

UPCOMING DATES

MARCH

- 28 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.

APRIL

- 2 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
3 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
4 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
5 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m.
8 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
9 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m.
17-19 Council, 9:30 a.m.
22 CreateTO, 2:30 p.m.
24 Design Review Panel, 12:45 p.m.
29 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m.
30 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.

MAY

- 1 General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.
2 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m.
6 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
7 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.
8 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
9 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m.



BRUTALIST OFFICE BUILDING PROPOSED TO BE REPURPOSED AS BASE FOR RESIDENTIAL TOWER

NEW DIRECTIONS IN ADAPTIVE REUSE



Lana Hall

A plan to demolish, salvage and recreate a six-storey precast concrete heritage building bordering the Rosedale Valley Ravine seeks to commemorate the existing brutalist office structure on the site while supporting a new 63-storey residential tower above.

Osmington Gerofsky Development Corp. proposes to redevelop a site at 350 Bloor Street East with a 63-storey mixed-use building. The new residential building would accommodate 806 dwelling units, including 16 affordable rental units within the reconstructed six-storey base building, which would be managed by a not-for-profit housing provider. **ERA Architects** would manage the heritage portion of the reconstruction, while **Hariri Pontarini Architects** would design the new tower.

The existing heritage building on the site was built into the upper portion of the Rosedale Valley Ravine's south embankment between 1968 and 1970 to the designs of renowned Modernist architect, **John C. Parkin**. The building is considered a significant example of architectural precast concrete in Toronto with cladding that creates distinctive wedge-shaped columns and deep inset window openings above a recessed, transparent base. The building has accommodated office uses

since being built, most recently for **Rogers Media**.

At its meeting on March 18, the **City of Toronto's** Preservation Board adopted a recommendation to demolish and reconstruct the six-storey heritage building at 350 Bloor Street East based on a report prepared by **ERA Architects**. The report details the building's heritage features and outlines why the proposed residential tower would be better served by removing the existing heritage

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Whenever we deal with these kinds of buildings, we have to take a unique approach to each and every one of them, so this is the way we have managed to achieve commemoration ... The presence of it in the street will still be felt, even though it's a reconstructed building.

- Anne Fisher

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structure on the site and reconstructing it as a new base building which would then support the 63-storey tower.

Originally, the project team considered maintaining the six-storey building, but the unique site—bordered to the north by the Rosedale Valley, to the south by the TTC’s Line 2 subway line, and to the west by an on-ramp to Mt. Pleasant Road—made the prospect of installing a temporary retention structure challenging. The north side in particular, which sees a grade change of almost an entire storey, would make installation of a retaining structure almost impossible.

In search of an alternative approach to conserving the heritage structure, the ERA team undertook testing of the building’s precast elements—including the wedge-shaped concrete columns and the panels between them—and determined that most of them could be disassembled, salvaged and reinstated to replicate the appearance of the original six-storey building. The original building’s heritage value, according to City staff, lies in these non-structural cladding elements, which would be mechanically fastened to a brand-new foundational building.

“Staff do not normally

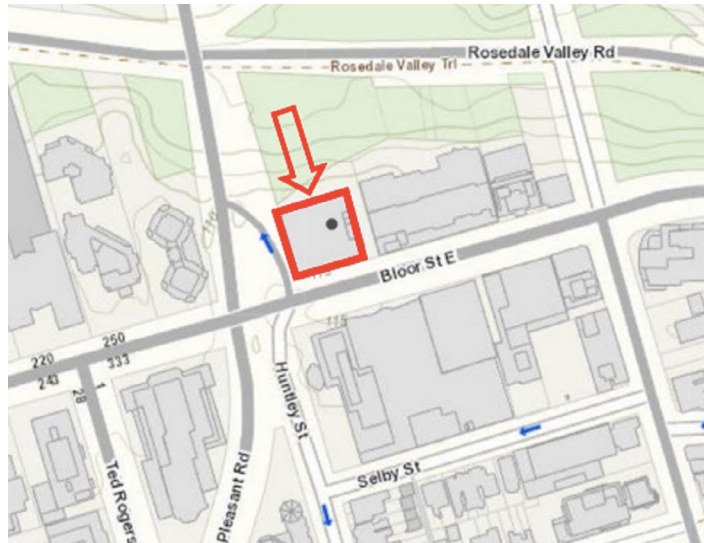
support the demolition of buildings such as this,” City of Toronto heritage preservation services program manager **Anne Fisher** told the preservation board at its meeting on March 18. “Whenever we deal with these kinds of buildings, we have to

take a unique approach to each and every one of them, so this is the way we have managed to achieve commemoration ... The presence of it in the street will still be felt, even though it’s a reconstructed building.”

