

Attention: Planning Committee (to be included in January 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 Agenda package)  
Regarding: **Gore Buildings Heritage Permit App HP2106-027 and HP2016-028 18-22 + 24-28 King St East**  
Date: January 17, 2017  
Submitted by: Michael William Biljetina, B.Sc., B.Arch., MRAIC, AIA, OAA, Architect, ATA Architects Inc.

*I am a resident of Hamilton (born in Ward 5, grew-up in Ward 11 & 10, lived in Ward 4 for 20+ years, Ward 2 and now reside in Ward 8). I am a licensed architect and have been practicing for 21+ years. As a senior architect at ATA (Toronto, Oakville and soon to be Hamilton), heritage projects encompass approximately 25% to 40% of my/the firm's workload. The other 75% to 60% is involved in new build/construction (contemporary and other) with a wide variety of public and private sector clients.*

### ***"introduction"***

The built form of a city is a direct and literal representation of a city's history – its story.

Architecture conveys this story - the unsuccessful and hopeless periods as well as the prosperous and joyful times.

These Gore Buildings (18 to 28 King Street East) represent an important part of this story. If written in a book, these buildings would certainly be included in chapter 1.

The businesses that constructed these buildings are directly connected to future business endeavours that followed and established themselves in this city. We, who currently reside in the City of Hamilton, are here (in some measure) because of these buildings and the prosperity that followed.

Now, certainly, it is of vital importance for each and every generation that follows to showcase their architecture - their advancements in design, building sciences and construction. This is what reinforces the **continuity of a city's prosperity**.

But this continuity need not (*and should not*) occur as a result of the demolition of designated heritage buildings.

It is the balance between Heritage and New Build that in fact reinforces the **continuity of a city's prosperity**.

### ***"a common goal"***

There is a common goal shared between the concerned advocates/citizens and the property owners.  
Simply a great result - wonderful, useful and functioning buildings.

For the owners this goal would allow them to generate profit/operate their business, and for the group of advocates this goal would allow for the preservation and adaptive re-use of heritage structures (*in their entirety*) thus adding to the positive fabric of a vibrant, diverse, growing and enlightened City.

### ***"the economic case for adaptive re-use ... where do we want Hamilton to be in the future?"***

If this was Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, etc ...

And if you could pick-up and re-locate these Heritage buildings (*in the heart of the city's downtown core, directly across the street from a heritage public (Gore) park, on the municipal LRT HUB/route, a stone's throw from the regional transit hub (GO station on Hunter), in the theatre/arts/financial/political districts, etc ...*), to any number of cities, there would be a line-up of "Fortune 500" companies (*Apple, Starbucks, ...*), financial institutions, professional offices, hospitality, art galleries, community groups, etc ... that would want to acquire space.

The statement may then follow from some, "*well, this is not NYC, Chicago, Boston, Toronto ... this is Hamilton*". The easy response - where do we want this city to be in the future? **We can certainly strive to achieve the best qualities of these other places albeit on a smaller scale** (i.e. *Oakville Lakeshore Road East Heritage District*).

A City with diverse architecture (*a mix of heritage and new build/contemporary*) has greater benefits to business and residents (where people live and work) in the neighbourhood, to tourists and visitors, and to the city's greater population.

Market research supports the case that diversity in built form (*the balance between heritage and new built*), well maintained structures, lead to safer neighbourhoods, greater opportunities for mixed-use (*live-work*), higher rental rates for commercial spaces, and thus an increase to the overall prosperity for the immediate area and thus the City (*increase to tax base*).

#### *"the City takes the lead"*

The City of Hamilton has a choice to make: whether to uphold and enforce the progressive and enlightened approaches to heritage preservation and adaptive re-use like other municipalities (*Kingston, Guelph, Toronto, Ottawa, Oakville, etc ...*) or not.

To build and manage a City that understands firstly that it does have an impressive past and history. That these "architectural reminders" of times gone by should be valued, saved, restored and re-used.

The City needs to make certain that communication with developers and property owners is on-going and clear with respect to heritage. A clear and transparent path leading all parties down the straight and narrow is a formula for the best results. The City needs to lead.

In Hamilton, there is a wealth of empty lots or lots used solely for parking in the downtown core and immediate adjacent areas. **These are the parcels of land** that should be the locations for "new build" projects. Heritage structures should be preserved, re-stored and re-used. The City's role here should be to direct and promote these opportunities.

