

Report to Community Advisory Committee on Planning

To: Chair and Members
From: Community Advisory Committee on Planning
Jana Kelemen, M.Sc.Arch., MUDS, RPP, MCIP,
Manager, Urban Design and Heritage
Subject: Heritage Alteration Permit application by M. Wales for 645
Lorne Avenue, Old East Heritage Conservation District
Date: November 9, 2022

Summary Recommendation

Approval of the Heritage Alteration Permit application seeking retroactive approval for the removal of the verandah and balcony and approval of the proposed porch and doorway-window alterations with terms and conditions is recommended. Terms and conditions are recommended to ensure compatibility with the heritage character of the property at 645 Lorne Avenue and the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

Executive Summary

The property at 645 Lorne Avenue is a C-ranked property in the Old East Heritage Conservation District, making contributions to its heritage character. The property owner previously removed the verandah and balcony, citing its poor condition. This Heritage Alteration Permit application seeks retroactive approval for the removal of the verandah and balcony, as well as approval of a new proposed uncovered porch and alteration of an upper doorway into a window. While conserving the former porch would be preferred, the proposed alterations are sufficiently consistent with the guidelines of the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines* and should be approved with terms and conditions.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Property Location

The property at 645 Lorne Avenue is located on the south side of Lorne Avenue between Adelaide Street North and Elizabeth Street (Appendix A).

1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 645 Lorne Avenue is located within the Old East Heritage Conservation District, designated pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by By-law No. L.S.P.-3383-111, passed on September 10, 2006.

The property at 645 Lorne Avenue is C-rated by the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Plan*. A C-ranking is assigned to a property that are “of value as part of the environment” (Section 4.2, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Study*), meaning that they contribute to the heritage character of the area.

1.3 Description

The building at 645 Lorne Avenue was built in about 1885 (Appendix B). It is a two-storey, frame, residential form building. The building is clad in horizontal vinyl siding. The primary (north) façade of the building faces Lorne Avenue and featured a verandah and balcony across the entire primary façade. The porch had a rug brick base, including plinths and solid balustrade, with square colonettes supporting the upper balcony which had metal railings. Overall, the composition of the primary façade was asymmetrical owing to the access to the verandah and balcony and three-quarters height of the upper storey. Nevertheless, the vernacular building contributes to the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

Between March and November 2020, the verandah and balcony were removed (see Appendix B).

1.5 Heritage Alteration Permit Application (HAP22-075-L)

In November 2020, the City received complaints from community members that the porch of the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue had been removed. A site visit was completed by staff on November 12, 2020.

In addition to the requirement for a Heritage Alteration Permit, a Building Permit is also required.

Following compliance action by the City, a Heritage Alteration Permit application has been submitted by an agent for the property owner of the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue. The Heritage Alteration Permit application seeks approval for:

- Removal of the verandah and balcony;
- Alteration of the upper doorway into a window; and,
- Construction of a new entry porch.

The property owner cited the poor condition of the verandah and balcony as the reasons for its removal.

The complete Heritage Alteration Permit application was received on September 28, 2022. Per Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*, a decision to approve, approve with terms and conditions, or refuse this Heritage Alteration Permit application is required before December 27, 2022.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

Cultural heritage resources are to be conserved and impacts evaluated as per fundamental policies in the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020), the *Ontario Heritage Act*, *The London Plan*. More specific, area-based policies and guidelines – part of the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan* and *Old East Village Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines* – contain policies establishing intention and specific guidelines that provide direction on how to achieve the conservation of cultural heritage resources, heritage attributes, and character.

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Heritage Conservation is a matter of provincial interest (Section 2.d, *Planning Act*). The *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020) promotes the wise use and management of cultural heritage resources and directs that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved” (Policy 2.6.1, *Provincial Policy Statement* 2020).

“Significant” is defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020) as, “resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest.” Further, “processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.”

Additionally, “conserved” means, “the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.”

