

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Built Heritage Sub-Committee / Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti
January 13, 2015 / 13 janvier 2015**

and / et

**Planning Committee / Comité de l'urbanisme
January 20, 2015 / 20 janvier 2015**

**and Council / et au Conseil
January 28, 2015 / 28 janvier 2015**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

**Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager / Directrice municipale adjointe, Planning
and Infrastructure / Urbanisme et Infrastructure**

Contact Person

Personne ressource:

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Ward: ALTA VISTA (18)

File Number: ACS2015-PAI-PGM-0001

**SUBJECT: Application to alter the Charles Billings House, 187 Billings Avenue,
a property designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act***

**OBJET: Demande de modification de la maison Charles Billings, située au
187, avenue Billings, une propriété désignée aux termes de la Partie
IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario***

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Built Heritage Sub-Committee recommend that Planning Committee
recommend that Council:**

1. Approve the application to alter 187 Billings Avenue, according to the drawings submitted on October 23, 2014 by Barry J. Hobin and Associates Architects Incorporated.
2. Issue the heritage permit with a two-year expiry date from the date of issuance.
3. Delegate authority for minor design changes to the General Manager, Planning and Growth Management Department.

(Note: The statutory 90-day timeline for consideration of this application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* will expire on February 6, 2015.)

(Note: Approval to alter this property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* must not be construed to meet the requirements for the issuance of a building permit.)

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Sous-comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Comité de l'urbanisme de recommander à son tour au Conseil :

1. d'approuver la demande de modification du 187, avenue Billings, conformément aux dessins soumis le 23 octobre 2014 par la firme Barry J. Hobin and Associates Architects Incorporated.
2. de délivrer le permis en matière de patrimoine dont la date d'expiration est fixée à deux ans après la date de délivrance.
3. de déléguer au directeur général d'Urbanisme et Gestion de la croissance le pouvoir d'apporter des modifications conceptuelles mineures.

(Nota : Le délai réglementaire de 90 jours d'examen de cette demande, exigé en vertu de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, prendra fin le 6 février 2015.)

Nota : L'approbation de la demande de modification aux termes de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario* ne signifie pas pour autant qu'elle satisfait aux conditions de délivrance d'un permis de construire.)

BACKGROUND

The Charles Billings House, 187 Billings Avenue, is a one-and-a-half-storey wood frame house with wood siding that was constructed prior to 1857 in the Billings Bridge area, now the Alta Vista neighbourhood of Ottawa (Documents 1 and 2).

City Council issued a Notice of Intention to Designate 187 Billings Avenue in September 2013 and no appeals were received. This building was designated through By-law 2014-142 under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in April 2014.

The current owner purchased this property in the summer of 2013 and applied to the Committee of Adjustment to sever the property into two parcels. The designated building is located on one parcel and the other parcel could be developed with a single detached dwelling. The non-designated portions of the Charles Billings House at the north and east sides of the building have been demolished.

This report has been prepared because the property owner has applied to alter the designated building through the removal of an approximately 4-metre long section of the house and to construct an addition at the rear of the property. All applications to alter designated buildings require the approval of City Council under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

DISCUSSION

Recommendation 1:

The Charles Billings House, 187 Billings Avenue, was designated for its cultural heritage value as an early frame house in the former Billings Bridge community. While the date of construction cannot be pinpointed, records indicate the building was constructed before 1857. Through its history, the Charles Billings House was associated with several prominent local figures including Archibald McKellar, a well known local dairy farmer who started his career here and Charles Billings, the youngest son of Braddish Billings. Charles Billings and his descendents owned and occupied the house for three generations, from 1859 until 1961.

Architecturally, the house is a rare vernacular example of the Ontario Cottage style in Ottawa, which was popular in Ontario from the 1830s until the 1870s. The house has a wood frame, constructed of hand-hewn and sawn timbers and features a symmetrical façade, and a side-gabled roof with a central gable over the entrance. All of these elements make it a good example of the vernacular Ontario Cottage style, one of the most common house types in Ontario between 1830 and 1870 (see Document 2).

The house is historically associated with the Billings family and their estate which developed into the 19th century Village of Billings Bridge. The house is one of the earliest remaining buildings in the Alta Vista neighbourhood and the orientation of the

building away from the street indicates that it was built during the early settlement of the area.

The Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for the property is attached as Document 3.