Replicating the building’s original external form also has some unexpected benefits, according to ERA heritage planner **Brendan McCabe**. It allows the project team more flexibility in designing the layout of office and residential units within the six-

storey base, instead of being beholden to the structure’s original floorplate, which was designed for commercial uses. This will allow for a single elevator corridor to service all 63 floors, as well as more room for community programming space in the base building. It will also allow the team to install operable, energy-efficient windows and balconies, the latter of

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Map showing the location of 350 Bloor Street East, the site of a six-storey precast concrete heritage building bordering the Rosedale Valley Ravine. As part of Osmington Gerofsky’s proposal to redevelop the site to accommodate a 63-storey mixed-use residential building, ERA Architects is proposing to dismantle and salvage the pre-cast cladding elements and mechanically fasten them onto a new base building, effectively recreating the exterior appearance of the original brutalist structure. Due to the building’s unusual location, installing a temporary retention structure to preserve the existing building as a base for the new tower would be challenging.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO



Rendering of the reconstructed six-storey base and the lower part of the tower of Osmington Gerofsky’s proposed mixed-use building for a site at 350 Bloor Street East. Osmington Gerofsky Development Corp is proposing to redevelop the site, which currently contains a six-storey heritage commercial building, with a six-storey commemorative base building for a 63-storey residential tower. The redeveloped site would accommodate 806 new dwelling units, including 16 affordable rental units within the six-storey base, as well as office space and community programming space.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO
ARCHITECTS: ERA ARCHITECTS AND HARIRI PONTARINI ARCHITECTS

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which were not part of the original heritage structure. The balconies are proposed for the north side of the base building overlooking the ravine, and would reflect the appearance of the original facade as much as possible with a minimalist

Rendering of Osmington Gerofsky's proposed redevelopment of a site at 350 Bloor Street East, looking southwest. The section outlined in the red box indicates the reconstructed six-storey base of the proposed new tower, designed to replicate the appearance of the existing six-storey Brutalist heritage building on the site that would be demolished and reconstructed with salvaged cladding as the base of the new development.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO
ARCHITECTS: ERA ARCHITECTS AND HARIRI PONTARINI ARCHITECTS

design.

While this particular case is unusual, for Toronto's significant collection of modernist and brutalist buildings, this project could serve as a guide for re-imagining their potential uses. Many of these structures—including 200 University Avenue, another John C. Parkin-designed precast concrete building undergoing a redevelopment—were designed for office or commercial use, with little attention paid to the design of their public realm. Converting them into sustainable, energy-efficient structures suitable for a mix

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of uses could help address the city's housing crisis if project teams are able to approach each conversion with some creativity.

"If we are to look at a Canadian architectural identity, I would strongly focus on the post-war period, which includes primarily these modernist and brutalist buildings. Because they are a different construction method and a different material than you would typically see from

the Gothic or the Edwardian period in Toronto, it necessitates a bit of a different style of thinking," McCabe told *NRU*.

"I'd like to believe that this is ... a project to showcase the extent that you could push it for a salvage and reinstatement scope. I think more broadly for these types of buildings—because a lot of them are office buildings—a lot of them were designed with a different idea around street engagement and

public realm access. And there are certain issues that need to be addressed in these buildings in order for them to be their most functional in this day and age."

Toronto and East York Community Council will consider the Toronto Preservation Board's recommendation for demolition and commemoration of the heritage structure at 350 Bloor Street East at its meeting on April 3. 🌸

2024 Friends of Planning Spring Social

April 4 | 6pm | Hart House

Featuring Keynote Speaker

Naama Blonder

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