

**Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment**  
for  
**Old Galt Post Office**  
**IDEA Exchange and Restaurant Project**  
**Cambridge, Ontario**



Credit: RDH, 2014

SBA Project No. A14018

**January 19, 2015**



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**Old Galt Post Office – Idea Exchange and Restaurant Project**  
**Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment**  
12 ½ Water Street South, Cambridge, ON

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SBA No.14018

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## Executive Summary

### Background

After many years of neglect, vandalism and unsympathetic interventions the City of Cambridge purchased the Old Galt Post Office in 2012 with the intention of bringing life back to one of the City's heritage and architectural treasures. Though designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) in 1982 by the City of Cambridge, recognized as a National Historic Site in 1982 and listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places in 2009; the formerly privately owned building was vacant and in poor condition.

Vacant unused heritage buildings are the most vulnerable and the City implemented stabilization measures to address heating and securing the building within the interim period so that the design work for the adaptive reuse and expansion of the 1880's building into the IDEA Exchange and Restaurant Project, an arm of the Cambridge Public Library focused on a progressive library experience; could commence.

Committed to its preservation and in keeping with its heritage designations the City, shortly after its purchase, commissioned the preparation of a Conservation Master Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant (ERA Architects) in keeping with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. The Conservation Master Plan outlines the overall historic conservation and material treatment approach to ensure the proper retention, care and repair of the historic building's exterior. The council approved and adopted Conservation Master Plan establishes the groundwork for the on-going conservation design work.

As is the case with many heritage buildings today the ideal of restoring the original use, footprint and heritage attributes is an ideal that is hard sought after but not often achieved on all three fronts. The decision was made that to secure a viable future and provide the required programming space an addition to the heritage building was required.

The design team of RDH Architects have been tasked with the challenge to design an addition that will roughly double the building's size to accommodate programming needs, fire and life safety requirements, barrier free accessibility, exiting requirements, mechanical, electrical and engineering services, LEED Gold certification while respecting the heritage attributes and in keeping with the Conservation Master Plan, the Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken by Stevens Burgess Architects Ltd., the project's heritage architects, and subsequently underwent peer review by ERA Architects to evaluate the impact of the proposed addition to the Old Galt Post Office, review mitigation measures and considered alternatives, and address the specific concern voiced by the Architectural Conservancy Ontario regarding the third level cantilevered meeting room on the southwest corner of the site. The drawing package Issued for Building Permit on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 was the basis of the review.

### **Public and Community Participation**

In keeping with a key City of Cambridge goal for the design of the project a public and community participation process was developed. This process has involved a number of meetings where the public was welcome to attend and provide comments. Throughout the process the Design Steering Committee took into consideration feedback received from the public and in turn six design iterations were made to the design of the proposed south and west additions to address both volume and site lines prior to the September 2014 acceptance of the design by the Design Steering Committee.

Further consideration in potential volume reduction of the third floor meeting room was considered in the fall of 2014 and an analysis of the library program was conducted. The analysis concluded that any further reduction of volume would be detrimental to the library program.

### **Description of the Property**

The Old Galt Post Office is located at 12 1/2 Water Street within the downtown core of the City of Cambridge. The building is situated tight to the sidewalk on the east elevation with neighbouring buildings set in close proximity to both the north and south side elevations.

Over the years a series of infill structures, inclusive of a roof mounted fire escape and exposed ductwork, were constructed on the south elevation and are clear visibly from both Water Street and the Grand River. On the west elevation fronting the river a poorly constructed addition was added that hangs over the river wall and is quickly deteriorating. In order to provide access to this addition the original ground floor masonry window openings were crudely modified with no consideration for the original stone detailing, clear and coloured glass windows and decorative wood trim.

The exterior is in poor shape however as ERA notes in the Conservation Master Plan the exterior is relatively stable due to the recent City initiated preventative maintenance measures put in place to heat the building and make it secure and watertight. The interior fabric is in worse shape with the destructive removals of original heritage fabric including wood trim, coloured glass transoms, wood floors and both wall and decorative plaster finishes. Fortunately there is clear evidence of where heritage materials once existed and enough original fabric still exists that can be used as the basis for replication and reinstatement by skilled heritage trades.

