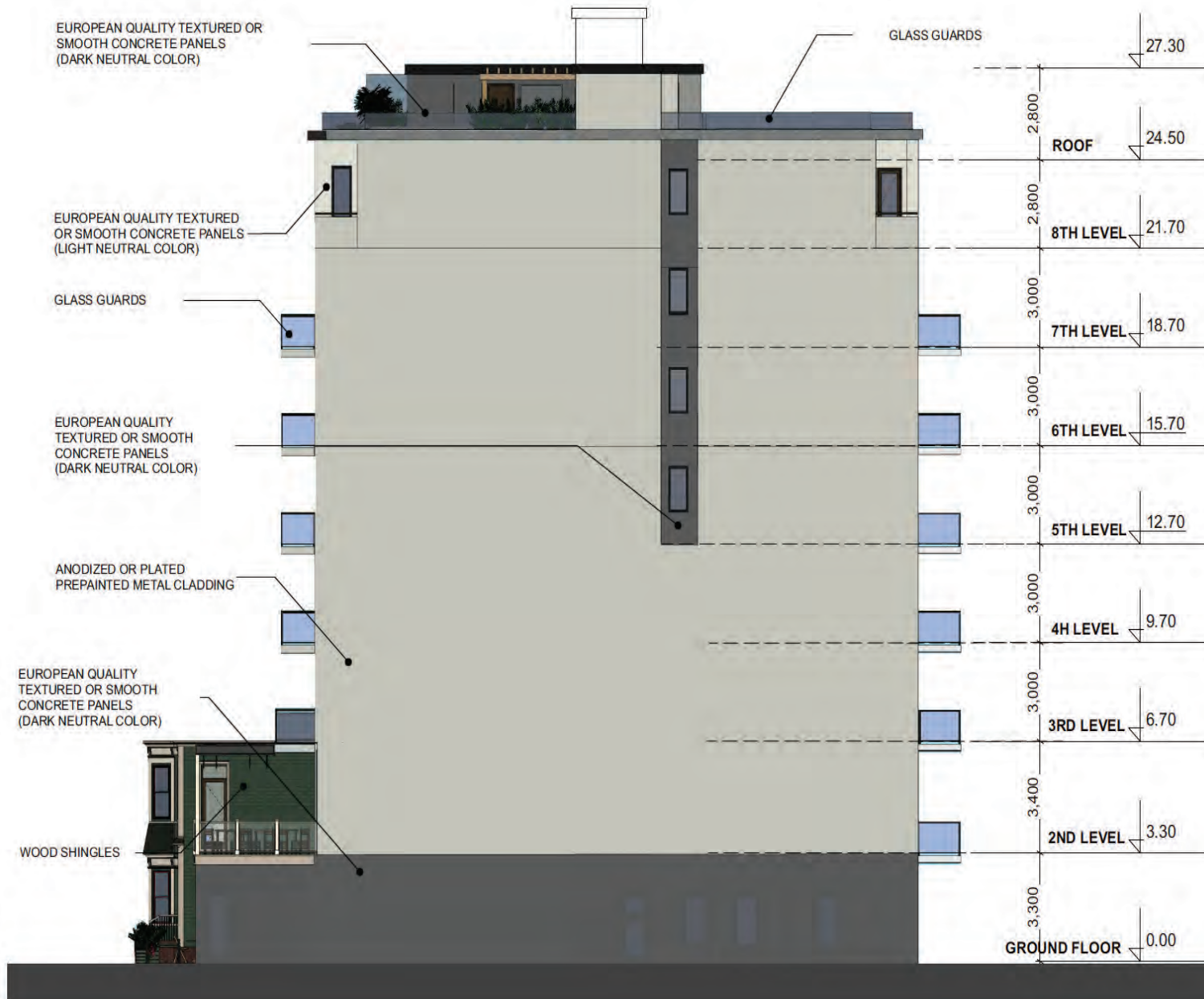




# NORTH FACADE



# SOUTH FACADE



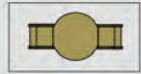


# Landscape Plan

EXISTING 2 