

# 179-181 & 183 King Street, London Ontario

## Heritage Impact Assessment



**PREPARED FOR:**  
City of London  
300 Dufferin Avenue  
London, Ontario N6A 4L9

**PREPARED BY:**  
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**ERA**



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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is to provide historical research and analysis of the properties at 179-181 King St. and 183 King St. in London, Ontario, as a basis applying a Heritage (HER) zone to all or a portion of the properties through a zoning by-law amendment.

The building at 179-181 King St. is a two-storey Italianate commercial building built around 1877, which originally was occupied by the W.J. Thompson Carriage Works. The building at 183 King St. is a four-storey Second Empire commercial building built as a hotel in 1892 as a front addition to an 1850s residential building. The commercial and industrial history of the two properties is linked and expressed through architectural features incorporated into the four-storey addition.

This report finds that the two buildings contribute to the Downtown Heritage Conservation District and that portions of the buildings should be zoned as Heritage (HER) and specific architectural features should be preserved through a zoning by-law amendment.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Scope of the Report

With respect to the heritage evaluation of the properties at 179-181 King St. and 183 King St. in London Ontario, the City of London has retained ERA Architects Inc. as a Heritage Consultant.

ERA Architects has prepared this Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in accordance the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport's Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties, and Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines.

The purpose of this HIA is to evaluate the heritage buildings at 179-181 King St. and 183 King St. which are contributing properties in the Downtown Heritage Conservation District and determine their heritage attributes for the application of a Heritage (HER) zone through a proposed zoning by-law amendment.

### 2.2 Prepared for:

City of London  
300 Dufferin Avenue  
London Ontario  
N6A 4L9

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

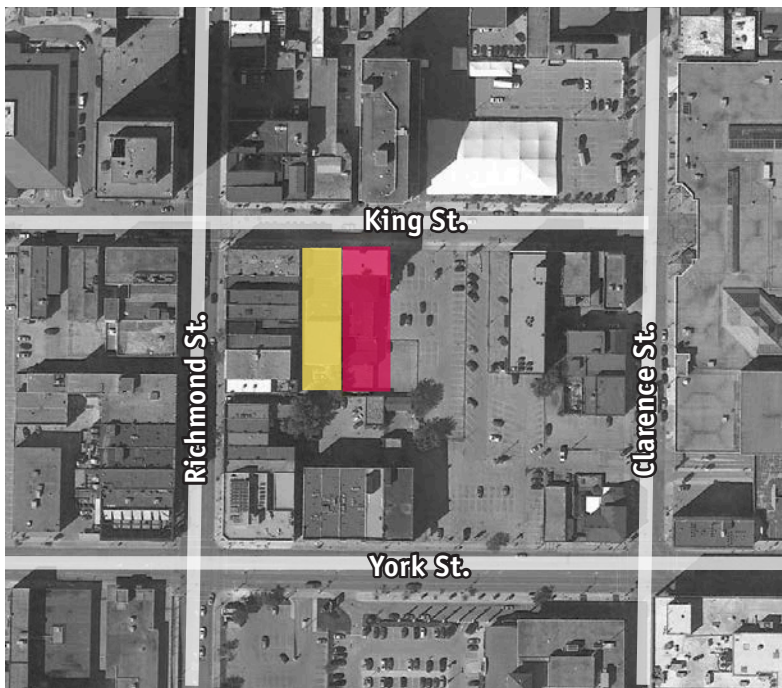
### 3.1 Site Location and Description

The subject site is located on the south side of King Street, between Richmond Street and Clarence Street.

179-181 King Street consists of a two-storey commercial building.

183 King Street consists of a four-storey commercial building with the original 2-storey building located in the rear.

For photo-documentation of the Subject Site see Section 5.



1. Subject site (179-181 King St. shaded in yellow, 183 King St. shaded in red)  
(Source: Google, Annotated by ERA Architects)

### 3.2 Structure Description

#### *179-181 King St.*

The property at 179-181 King Street is a two-storey Italianate style brick commercial building built around 1877. The architectural features include second-storey windows with detailed brick work arches with keystones and pilasters separating each window with Doric capitals. The first floor has been heavily altered. The building originally had a third storey that was removed prior to 1955.

#### **Heritage Conservation District**

##### **Property Description**

B-rated - Painted brick with replacement windows in original openings; decorative brickwork around windows; building formerly had a third storey now removed.