### **Conservation Strategies**

In terms of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) Part IV Designation with respect to **exterior heritage attributes** the designation cites the *mansard roof, deeply recessed windows, round-topped arches, entrance porch with tessellated marble floor, square tower and “apse-like” projection, gable bossage, massive chimney stack, slate roof, elaborate floor designs carved in stone, decorative iron grille and coloured glass windows.*

Accordingly these heritage attributes are slated for conservation inclusive of restoration, replication and preservation measures dependent on the present state of the particular heritage attribute. Given the quality of the original design and materials; many of these heritage attributes have survived despite unsympathetic interventions and harsh treatment over the years and are in dire need of heritage conservation methods.

Though the Part IV Designation is silent with respect to the remaining **interior heritage attributes** the City has adopted as a key design mandate that the project scope of work address the restoration and replication of key remaining interior heritage attributes including plaster walls and decorative plaster cornices within the Ground Floor Reading Room and the restoration of the Tower Stair decorative plaster and woodwork.

### **Description of Proposed Undertakings, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives**

In order to address program requirements and the resultant space needs to make the new Idea Exchange Project viable an addition was determined to be necessary. In rehabilitation projects; additions or new construction may be needed to assure the continued use of heritage buildings and as it has been shown through the design evolution to date the program requirements for the IDEA Exchange greatly exceed the relatively small footprint of this grand building. As cited within the Standards and Guidelines new work should be physical and visually compatible with; subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place. Subordination is not a question of size; a small ill-conceived addition could adversely affect a historic place more than a large well designed addition.

The designation notes that the building is ***an eclectic mix of architectural styles and was meant to be seen from all sides and finished accordingly.*** The second point has been ignored over the years and poorly designed and constructed additions with likewise poor materials have been constructed on the south and west elevations resulting in masonry damage, loss of both clear and coloured glass windows, and roof damage due to the addition of an exposed fire escape. These interventions will be carefully removed and the resultant damages to the heritage attributes addressed within the scope of the project.

### **Front - East Elevation**

The proposed design has purposely maintained the existing Front Elevation on Water Street to be proud and materialistically heavier than the new glazed additions to the north and south and in turn the heritage structure is clearly visible from Water Street. The full extent of the heritage building's exterior is slated for conservation inclusive of restoration, replication and preservation measures dependent on the present state of the particular heritage attribute. Given the quality of the original design and materials many of these heritage attributes have survived despite unsympathetic interventions and harsh treatment over the years and are in dire need of heritage conservation methods.

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The new glazed and barrier free entrance addition, adjacent to the restored heritage portico on the northeast corner, has been set back from the existing east façade and its physical connection to the Old Galt Post Office is limited to the northwest corner. Likewise the three storey glazed circulation tower on the southeast corner of the heritage building, designed to accommodate barrier free accessibility and exiting requirements, has been set back from the street and its physical connection to the existing masonry is limited and reversible. The current location of this element is the direct result of site constraints in combination with the designation of west and east facades as having primary heritage significance. Further to this, the fact that there is a zero lot line condition to the north; a need for a fully barrier free entry; an existing heritage entry point; and an existing historic clock tower; all further necessitated the need to locate the circulation tower to the south.

Throughout the process the Design Steering Committee took into consideration feedback received from the Public and in turn changes were made to the design of the circulation tower including reduction in building height, visibility of the stone chimney and maximizing the setback of the new façade from Water Street.

#### **Rear - West Elevation**

The proposed west addition includes for the removal of the existing unsympathetic, poorly designed and constructed addition and the restoration of the full extent of the west elevation damaged by the previous addition. The proposed full width glazed addition is limited to the Ground Floor and will allow for the restored masonry from the Basement to Ground Floor to be internally seen, touched and enjoyed while maintaining a transparency to the exterior.

The third floor cantilever design element is relatively modest in size, clearly separated from the heritage building with a glazed link that acts as a reveal between the two and positioned to the south and west to ensure that it does not obscure the key views of the site from the northeast and northwest. Interestingly this design element provides for a third vista, the panoramic view of the heritage river and the context of the old town of Galt.

The cantilevered meeting room is flexible by design and will serve as a classroom, meeting room and project collaboration room. Additionally it provides an important utilitarian purpose; namely to house and conceal the mechanical equipment behind the roof parapet. The previous designers accommodated the mechanical services on the southeast addition, in a highly visible location. The proposed design makes use of the roofs of the additions to house the new mechanical services without obstructing views to the site or of the building. If the meeting room was deleted the only viable location for the mechanical units would be on the highly visible roof terrace overlooking the Grand River.