2.2 Ontario Heritage Act

Section 42(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that a property owner not alter, or permit the alteration of, the property without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval. The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables Municipal Council to give the applicant of a Heritage Alteration Permit:

- a) The permit applied for
- b) Notice that the council is refusing the application for the permit, or
- c) The permit applied for, with terms and conditions attached (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*)

Municipal Council must make a decision on the Heritage Alteration Permit application within 90 days or the request is deemed permitted (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*).

2.3 The London Plan

The London Plan is the City of London's Official Plan. The policies of *The London Plan* found in the Key Directions and Cultural Heritage chapter support the conservation of London's cultural heritage resources.

Policy 61_5 of *The London Plan* states, "Protect what we cherish by recognizing and enhancing our cultural identity, cultural heritage resources, neighbourhood character, and environmental features."

Policy 594_, *The London Plan*, includes policies relevant to change management within London's Heritage Conservation Districts:

1. *The character of the district shall be maintained by encouraging the retention of existing structures and landscapes that contribute to the character of the district.*
2. *The design of new development, either as infilling, redevelopment, or as additions to existing buildings, should complement the prevailing character of the area.*
3. *Regard shall be had at all times to the guidelines and intent of the heritage conservation district plan.*

2.4 Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan

The Old East Heritage Conservation District was designated pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by By-law No. L.S.P.3383-111 and came into force and effect on September 10, 2006. The *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan* articulate a policy framework to help manage change for the nearly 1,000 properties located within its boundaries.

The goals and objectives of the designation of the Old East as a Heritage Conservation District are found within Section 3.2 of the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan*. Two goals are particularly relevant:

- *Recognize, protect, enhance and appreciate the integrity of heritage buildings and streets in Old East and value their contributions to the interest and diversity of the community by:*
 - *Encouraging individual building owners to recognize the unique character of each building and to become more interested in the conservation and celebration of that unique character*
 - *Encouraging individual building owners to understand the broader context of heritage restoration in history, and recognize that buildings should outlive their individual owners and each owner or tenant should consider themselves stewards of the building for future owners and users*
- *Avoid the destruction and/or inappropriate alteration of the existing building stock, materials and details by:*
 - *Encouraging sensitive restoration practices that make gentle, reversible changes, when necessary, to significant heritage buildings*
 - *Providing homeowners with conservation and maintenance guidelines and best practices so that appropriate building and repair activities are undertaken,*
 - *Establishing design guidelines to ensure new development or alterations are sensitive to the heritage characteristics and details of the Old East Heritage Conservation District*

Section 4.1, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan* (Dealing with Growth and Change – Architecture), includes important references to understand the

individual contributions of properties to the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District:

- "...the intent of the designation of the heritage conservation district is to preserve an adequate stock of the heritage features that define the character of the area to preserve the cohesive nature of the district"
- "The contribution of each individual property to the overall character of the district is primarily the front façade of the building except at corners where the side façade also contributes to the street appearances."
- "Any of the original components that face the public street(s) should be preserved as much as possible to conserve the heritage character of the street"

Policies regarding alterations, in Section 4.2, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan*, highlight the importance of conserving the street-facing facades, stating,

Alterations to the street-facing façade of the buildings (typically the front of the house or the front and side of the house on corner lots) have the potential to dramatically affect the appearance of not only the building itself, but the entire streetscape.

Table 7.1, in Section 7.1, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan*, describes the classes of alterations that do or do not require Heritage Alteration Permit approval. Heritage Alteration Permit approval is required for "door removal, replacement or addition" and "window removal, replacement or addition" as well as "porch/verandah replacement, removal or addition" for A, B, and C-ranked properties in the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

2.5 Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines

To support the conservation of the cultural heritage resources within its boundaries, the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines* provides guidelines to help manage change.

Specifically, Section 3.4 (Exterior Walls), Section 3.6 (Doors and Windows), Section 3.7 (Porches and Verandahs), Section 3.9 (Paint and Colour), and Section 4.3 (Alterations).