STOREY COMMERCIAL BUILDING



- PROPERTY LINE



- OUTDOOR FURNITURE



- CONCRETE PAVING



- CONCRETE DRYWAY



- ARCTOSTAPHYLOS INDIGENOUS



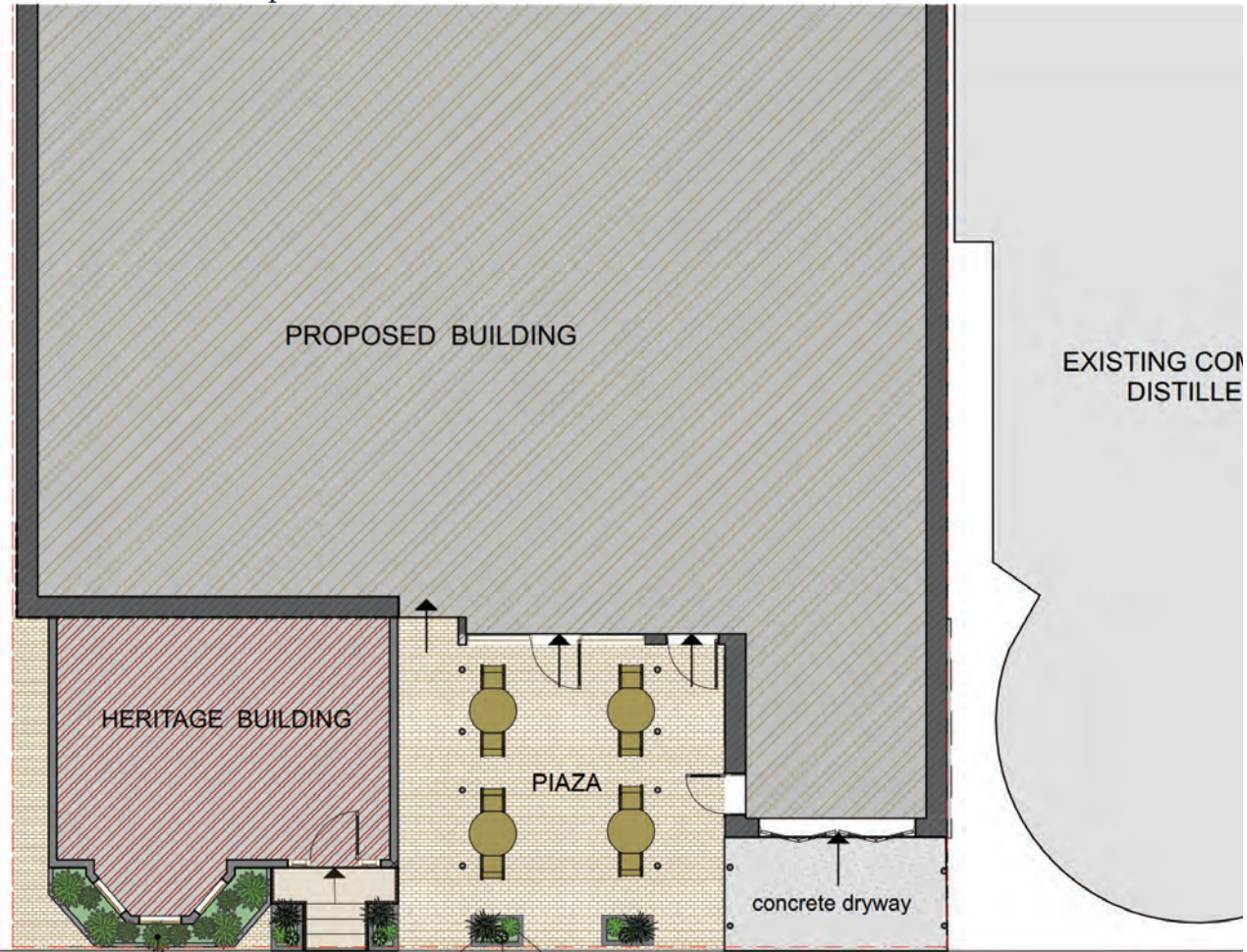
- NEW YORK ASTER



- COTTONEASTER DAMMERI



- JUNIPERUS HORIZONTALIS



sidewalk



**AGRICOLA STREET**

## Landscaping