Application

The proposal includes the alteration of the house through the removal of approximately 20 per cent of the designated building, and construction of an addition to the rear of the property. The existing house has a gross floor area of approximately 102 square metres and the proposed addition is approximately 248 square metres for a total gross floor area of approximately 350 square metres (see Document 4). There is a double garage with living space above facing Billings Avenue. The addition is connected to the north end of the historic building by a single storey glazed entrance. The addition is 7.8 metres to the roof ridge, which is 1.6 metres higher than the historic building. The addition features an irregular cross-gable roof that reflects the massing and gable roof of the Charles Billings House.

The proposal also includes alterations to the Charles Billings House including replacement of the existing rubble stone foundation with a new concrete foundation. The demolition of the north end of the building will result in the loss of one of the chimneys, which appears to have been rebuilt in the recent past and the loss of one of the large windows on the front façade. Two new windows are proposed on the south elevation of the historic building flanking the red brick chimney (see Documents 4, 5, and 6).

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada” were adopted by City Council in 2008 and are used to evaluate all applications under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The following Standards are applicable to this application:

Standard 1: Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace or substantially alter its intact or repairable character defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character defining element.

The proposal includes retention of 80% of the original building and protection of heritage attributes including the wood cladding, gable roof, chimney, central gable and vestibule with diamond shaped windows. Locating the addition at the rear of the property

maintains the contextual heritage attribute of the orientation of the house away from the street.

Standard 10: Repair rather than replace character defining elements.

The existing wood cladding, red brick chimney and the diamond shaped windows will be repaired and retained in the proposal. The foundation is proposed for replacement with a new concrete foundation. The house has been subject to deferred maintenance for several years and the replacement of the foundation will ensure the long term stability of the building.

Standard 11: Conserve the heritage value and character defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

The new addition conserves the heritage value and heritage attributes of the Charles Billings House. While larger than the existing building, the addition is compatible with the historic building through its massing and exterior materials. The setback of the addition allows the historic building and its unusual orientation to the street to remain the dominant presence. The proposed glazed link between the historic portion of the building and the addition creates a clear distinction between new and old.

Standard 12: Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

While the proposal to demolish approximately 4 metres of the north end of the building will have a negative impact on the symmetrical massing of the building, the proposed glazed connection between the existing building and the addition allows the historic massing of the building to be clearly distinguished and if the addition were removed in the future, the missing portion of the building could be reinstated.

Cultural Heritage Impact Statement

Section 4.6.1 of the Official Plan provides direction related to the preparation of Cultural Heritage Impact Statements (CHIS) for properties designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. A CHIS is required where an application has the, “potential to adversely affect the designated resource.”

Heritage staff determined that the proposal had the potential to adversely impact the heritage resource and a CHIS was required as part of this application. The complete document is attached as Document 7.

The CHIS was completed by Robertson Martin Architects in response to an earlier iteration of the plans that showed approximately 20% of the original building being demolished. The CHIS outlined the following positive and negative impacts of the proposal:

Positive impacts

- Demolition of the non-designated portions of the building highlights the historic Ontario Cottage style of the original building.
- New foundation will ensure ongoing stability of the heritage resource.
- Addition is generally compatible and the glazed connection provides a distinction between new and old.
- Location of new addition and creation of new driveway from Billings Avenue will result in greater visibility for the heritage resource.

Negative impacts

- Demolition of approximately 30 per cent of the building results in the building losing its symmetrical plan and entrance scheme and the prominence of the central entrance gable is diminished.
- Potential negative impact of the new development on the adjacent lot if the proposed new building is not sympathetic to the heritage resource.
- Main negative impact of the addition is the disruption of the symmetrical cottage style of the original building.

The CHIS concludes that,

The development proposal, as shown in the attached documents, presents an overall positive impact for the heritage resource relative to its prior state. While the demolition of approximately 30 per cent of the original structure presents a negative impact to the heritage resource, it is deemed acceptable given the existing conditions of the site and building.

In response to findings of the CHIS and feedback from Heritage Services Section staff, the proposal has been amended to demolish approximately 20 per cent of the original building.

Conclusion

The negative impact of the partial removal of the building is mitigated through the rehabilitation of the remainder of the designated building which is currently in poor condition. The rehabilitation of the building, including the new foundation will ensure its long-term preservation. The proposed addition is compatible with and physically distinguishable from the original building and the set back from the street allows the historic building to remain the dominant presence on the site. The proposal meets the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and the overall impact on the heritage resource will be positive. For these reasons, the Department has no objections to the proposal.

