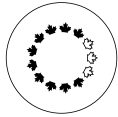


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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

<b>No.</b>	2024-P275
<b>To</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Date</b>	2024-06-20

<b>For</b>	DECISION
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### Subject/Title

Federal Land Use and Design Approval – 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation – 100% Developed Design Building Envelope and Landscape

### Summary

- To seek Federal Land Use and Design Approval (FLUDA) of the 100% Developed Design for the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation – Building Envelope and Landscape.

### Risk Summary

- Delays in obtaining FLUDA for the Developed Design Building Envelope and Landscape will result in delays and potentially cost overruns for the subsequent construction phase.

### Recommendation

- That the FLUDA for the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation - 100% Developed Design Building Envelope and Landscape be granted by the Board of Directors, pursuant to Section 12 of the *National Capital Act*, subject to the following conditions:
  - The Design Development of the exterior lighting strategy, and exterior signage and NCC branding will be subject to separate Level 2 federal review and approval process, prior to construction.
- That the preparation and signature of the FLUDA letter for the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation – 100% Developed Design Building Envelope and Landscape be delegated to the Vice-President, Capital Planning Branch.

#### Submitted by:

DocuSigned by:

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 Alain Miguez, Vice-President, Capital Planning Branch

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## 1. Strategic Priorities

- National Capital Commission (NCC) Corporate Plan 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 – Strategic Direction #1:
  - Foster an inclusive and meaningful National Capital Region of national significance reflective of all Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, and all levels of government.
- NCC Corporate Plan 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 – Priority #2:
  - Plan, rehabilitate and revitalize key assets and transportation networks in the National Capital Region.
- NCC Corporate Plan 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 – Priority #4:
  - Demonstrate national leadership in achieving an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient National Capital Region.
  
- Federal Government initiatives:
  - Greening Government Strategy: A Government of Canada Directive (2020)
  - Sustainable Development Strategy 2023-2027 (NCC, 2023)

## 2. Authority

- *National Capital Act*, Section 12.
  - Only the building envelope exterior modifications (and landscape) as well as the design for the new commercial spaces on the ground floor are subject to federal approval. A federal approval is not required under the *National Capital Act* for alterations to the interior of the office building because the land use remains the same.

## 3. Context

### Project Background

The Former British High Commission, located at 80 Elgin Street, was acquired by the NCC to become its new headquarters. The project objective is to undertake a thorough interior and exterior rehabilitation to incorporate Workplace Modernization elements in accordance with GCWorkplace standards that accommodate NCC employees in a hybrid workplace model; and exterior landscape, building envelope, and façade modifications that will improve the integration of the building into the streetscape of Confederation Boulevard at this important location.

The former British High Commission building was constructed in 1964 to the designs of British architect Eric Bedford. Its parcel is bounded by Queen Street to the north, Elgin Street to the east, Albert Street to the south, and a small surface parking lot to the west (forming part of the property). Also, to the west of the building is an entrance off Albert Street to a vehicle access tunnel into the National Arts Centre's underground parking

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garage. The eight-storey building includes seven floors of office space, a main lobby level, a mezzanine level, and a mechanical penthouse. The building is constructed in the International Style and features a modular, geometric façade, clad in polished Stanstead and Blue-Pearl granite with extensive glazing. Its massing is rectangular in shape with a flat roof, and while it spans an entire city block from north to south, it is characterized by a very narrow floorplate from east to west.

The property holds a significant place on the Confederation Boulevard ceremonial route on the southwest edge of Confederation Square. The visibility and prominence of the building in the context of the National Capital's core area are subject to site design requirements developed by the NCC as described in *The Confederation Boulevard Guidelines, Management and Stewardship of our Capital Legacy*.

Additionally, the NCC has submitted the property to the Federal Heritage Building Review Office (FHBRO) for evaluation of federal heritage building designation. This process has not been completed. In the interim, a separate *Heritage Assessment and Conservation Guidelines* report was commissioned by the Proponent in 2022 with the goal of guiding the 80 Elgin Modernization and Rehabilitation project. The NCC is committed to excellence in urban design and heritage conservation and, therefore, the proposed interventions follow *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* from Parks Canada and have been reviewed by the NCC's Heritage Program.

## General Project Scope

The following key elements make up the project scope:

- Fit-up of all interior spaces to align with an Activity-Based Work (ABW) model within the building's existing floor plate;
- Re-design of ground floor spaces to include new leasable commercial space along Elgin Street (at Albert and Queen streets), new interactive public realm, corporate service facilities, and accessibility upgrades;
- Mechanical and electrical upgrades to support increased building occupancy and achieve long-term sustainability targets;
- Building envelope improvements (including new exterior insulation, roof replacement) to improve energy efficiency;
- Rehabilitation or replacement in kind of black granite panels and sealant repairs to renew exterior granite panel wall assemblies;
- Landscape improvements to improve streetscape animation and provide additional staff amenities;
- Information Technology (IT) upgrades to improve operational efficiency and support modern hybrid work trends; and
- Smart Building technology to improve building performance and emergency efficiency.