#### *183 King St.*

The property at 183 King Street is a four-storey Second Empire style brick commercial building built in 1892 with a 1850 residential building incorporated in the rear. The architectural features include an arched carriageway and entranceways, arched window openings on the first and third floors, flat headed windows in the second floor, centred bay windows on the second and third floor, first floor and roof cornice entablature and a mansard roof with dormers and a central tower above the bay windows. The arched carriageway is a feature typically associated with the Second Empire style.

#### **Heritage Conservation District**

##### **Property Description**

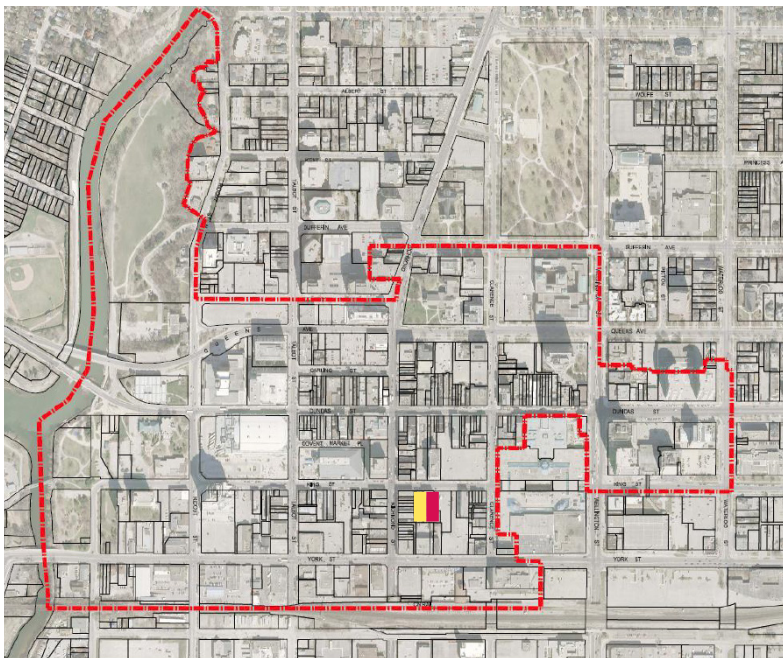
A-rated - Painted brick and stone façade with replacement windows on 2nd and 3rd floor in original locations; upper sash of ground floor windows original; carriageway; projecting two-storey bay with original woodwork; brackets at eaves; roof assembly including eight dormers; one set in a mansard style tower with original slate shingles; exterior of part of the Marcus Holmes house, c.1850 visible behind the hotel.

The two-storey brick residential building has been incorporated into the rear of the principal building. Its facade was likely removed when the principal building was built. A two-storey and one-storey addition are located behind the residential building. The one-storey addition has been clad in aluminium siding, though an arched brick entry is visible.

See Section 5 for photographic documentation of both buildings.

### 3.3 Downtown Heritage Conservation District

179-181 King Street and 183 King Street are located within the Downtown Heritage Conservation District. The district was adopted by the City of London in April 2012 designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in June 2013. The District consists of approximately 400 properties spanning five different eras of development. The district plan notes, *“Today the structures comprising the Downtown Heritage Conservation District are a good representation of the buildings that contained a variety of services, industries and commercial and financial enterprises that brought London to prominence across the country.”*



2. Downtown Heritage Conservation District Boundary, 179-181 King St. outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: City of London, Annotated by ERA Architects)



The district plan contains a number of key goals for the district. these include:

*Physical Goals & Objectives*

- Establish the framework for the retention, conservation, and adaptation of the existing stock of significant heritage buildings and spaces within the Downtown District;
- Encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of heritage buildings that is sensitive and respectful to the historical significance of the structure;
- Influence the renovation or construction of modern era buildings so that it is done with regard to the District and complementary to the character and streetscape.
- Successfully implement these objectives while fostering an environment of growth and renewal going forward.

*Social Goals & Objectives*

- Increase community awareness of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District, its attributes, opportunities, and ways of contributing;
- Emphasize the significance of the cultural heritage and its role in defining the sense of place for the Downtown;
- Educate and encourage building owners to embrace the District and the importance of heritage preservation through the stewardship of their buildings;
- Increase tourism across the District;
- Encourage the redevelopment, intensification, and acceptance of the Downtown as the cultural and social focus of the community;

### **3.4 Heritage (HER) Zone**

The City of London has a specific Heritage (HER) Zone that regulates land use on properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Specifically, the by-law stipulates that no additions can be built in the front or side-yard. Additionally, replacement structures must be of the same height, volume, floor area, general form, mass and external design as the original building or structure.