#### *"there's always a solution"*

This project offers the great potential to be a fantastic marketing tool/portfolio piece for the City, the Developer and the project team.

As an architect, I understand the difficulties and the never-ending balancing act it takes to bring a project to fruition. A great aspect of architecture (and of the construction industry) is that there are always creative and cost effective solutions to every issue and apparent problem.

Firstly, build on the existing parking lots to the south that front onto Main Street East. **Make this work, Phase 1 of the proposed development.** Currently, planned as Phase 3, there is no certainty these parking lots will ever be developed in the immediate future.

If what is required is flexible/open floor space, then simply design and construct on these parcels of land properties.

To put this into context, the parking lots to the south (fronting onto Main Street East) could accommodate approximately 22,000+ square feet per floor plate. That means if a 5 storey building was constructed on the parking lot lands there would be over 110,000 sf of space available. If built to 16 storeys - 352,000 sf.

Secondly, heritage restoration does not need to be feared. The composition and organization of a heritage project is no different than that of new construction. Simply think of it reduced to its major components: civil, structural, mechanical, electrical and architectural.

Heritage restoration is also becoming a norm in the construction industry. Each year there are more qualified contractors/construction companies involved in this type of work. The result is a more competitive market place and thus reduced restoration construction costs.

Allow me to take this opportunity and **respectfully** present one of many possible schemes (*please refer to the “rudimentary massing model sketches” attached on pages 4 to 7*) that may potentially begin the dialogue between restoration and adaptive re-use of existing heritage juxtaposed to proposed new construction:

- *preserve the character (scale and proportion) of the existing built-form on Gore Park by restoring the heritage designated properties 28, 24, 18-22 King Street East in their entirety*
- *construction of an intervention on 30 King Street East (vacant lot) – perhaps a simple and elegant glazed Atrium Space (program space to be determined) connecting to the proposed NEW development via a level 2, 3 or 4 interior bridge spanning over the existing alley. This Atrium space creates the link from new development to Gore Park to LRT hub.*
- *construction of the proposed NEW development on the vacant parking lot to the south of the alley (21 Main St E) – shown here as a high density tower.*

#### ***“the custodian”***

We must understand and be aware of developers/owners desires and needs. There is always common ground that can be reached. That reason, compromise, a sympathetic approach, and awareness will always generate the best results for all.

We must respect private property rights, but we must remind owners of heritage designated buildings that ***“they are temporary custodian of the heritage buildings they possess (privately or publicly) and that they are obliged, to pass on these buildings to the on-coming generations.”***

As architects, we respectfully ask the follow question to our heritage clients: “20 years from now, will you own this/these buildings on this block?” Undoubtedly, no one can answer this question with absolute certainty. Business plans change, companies merge/grow/down-size, assets are sold, etc ...

But, we do know for certain that 20 years (*even 200 years*) from now there will still be a block on this site and there will still be buildings on this block. Let us make certain these buildings (*in their entirety*) are part of that plan.

Let us learn from our past. Review the projects that have “not hit the mark” (i.e. Jackson Square) and compare these failures to projects that have “hit the target” (i.e. the Lister Block). A shining example of how a thoughtful project revitalizes a street, a neighbourhood, a district and thus a city.

We are not looking to “move mountains” or “hoping for a miracle”, but simply for the right action to be taken.

It is in your hands to lead this city. Perhaps PAUSE for thoughtful re-examination.

Respectfully,

**Michael William Biljetina**  
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Architect

rudimentary massing model sketches - "there's always a solution"



