



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



Table of contents

- 01 Introduction.
- 02 Existing Buildings, Current and Historical Context.
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.

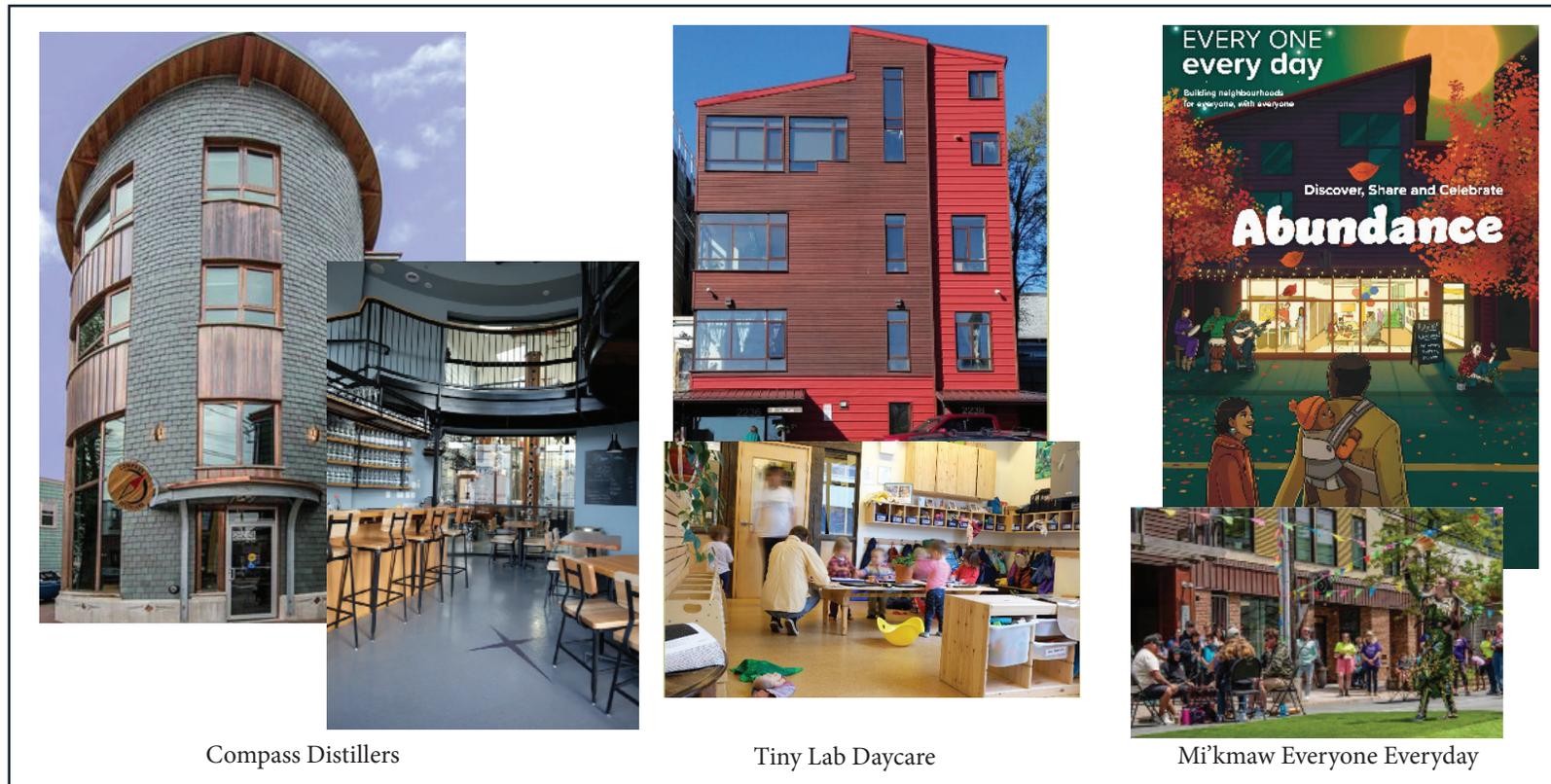


Fig. 1 Showing some of EcoGreen Homes community enhancement projects.

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

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.

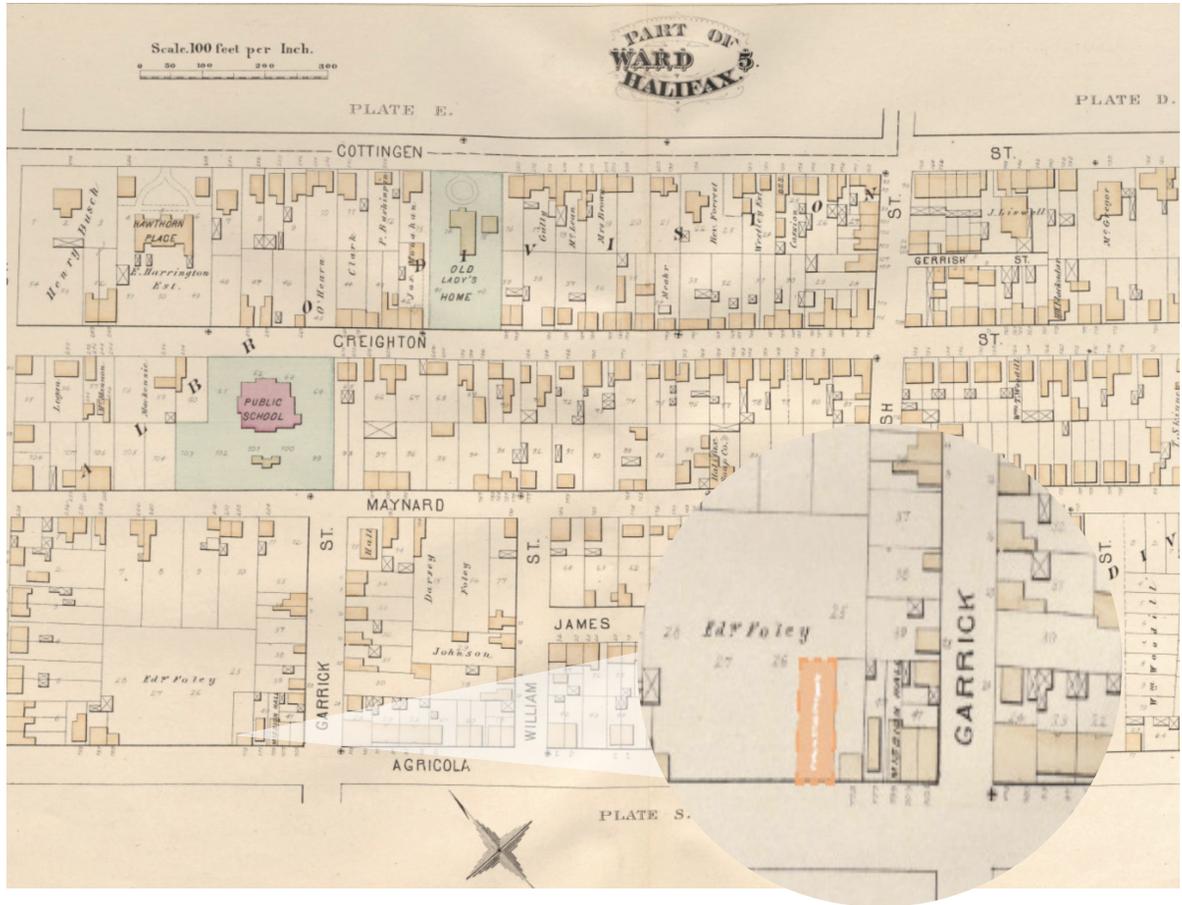


Fig. 4 Above Atlas of Halifax showing future property outlined. (Hopkins 1878)

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.