Plan

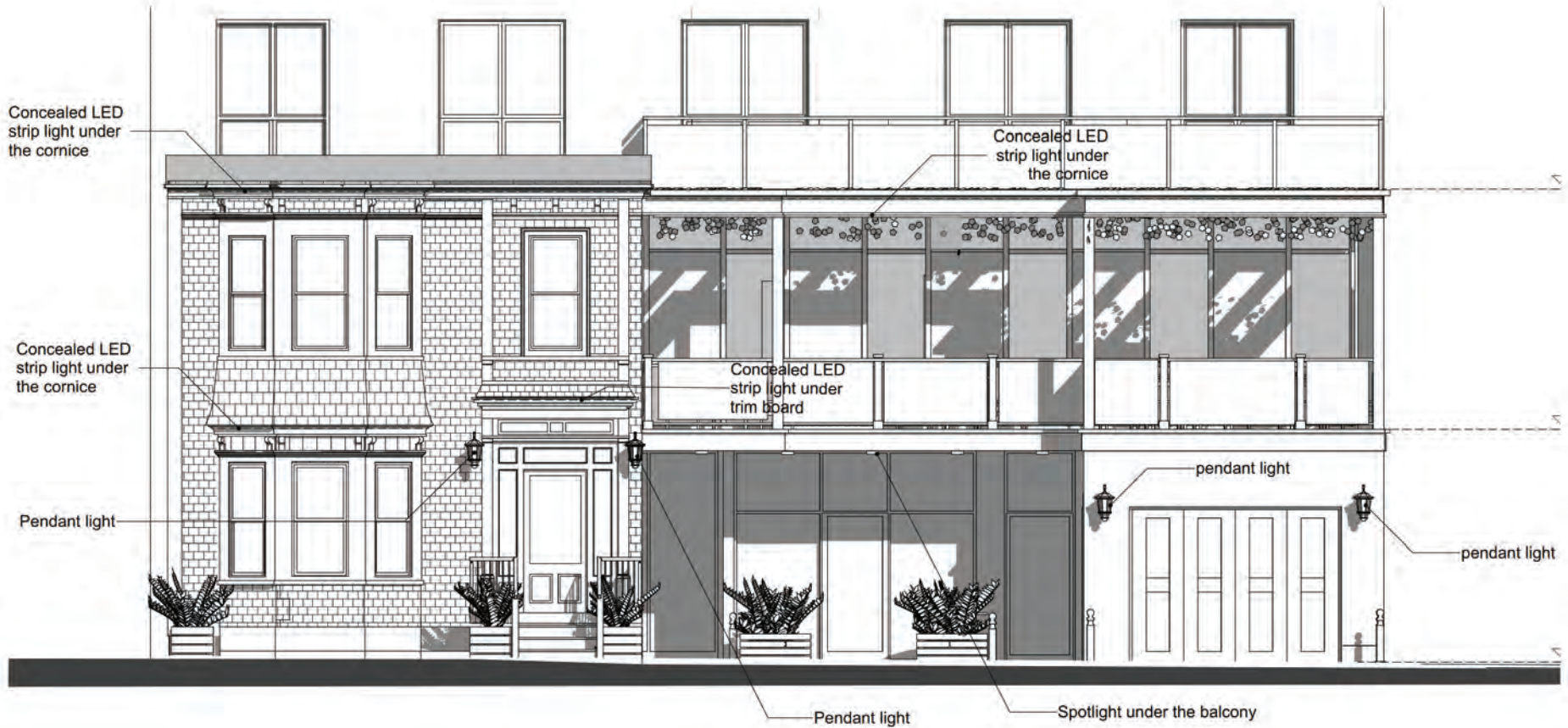
2537 Agricola Street

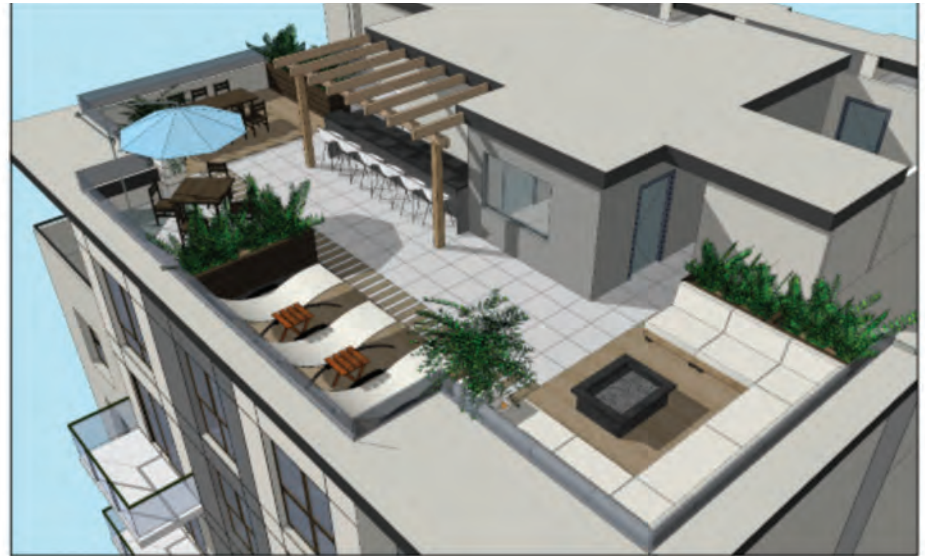
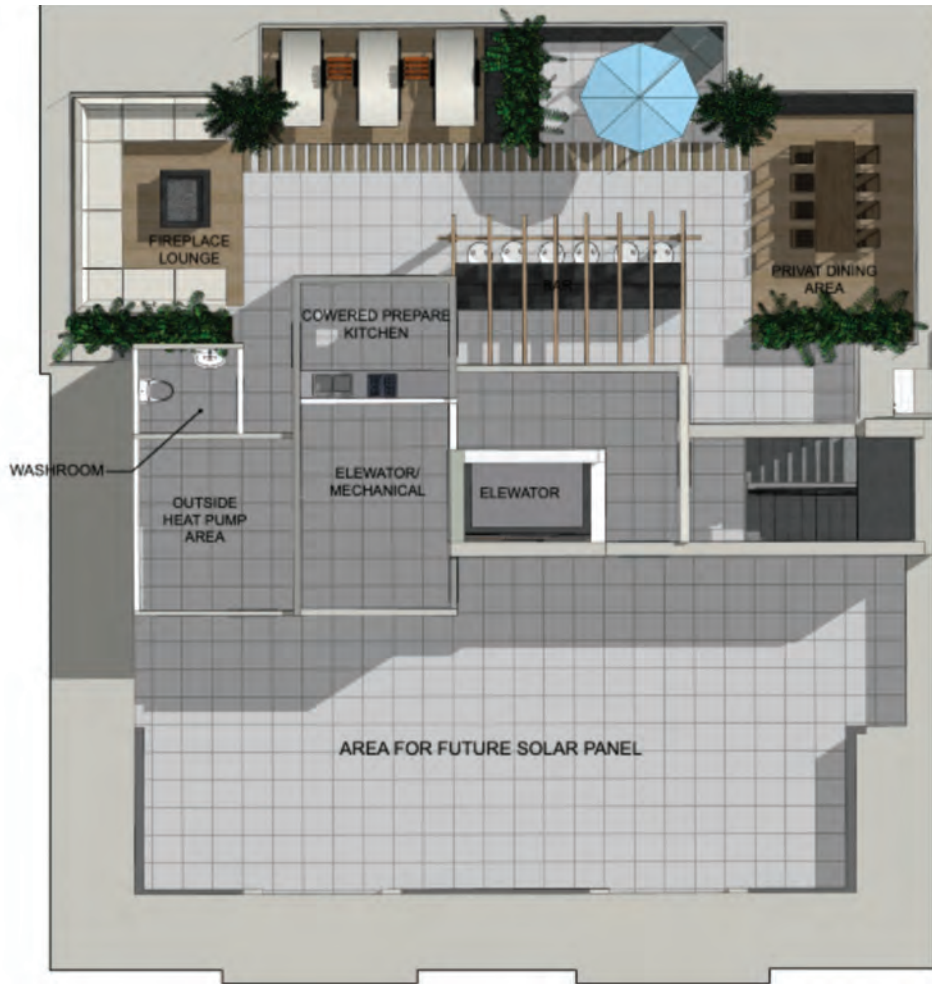