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## Federal Approval Scope

In addition to engineering reports (mechanical, electrical, civil, and structural) and a Heritage Conservation Approach, the 100% Developed Design submission includes the following items, which are subject to Federal Land Use and Design Approval (FLUDA) review:

- The main entrance/entry experience and sequence off Elgin Street;
- The landscape design of the Elgin Street interface;
- The landscape design at the rear of the building;
- The rehabilitation and upgrades to the exterior building envelope; and
- The exterior and interior renovations at grade level to accommodate two proposed commercial spaces (one at the northeast corner, and one at the southeast corner of the building).

The remaining interior renovations – including typical office floor fit-up and special purpose spaces – are not subject to FLUDA review, as they do not represent a change in land use.

## Previous Approvals

- In November 2023, the NCC's Board of Directors granted Approval for the Schematic Design of the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation – 100% Schematic Design Building Envelope and Landscape.
- In June 2024, the NCC's Executive Committee of the Board of Directors granted Approval for the early works associated with the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation exterior scope, which included site mobilization, construction site hoarding and fencing, selective demolition of building envelope and landscape elements, and preliminary re-grading work.

## Developed Design

The proposal remains largely consistent with the design intent approved at the Schematic Design phase. The 100% Developed Design submission is summarized below.

### Elgin Street Entrance:

The existing entry vestibule – which was a later addition to the building – will be demolished and replaced with a new exterior stair, new canopy, and new enclosed vestibule centred on the main building façade. The proposed new vestibule will span three structural bays and restore the symmetry of the original building façade. Having the entrance parallel to the path of travel along Elgin Street speaks to the original design intent of the building forecourt functioning as an extension of the street. The vestibule will be constructed of a light steel frame, wrapped with a clear anodized aluminum and clear bird-

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safe glazing assembly. The glass assembly will terminate at a small granite curb/ sill, providing a durable edge for winter maintenance and tying in with the Stanstead granite cladding of the original building. The canopy will be finished with a brushed aluminum fascia, with integrated soffit lighting. While these materials are compatible with the original architecture of the building, the detailing of the new vestibule will be distinct enough for it to be clearly legible as a contemporary addition.

The new central entry stairs will be constructed of cast-in-place concrete with solid granite stair treads. The custom handrail will be fabricated in stainless steel with a flat bar cross-section featuring a continuous design. The detailing will specify eased edges to facilitate user comfort and safety. Universal access into the building will be from the upper terrace located just north of the new entrance vestibule, which is accessible from Queen Street via the existing sloped sidewalk along Elgin Street.

The proposed landscape design associated with the new Elgin Street Entrance maximizes street animation/activation by providing commercial spaces on both corners of the building and by integrating outdoor patio seating adjacent to these commercial spaces. The existing black granite planters located between the building and the Elgin Street sidewalk will be demolished and replaced with sloped planting beds on either side of the new central entrance stairs to resolve the grade difference between the north and south of the site. The use of granite around the proposed planters will provide a connection to the building's history and provide integrated seating that is consistent with typical design details on Confederation Boulevard. In addition to shrub and perennial plantings, nine new trees will be planted along the Elgin Street interface in line with the new entry stairs.

#### Landscape at Rear of Building:

The west (rear) side of the building, currently set up as a vehicular parking lot, will be re-landscaped to create a plaza and central open space accessible to NCC employees. The plaza will be surrounded by planters with trees that connects Queen Street and Albert Street through a pedestrian / cycling pathway. A loading dock is also located at the rear of the building with vehicular entrance from Albert Street. The plaza will be separated from the service entrances to the south by a retaining wall to negotiate the more than two-metre slope across the length of the site, with plantings to screen the back-of-house activities. Bicycle parking for 100 bikes is located on the west side of the plaza with a soft landscape buffer between the two. The plaza will include benches along the planters, picnic tables and movable tables and chairs to provide space customization opportunities for NCC employees.

#### Exterior Envelope:

The proposed rehabilitation and upgrades to the existing exterior envelope include a complete roof replacement with added thermal performance, and a new parapet to accommodate the height increase from the additional insulation. Additionally, a localized granite panel rehabilitation, including partial replacement in-kind, is planned for the building exterior. Following mobilization of the construction site, investigative works are

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planned to determine the precise means and methods to execute the granite rehabilitation program and finalize the extent of the work. The project will also improve the exterior envelope performance by adding insulation to the exterior walls (from the interior side) and at the floor slab immediately inboard of the exterior envelope.

### Proposed Commercial Spaces:

The proposed changes to accommodate the two new commercial spaces at grade level include replacing the existing granite panels at the southeast and northeast corners of the building with new storefront glazing and new glazed entrance doors on the east façade; the installation of one new garage door on the west façade to access the proposed new rear loading dock; and re-grading and adding a new slab to bring the proposed commercial space, loading dock, and garbage room to the same elevation. The new storefront glazing will be composed of clear anodized aluminum and clear glazing with etched bird-friendly frit.

### Exclusions

The following design areas are not included in this submission, and will be subject to separate Level 2 FLUDTAs following the Board of Directors' approval of the 100% Developed Design:

- Developed Design for exterior lighting.
- Developed Design for exterior signage (including tenant signage at commercial storefronts) and NCC branding opportunities across building exterior, including options to animate and improve the visibility of the Atrium (Urbanism Lab) at the mezzanine level from the street/Confederation Boulevard.

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## 4. Options Analysis / NCC Staff Analysis

### Design:

NCC FLUDTA Staff have reviewed the 100% Developed Design submission for the 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation (Building Envelope and Landscape) and are generally supportive of the proposal.