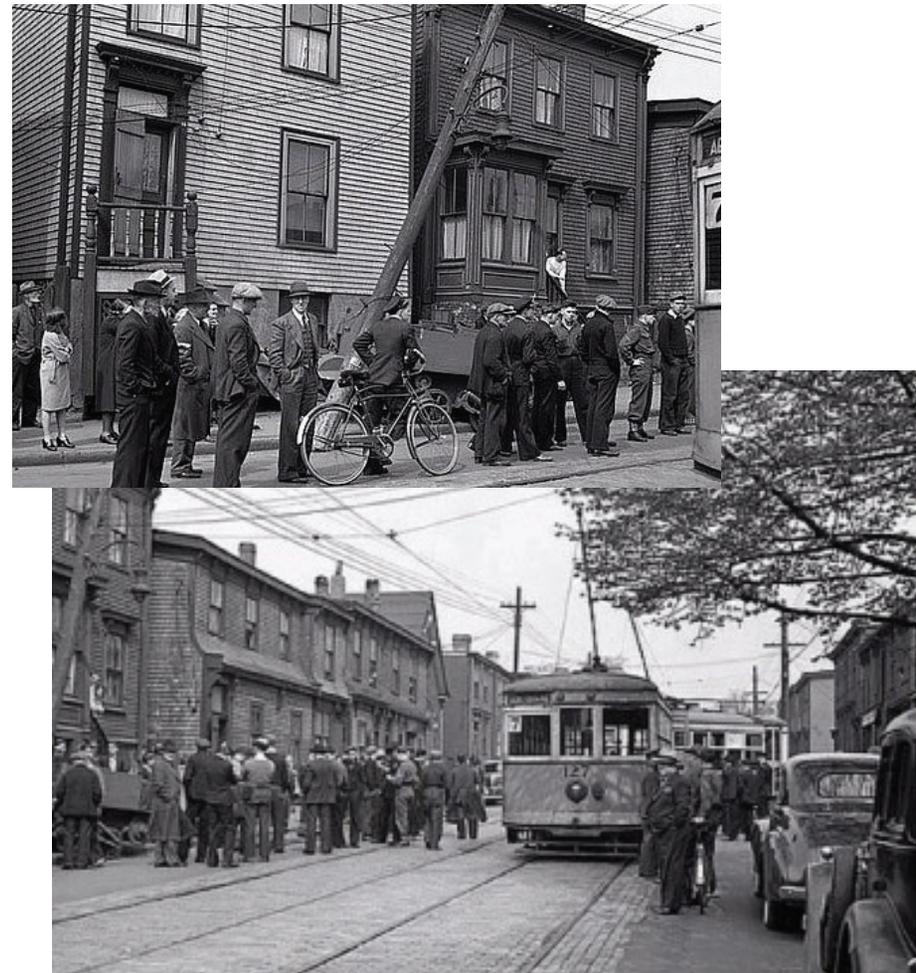
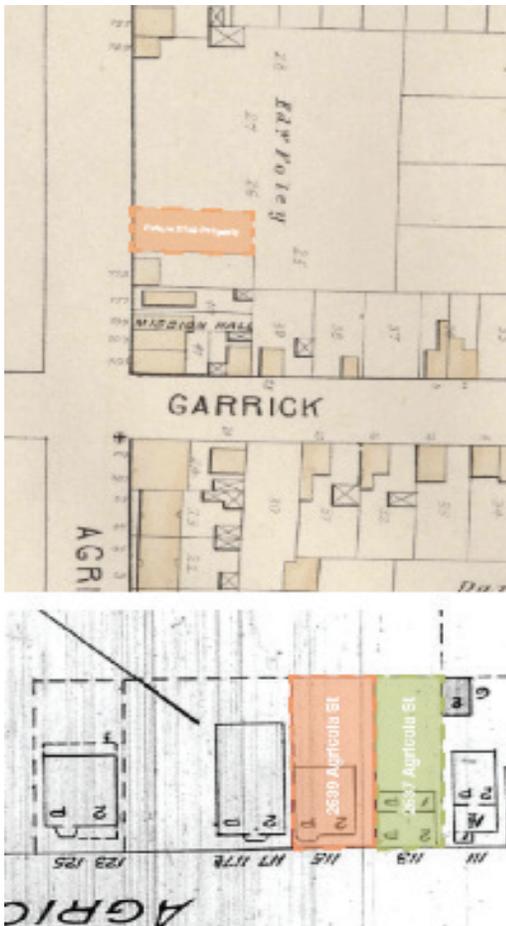


Fig. 9 Showing Atlas of Halifax with future property outlined (Hopkins, H. W. 1878).
A 1914 Goad Atlas of Halifax (below) shows the now-constructed 2539 Agricola St

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.

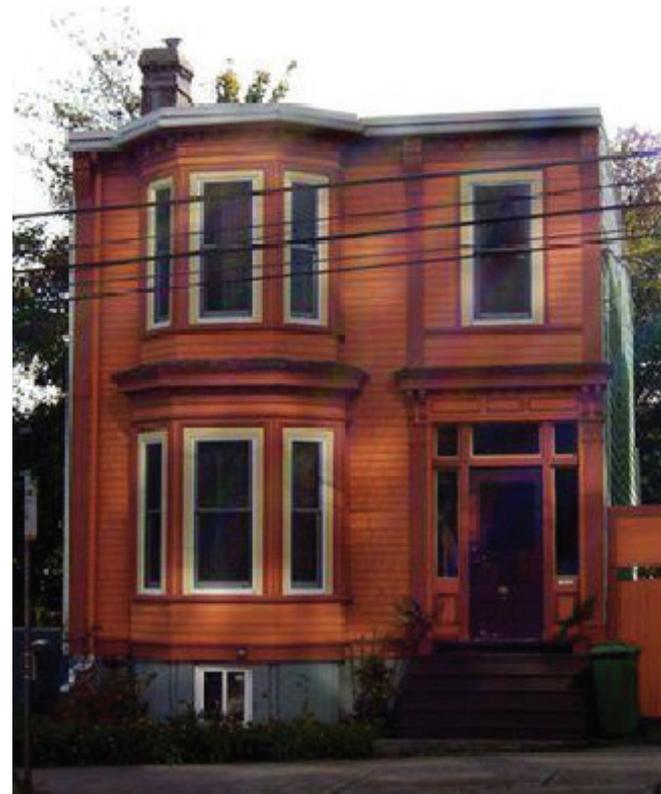


Fig. 12 Showing a remaining example of Halifax Box 5516 North St.

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.