2159 Gottingen St  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3K 3B2 | 902. 412. 2329  
info@ecogreenhomes.ca

Date: 2022  
Scale: 1:92

# Lighting Plan





Rooftop Amenity Plans

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Kitz, Janet (1989). Shattered City, The Halifax Explosion and the Road to Recovery. Nimbus Publishing, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Standards and guide lines for the conservation of Historical places Canada. (2010). Canada's Historic Places. Second Edition. Catalogue Number R62-343/2010e-pdf / web link chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf

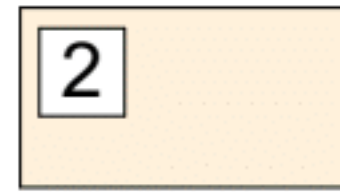
Swaffer, Kajsia (2020). "Historical Research Report -2539 Agricola Street" . Halifax Planning and Development. Nova Scotia Archives.

# ATTACHMENT C - MATERIALS PALETTE

## HERITAGE BUILDING



1 - WOOD SHINGLES GREEN COLOUR OR SIMILAR



2 - CORNBOARD, CORNICE, DOOR AND WINDOW TRIM PAINTED IN LIGHT BEIGE COLOURS



3 - RECLAIMED CLAY BRICK OR SIMILAR

## NEW BUILDING



3 - RECLAIMED CLAY BRICK OR SIMILAR



4 - SVK FIBRE CEMENT PANELS NATURAL COLOUR OR SIMILAR



5 - SMOOTH STEEL PANELS OR SIMILAR



6 - SVK FIBRE CEMENT PANELS SLATE COLOUR OR SIMILAR



## Material and Color Palette:

The materials selected for the new design have been carefully chosen to help the building remain distinct from and subordinate to the Open Mic House while also fitting into the surrounding context. It was important to create a building that is modern yet also physically and visually compatible with the heritage building.

The wood frame construction Open Mic House will be restored using traditional materials such as cedar shingles and wood trim. The foundation will be clad with reclaimed style brick suitable for exterior use. Wood trim will be pine, painted. The red accent colours on the trim will help make it the Open Mic House a focal point of attention.

The new building is non-combustible construction with the lower two stories as commercial space. Portions of the new building's lower two stories with restaurant and parking garage entrance will be clad in the same brick as the Open Mic House foundation. This will create sympathy with the older structure tying the site together and at the same time balance the front façade. Due to the need for and use of large areas of glass in this commercial space, the brick will not appear overwhelming. The use of brick connects these lower two stories and creates a unified background with the Open Mic House in front while the generous amount of glass ensure that the two buildings are different.

Higher up, the European fibre cement panels will be similar in colour to the painted wood trim on the Open Mic House helping blend the new building to the existing heritage structure. The neutrality of colour and smooth texture of the cement panels will help keep this subservient. The mid-rise tower's street façade will have light grey steel siding located at the centre and both sides along with dark windows will help keep this building in the background while making the façade more interesting. The darker slate colour fibre cement panels on the upper floors is help the building "recede" and will make the upper stories be less prominent.

The location of materials has been carefully thought out to minimize the presence of the new building on Agricola St while at the same time helping the Open Mic House stand prominently. The neutral three colour scheme helps break up the scale of the mid-rise building so that it relates well within its context, punctuating the façade, giving the building modern appearance. There is a balance overall of the tie in of the lower two floors and the modern neutral palette above.



**ATTACHMENT D:  
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES HERITAGE STAFF EVALUATION  
2537-2539 AGRICOLA STREET, HALIFAX**

Conservation is the primary aim of the Standards and Guidelines and is defined as *'all actions or processes that are aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of an historic place so as to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life. This may involve **Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration**, or a combination of these actions or processes.'*

**Note:** The Standards are structured to inform the type of project or approach being taken:

- Preservation projects apply Standards 1 through 9;
- Rehabilitation projects apply Standards 1 through 9, and Standards 10 through 12; and
- Restoration projects apply Standards 1 through 9, Standards 10 through 12, and Standards 13 and 14.

Similar to the Standards, the base Guidelines apply to the approach being taken, and additional Guidelines may apply if the project includes rehabilitation and restoration. The Guidelines should be consulted only when the element to be intervened upon has been identified as a character defining element. The Guidelines should not be used in isolation. There may be heritage value in the relationships between cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, buildings, or engineering works. These values should not be compromised when undertaking a project on individual character defining elements of an historic place.