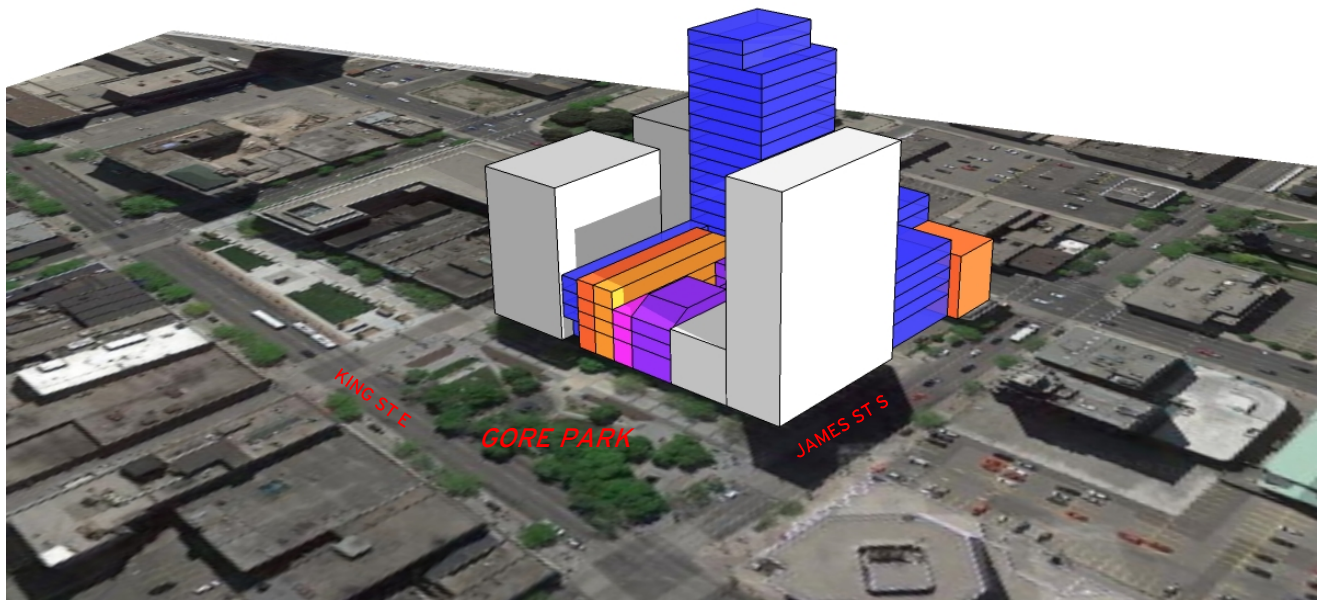
aerial

28 KING ST E

24 KING ST E

18-22 KING ST E

NEW



view toward south-east

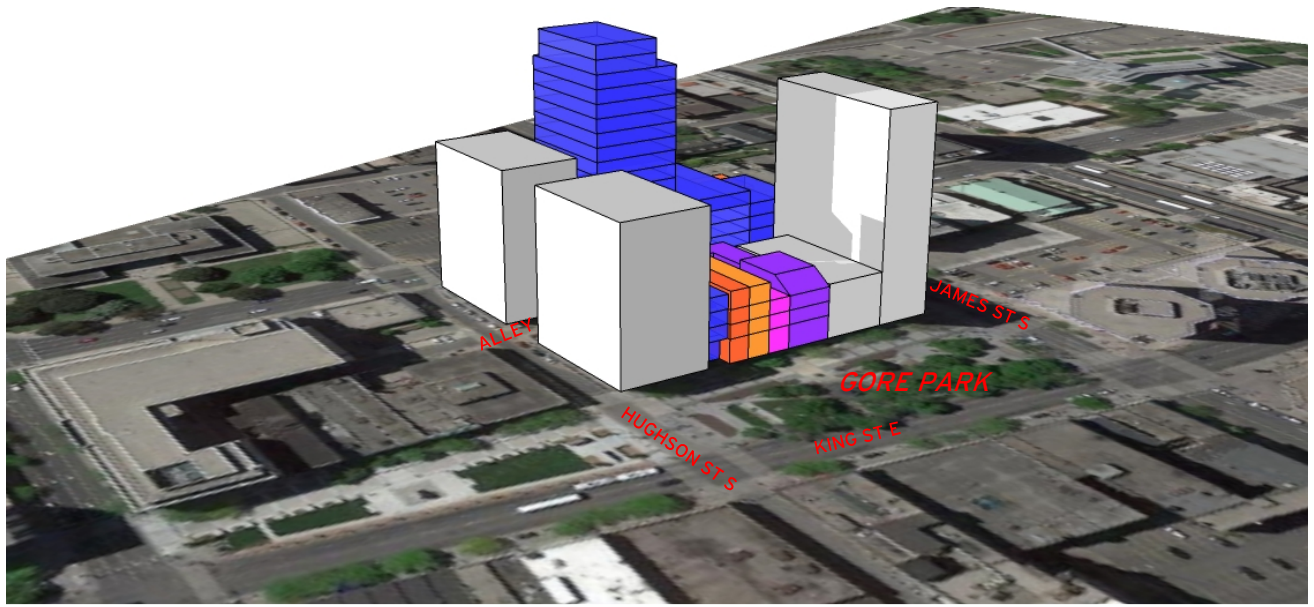
28 KING ST E

24 KING ST E

18-22 KING ST E