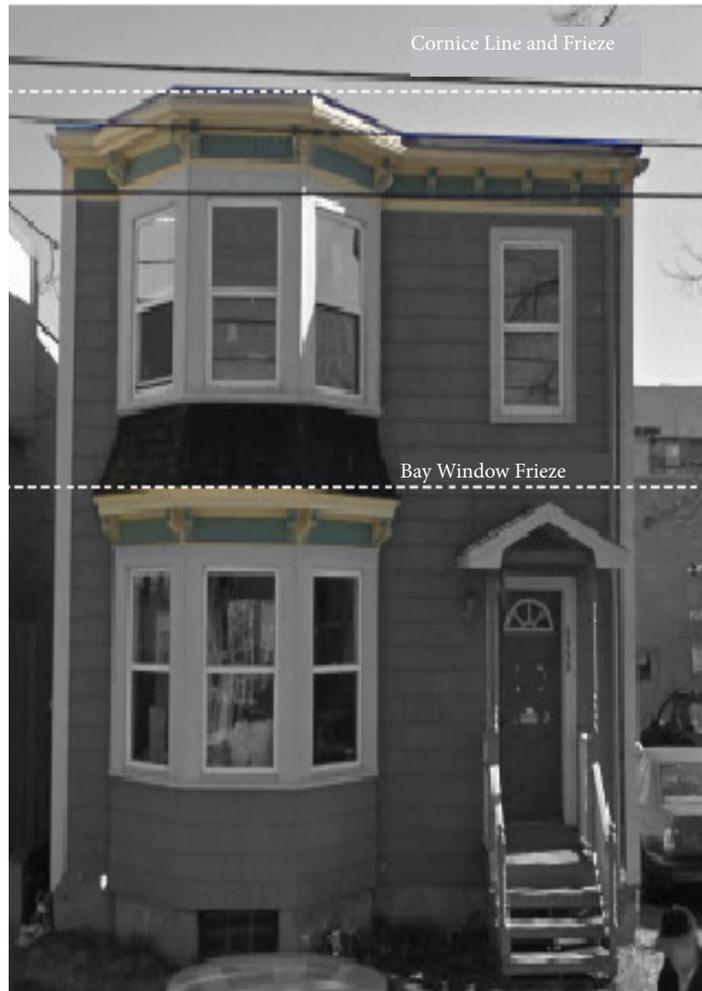


Fig. 13 Horizontal elements showing characteristics of the Halifax Box style. The frieze features ornamental cornice brackets to accentuate the roof lines.



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)

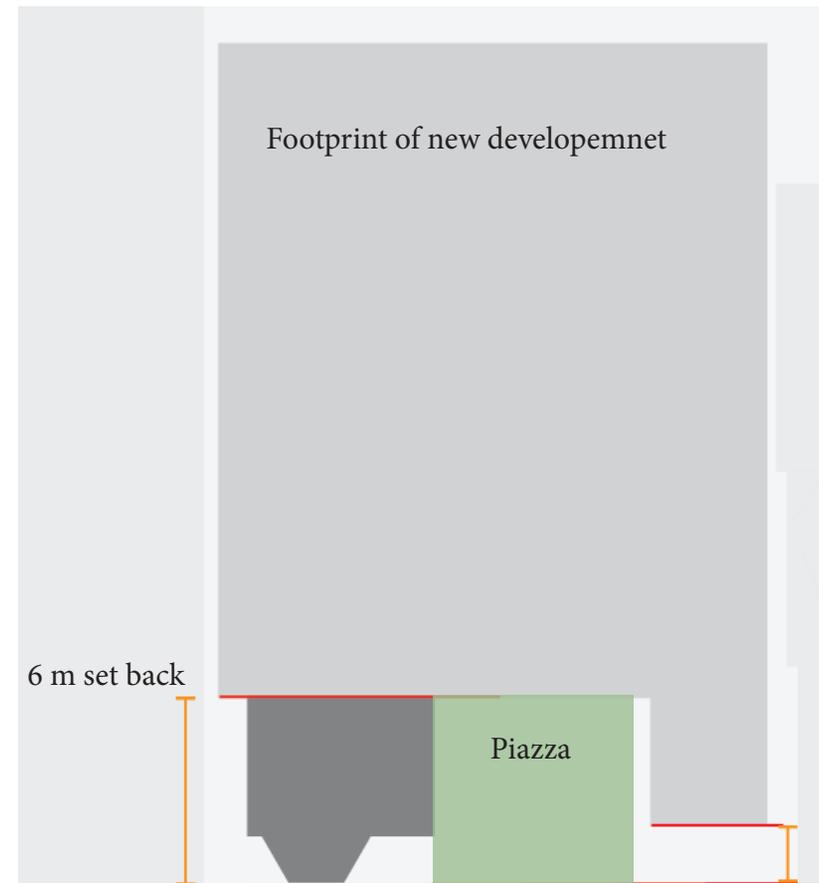


Fig. 16 Showing 6 meters setback, Open Mic House, and piazza in green.