Since the Schematic Design approval, the Proponent has explored several design and cost options on the advice of the Regulator Advocate (NCC Federal Approvals) and has made improvements to the design, including:

- Further development of the landscape design, including refining the material palette for hardscaping elements. Generally, the use of granite for curbs, exterior stairs, planter walls, and integrated seating walls, is reserved for the Elgin Street forecourt, while the hardscaping materials for the rear courtyard will be primarily architectural concrete. FLUDTA Staff are supportive of this hierarchical approach for selecting landscape materials, as the emphasis should be on the interface between the building and Confederation Boulevard.
- Improvements to the design and layout of the rear courtyard, including more efficient bike storage and a reduction in the space dedicated to loading activities, in order to maximize the available open space in the courtyard for staff use.
- Further refinement of the architectural detailing of the new entry stairs, central vestibule, and canopy. In particular, the new entry handrails will be a custom stainless-steel design with integrated LED lighting. The aesthetics of the exterior handrails will carry through to the main lobby at the mezzanine stairs, which will feature similar handrail details to tie the exterior and interior spaces together to achieve a cohesive entry experience.
- Further refinement of the proposed new glazing assembly details. The glazing assemblies for both the new vestibule and new storefronts on the ground level will have the same aesthetic (clear glazing with etched bird-frit, and anodized aluminum frames); this will make the new interventions on the existing building more legible and read as a cohesive contemporary layer.

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## Planning:

The proposal is aligned with the following NCC plans and policies:

- NCC Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067 (2017):
  - Key Policy Directions for federal head offices and accommodations:
    - The head offices of federal departments, Crown corporations and agencies will locate, wherever possible, in the Capital's core area, (...).
    - Federal accommodations should be located and designed in a manner that contributes positively to the character of the Capital.
- Key Policy Directions for Confederation Boulevard:
  - As the NCC and the municipalities work to renew Confederation Boulevard, they will focus on enhancing the pedestrian and cycling experience, as well as the amenities in and around federal sites (...).
- Key Policy Directions for the Capital and regional economy:
  - Changes to federal accommodations will include locating facilities near readily available transit. Retrofitting or replacing buildings with more energy-efficient and accessible design will contribute to regional sustainability and reduce environmental impacts.
- Key Policy Directions for a living culture and heritage:
  - The NCC will strive to protect heritage buildings and sites and bring them to life with new uses that respect their character, are compatible with the heritage features to be preserved, and have well-integrated accessibility features (...). The NCC will give special attention to 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture.
- Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan (2005) – Currently under review:
  - Policies related to Confederation Boulevard:
    - Promote use of the highest standards for institutions located along the Boulevard in terms of building design, heritage preservation and adaptive re-use, landscape architecture and programming activities.
    - Encourage the addition and incorporation of active uses and more visitor services/facilities at street level, to improve public pedestrian life and the vitality of Confederation Boulevard throughout the day and throughout the year.
- Policies related to Federal Accommodation:
  - Demand high quality and leading standards for all federal Crown owned accommodation and facilities along Confederation Boulevard, in terms of architecture and design, building construction and energy efficiency (...).
  - Encourage departments to enhance their "public face" or presentation to the public, through on-site information, landscaping, art and other means that help communicate their mandates and activities.



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- NCC Confederation Boulevard Guidelines Key Principle:
  - Confederation Boulevard is a vibrant public place that presents Canadians with a range of opportunities for enhanced community, intellectual and emotional experience.

### Summary of ACPDR Comments:

The proposal was presented to the NCC's ACPDR on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Committee provided NCC staff with the following comments:

- The Committee encouraged the use of the existing sloped sidewalk along Elgin Street as an accessible path to the main entrance rather than proposing a new ramp with a steeper slope. Following similar advice from the Regulator Advocate (NCC Federal Approvals) and from ACUA, the Proponent modified the design to reflect this change.
- In general, the Committee noted that this project should showcase the NCC and encouraged the design team to push the boundaries with more bold design choices.
- The Committee's opinion on the rear courtyard being public versus private (reserved for NCC employee use) was split.
- The Committee suggested looking at alternative solutions for staff bicycle storage and delivery/loading solutions in order to gain more usable surface area in the rear courtyard.
- The Committee reiterated that the Atrium (Urbanism Lab) should contribute to the building animation as a lively and inviting space. Together with the ground floor lobby, there is a great opportunity for public exhibits showcasing the NCC's work.

### Summary of ACUA Comments:

The proposal was presented to the NCC's Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility (ACUA) on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Committee provided NCC staff with the following comments:

- Members of the Committee expressed concern that the originally proposed UA ramp was for one-way traffic only. There were also concerns that the ramp's slope of 6.6% would be difficult to navigate, especially during the winter.
- Committee feedback reinforced the preferred option to utilize the existing sloped sidewalk as the universal access to the main entrance.

## **5. Financial Details**

- Not applicable

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## 6. Opportunities and Expected Results

- The 80 Elgin Office Modernization and Rehabilitation project will consolidate most of the NCC's staff in the new NHQ building in a contemporary office workplace that supports current ways of working. At 80 Elgin, the NCC will be both landlord and tenant, which creates an opportunity for the organization to present a new face to the National Capital Region and to showcase its public-facing programs. The renewal of the base building will dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of the building, while the proposed new landscape design will contribute to a vibrant, urban streetscape and public realm.