NEW





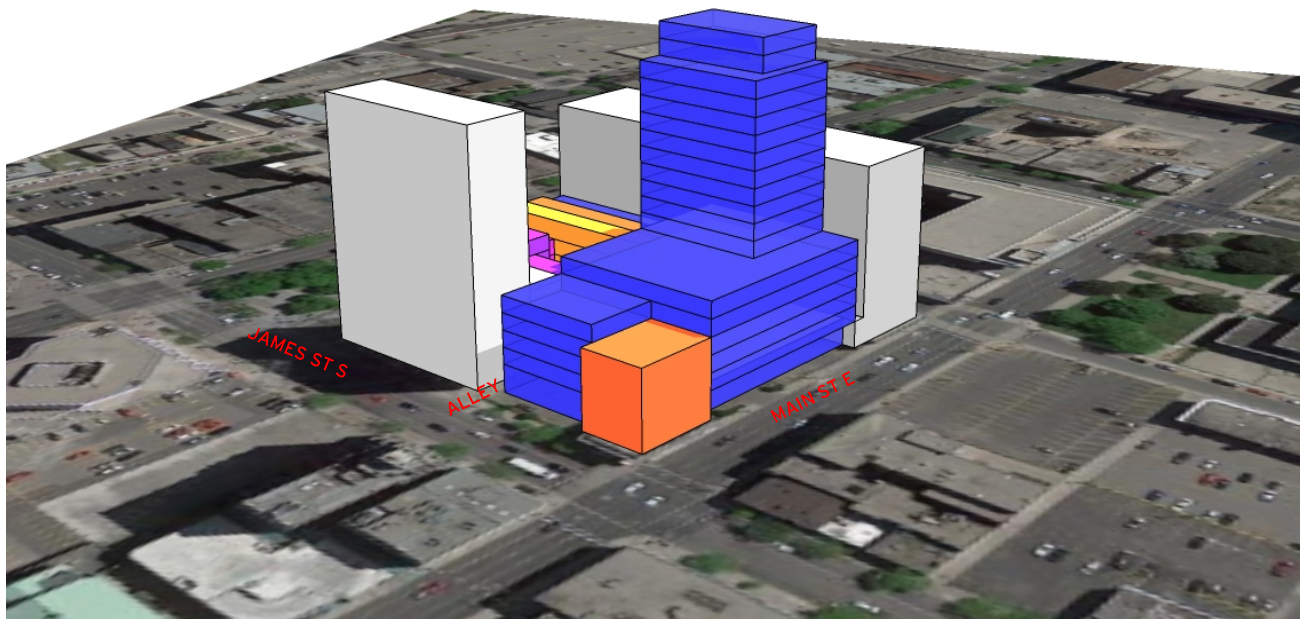
view toward south-west

28 KING ST E

24 KING ST E

18-22 KING ST E

NEW



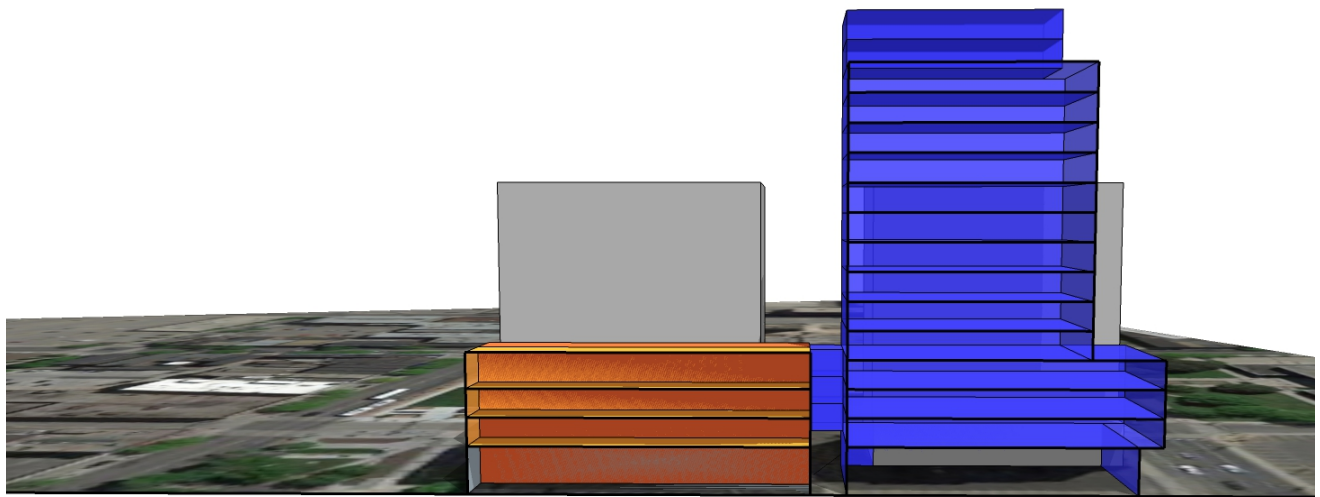
view toward north-east

28 KING ST E