Vinyl siding is not recommended to cover or replace original exterior cladding materials, like wood siding (Section 3.4). When considering replacement windows, the guidelines of Section 3.6 direct that,

- *The replacement windows should mimic the original windows with respect to style, size and proportion with a frame that is similar in colour, or can be painted, to match other windows.*
- *Original door and window openings on the street facing façade should not be blocked up or covered as this can greatly alter the visual character of the dwelling.*

Guidelines of Section 3.7, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines*, recommends,

- *Removal or substantial alteration to the size, shape and design of existing porches is strongly discouraged.*
- *Do not remove or cover original porches or porch details, except for the purpose of quality restoration.*
- *When restoring a porch that is either intact or completely demolished, some research should be undertaken to determine the original design which may have been much different from its current condition and decide whether to restore the original.*
- *For the structural elements of the porch, use the best of current technology including secure footings extending below frost and pressure treated wood for wood framing.*
- *For decorative elements such as gingerbread fretwork and other trim, wood is still the best choice to recreate the original appearance, but using improved technology such as waterproof glues and biscuit joiners and liquid preservatives*

and best quality paints to protect the finished product.

- *Fibreglass and plastic versions of decorative trims should be avoided. Poor interpretation of the scale and design of applied decoration detract from the visual appearance and architectural coherence of porches and verandahs.*
- *Where there are no other reasonable options, fibreglass and plastic versions of these decorative trims may be considered if the appropriate shape and size is available and they are kept in good condition with adequate maintenance of the paint.*
- *Install and maintain a porch apron on all exterior sides below the porch floor level that permit good ventilation and prevent animals and debris from entering. Research some of the attractive and functional trellis designs that are used in the neighbourhood to fulfil this purpose.*

Painting exterior wood is supported by the guidelines of Section 3.9, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines*. It notes that painting presents “a finished appearance to the neighbourhood, and to protect the investment in the house.”

Section 4.3, *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines*, provides general guidance on alterations, including:

- *Research the original appearance of the building to determine “authentic limits” of restoration or alteration.*
- *In the absence of historical data, use forensic evidence available from the building itself to suggest appropriate restoration or alteration.*
- *Seek similar properties (same age, same design, same builder) for evidence of details that may still exist as samples for reconstruction.*
- *Avoid “new” materials and methods of construction if the original is still available.*
- *“Restore” wherever possible rather than “replace” particularly for features such as windows, doors, porches, and decorative trim.*
- *Where replacement of features (e.g. – doors, windows, trim) is unavoidable, the replacement components should be of the same general style, size, and proportions.*
- *Incorporate similar building forms, materials, scale, and design elements in the alteration that exist on the original building.*
- *Avoid concealing original parts of buildings, entrances and decorative details when undertaking alterations.*
- *If in doubt, use discretion and avoid irreversible changes to the basic structure.*
- *Keep accurate photos and other records, and samples of original elements that have been replaced should you or future owners have the desire or opportunity to restore the original features at some point in time.*

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

None.

4.0 Key Issues and Considerations

4.1 Verandah and Balcony

A verandah is shown on the 1892, revised 1907 Fire Insurance Plan for the property at 645 Lorne Avenue (see Figure 2, Appendix A). A similar verandah is shown on the 1912, revised 1915 Fire Insurance Plan and 1912, revised 1922 Fire Insurance Plan. However, the former verandah and balcony appear to date from the mid-twentieth century (see Appendix B). This dating is attributed to the use of rug brick balustrade and plinths which became more common into the 1930s, accompanied by metal railings that appeared more typical of an early post-WWII period, and could be accounted by several or successive alterations. It is unlikely that the verandah and balcony were an original conception, but of comparable size to what was shown in the Fire Insurance Plan.

The verandah and balcony were removed by the property owner citing poor condition.

Presently, only a basic wooden step to the front door has been provided. This is not in

keeping with the heritage character of the property or the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

Recognizing that porches are an important part of the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District, a smaller uncovered porch at the front doorway of the house at 645 Lorne Avenue has been proposed (see Appendix C). The proposed porch is approximately 108” in width by 60” in depth, approximately 20” in height to meet the front doorway. Pressure treated wood has been proposed as the primary material for the porch, including steps, deck, and wood spindles.