Recommendation 2:

The *Ontario Heritage Act* does not provide any timelines for the expiry of heritage permits. A two-year expiry date is recommended to ensure that projects are completed in a timely fashion and according to the approved heritage permit.

Recommendation 3:

Occasionally, minor changes to a building emerge during the working drawing phase. This recommendation is included to allow the Planning and Growth Management Department to approve these changes.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

Heritage Ottawa was circulated on the application and provided the following comments:

1. We are pleased that the original building is to be largely retained and integrated into a newly expanded residential structure. We also appreciate the difficulty of adequately treating a structure whose principle façade does not face the current street, making it difficult to ensure that it is visible and suitably differentiated from new additions.

2. Demolition of such a large portion of the original structure at least borders on the excessive. If this cannot be avoided, then it is important that the new addition be designed to be clearly differentiated from the designated portion, and that the original cottage portion be appropriately restored. We would like to see a more convincing justification of why more of the original structure cannot be retained. In particular, the symmetry of the façade is a feature of the Ontario Cottage style. Why symmetry must be sacrificed deserves a clear narrative.
3. It is not entirely clear what materials are to be used on the designated portion. The existing wood clapboard should be restored and reused where possible, and where unavoidable, the replacement should be replicated to match the existing material. A detailed description of the materials to be used, and which features can be repaired vs. replicated, is needed.
4. Windows should be replaced with thermal wood windows with muntin bars and trim typical to the period. Windows on the new portion should be clearly different.
5. The breezeway between the designated portion and the new portion, whose major visible façade is garage doors, should be designed to more clearly divide the historical structure from the new. In its currently-proposed form, it does not recede sufficiently and reads instead as an extension of the original cottage façade.
6. Attempts should be made to emphasize the original entrance. In the current design, there is no clear pedestrian walkway to the entrance, and the driveway is given too much priority. A change in materials across the driveway at that point and landscaping could reinforce the original entrance

Property owners within 30 metres of the site were circulated on the application and offered the opportunity to comment.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR

Councillor Cloutier is aware of the application.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications with respect to adopting the report recommendations.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

Information Technology and Planning and Growth Management have agreed that for reports from development Review Services and Policy Development and Urban Design Branches, there is not technology component.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This project addresses the following Term of Council Priority:

HC4: Improve arts and heritage

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE STATUS

The application was processed within the 90 day statutory requirement under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map

Document 2 Photographs

Document 3 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Document 4 Site Plan