## 4 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

### 4.1 History of the Site

#### *179-181 King St.*

W.J. Thompson & Sons Carriage Works established his carriage and wagon manufacturing company in 1868 on Dundas Street before moving to the subject site around 1877. W.J. Thompson & Sons Carriage Works would remain in the building until 1927. In 1889, it was noted that the company was employing 45 workers.

The carriage works was a series of buildings laid out in an L-shape that incorporated the entire property at 179-181 King St. and extended behind 183 King St. The buildings were used for show-rooms, paint shops and carriage manufacturing. As of 1965, the entire complex was intact. However, at some point after, the complex's rear buildings located behind 183 King St. were removed. Access to the rear was achieved through a carriageway incorporated into the architecture of the hotel at 183 King St.

#### *183 King St.*

The four-storey building at 183 King Street was built by W.J. Thompson and constructed directly in front of the Marcus Holmes House (c. 1850). Details of the Marcus Holmes House at the eaves, including brackets and block modillions, still survive. Holmes was a carriage maker, and acted as the fifth Mayor of London in 1854. For several years in the late 1870s, the house was occupied by the London Club.

The hotel was originally called the St. James, changing its name to the Fraser House in 1895. It became the Royal Alex after 1929. For a time, the building became the headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union, and its sister organization, the YWCA before returning to its use as a hotel until the 1980s.



3. Marcus Holmes (source: London Public Library)

#### 4.2 Photographs



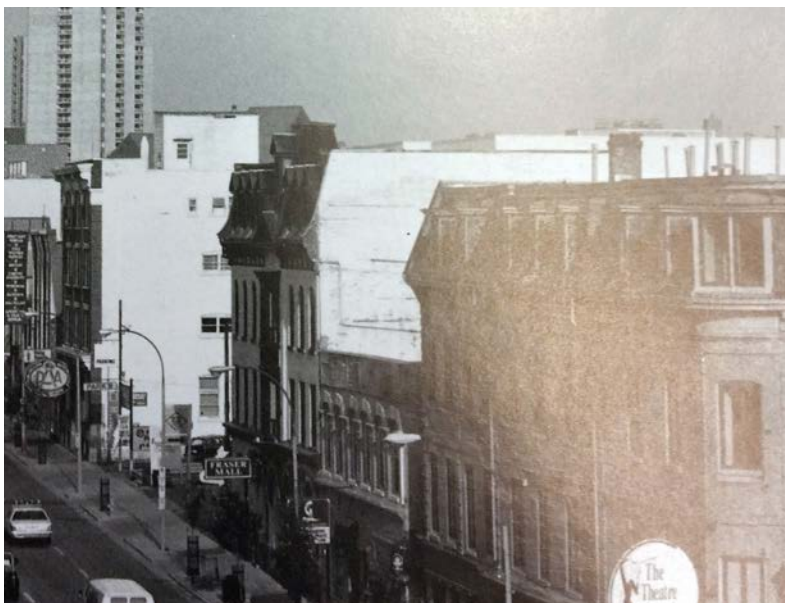
4. 1900 photo of 179-181 King Street (Source: Museum London)



5. Early 1900s photo of King Street, showing 183 King St to the right. (Source: Best Wishes From London, Annotated: ERA Architects)



6. 1955 photo of King Street, showing 179-181 King St. and 183 King St.  
(Source: Vintage London, Annotated: ERA Architects)



7. 1980s photo of King Street showing 179-181 King St. and 183 King St.  
(Source: Best Wishes From London)



8. 1998 photo of 183 King St. (Source: Downtown London: Layers of Time)