<b>TREATMENT: PRESERVATION</b>			
<i>Preservation is the action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of an historic place, or of an individual component, while protecting the heritage value.</i>			
<b>STANDARDS 1-10</b>	<b>Complies</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
1. Conserve the <i>heritage value</i> of an <i>historic place</i> . Do not remove, replace or substantially alter its intact or repairable <i>character-defining elements</i> . Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.	<b>Yes</b>		All intact and repairable character-defining elements will remain unaltered and will be repaired as necessary. The rear portion of the dwelling will be removed as it does not contain any character-defining elements. Though the building's location is not in itself a character-defining element, nevertheless, the historic building will be replaced in its original location once the new foundation is completed.
2. Conserve changes to historic places that, over time, have become <i>character-defining elements</i> in their own right.	<b>Yes</b>		The more recent culturally significant use of the heritage property as a musical venue, which has over time become character defining in its own right, will be reinstated as part of the new commercial use of the mixed-use development.
3. Conserve <i>heritage value</i> by adopting an approach calling for <i>minimal intervention</i> .	<b>Yes</b>		The building exhibits fair to somewhat poor heritage integrity. The proposal will retain all remaining intact and repairable character-defining elements and repair them as required, replacing elements which are rotted or otherwise irreparable with in-kind replacements, again only as required. Later modifications which reduced the heritage integrity of the building will be

		<p>remedied. The proposal will rehabilitate the building by reintroducing period-appropriate features such as wood-frame windows and a front entrance of the same architectural style as the building and based on examples of other buildings in that architectural style.</p> <p>Construction of the rear addition will necessitate the removal of a rear portion of the heritage building to facilitate the redevelopment of the site and, by extension, to fund the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic building. The character-defining elements of the building are concentrated on the building's front façade, will remain unaffected by this removal and the subsequent construction of the rear addition.</p>
4. Recognize each <i>historic place</i> as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties, or by combining features of the property that never coexisted.	<b>Yes</b>	<p>There is insufficient historic record to accurately restore the historic building to its original state. As this original state is unknown, all existing CDEs will be retained and repaired or replaced in-kind as necessary, later modifications will be removed, and appropriate features will be reinstated based on historical and physical evidence of similar buildings of the same style from the same era.</p> <p>No features with identifiable characteristics will be directly added/reused from other properties or eras, and the rehabilitation will be documented to ensure historical transparency, thus preventing any false sense of historical development.</p>
5. Find a use for an <i>historic place</i> that requires minimal or no change to its <i>character-defining elements</i> .	<b>Yes</b>	The proposed use of the existing heritage building as commercial space, including its continued use as a musical venue will require minimal to no change to character-defining elements.
6. Protect and, if necessary, stabilize an <i>historic place</i> until any subsequent <i>intervention</i> is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbing archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.	<b>Yes</b>	The heritage building will be temporarily closed, with measures taken to protect it from vandalism and weather while the building is temporarily lifted/moved. The historic building will be protected during construction of its new foundation in consultation with a structural engineer.
7. Evaluate the existing condition of <i>character-defining elements</i> to determine the appropriate <i>intervention</i> needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect <i>heritage value</i> when undertaking an intervention.	<b>Yes</b>	Original character-defining elements will be preserved and repaired whenever possible, only being replaced when they are beyond repair, and with replacements being in-kind (i.e. employing the same forms, detailing, and materials of the