Document 5 Elevations

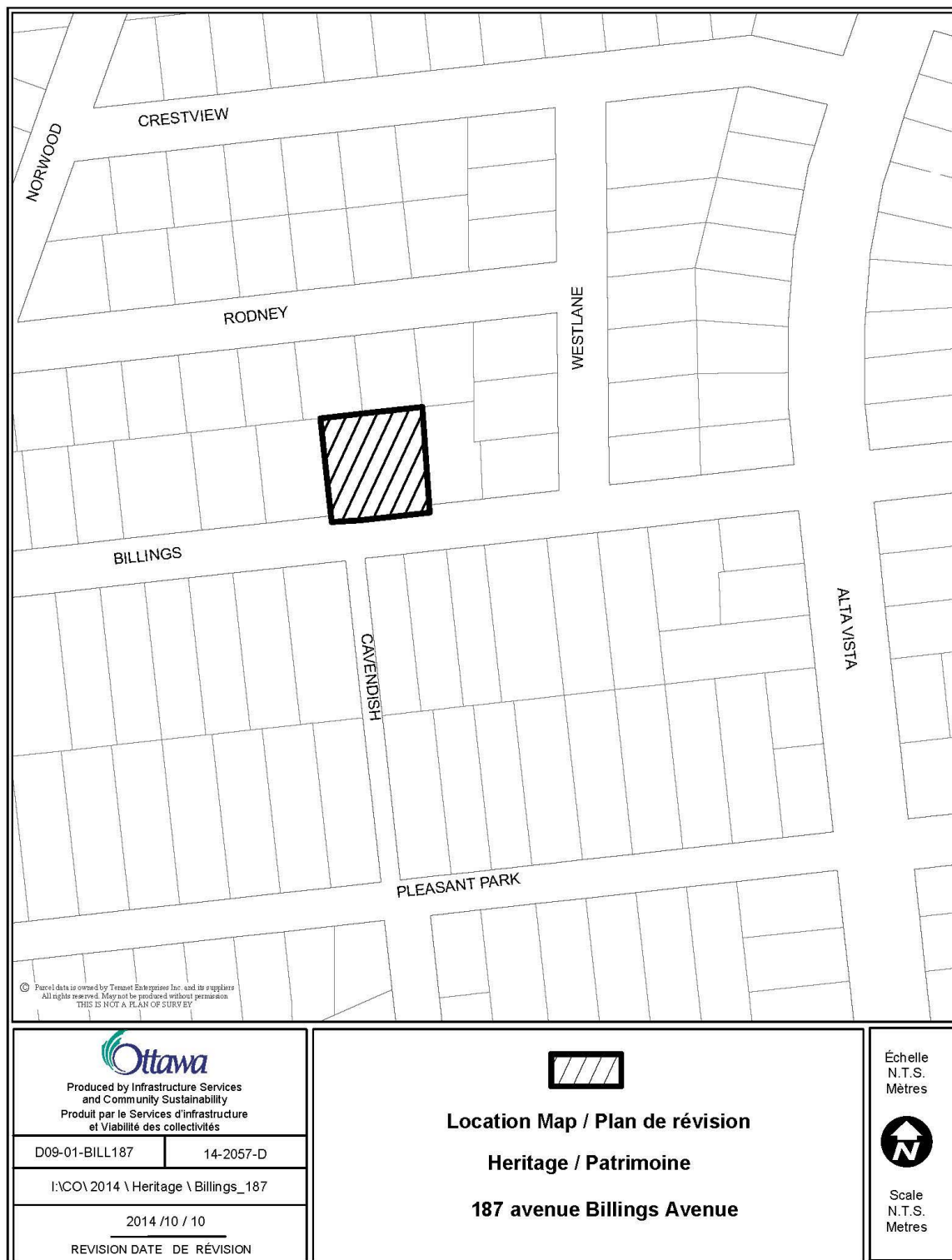
Document 6 Renderings

Document 7 Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (attached separately – on file with the City Clerk)

DISPOSITION

City Clerk and Solicitor Department, Legislative Services to notify the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision.

Document 1 – Location Map



Document 2 – Photographs

187 Billings Avenue, prior to removal of additions, the designated portion of the building is outlined in red.



North and west façades of the house, looking south towards Billings Avenue



East façade of the house showing areas of demolition.



Central gable and entrance



Window details on front façade

Document 3 – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

By-law 2014-142

Description of Property

The Charles Billings House, 187 Billings Avenue, is a one-and-one-half-storey frame structure with wood siding that was built before 1857. It is located on the north side of Billings Avenue, immediately east of the Cavendish Road intersection within the Alta Vista neighbourhood of Billings Bridge in the City of Ottawa.

Heritage Value

The Charles Billings House has cultural heritage value for its physical value as an early pioneer cottage style house and its historical value as associated with the settlement and development of the Billings Bridge community – including several important local families; namely Billings and McKellar. Contextual value is found in the property's orientation away from the street which speaks to the age of the building and the early settlement of the community.

As an example of an early residence, the Charles Billings House is vernacular but illustrates elements of the Ontario Cottage Style, which was the most common house type in Ontario from roughly the 1830s to the 1870s. Features of the house typical of the style include the frame construction, stone foundation, one-and-one-half-storey massing, gabled roof with central gable over the entrance, and the red brick chimneys.

The shiplap siding of the house is rugged and the diamond window in the building's vestibule is the only decoration. Such houses were principally built for shelter and therefore were inspired by necessity rather than aesthetic value.

The property is historically valuable for its early associations with the Billings family and their estate which developed into the Village of Billings Bridge. Arriving in 1812, Braddish Billings was the first settler of Gloucester Township. He and his family developed and leased surrounding lands, including this property, and the area soon became the thriving Village of Billings Bridge. Known locally as 'the foreman's house', the documented history of 187 Billings Avenue begins with Archibald McKellar, a well established Ottawa dairy farmer who began his career here while leasing the property from Billings from 1857 to 1871. After McKellar left, the family of Charles Billings, Braddish's youngest son, owned the property for three generations beginning in 1859 and lasting until 1961. Charles and his son Hugh Braddish were both prominent community members who shaped the political landscape of the village.

Contextual value is found in the property's character as one of the earliest residential structures remaining in the Alta Vista neighbourhood. The building's orientation away from the street indicates the early settlement of the area.