While not of the same size or scale as the former verandah and balcony, the proposed porch will maintain this important feature and make contributions supporting the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District. To ensure that the porch is appropriate for the property and Old East Heritage Conservation District, turned wood spindles should be used, a square or diamond pattern lattice-style wood porch skirt installed, all exposed wood be painted, and consideration be given to using the colour palette of the Old East Heritage Conservation District (see Figure 3, Appendix A).

4.2 Doorway to Window Alteration

As the verandah and balcony have been removed, the upper doorway serves no function. Retaining an unarticulated doorway on the second storey of the house could present potential safety risks to inhabitants as well as an unbalanced façade composition.

The applicant has proposed to insert a window into the doorway opening. This would retain the opening on the façade and its associated trim detailing. As the proposed window (34” wide by 53” in height) does not fill the entire doorway opening (generally about 80” in height), the lower portion of the opening would be clad in vinyl siding to match the front façade of the house. The applicant advised that siding can be salvaged from a location on the house not visible from the street to ensure the siding matches. A sill and other finishing details would be installed to match the adjacent window opening.

This proposed alteration seeks to match the finishes of the house and presents a reasonable solution provided there is support for the removal of the verandah and balcony. Removing the doorway from the second storey diminishes the likelihood that the upper balcony will be restored.

Conclusion

Conservation, rather than removal, of the former verandah and balcony would have been preferable from a cultural heritage perspective and better aligned with the policies and guidelines of the *Old East Heritage Conservation District*. However, the verandah and balcony were removed by the property owner citing poor condition.

The proposed alterations seek to reinstate the important contributions of a porch to the heritage character of the C-ranked property at 645 Lorne Avenue and support its contributions to the Old East Heritage Conservation District. The proposed uncovered porch and doorway/window alteration are sufficiently consistent with the guidelines for the *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines* and should be approved with terms and conditions.

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Appendix A Location
Appendix B Images
Appendix C Drawings

Selected Sources

City of London. Property File.

City of London. *Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation Plan and Old East Heritage Conservation District Conservation & Design Guidelines*. 2006.

City of London. *Register of Cultural Heritage Resources*. 2019.

City of London. *The London Plan*. 2022, consolidated.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. *Provincial Policy Statement*. 2020.

Ontario Heritage Act. 2019, c. 9. Sched. 11.