## 7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies

- A Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) analysis was performed by the Prime Consultant during the Schematic Design and Design Development phases to inform the project team and support the development of design options for both the interior office spaces and exterior landscaping to provide the greatest level of inclusion to employees and visitors.
- Outcomes of this analysis include changes to washrooms to be gender-neutral across all spaces, the inclusion of various types of work points to accommodate a variety of employee needs, wellness and active rooms to serve as additional employee support spaces, upgrades to exterior landscaping and main lobby to improve accessibility, new elevators to ensure all spaces are accessible to users of a variety of physical abilities, and minimizing partition walls to improve sightlines, increase the prominence of natural daylight, and reduce the reliance on artificial lighting.

## 8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measure
Delay in receiving approval could affect start of construction.	Low	Moderate	The Regulator Advocate (Federal Approvals staff) continue to work closely with the NCC's Real Estate and Development branch to adapt the approvals process to meet intended timelines.
Risk that the proposed building interventions may conflict with the outcome of the FHBRO evaluation /designation and associated heritage value.	Low	Low	This risk is being mitigated by the Proponent applying the <i>Heritage Assessment and Conservation Guidelines</i> report, completed in 2022. Further, the NCC Heritage Program was consulted and provided guidance in accordance with <i>The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada</i> .

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## 9. Public Engagement and Communications

- Internal (NCC):
  - ACPDR – August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - ACUA – August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - Employee surveys were circulated to the NCC and at different levels of management to evaluate preferences for accommodation options.
  - Project updates are published regularly on the internal NCC intranet.
  - NCC employees had the opportunity to attend building tours in the summer of 2022.

## 10. Next Steps

Spring 2024:

- Construction site mobilization and hoarding
- Commencement of exterior demolition and construction

Summer/Fall 2024 – Separate Level 2 FLUDAs for:

- Exterior lighting strategy – Developed Design
- Exterior signage and NCC branding across building exterior – Developed Design

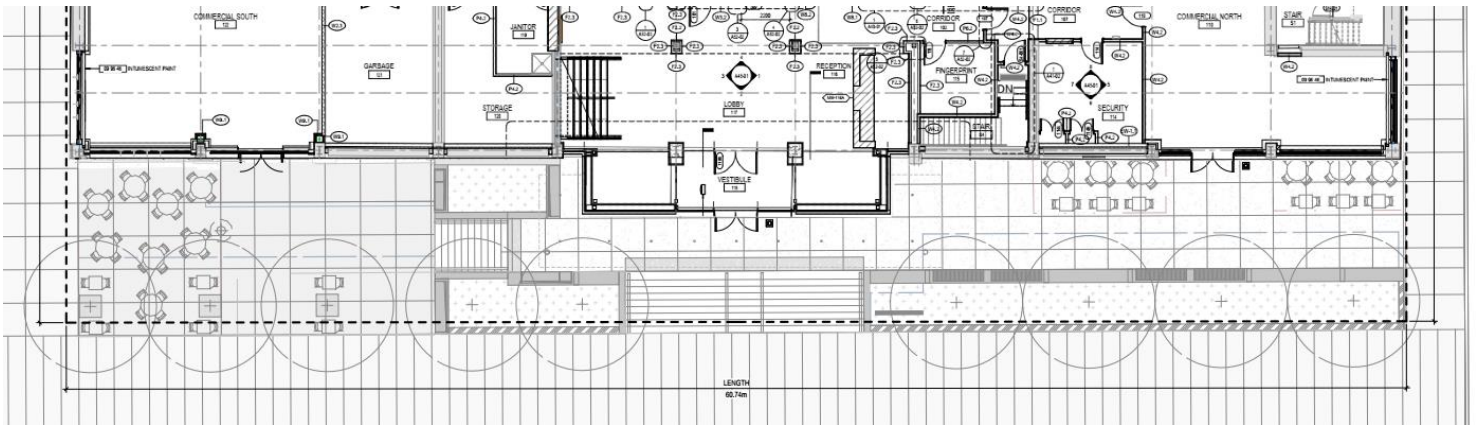
## 11. List of Appendices

- Appendix A – Proposed Elgin Street Entrance (plans and renderings)
- Appendix B – Proposed Landscape Design (plans and renderings)
- Appendix C – Proposed Upgrades to Exterior Envelope (plans, elevations, and sections)

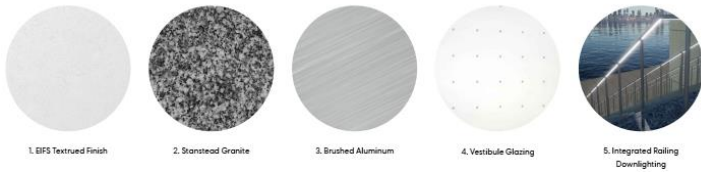
## 12. Authors of the Submission

- Alain Miguelez, Vice-President, Capital Planning (CP)
- Isabel Barrios, Director, Federal Approvals and Heritage, and Archaeology Programs (FAHA), CP
- Jason Hutchison, Chief, Federal Design Approvals, FAHA, CP
- Amanda Conforti, Senior Architect, Federal Design Approvals, FAHA, CP