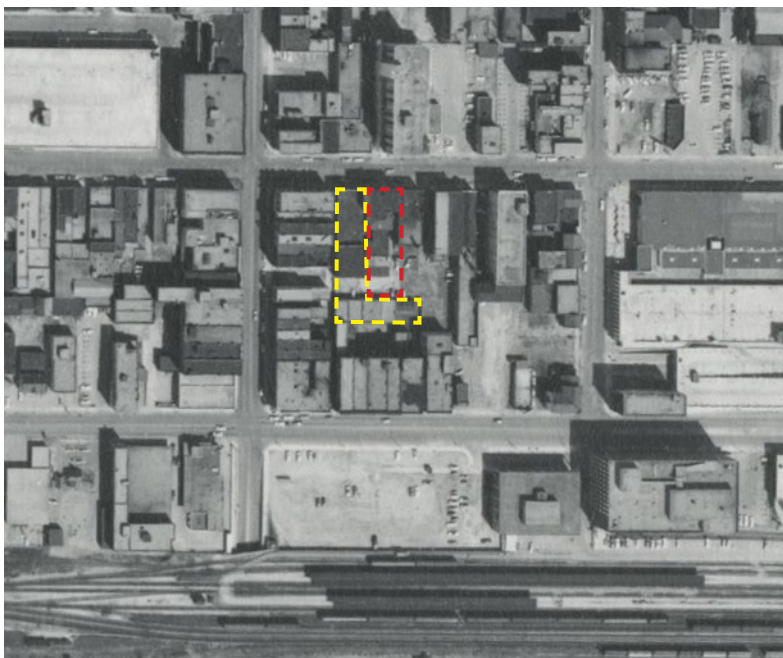


9. 1998 photo of the Marcus Holmes House, with detail of the eaves (Source: Downtown London: Layers of Time)

#### 4.3 Aerial Photos



10. 1922 Aerial Photo. 179-181 King St. outlined in yellow and 183 King St. in red. (Source: University of Western Ontario, Annotated by ERA Architects)



11. 1965 Aerial Photo. 179-181 King St. outlined in yellow and 183 King St. in red. (Source: University of Western Ontario, Annotated by ERA Architects)

#### 4.4 Maps



13. 1872 Aerial drawing showing 183 King St. (Source: University of Toronto, Annotated by ERA Architects)

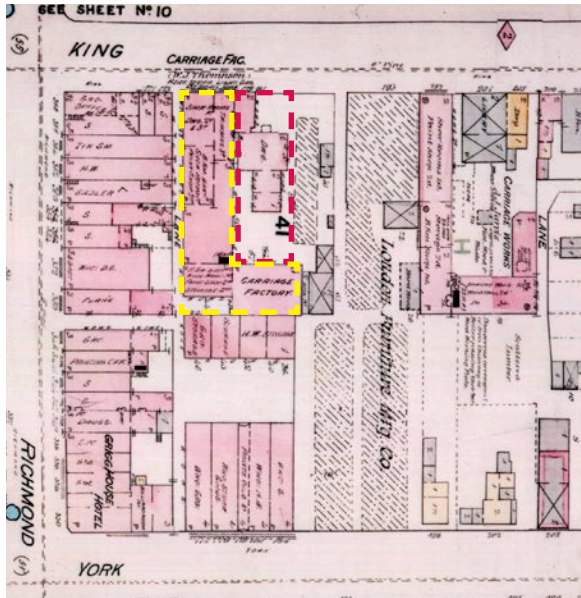


12. 1878 County Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: McGill University, Annotated by ERA Architects)

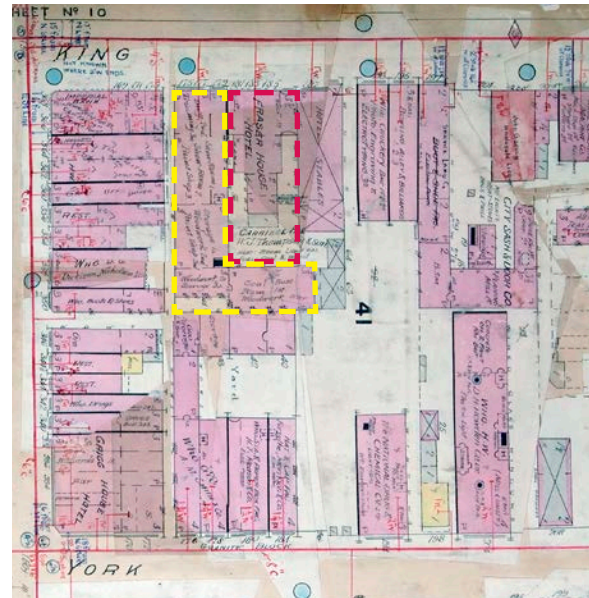




14. 1879 County Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: University of Western Ontario, Annotated by ERA Architects)