		<p>originals) to ensure that heritage integrity is maintained.</p> <p>To enable the installation of period-correct wood-shingle cladding, the new addition at the rear will have a two-hour rated firewall separation with the heritage building, along with the installation of a sprinkler system and fire alarm monitoring in the heritage building, which will be tied in with the new addition's systems. These safety improvements should allow the use of period-correct wood shingles as exterior siding to respect and maintain the heritage value of the building.</p>
<p>8. Maintain <i>character-defining elements</i> on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving <i>prototypes</i>.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>Replacement in-kind will be used for any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements based on surviving examples.</p> <p>The new addition in rear will provide an ongoing source of revenue to enable the continued maintenance of the heritage building. The physical connection between the heritage building and the new addition, as well as the integration of the mixed-use addition's commercial uses will ensure it remains a vital component of the overall development and help incentivise its ongoing maintenance.</p>
<p>9. Make any <i>intervention</i> needed to preserve <i>character-defining elements</i> physically and visually compatible with the <i>historic place</i> and identifiable on close inspection. Document interventions for future reference.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The repairs and intervention will aim to repair and where necessary replace deteriorated or lost character-defining elements in a visually compatible fashion. A front door with transom, sidelights, and trim will be created and installed, and its design will be based on physical and historical evidence of similar buildings of the same style from the same era to ensure compatibility. The new foundation will be faced with reclaimed brick in keeping with the historic building's original foundation materials. The rehabilitation process will be documented for historical transparency, to make new interventions identifiable. Date stamping in inconspicuous locations can also be used where necessary.</p>

<b>TREATMENT: REHABILITATION</b>			
<i>Rehabilitation is the action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of an historic place, or an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.</i>			
<b>STANDARDS 10-12</b>	<b>Complies</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
10. Repair rather than replace <i>character-defining elements</i> . Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the <i>historic place</i> .	<b>Yes</b>		<p>Character-defining elements will mostly be repaired, and rotten wood elements needing replacement will employ the same forms materials and detailing as the original. Archival photos of similar properties of the same style and era show the original scale of shingles which will be recreated as part of the rehabilitation.</p> <p>New elements such as the new entrance, replacement windows, and new foundation will be designed to be compatible with the historic place and consistent with designs and materiality of the same architectural style and era, using the physical evidence of similar extant buildings and the documentary evidence of historic photographs of similar buildings as a points of reference.</p>
11. Conserve <i>heritage values</i> and <i>character-defining elements</i> when creating new additions to an <i>historic place</i> or any related new construction. Make new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.	<b>Yes</b>		<p>The proposal conserves the heritage value by maintaining and restoring key elements of the heritage building, such as its relationship to the street and location on Agricola Street, and by proposing the new addition in the rear of the heritage building.</p> <p>The new addition's design has been thoughtfully revised to become physically and visually compatible with, but subordinate to and distinguishable from the heritage building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed addition's massing is set back behind the heritage building, with the exception of the parking garage entrance, which cannot be fully set back due to limitations with the size and configuration of the site, but is still set back slightly and only one storey tall, ensuring the heritage building remains the most prominent feature of the combined development;</li> <li>• The proposed addition's design has been simplified, so as not to distract from the registered heritage property;</li> <li>• The proposed addition employs a consistent number of bays</li> </ul>

		<p>throughout the vertical façade of the building;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The second storey balcony and pergola have been designed to continue the streetwall from the registered heritage property, minimizing the prominence of the garage entrance and visually repairing the articulation of the historic streetwall, which was lost over time;</li> <li>• The roofline of the addition has been simplified to avoid drawing the eye upwards;</li> <li>• The addition employs neutral colours so as not to distract from the registered heritage property; and</li> <li>• The faux cornice of the second-storey pergola carries the streetwall datum line from the cornice of the historic building across the full width of the new addition, while employing a simplified design in order to remain fully distinguishable.</li> </ul>
<p>12. Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an <i>historic place</i> will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The new addition proposes to attach to the rear of the heritage building, where there are no character-defining elements to be lost, damaged, or altered. The majority (54%) of the building's footprint will remain intact, including all character-defining elements, which are concentrated on the front façade. The basic form of the "Halifax Box" dwelling, while truncated by the removal of the rear portion, remains intelligible to the public as they experience it from the street. Thus, the essential form and integrity of the heritage building remains intact. If the new addition is removed, the heritage building retains its basic form and its character-defining elements and is thus not impaired.</p>

**TREATMENT: RESTORATION**

*Restoration is the action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.*

<b>STANDARDS 13-14</b>	<b>Complies</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
13. Repair rather than replace character-defining elements from the restoration period. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements.		<b>N/A</b>	Not a restoration project.
14. Replace missing features from the restoration period with new features whose forms, materials and detailing are based on sufficient physical, documentary and/or oral evidence.		<b>N/A</b>	Not a restoration project.