# Appendix A – Proposed Elgin Street Entrance



Entry Experience – Proposed Floor Plan



Vestibule materiality



Entry Experience – View Approaching from Elgin Street



Entry Experience – View from Elgin Street

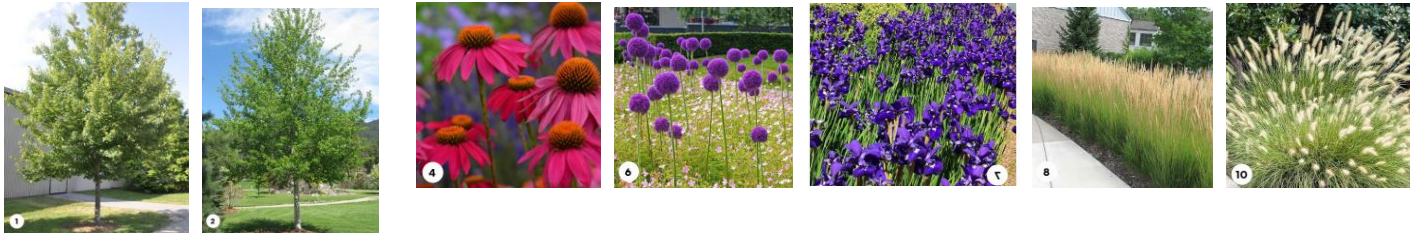
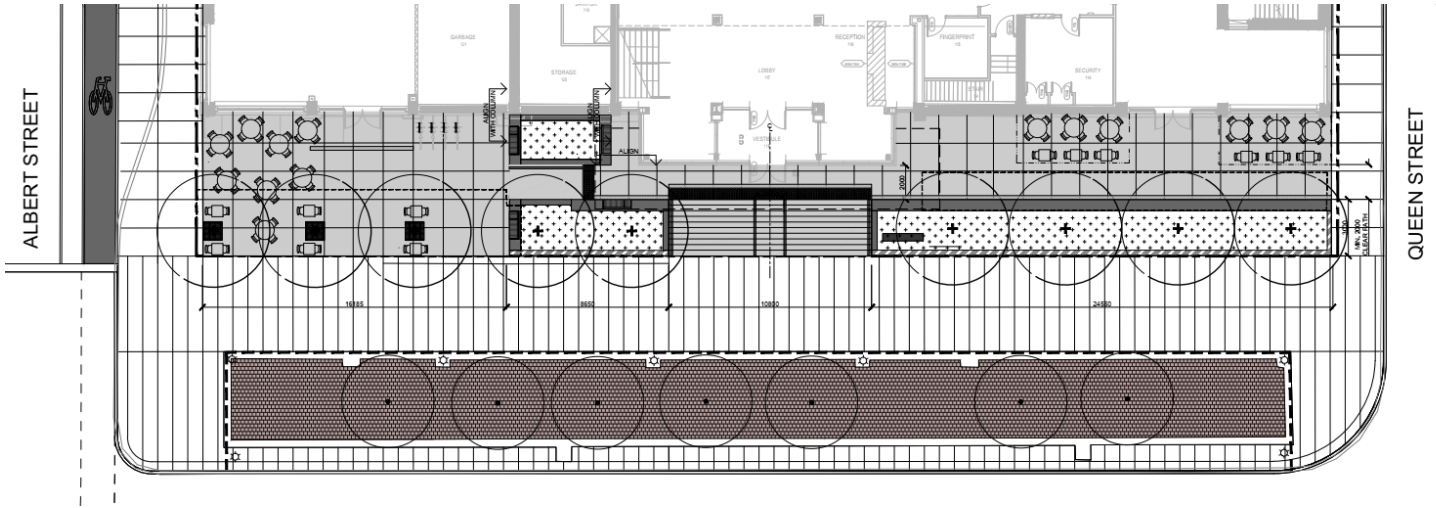