Appendix A – Location Map

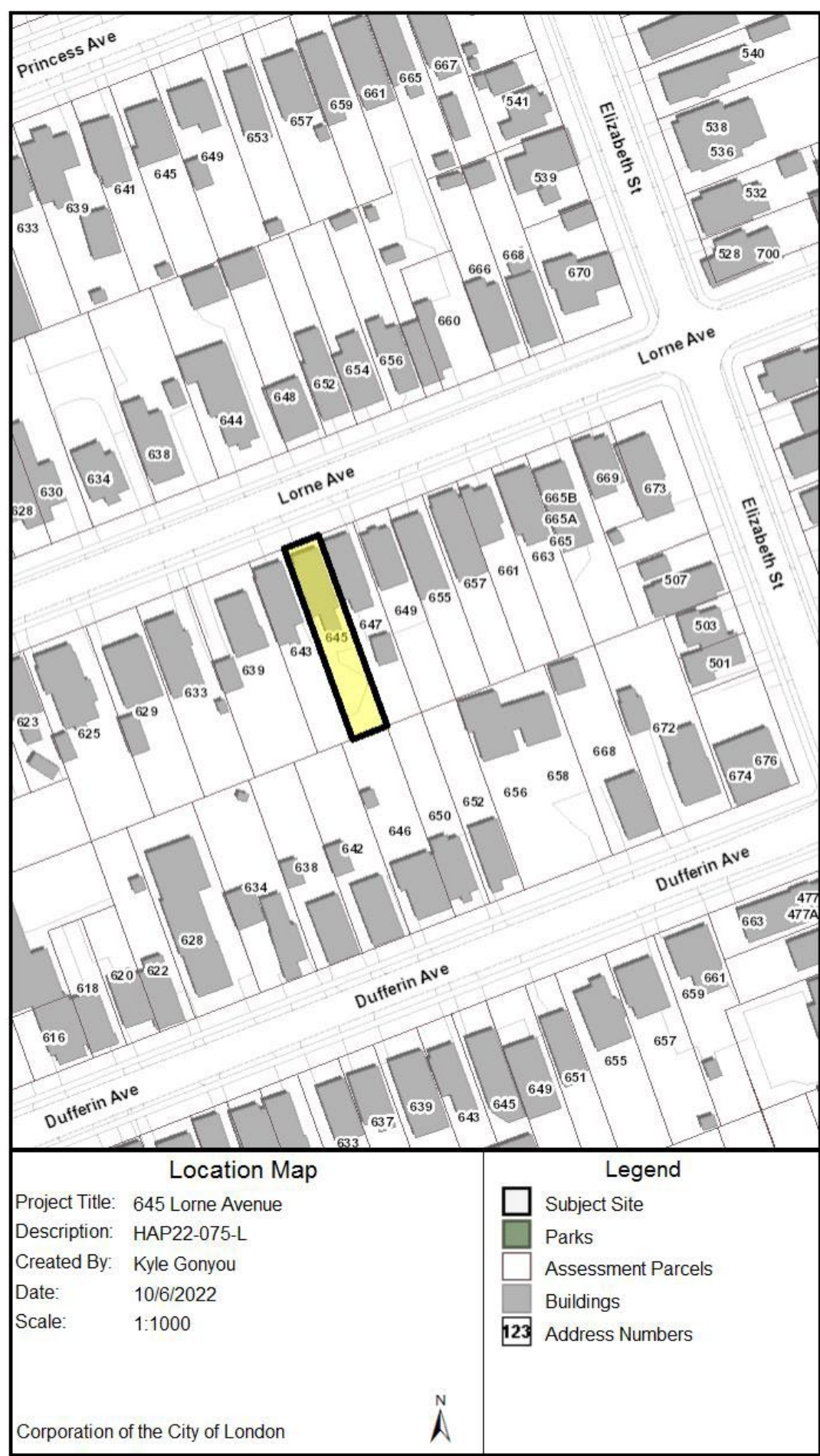


Figure 1: Location map of the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue.

