

# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

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April 18, 2005

To: Toronto Preservation Board  
Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Policy & Research, City Planning Division

Subject: 531 Parliament Street (Winchester Hotel and Winchester Hall) – Alterations to a Designated Property  
Toronto Centre-Rosedale - Ward 28

Purpose:

This report recommends that alterations to the designated property at 531 Parliament Street be approved.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the alterations to the heritage property at 531 Parliament Street known as the Winchester Hotel and Winchester Hall, substantially as shown in the plans and drawings prepared by Stanford Downey Architect Inc. dated April 18, 2005 on file with the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, be approved subject to, prior to the issuance of any building permit or undertaking the work, the Owner will, to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services:
  - (a) provide exterior architectural details and building materials;
  - (b) retain a qualified heritage architect to prepare a Conservation Plan, detailing interventions and conservation work to the heritage building, and to monitor the implementation of the Conservation Plan; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The property is located on the east side of Parliament Street, north of Carlton Street, as shown in Attachment No. 1. The property consists of two interconnected buildings, as shown in Attachment No. 2. Winchester Hall, constructed in 1866, fronts onto Winchester Street. The Winchester Hotel, fronting onto Parliament Street, was erected in 1888 according to the design of the Barrie based architectural firm of Kennedy and Holland. The property was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by City Council on August 14, 1995 (By-law No. 395-95).

The Winchester Hotel features elements of the Second Empire style, including a slate-clad mansard roof with gabled dormers and a truncated corner tower. Constructed in red brick, the 3 ½-storey building has a 2 ½-storey south extension. At the ground floor, the southern three bays contain shopfronts, while the northern bays are clad in Granox, a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century alteration.

The ground floor of Winchester Hall is also clad in Granox, while the upper storey features red brick and segmentally arched opening with brick voussoirs. A gabled roof with bracketed eaves covers the building.

In 1941, significant alterations were undertaken according to the design of the architect Benjamin Swartz. The ground floor was clad in Vitrolite, a vertical 2-storey sign was erected at the northwest corner of the building, the Winchester Street entrance and lobby were altered to reflect the Art Moderne style, a wooden staircase to the second floor was replaced with a terrazzo and chrome staircase, and a new opening was cut for the stair landing. In 1955, the lower portion of the property was clad in Granox, by DeSpirit Mosaic and Marble Company Limited.

Comments:

(a) The proposal

The applicant is proposing to restore the ground floor façade of Winchester Hotel and Winchester Hall to what existed before the 1941 and 1955 renovations. The ground floor is proposed for retail use. The strategy is to restore that appearance and to repair the fabric in accordance with stated heritage principles, while making interventions where necessary to provide access, light and ventilation for the retail use. The proposal involves the removal of granite cladding, the restoration of the brick substrate and roof repair. The main impacts to the exterior fabric of the heritage building are the introduction of a new recessed entry at the corner, removal of the Winchester sign and alteration of window openings to provide more visibility to the retail use. The new recessed entry is proposed to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, Universal Access policies and related regulations.

The upper floors will continue as rental apartments. Upgrade changes to the interior, signage and exterior lighting will be dealt when a retail tenant is selected.

(b) Heritage Evaluation

Staff supports the proposed restoration and rehabilitation as it is consistent with documentary evidence about the early condition of the building and with generally accepted heritage conservation principles. To address the details of the impacts of these interventions on the heritage fabric and any existing deficiencies in the exterior of the heritage building, staff recommends that a Conservation Plan be prepared by a heritage architect prior to the issuance of any building permit. This plan will provide detailed drawings and specifications designed to mitigate the impact of interventions in the heritage building. The Conservation Plan will address in greater detail, the proposed windows for the existing building, the conservation work for the exterior elevations, a condition assessment of the existing structures, and a summary of all proposed interventions and associated mitigation strategies. The heritage architect will be required to monitor implementation of the Conservation Plan to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.

Staff understands that the alterations are required to respond to the Building Code, Universal Access policies and related regulations and they may be permitted provided they are sensitive to and respect the heritage attributes of the building.

Conclusions:

The heritage building at 531 Parliament Street known as Winchester Hotel and Winchester Hall is proposed to be restored and rehabilitated. This proposal will require alterations to and have impacts on the heritage building although staff consider such alterations to be acceptable. It is appropriate at this time to approve alterations consistent with plans and drawings prepared by Stanford Downey Architect Inc.