Entry Experience – Night View from Elgin Street

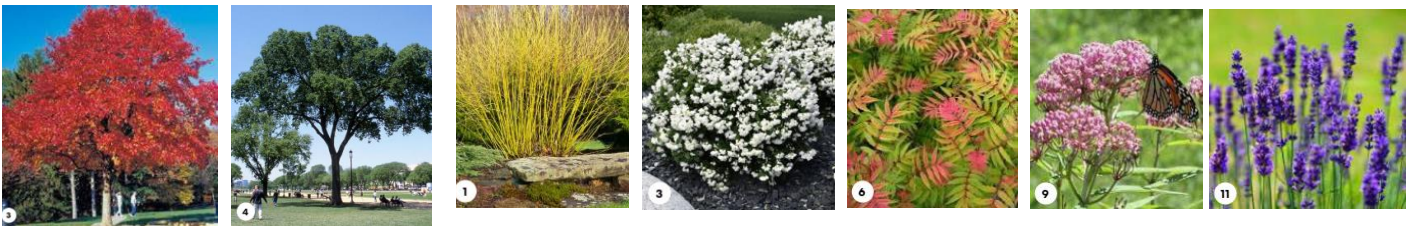
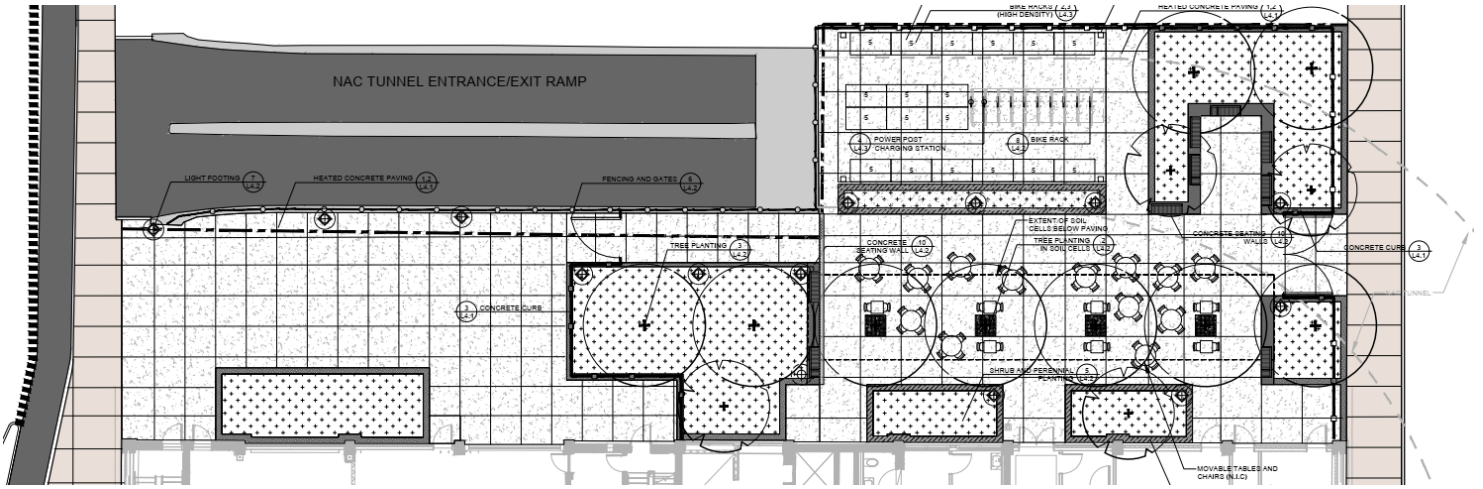


View of proposed new entry vestibule from the lobby (interior)

# Appendix B – Proposed Landscape Design



Landscape Plan – Elgin Street Forecourt



Landscape Plan – Rear Courtyard



Rendering of rear (west) plaza looking southwest



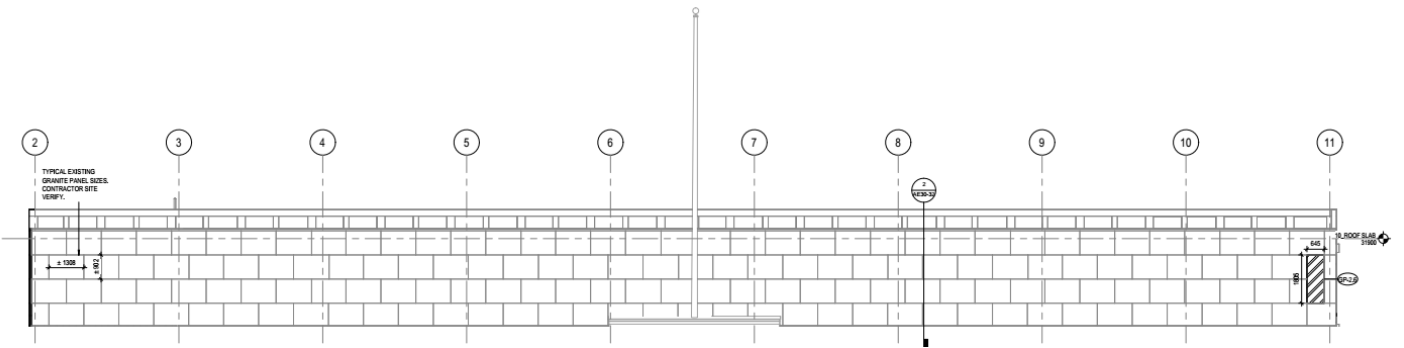
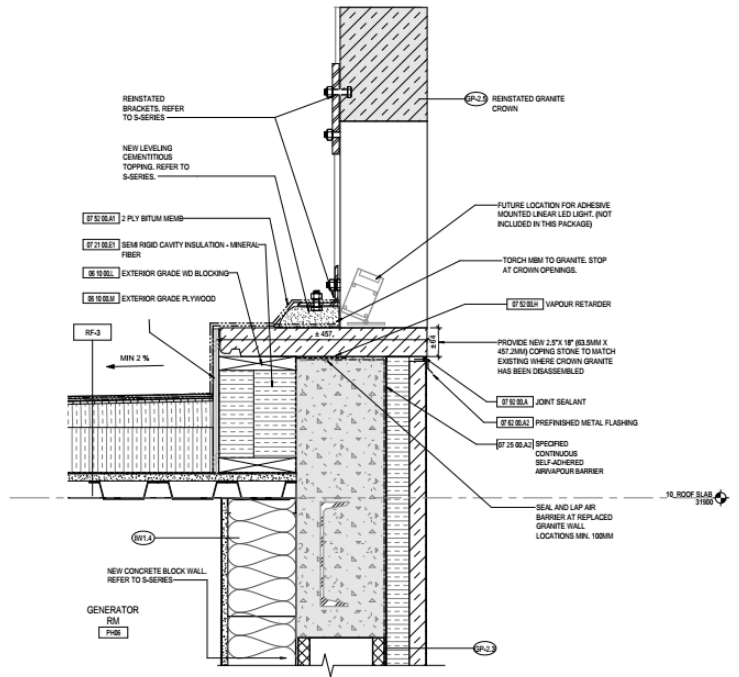