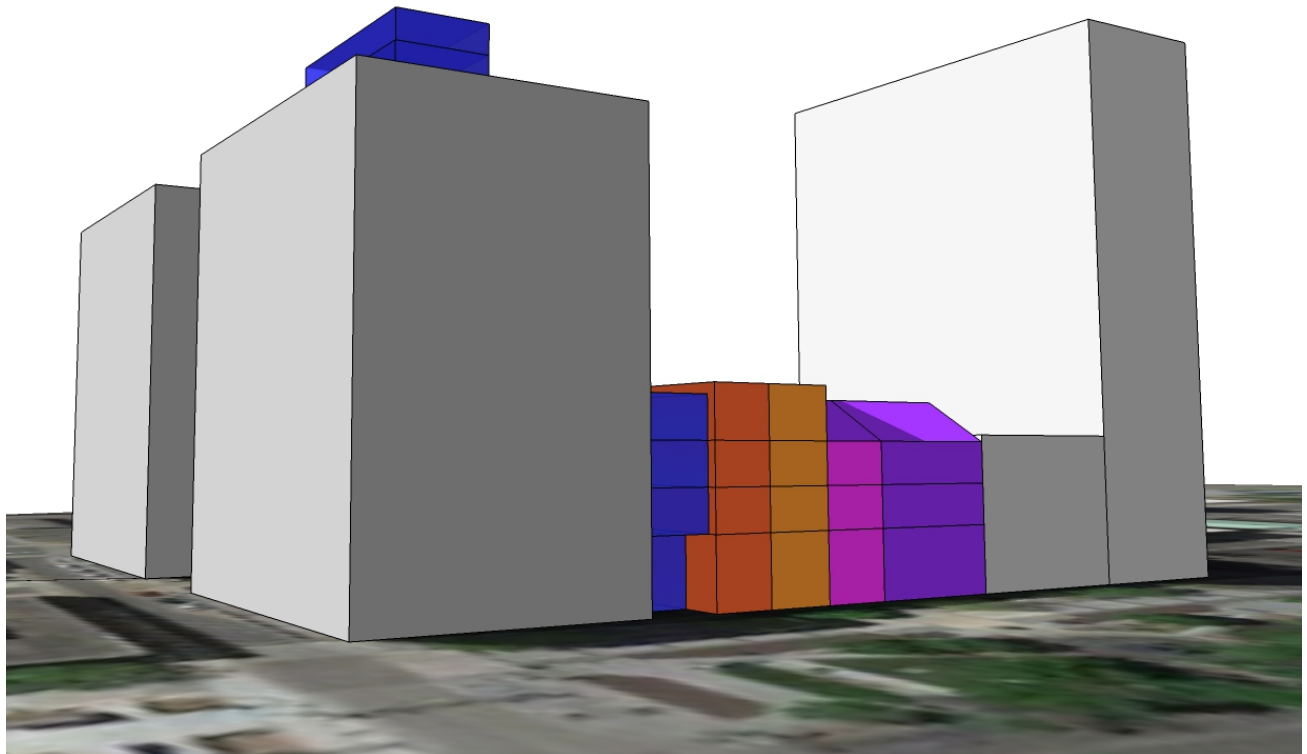
24 KING ST E

18-22 KING ST E

NEW



*section toward east*  
 KING ST E / LRT   GORE PARK   HERITAGE   ALLEY   NEW   MAIN ST E  
 28 KING ST E   24 KING ST E   18-22 KING ST E   NEW