Contact:

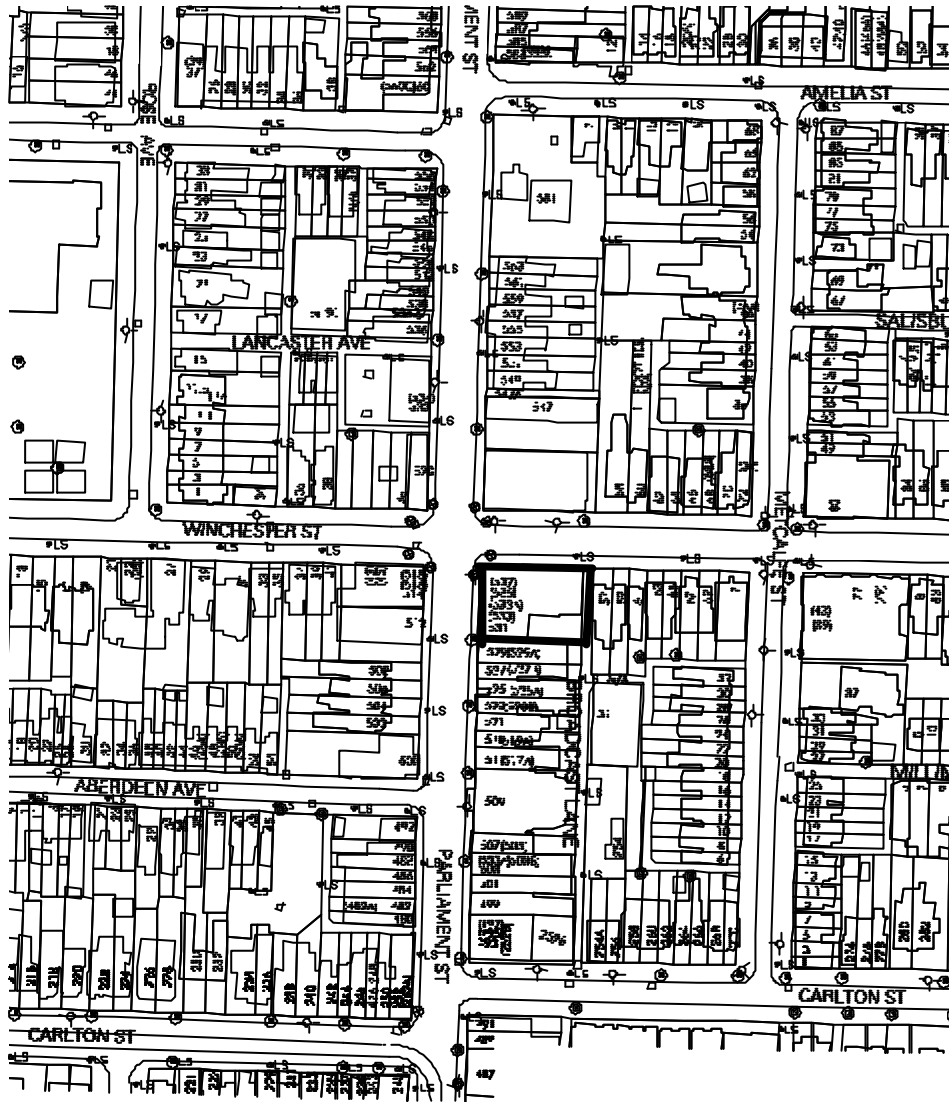
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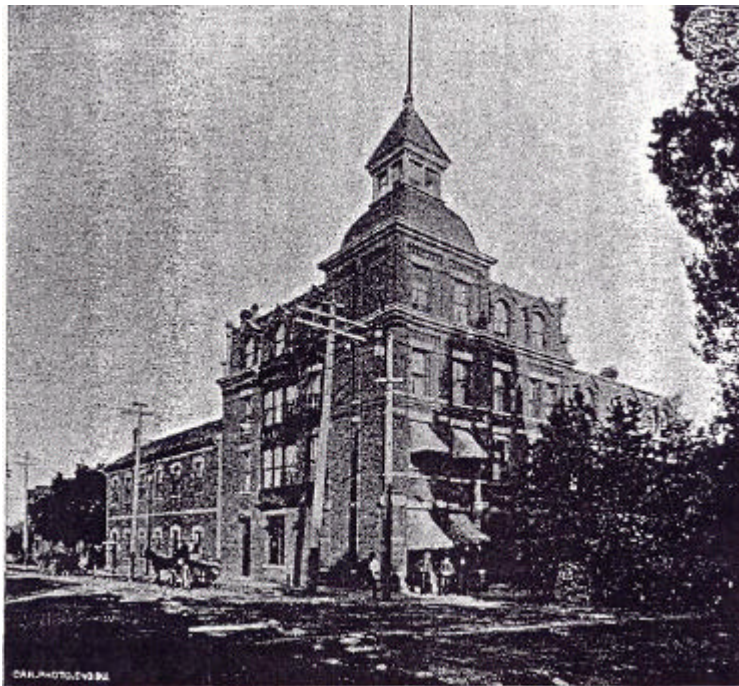
List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1      Location Map (531 Parliament Street)  
Attachment No. 2      Photographs (531 Parliament Street)  
Attachment No. 3      Applicant's Proposal(531 Parliament Street)