Heritage Attributes

Key attributes that embody the heritage value of 187 Billings Avenue as an early vernacular house include:

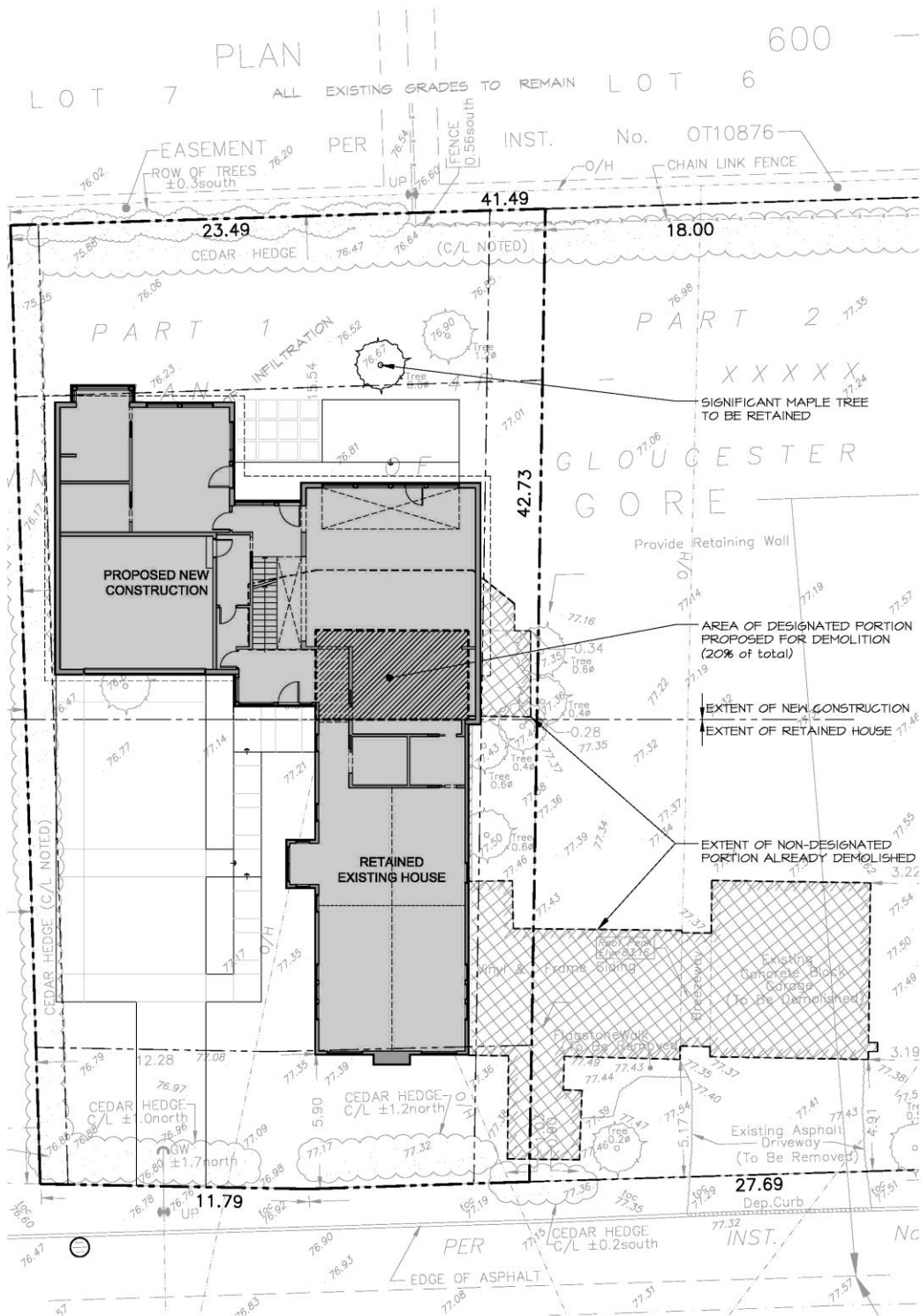
- One-and-one-half-storey height
- Side gabled roof with central gable above entrance
- Entrance vestibule with gable roof
- Stone foundation
- Red brick chimneys
- Wooden shiplap siding
- Diamond window in vestibule
- Rectangular window openings with wooden trim

Key attributes of 187 Billings Avenue that embody the historical character of the Billings Bridge community include:

- Orientation of the front entrance of the building to the west, away from Billings Avenue.

The designation is limited to the original gable-ended structure with central gable and vestibule. Later additions and the interior of the building are not included in the designation.

Document 4 – Site Plan



Document 5 – Elevations





Document 6 – Renderings



187 Billings Avenue
ALTA VISTA

OCTOBER 22, 2014
CONCEPT RENDERING