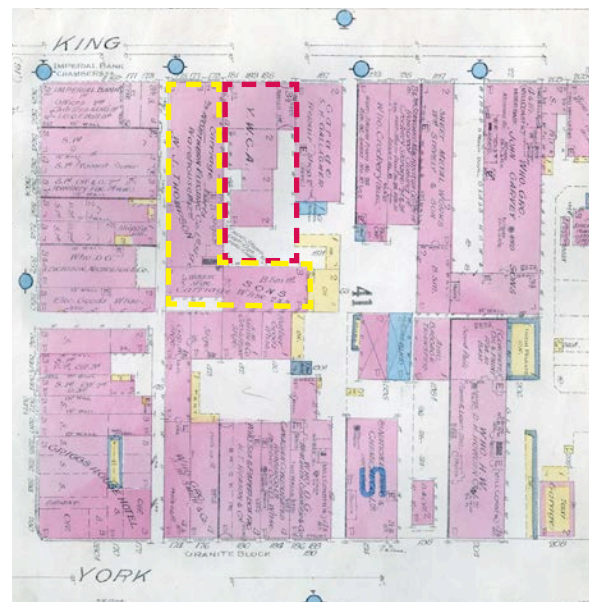
15. 1881, revised 1888 Fire Insurance Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: Western University, Annotated by ERA Architects)



16. 1892, revised 1907 Fire Insurance Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: Western University, Annotated by ERA Architects)



17. 1912, revised 1915 Fire Insurance Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: Western University, Annotated by ERA Architects)



18. 1912, revised 1922 Fire Insurance Map. 179-181 King St outlined in yellow, 183 King St. outlined in red. (Source: Western University, Annotated by ERA Architects)

## 5 PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

ERA Architects conducted a site visit on October 8, 2015.



19. Contextual view from the east (Source: ERA Architects)



20. Contextual view from the east (Source: ERA Architects)



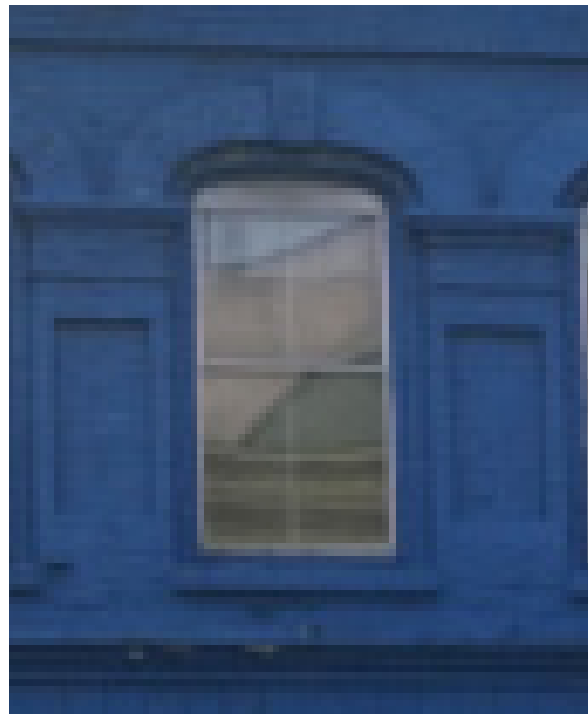
21. Contextual view from the west (Source: ERA Architects)



22. 179-181 King St. (Source: ERA Architects)



23. 179-181 King St. alleyway. (Source: ERA Architects)



24. 179-181 King St. windows (Source: ERA Architects)



25. 183 King St. (Source: ERA Architects)



26. 183 King St., arched entranceway (Source: ERA Architects)



27. 183 King St., arched carriageway, windows and entranceway (Source: ERA Architects)



28. 183 King St., arched windows, bay windows, mansard roof and tower (Source: ERA Architects)



29. 183 King St., arched windows and cornice (Source: ERA Architects)



30. 183 King St., bay windows (Source: ERA Architects)



31. 183 King St., east facade (Source: ERA Architects)



32. 183 King St., 1850 building and rear additions (Source: ERA Architects)



33. 183 King St., south facade and carriage way (Source: ERA Architects)



34. 183 King St., arched entrance in rear addition (Source: ERA Architects)



35. 183 King St., rear additions (Source: ERA Architects)