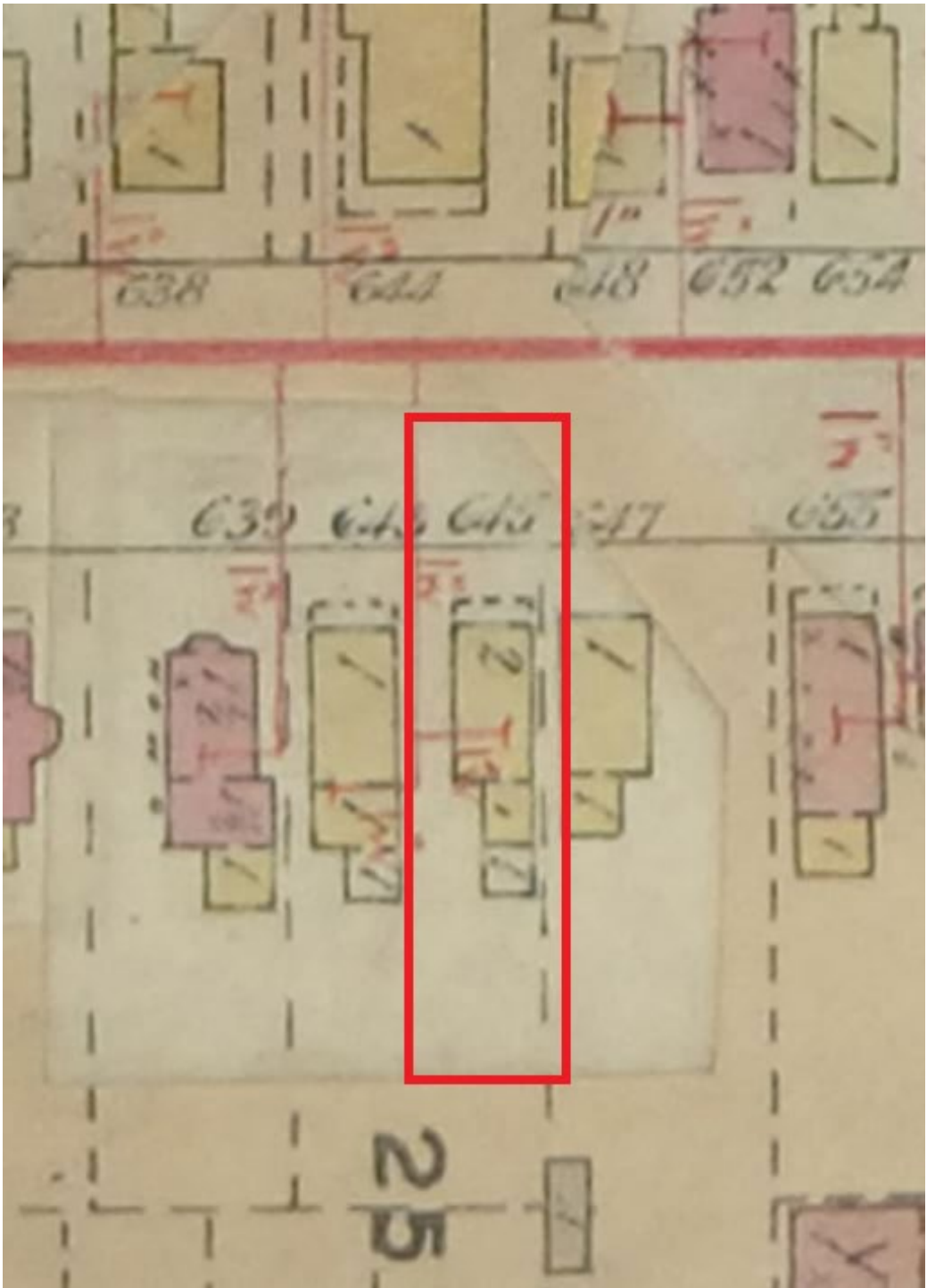


Figure 2: Detail of Sheet 21, 1892, revised 1907 Fire Insurance Plan (courtesy Maps and Data Centre, Western University). The dashed line in front of the building indicates a verandah.

Townsend Harbor Brown HC-64	Holdley Red HC-65	Branchport Brown HC-72	Shore Line CC-364	Bryant Gold HC-7	Livingston Gold HC-16	Forest Floor CC-570	Hale Navy HC-154	Knoxville Gray HC-154	Onyx 2133-10
Laurentian Red CC-152	Somerville Red HC-62	Fairview Taupe HC-85	Revere Pewter HC-172	Dijon CC-210	Lenox Tan HC-44	Tate Olive HC-112	Brewster Gray HC-162	Duxbury Gray HC-163	Kendall Charcoal HC-166
Georgian Brick HC-50	Bradstreet Beige HC-48	Creamy White OC-7	White Chocolate OC-127	Hopplewhite Ivory HC-36	Putnam Ivory HC-39	Louisburg Green HC-113	Wickham Gray HC-171	Palladian Blue HC-144	Chelsea Gray HC-168

Figure 3: Colour palette for the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: Photograph of the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue on March 12, 2020.



Image 2: Photograph of the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue (left) on November 12, 2020.



Image 3: Photograph, submitted as part of the Heritage Alteration Permit application, showing the current condition of the property at 645 Lorne Avenue.