Rendering of rear (west) plaza looking southwest

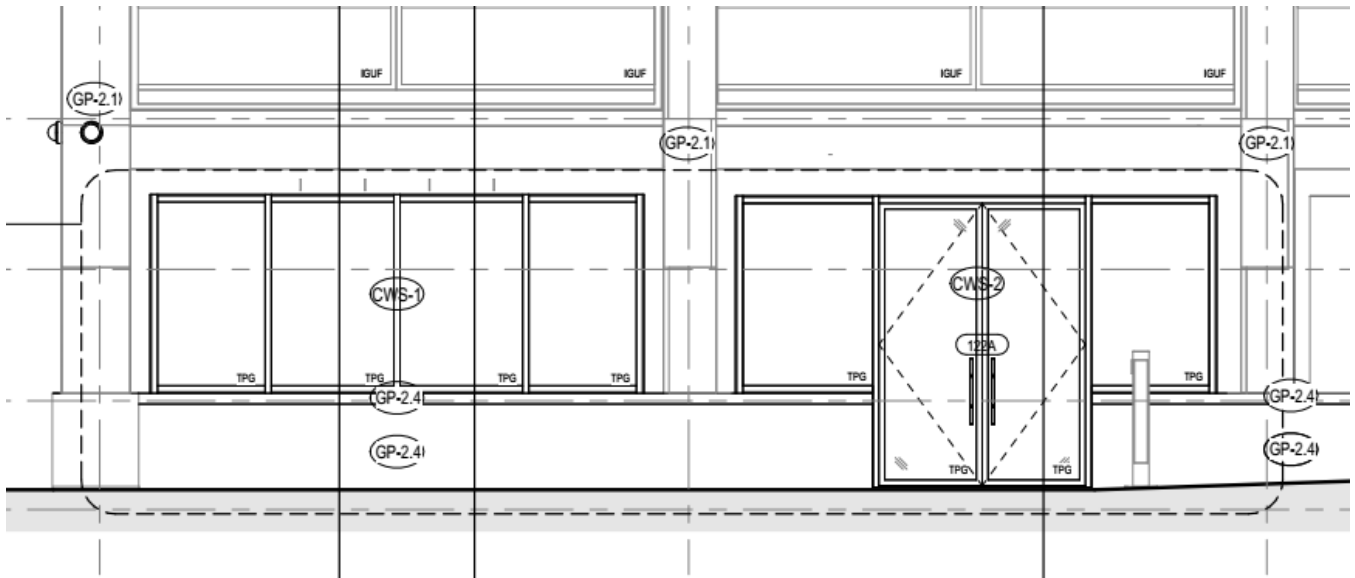


Rendering of rear (west) plaza looking south

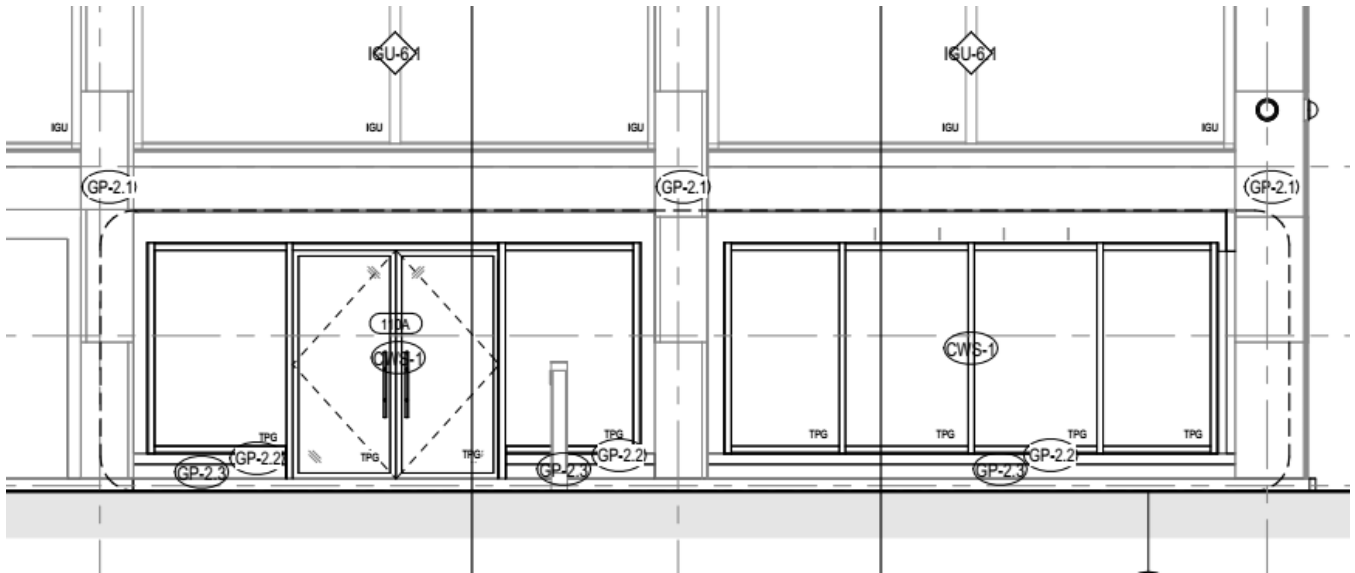
# Appendix C – Proposed Upgrades to Exterior Envelope



