

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Heritage Kitchener

**DATE OF MEETING:** March 3, 2026

**SUBMITTED BY:** Garett Stevenson, Director of Development and Housing Approvals,  
519-783-8922

**PREPARED BY:** Victoria Grohn, Heritage Planner, 519-783-8912

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** Ward 10

**DATE OF REPORT:** February 2, 2026

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2026-070

**SUBJECT:** Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-V-004  
98 College Street  
Building Conversion and Associated Exterior Alterations

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That pursuant to Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-V-004 be approved to permit the construction of a fire escape, alterations to window and door openings, and the construction of a new rear roof dormer at the property municipally addressed as 98 College Street, in accordance with the supplementary information submitted with this application and subject to the following condition:

1. That the final building permit drawings be reviewed, and heritage clearance be provided by Heritage Planning staff prior to the issuance of a building permit.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to present Heritage Planning staff's recommendation regarding the proposed building conversion at 98 College Street and associated exterior alterations, including the construction of a fire escape, alterations to window and door openings, and the construction of a rear roof dormer.
- The key finding of this report is that the proposed alterations associated with the conversion of the existing building to eight (8) dwelling units will not adversely impact the cultural heritage value or interest of the property municipally addressed as 98 College Street, the College Street streetscape, or the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation district.
- There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- Community engagement included consultation with the City's Heritage Kitchener Committee.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

- This heritage permit application is not delegated to Heritage Planning staff because the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan identifies conversions with exterior alterations visible from the street or other public space as works requiring Council (Heritage Kitchener review) approval. Additionally, the Plan includes policies and guidelines related to fire escapes and window and door alterations, and the proposal does not fully comply with those requirements.

## BACKGROUND:

The Development Services Department is in receipt of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-V-004 for the property municipally addressed as 98 College Street. The application is for the construction of a fire escape, alterations to windows and doors, and the construction of a new rear roof dormer, which are all works associated with the proposed building conversion to eight (8) residential units.

The subject property is located on the west side of College Street between Weber Street West and Ahrens Street West. It is located within the Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District (CCNHCD) and therefore designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It is identified as a Group 'B' building.

The CCNHCD Plan indicates that building conversions with exterior alterations that are visible from the street or other public space requires a Heritage Permit Application and Council approval (Heritage Kitchener review). Furthermore, Chapter 642 of the City's Municipal Code pertaining to Delegated Approval Authority for the alteration of Part IV and Part V designated properties indicates that applications that have the potential for significant impact on cultural heritage value of the property as identified in the conservation district plan are to be reviewed by Heritage Kitchener. While the proposed alterations are not anticipated to have significant impact on the property, the alterations proposed, particularly the exterior fire escape, are not in compliance with the policies contained in the CCNHCD Plan and warrants additional review.

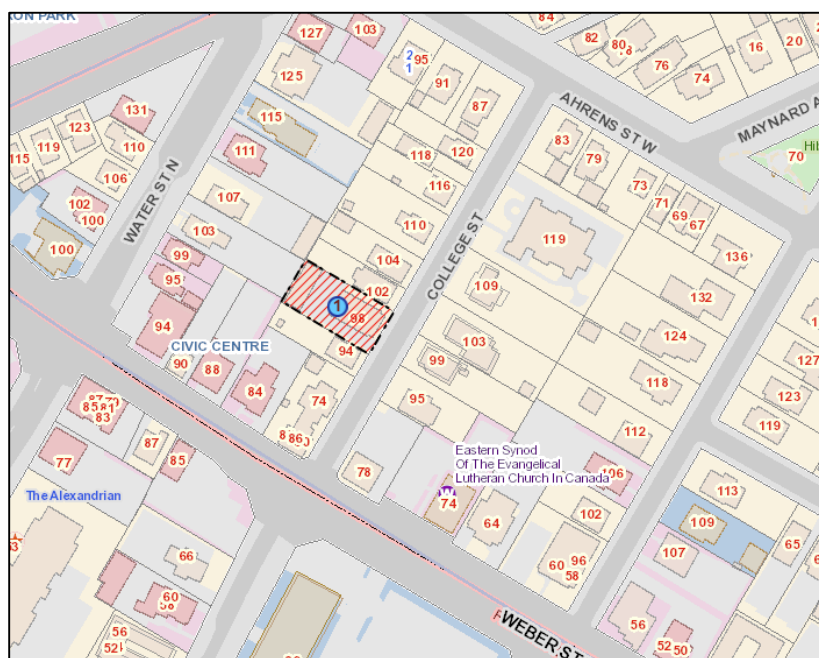


Figure 1: Location Map

## REPORT:

The subject property contains a 2 ½-storey c.1905 brick building constructed in the Georgian architectural style.