Appendix C – Drawings

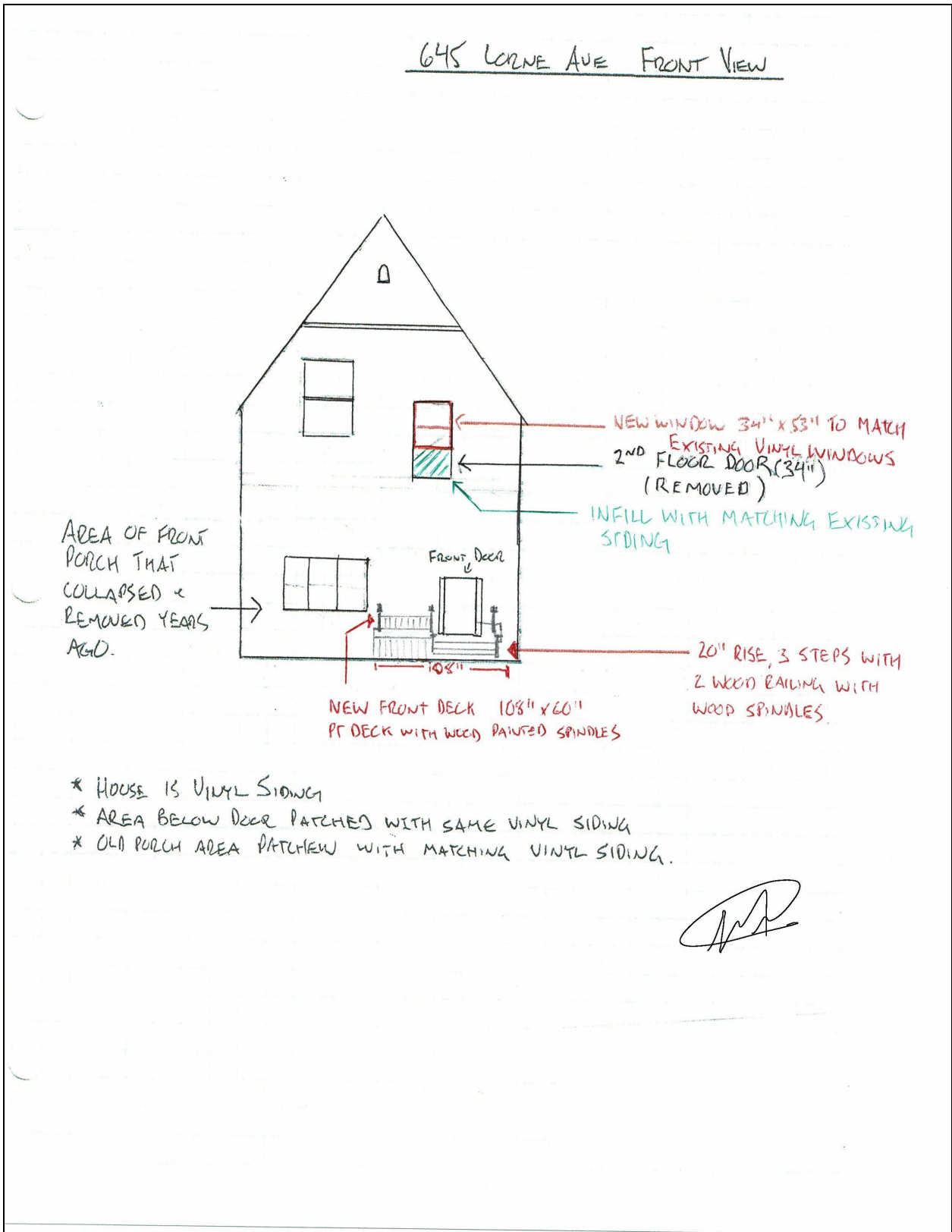


Figure 4: Elevation drawing submitted as part of the Heritage Alteration Permit application showing the proposed changes to the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue. Note: not to scale.