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

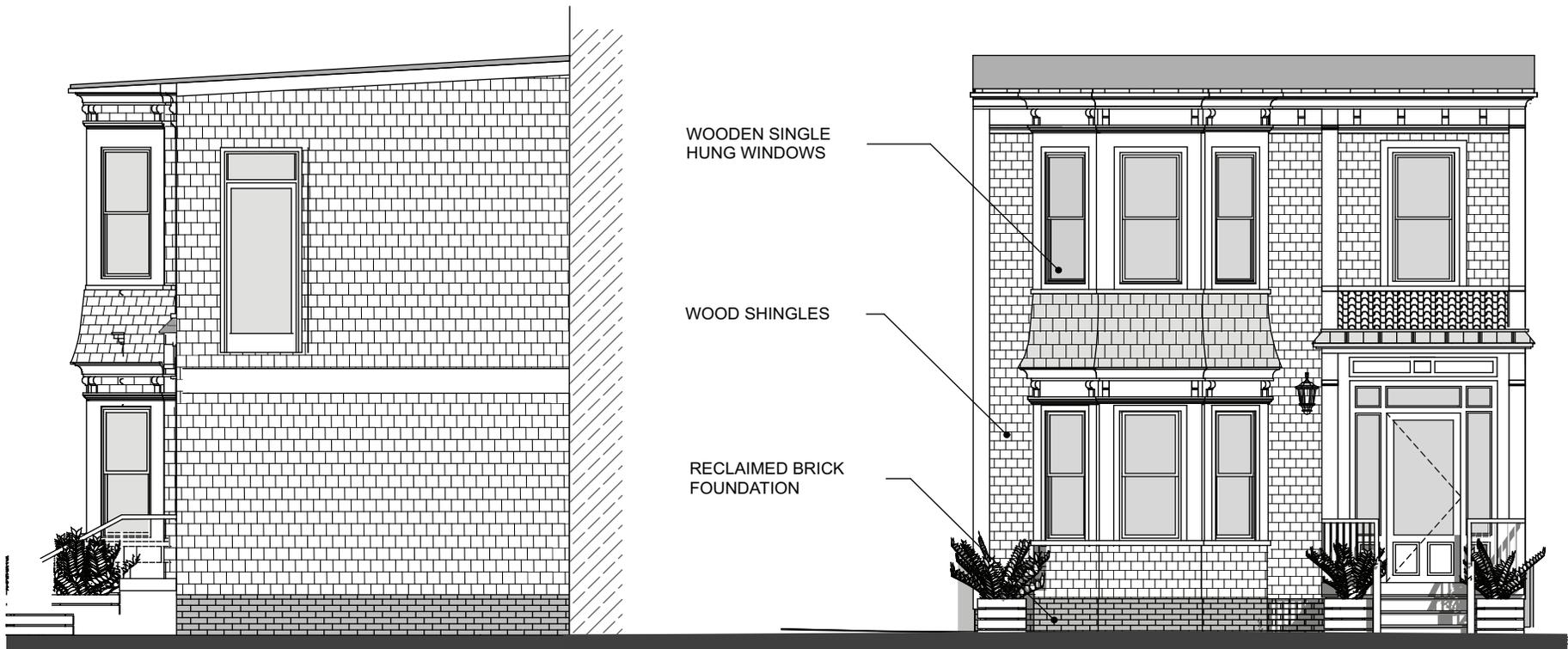


Fig. 20 Shows elevations of the proposed retained Heritage House

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



Historic building on NRTTH 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

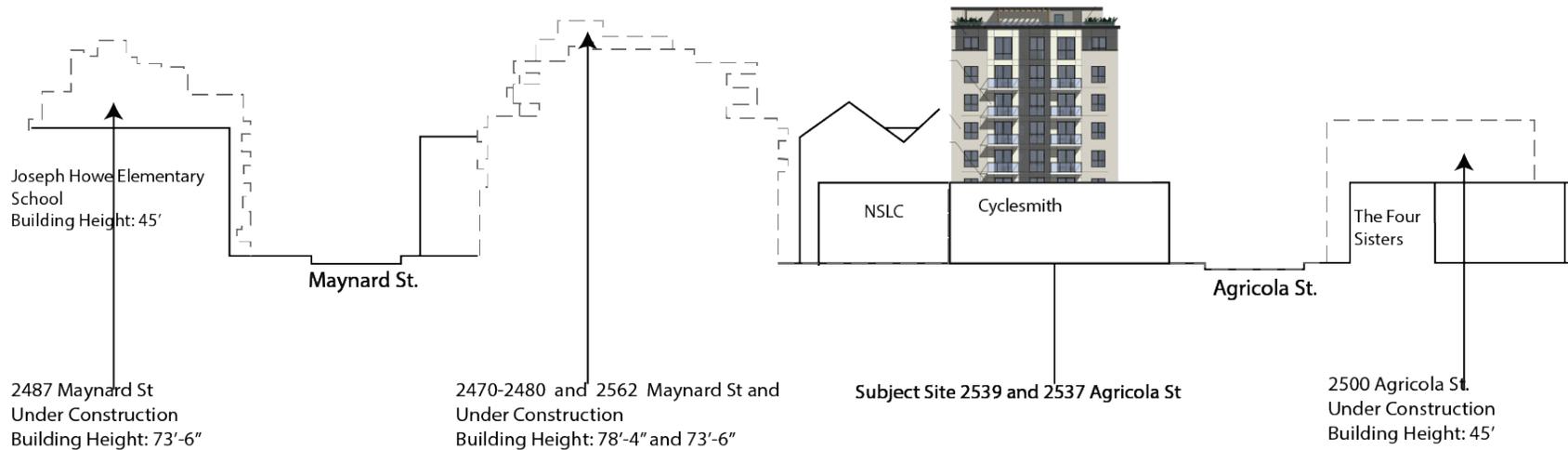


Fig 23. Showing Current Construction adjacent to 2539 Agricola Street

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.

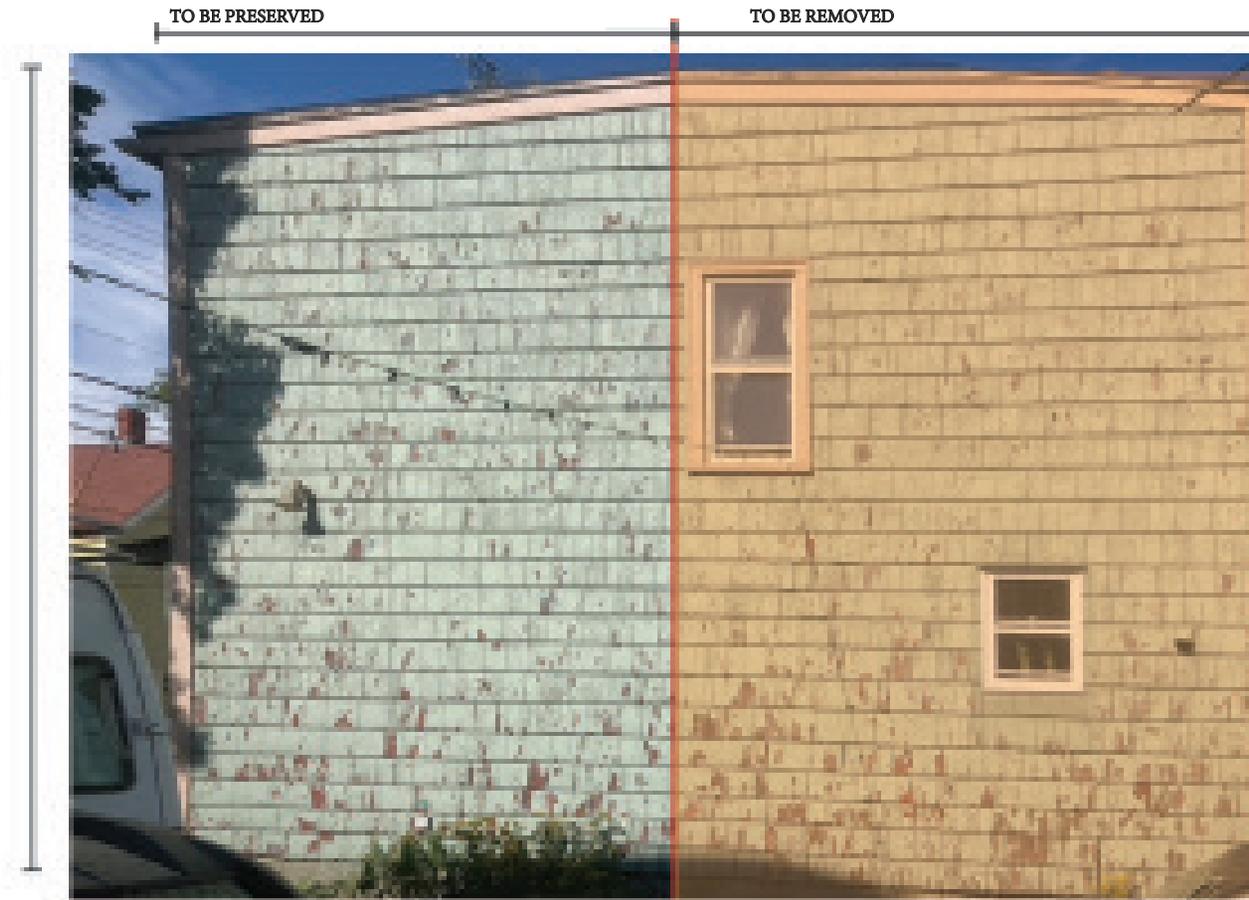
There are numerous public benefits with this proposal:

- 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.