Figure 2: Front Façade of 98 College Street

### Proposal

Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-V-004 is a proposal for exterior alterations to the existing building to facilitate its conversion to eight (8) residential units. The exterior alterations include: the construction of a fire escape, alterations to window and door openings, and the construction of a new rear roof dormer.

### Construction of Fire Escape

To facilitate the conversion of the existing building to eight (8) residential units, and in compliance with the Ontario Building Code (OBC), a second means of egress with access at grade is required for the upper-level units. The building has been demised in way that retains key interior millwork, where feasible. Given the age of the existing building (c. 1905), the OBC permits the use of fire escapes as an option. The owner/applicant chose this option over a second enclosed stairway because it maintains a smaller footprint and reduces exterior impact to the building.

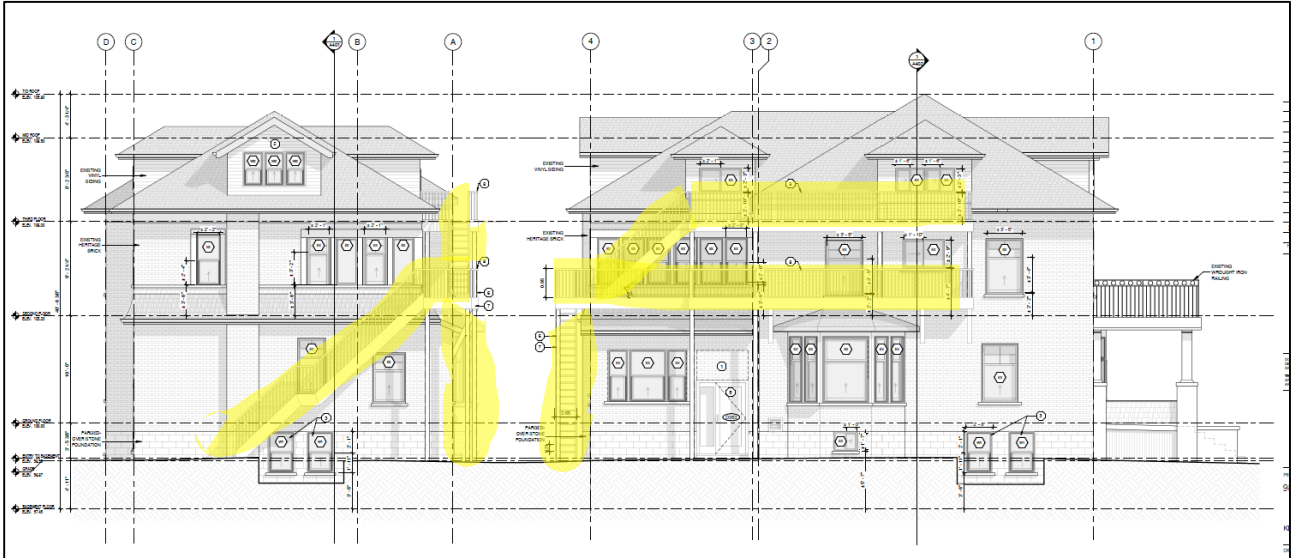
The CCNHCD Plan outlines the following policy regarding building conversions and associated alterations:

**3.3.2 Alterations to Existing Buildings**

- 3.3.2.(b) Structural alterations to the exterior of buildings are not permitted in the event of residential conversions. Any exterior stairs or fire escapes are to be enclosed and kept away from the façade of the structure.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that in the event of building conversions within the CCNHCD, that the low-rise profile of the building is maintained.