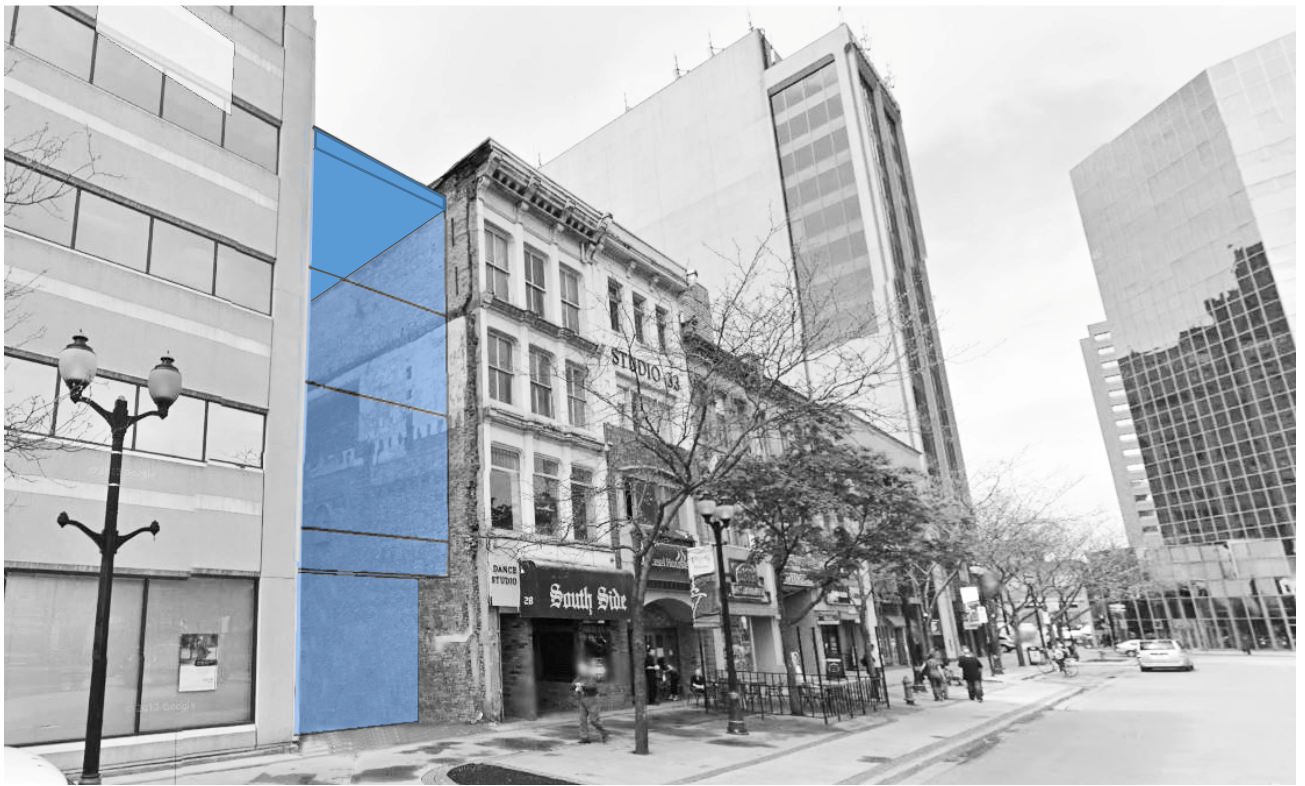


*massing elevation along Gore Park*  
 28 KING ST E   24 KING ST E   18-22 KING ST E   NEW





*existing photo along south side of Gore Park*



*proposed Atrium Connection to Tower on Main Street East along south side of Gore Park*

**NEW**    **28 KING ST E**    **24 KING ST E**    **18-22 KING ST E**