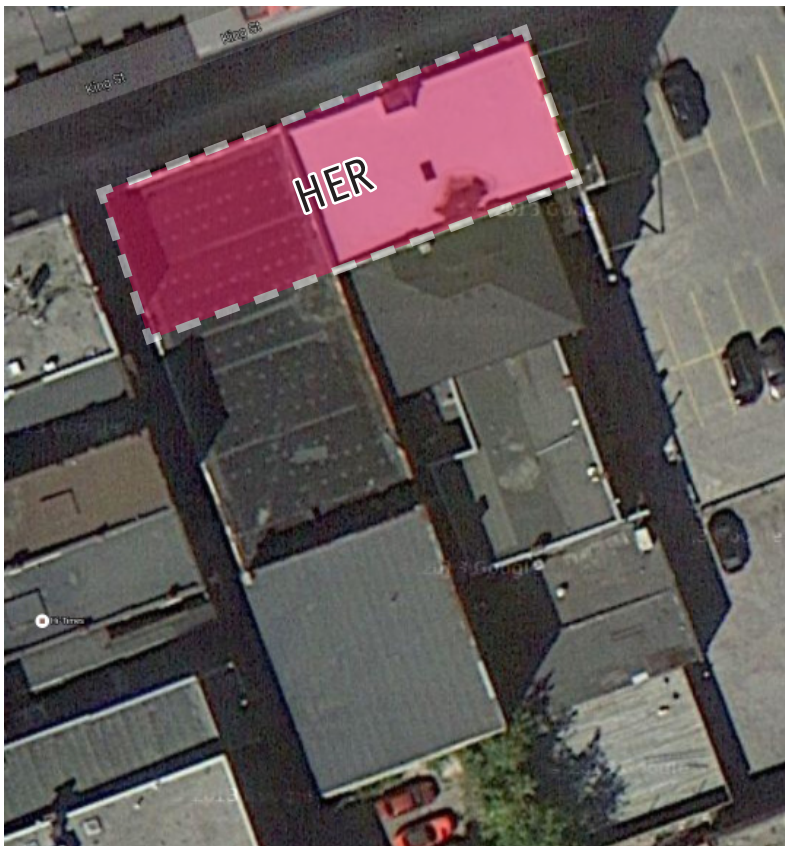


36. 183 King St., rear additions (Source: ERA Architects)



## 6 HERITAGE (HER) ZONE AND ATTRIBUTES

The interrelated history, form and development of the buildings at 179-181 King St. and 183 King St. contribute to the Downtown Heritage Conservation District. In particular, the facades of the two buildings contribute to the character of the area. As such, a Heritage (HER) Zone should be implemented on portions of the site to ensure that significant portions of the buildings are maintained and continue to contribute to the heritage district.



37. Image showing proposed Heritage (HER) Zone overlaid on the subject site. (Source: ERA Architects, Annotated by ERA Architects)

### Heritage attributes for 179-181 King St. include:

- The placement, setback, and orientation of the building on the south side of King St.;
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey building with a rectangular-shaped plan under the flat roof line;

- The brick cladding;
- The first floor has been altered but original heritage fabric may exist beneath the existing facade. Future alterations to the first floor should take this into account;
- The King Street facade characterized by the pairing of the second-storey row of windows with detailed brick work arches with keystones and modified Doric pilasters separating each window and a lower storey which retains elements of its original storefront/character showroom.

**Heritage attributes for 183 King St. include:**

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building on the south side of King St.;
- The scale, form and massing of the four-storey building with the rectangular-shaped plan;
- The front facade, including the arched carriageway and entranceways, arched window openings on the first and third floors, flat headed windows on the second floor, centred bay windows on the second and third floor, first floor and roof cornice entablature, and a mansard roof with dormers and a central tower above the bay windows;
- The materials, including the brick facade, wood trim, and slate roof;
- The original 1850s building does not merit inclusion as a heritage attribute. Due to its removed front facade, rear location and the lack of historical images available for restoration purposes, the building does not contribute significantly to the Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The properties at 179-181 King St. and 183 King St. have been recognized as contributing to the heritage character of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District. This report has found that the buildings have a historical relationship with one another and proposes a set of significant heritage attributes for both buildings that should be included within a zoning by-law amendment.

The proposed Heritage (HER) Zone will restrict development within the zone, however sympathetic development should be permitted on other parts of the site. This will ensure that the buildings continue to contribute to the Downtown Heritage Conservation District while providing flexibility that will allow for the site to contribute to the City's goals for the downtown and the district.