UNSOOUND FOUNDATION TO BE REMOVED
THROUGHOUT BUILDING.

Fig 26. Showing Heritage Character Defining elements for restoration.

Structure

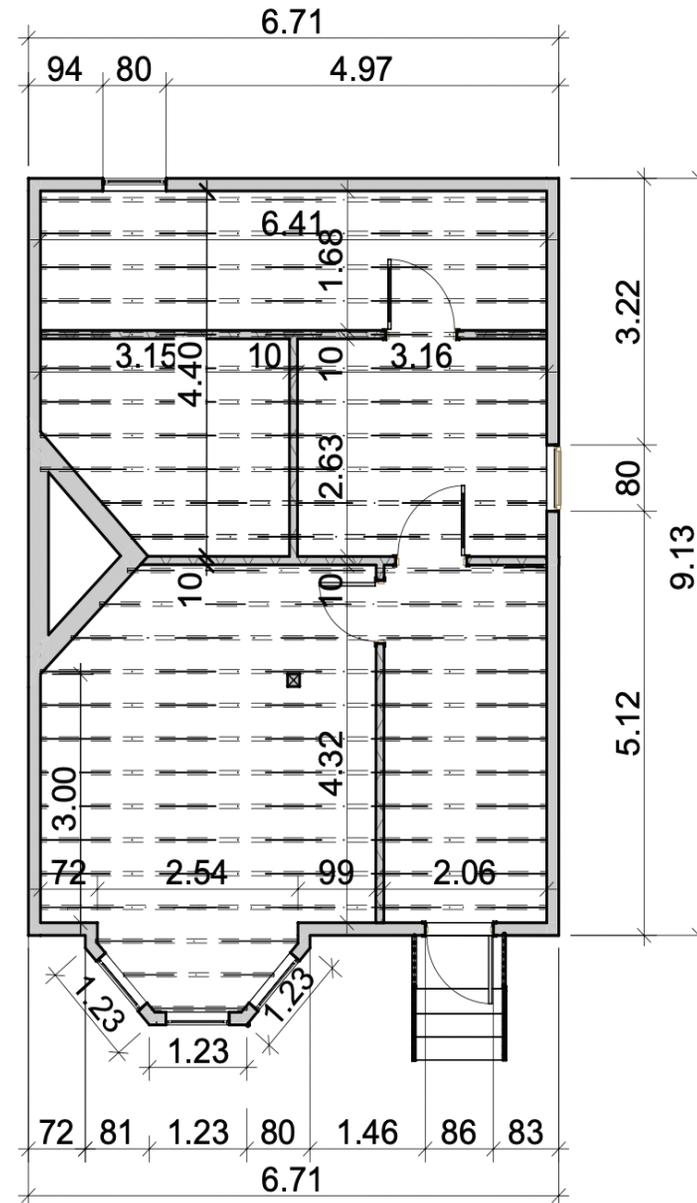
In our investigation of the of the existing structure of the house, we found that the floor joists run across the house on both the main and second floor. This makes it simple to retain the majority front portion of the house without compromising its structural integrity. The image shown here at right 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 = 63.6mft²



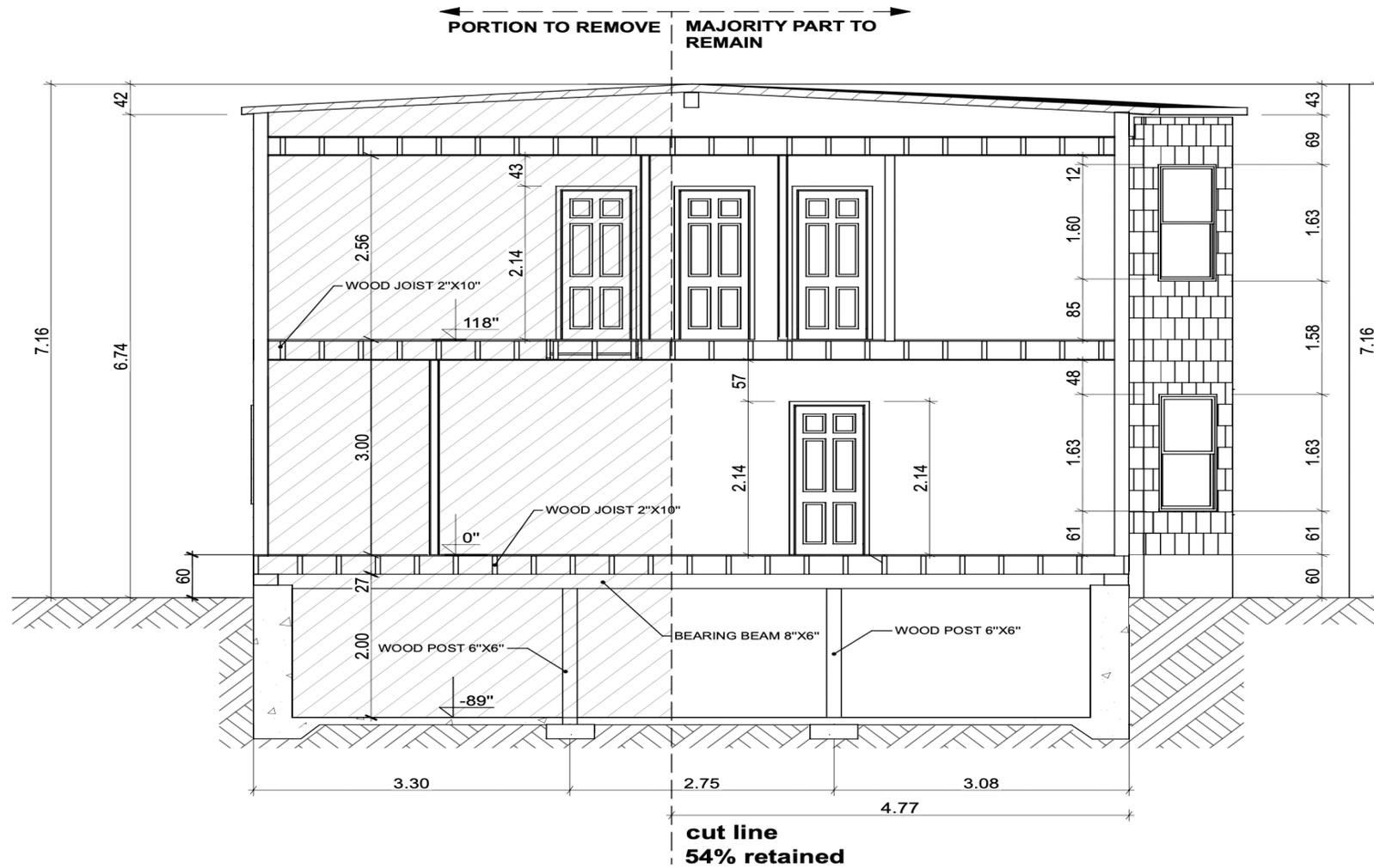


Fig 28. Showing removed and retained portions of Agrícola 2539

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 is structurally unsound, and will be replaced with a new foundation featuring reclaimed brick veneer.