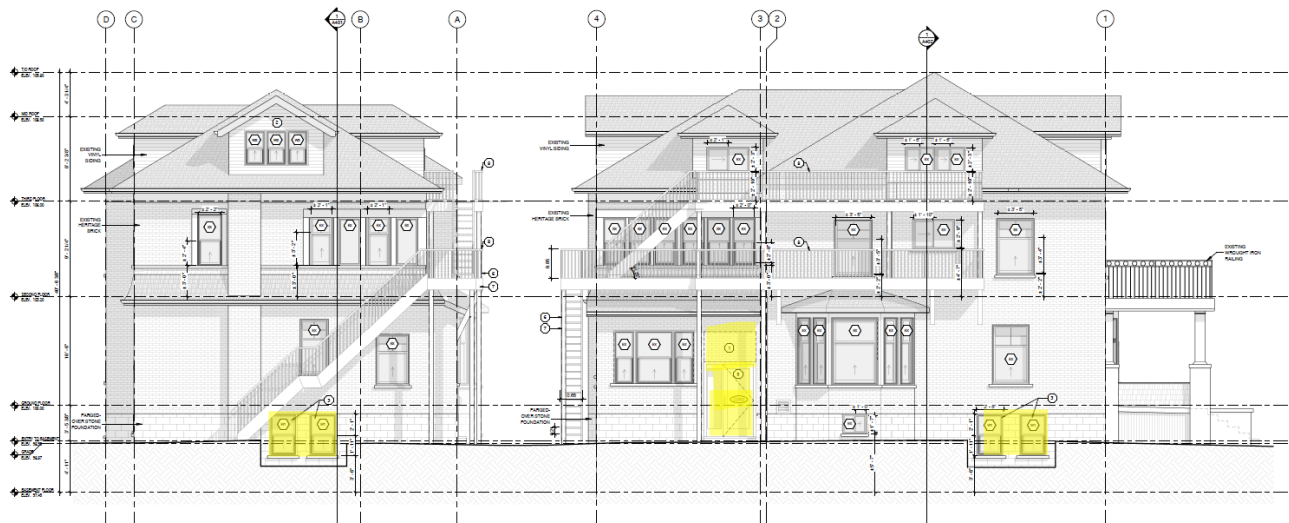
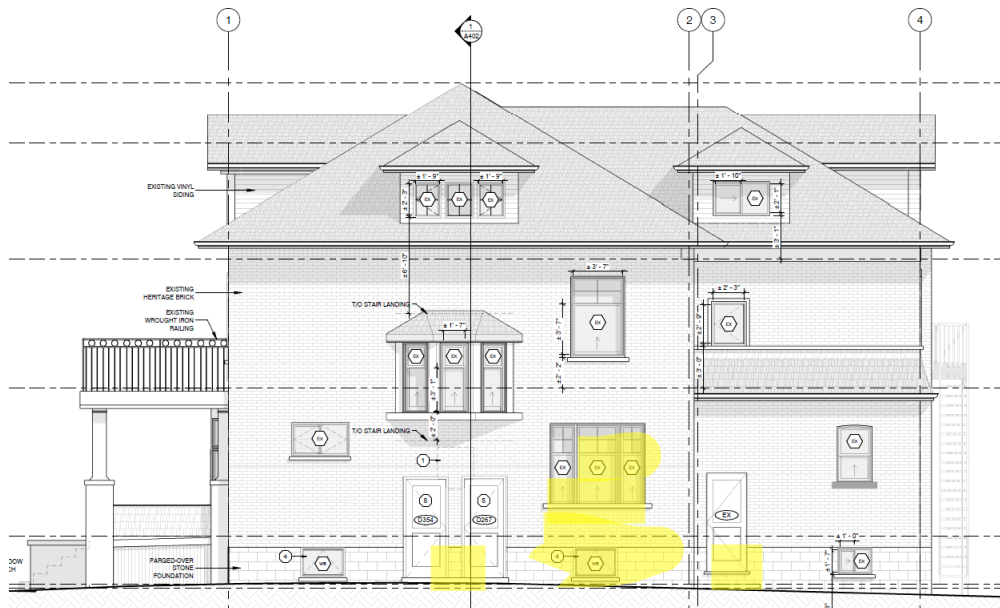
While the proposal outlined in HPA-2026-V-004 contemplates the construction of a non-enclosed fire escape, consideration has been given by the owner/applicant to minimize impacts to the exterior of the building, where feasible, while maintaining the existing profile of the building. The fire escape is proposed to be constructed from black power coated metal to complement the existing wrought iron features of the building. The fire escape is designed with dimensions as close to the OBC minimum requirements as possible to facilitate exit purposes only and is not intended for or contemplated as amenity space on the property. The fire escape is proposed to be supported by eight (8) posts; four (4) of which are affixed to new footings at grade while the other four (4) are anchored into the bricks. Lastly, the fire escape is located towards the rear of the building and does not impact the front façade, which conforms to the recommended practice of the CCNHCD Plan outlined in section 6.8.1.