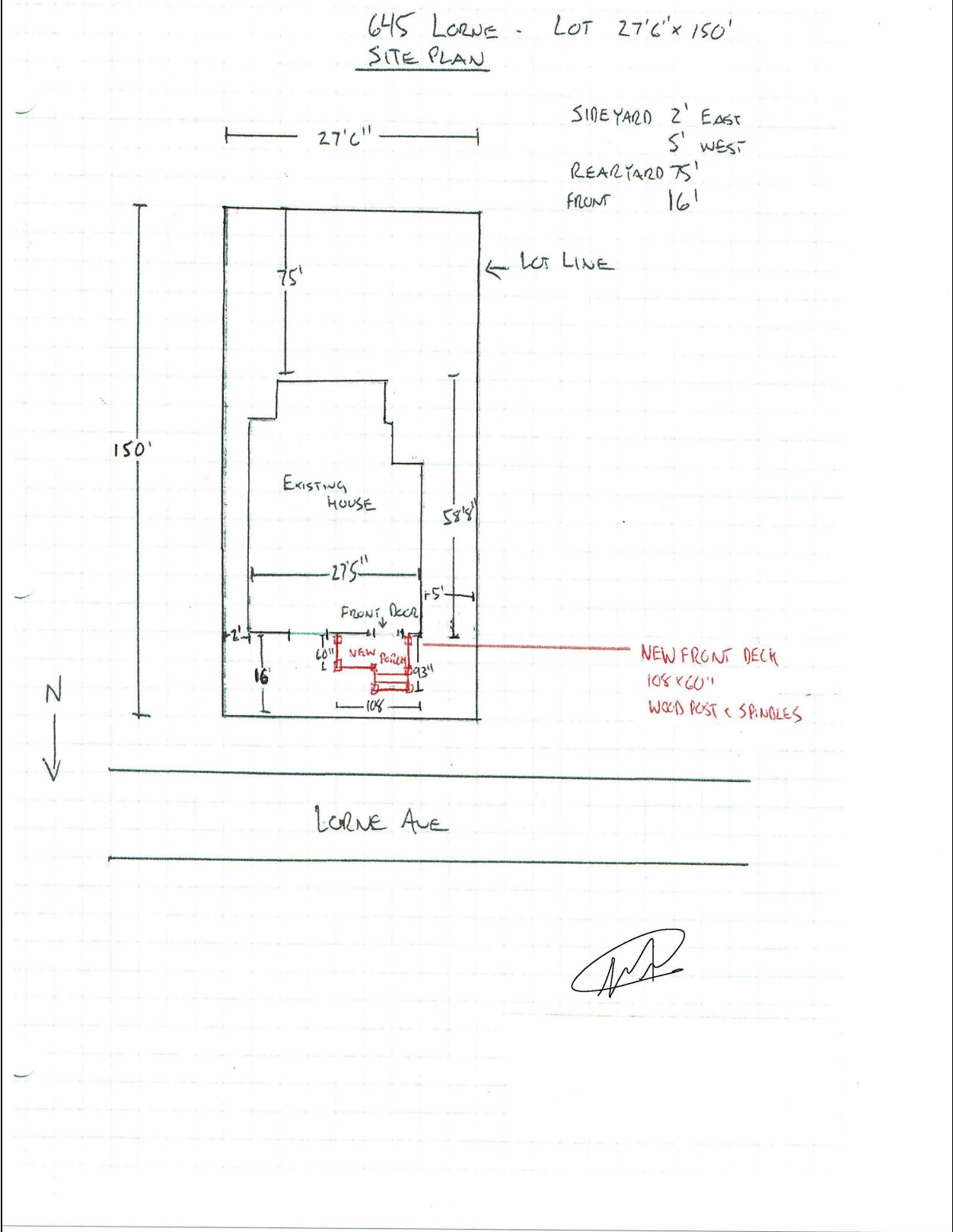


Figure 5: Plan drawing submitted as part of the Heritage Alteration Permit application showing the proposed changes to the heritage designated property at 645 Lorne Avenue.