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

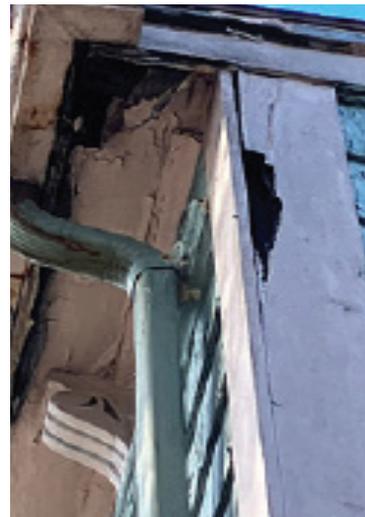


Fig. 36 Soffits and corner boards will be repaired or replaced and repainted.

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

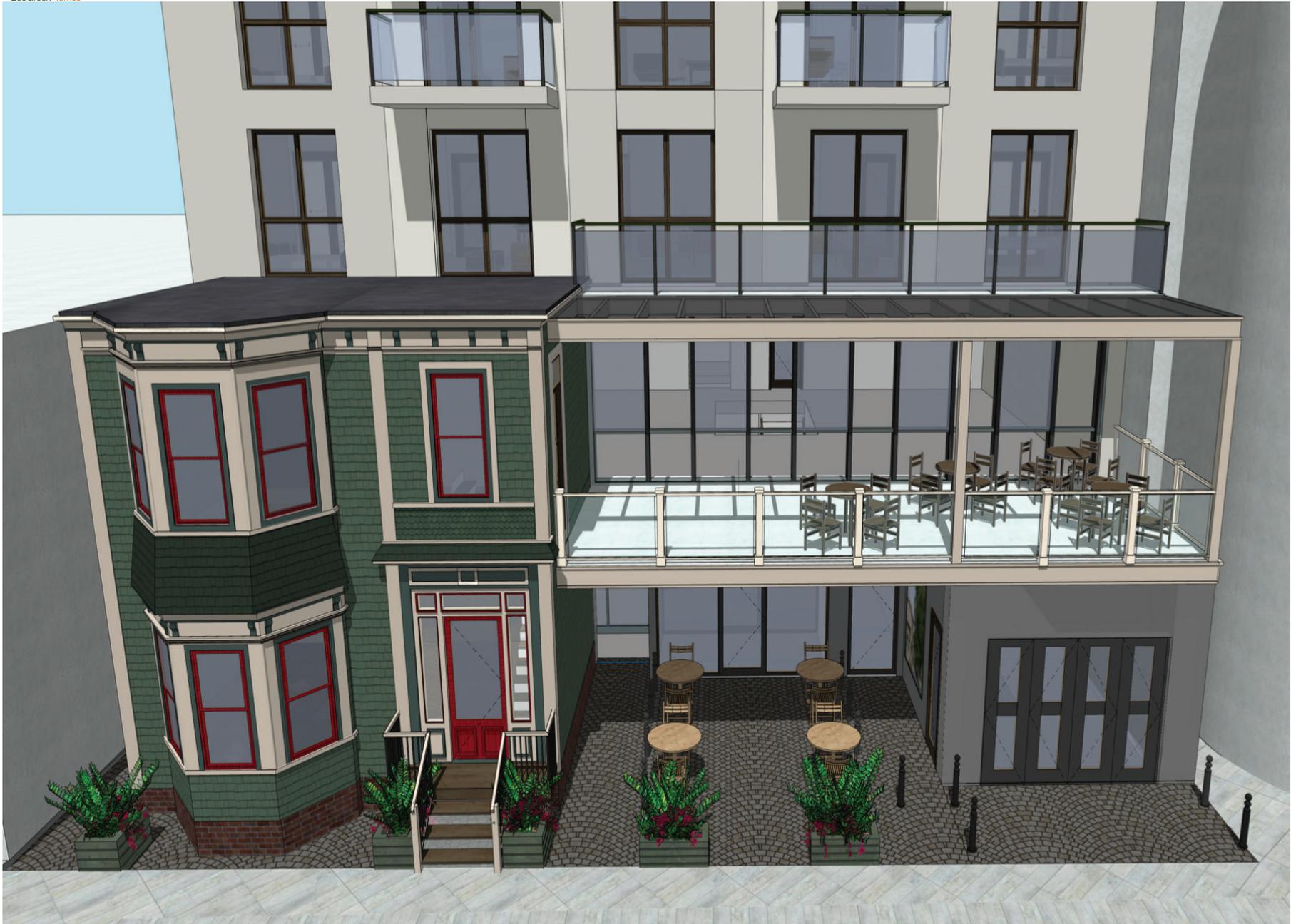
South Elevation

Landscape Plan

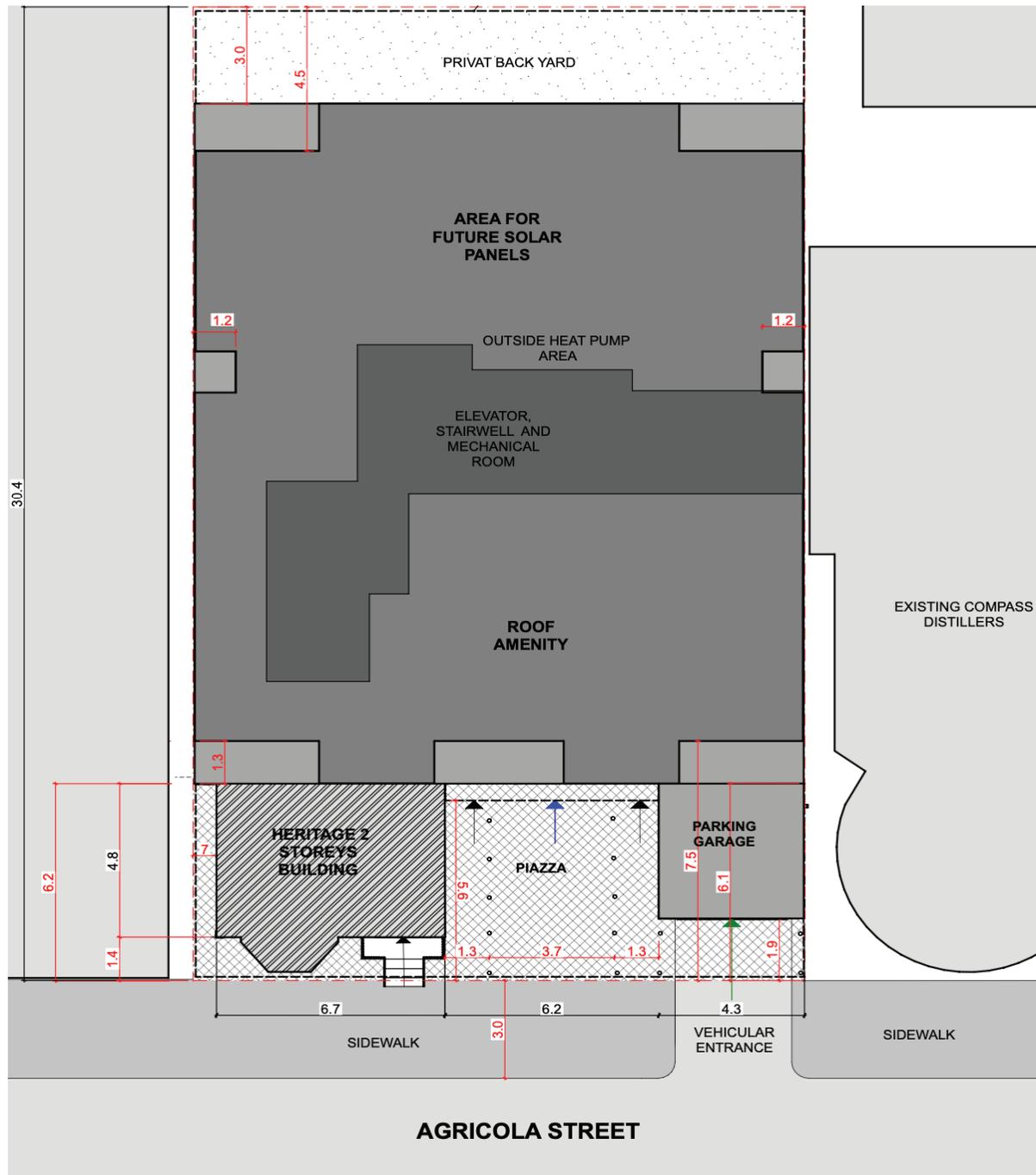
Lighting Plan

Roof top Plan

Bibliography



3-D View from the West



Site Plan

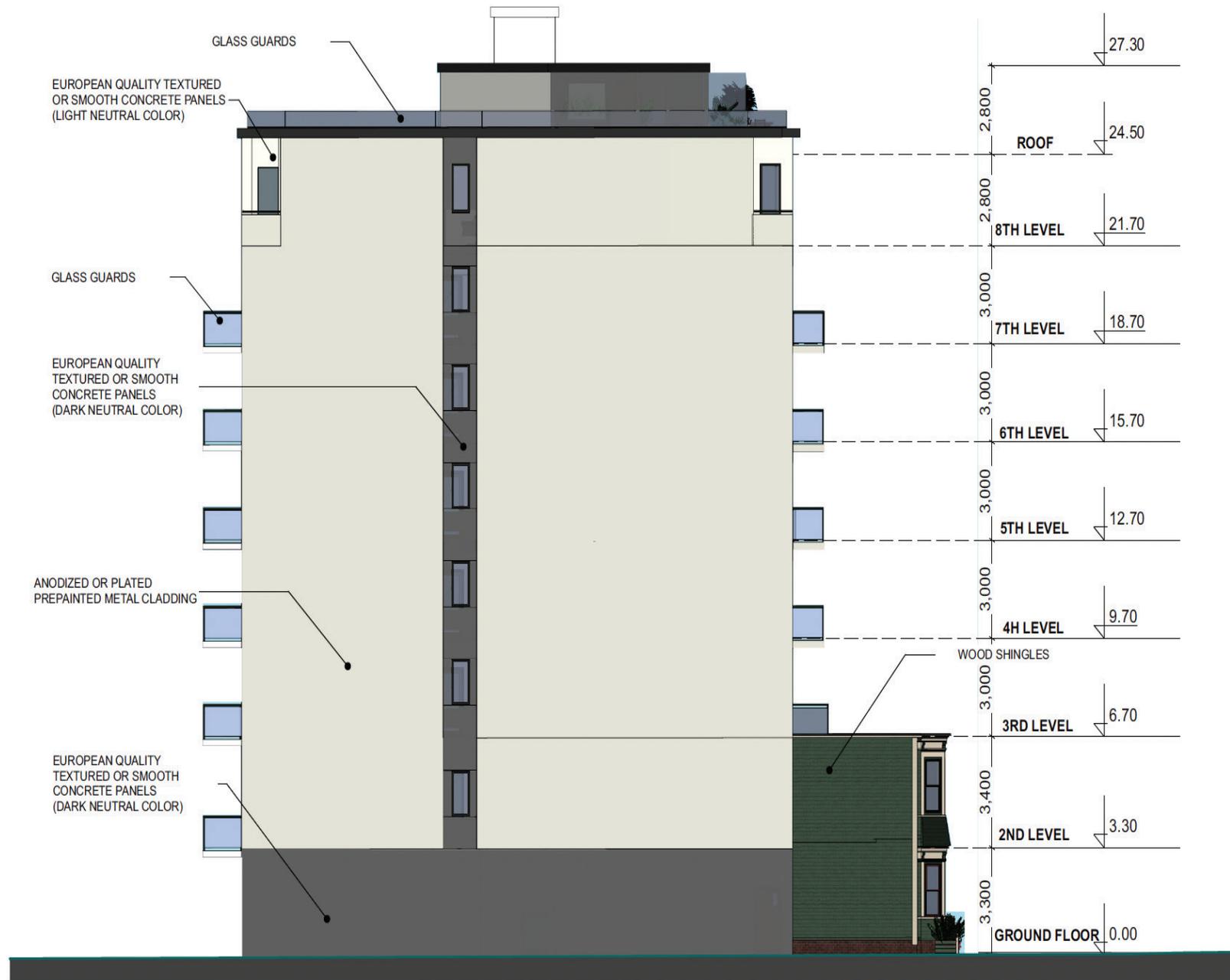
WEST FACADE



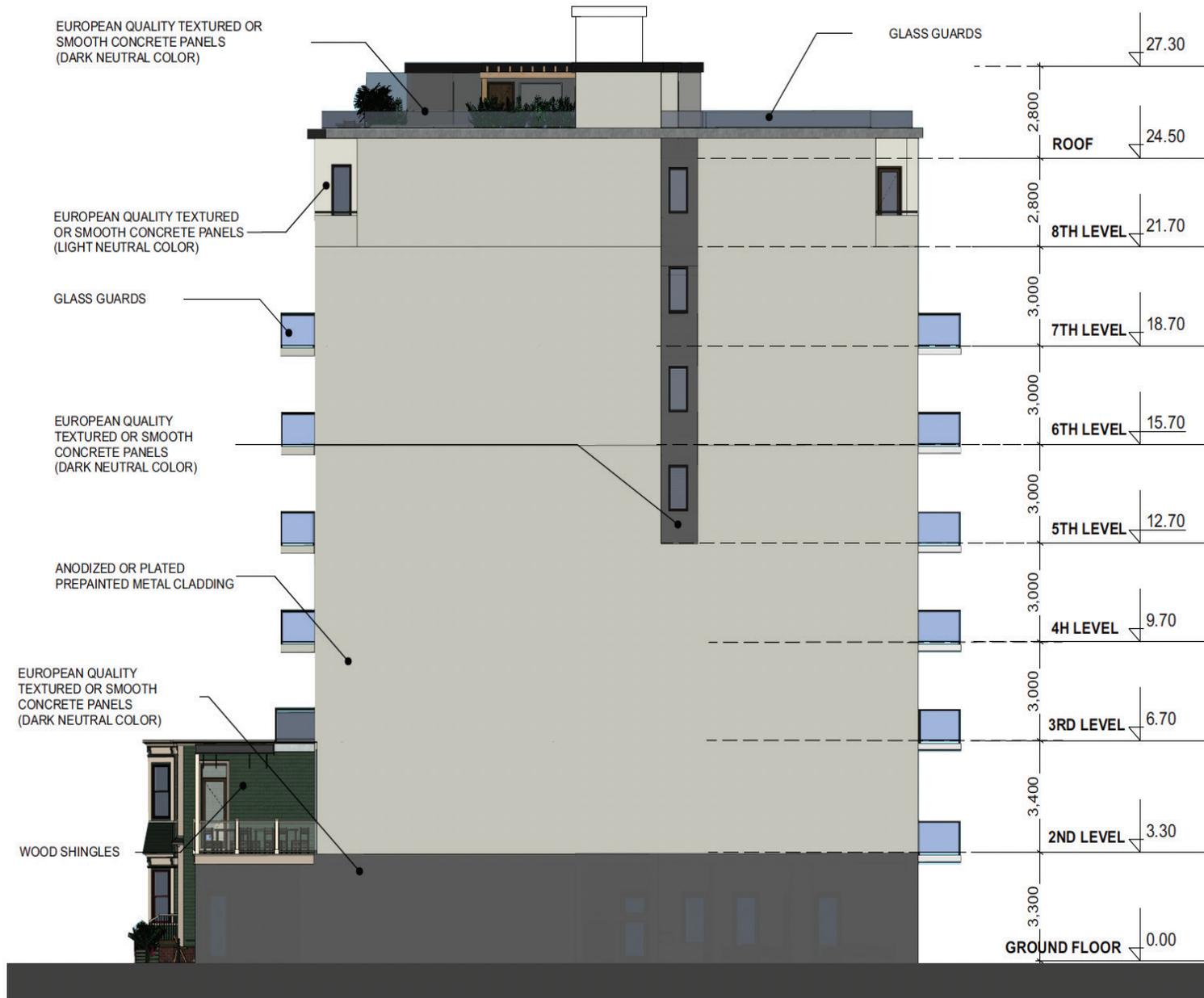