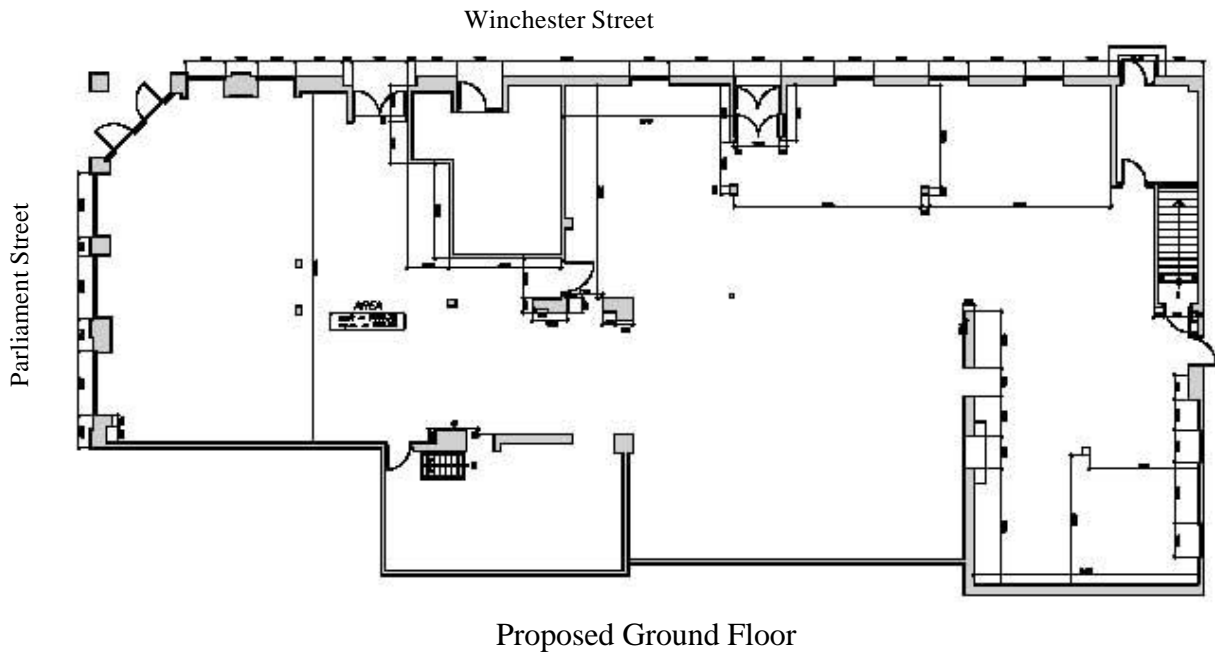




West and north elevation – Intersection of Parliament and Winchester Streets



Above: West and south façades of the Winchester Hotel and Winchester Hall from Toronto, Old and New ... (1891)



Proposal – View of Parliament and Winchester Streets



Existing West Elevation – Parliament Street



Proposed West Elevation



Existing North Elevation – Winchester Street



Proposed North Elevation