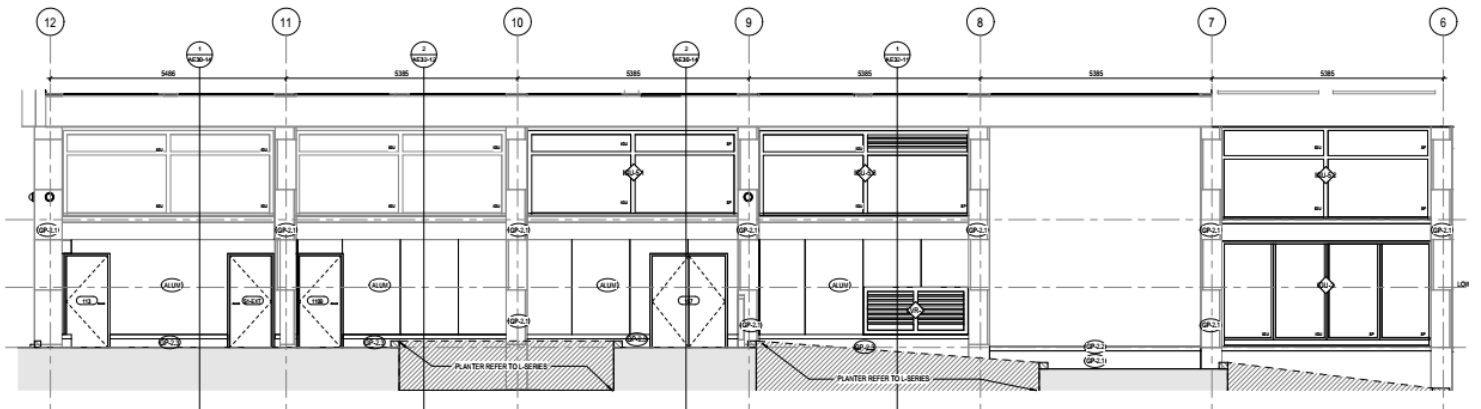
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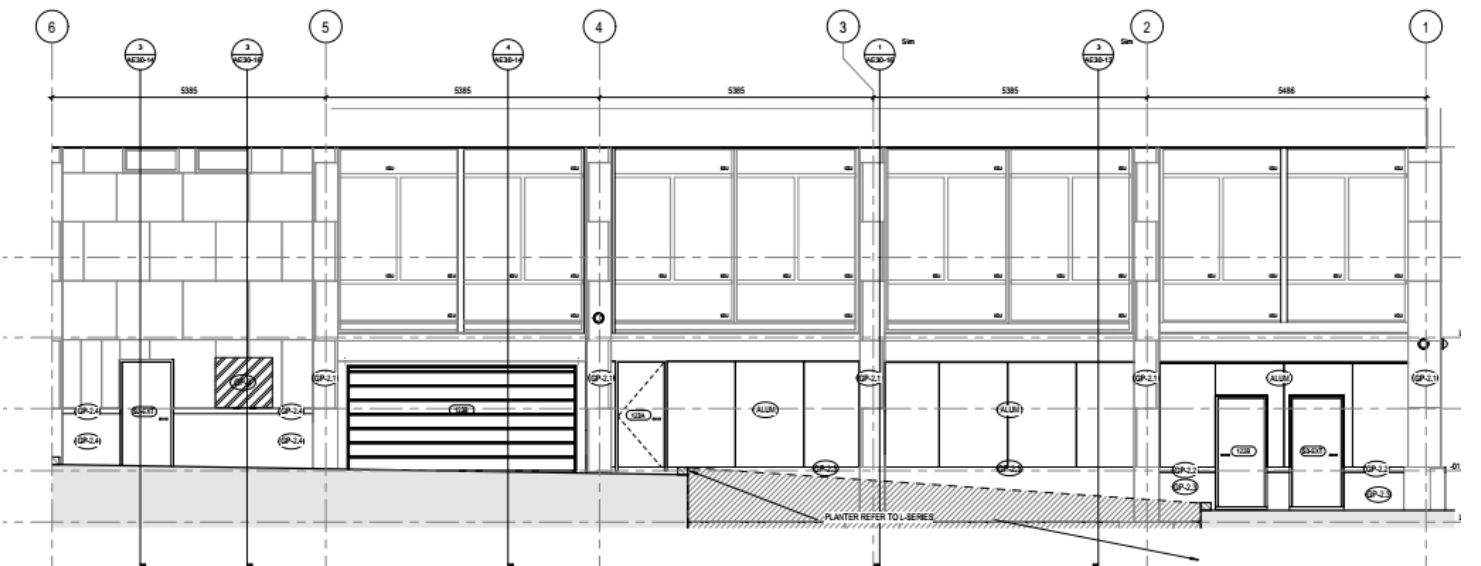
Proposed South Commercial Space on Albert Street



Proposed North Commercial Space on Queen Street



Partial proposed west (rear) elevation showing new rear entrance doors and new spandrel infill to replace existing garage doors.



Partial proposed west (rear) elevation showing new window and granite panel infill and new garage door at rear loading dock.