EAST FACADE



NORTH FACADE



SOUTH FACADE



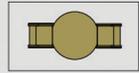


Landscape Plan

EXISTING 2 STOREY COMMERCIAL BUILDING



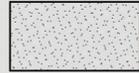
- PROPERTY LINE



- OUTDOOR FURNITURE



- CONCRETE PAVING



- CONCRETE DRYWAY



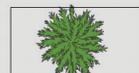
- ARCTOSTAPHYLOS INDIGENOUS



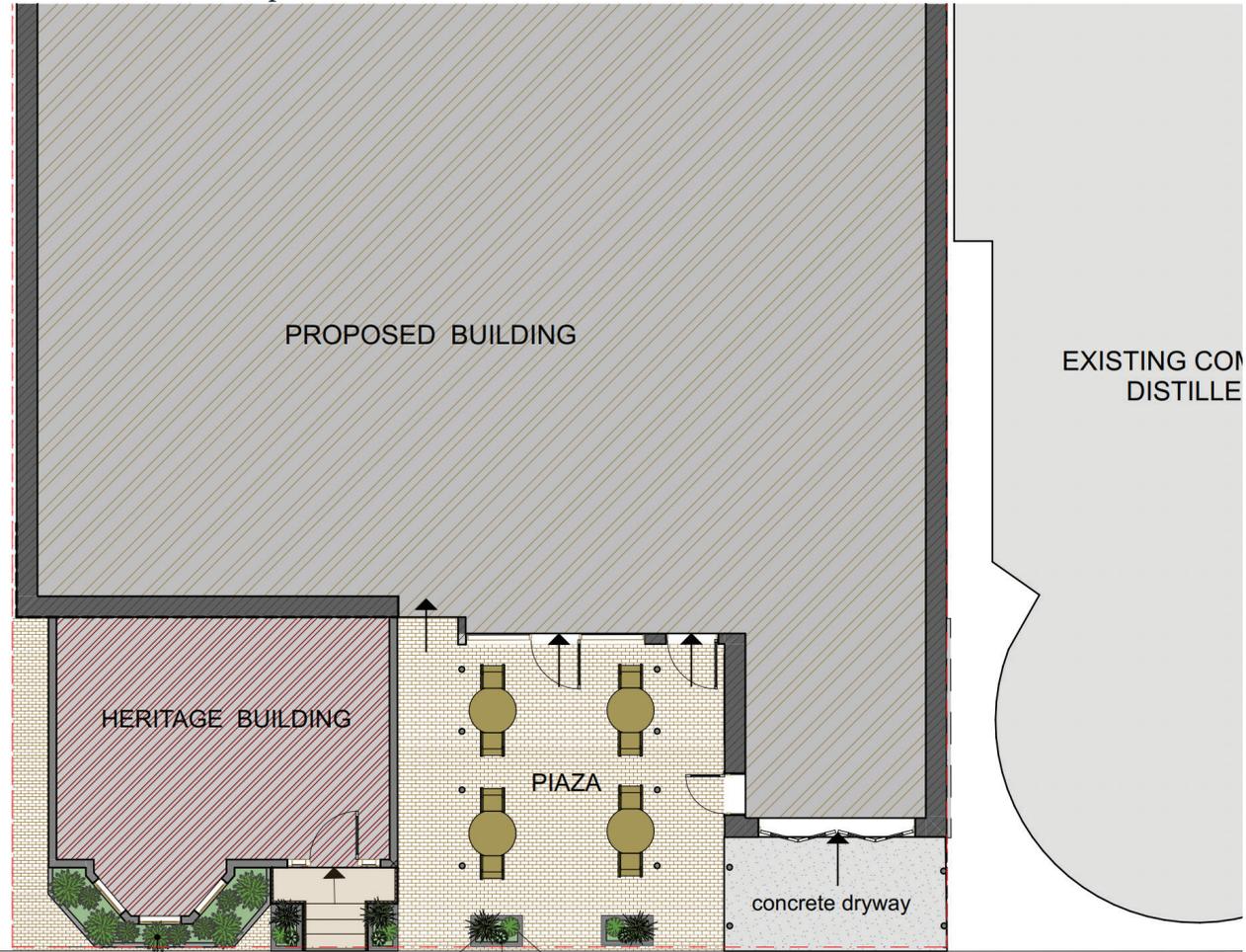
- NEW YORK ASTER



- COTTONEASTER DAMMERI



- JUNIPERUS HORIZONTALIS



sidewalk



AGRICOLA STREET



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

Landscaping Plan

2537 Agricola Street

Date: 2022
Scale: 1:92

Lighting Plan





Rooftop Amenity Plans

Bibliography

Hopkins, H. W. (1878). City Atlas of Halifax, Nova Scotia. From Actual Surveys and Records by and under the Supervision of H.W. Hopkins, Civil Engineer. Halifax: Provincial Surveying and Pub. Co. Plate F. Nova Scotia Archives (H.W. Hopkins Nova Scotia Archives Library O/S G 1129 H3 H67 1878), Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/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.