**Figure 3: Proposed Exterior Fire Escape**

Alteration to Window and Door Openings

To facilitate the conversion of the existing building, there are several windows and doors on the north (right), south (left), and rear (west) elevations. These changes are to enlarge existing windows to provide proper egress from the residential units or to provide an additional ground level access. While the CCNHCD Plan notes that these are works not requiring Council approval, Heritage Planning staff are highlighting the window and door alterations because the CCNHCD Plan does note in the recommended practices and design guidelines for building conversions that original door and window locations should not be blocked or removed.



**Figures 4 & 5: Proposed Window and Door Alterations**

**Construction Rear Roof Dormer**

To facilitate the conversion of the existing building, a new roof dormer is proposed to be constructed on the rear façade of the dwelling. While the construction of the new roof dormer is an alteration to the original roofline of the building, it is located at the rear of the property, away from public view. Additionally, the new roof dormer is similar to the existing roof dormer on the principal façade.

**6.8.1 Recommended Practices and Design Guidelines (Building Conversions)**

- *Avoid altering the streetscape façade of the building. Try to provide access to individual apartments and offices from the interior of the building. If this is not feasible, new entrances should be located to the side or rear of the dwelling.*
  - This practice/guideline is met as new entrances are located to the side of the dwelling.

- *If exterior stairs are required for access or emergency exit purposes, they should be situated at the rear or side of the dwelling away from view, using materials and construction methods that are compatible with the original building design.*
  - This practice/guideline is met as the exterior stairs are located at the side and rear, and the materials and construction methods are compatible with the design of the dwelling.
  
- *Do not block up or remove original door and window locations.*
  - The windows proposed to be altered are basement windows on non-principal facades. The location of the windows is not changing; they are proposed to be enlarged to comply with the Ontario Building Code. The removal of the window on the right (north) elevation to accommodate two (2) new doors is not a character-defining feature of the building and is located away from the principal façade. The door opening on the left (south) elevation is proposed to be relocated at grade and will not be visible from the public right-of-way. While this practice/guideline is not met, the proposed window and door alterations are located away from the principal façade and have been considered to result in the least disruption to the historic fabric of the building while still complying with Ontario Building Code requirements.
  
- *Locate additional utility meters in an inconspicuous, but still accessible location at the rear or side of the building.*
  - This practice/guideline is met.
  
- *Front yard or boulevard parking is discouraged unless unavoidable and permitted by zoning regulations.*
  - This practice/guideline is met as no front yard or boulevard parking is proposed.
  
- *If additional parking must be provided, it should be located at the rear or side of the building with appropriate landscaping or fencing provided to screen it from the street and adjacent neighbours.*
  - This practice/guideline is met.

#### Heritage Planning Comments

In reviewing the merits of the application, Heritage Planning staff note the following:

- The subject property is located within the CCNHCD and is designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- The subject property is classified as District Significance 'B' meaning it is a building of importance within the CCNHCD, per the 2006 CCNHCD Study.
- The proposed fire escape maintains a smaller footprint and reduces exterior impact on the building, as opposed to the construction of a second enclosed stairway.
- The proposed fire escape will be partially affixed to the brick of the building. While this is a semi to permanent alteration, the open stairway will not cover up architectural details or result in the removal of prominent architectural details of the building.
- The proposed fire escape will be black powder coated metal to be more visually compatible with the existing building.

- The proposed fire escape conforms to the recommended practice of the CCNHCD Plan regarding the location, material, and construction method of exterior stairs required for access or emergency purposes.
- The proposed window and door replacements/removals are not impacting character-defining features of the building, are not located on the principal façade and are required for Ontario Building Code compliance.
- The proposed new roof dormer is located at the rear of the building away from public view and is similar to the existing roof dormer on the principal façade.
- The proposed work is generally in compliance with the CCNHCD Plan guidelines for building conversions.
- The proposed work will not have a negative impact on the integrity or the heritage character of the building, the College Street streetscape, or the CCNHCD.

In accordance with the Heritage Permit Application form, the approval of any application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* shall not be a waiver of any of the provisions of any by-law of the City of Kitchener or legislation, including, but not limited to, the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and Zoning By-law. In this regard, staff confirm that a Building Permit is required to undertake the outlined alterations to facilitate the conversion of this building to eight (8) residential units.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports the delivery of core services.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the Heritage Kitchener committee meeting.

CONSULT – The Heritage Kitchener Committee will be consulted regarding the subject Heritage Permit Application.

#### **PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- *Ontario Heritage Act, 2022*
- *Civic Centre Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan*

**REVIEWED BY:** Sandro Bassanese, Manager of Site Plan

**APPROVED BY:** Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-V-004

Attachment B – Supplementary Information

Attachment C – Heritage Permit Application Drawings