Throughout the process and in consideration of the feedback received from the Public changes were made to the design of the cantilevered meeting room including reduction in height and area, increased setback from the river wall, reduction in the area of the

façade and the incorporation of a diagonal view plane angle to open up views of the existing building from the south.

Further consideration in potential volume reduction was considered in the fall of 2014 and an analysis of the library program was conducted. The analysis concluded that any further reduction of volume of the third floor cantilever would be detrimental to the library program.

### **North - Side Elevation**

The new glazed and barrier free entrance, adjacent to the restored Heritage Portico on the north east corner, has been set away from the existing north façade and its physical connection to the Old Galt Post Office is limited to the northwest corner. In addition to addressing the principle of reversibility this previously overgrown and poorly maintained elevation and heritage portico will be restored and will be fully visible from the new landscaped courtyard and through the new glazed entrance addition.

### **South - Side Elevation**

The southeast corner of the front elevation and south elevation have been severely altered over the years with the addition of a red brick infill building located tight to the sidewalk, a concrete block exit stair addition, exposed mechanical equipment and ductwork, a metal fire escape, the loss of original window openings including a roof dormer, and the loss of the corner masonry detailing at the southeast corner of the one storey Post Office Addition.

In order to accommodate barrier free accessibility and exiting requirements a new glazed three storey circulation tower has been set back from the street and its physical connection to the existing masonry is limited and reversible. Access to the required exit stair and new elevator from attic floor necessitated the enlargement of two existing masonry openings into one larger opening. A plywood infilled masonry opening on the second floor will be reopened to provide access to the circulation tower on the second floor.

The removal of the two additions; restoration of the masonry and masonry openings on the now exposed south elevation; recreation of the lost dormer window and reinstallation of the south east masonry corner detailing of the Post Office Addition are the proposed mitigation measures.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The proposed design for the Idea Exchange and Restaurant Project is in keeping with the Eight Guiding Principles and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. The proposed IDEA Exchange and Restaurant Project will have a positive impact on the heritage attributes and features of the Old Galt Post Office by establishing a dynamic and progressive library experience housed simultaneously within the heritage building and within the new state of the art addition.



## 1. Background

After many years of neglect, vandalism and unsympathetic interventions the City of Cambridge purchased the Old Galt Post Office in 2012 with the intention of bringing life back to one of the City's heritage and architectural treasures. Though designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) in 1982 by the City of Cambridge, recognized as a National Historic Site in 1982 and listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places in 2009; the formerly privately owned building was vacant and in poor condition.

Vacant unused heritage buildings are the most vulnerable and the City implemented stabilization measures to address heating and securing the building within the interim period so that the design work for the adaptive reuse and expansion of the 1880's building into the IDEA Exchange and Restaurant Project, an arm of the Cambridge Public Library focused on a progressive library experience; could commence.

Committed to its preservation and in keeping with its heritage designations the City, shortly after its purchase, commissioned the preparation of a Conservation Master Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant (ERA Architects) in keeping with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. The Conservation Master Plan outlines the overall historic conservation and material treatment approach to ensure the proper retention, care and repair of the historic building's exterior. The council approved and adopted Conservation Master Plan establishes the groundwork for the on-going conservation design work.

As is the case with many heritage buildings today the ideal of restoring the original use, footprint and heritage attributes is an ideal that is hard sought after but not often achieved on all three fronts. The decision was made that to secure a viable future and provide the required programming space an addition to the heritage building was required. As so adeptly noted within Janet Wright's book on Federal Architecture: *The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1976*:

*"The Galt building ... demonstrates sensitivity to setting and an ability to adapt a design to the unique qualities of a site. The building was situated on a narrow lot sandwiched between the main business street and the river. To adapt to the compressed site and to take advantage of its frontage on two sides, the one storey wing containing an examining warehouse, which usually attached to the rear, was shifted to the side elevation. As a result, the building features two principle elevations, one facing onto the street and the other overlooking the river and makes an imposing statement from two different standpoints."*

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The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken by Stevens Burgess Architects Ltd., the project's heritage architects, and subsequently underwent peer review by ERA Architects to evaluate the impact of the proposed addition to the Old Galt Post Office, review mitigation measures and considered alternatives, and address the specific concern voiced by Richard Longley President of the Architectural Conservancy Ontario; in a letter addressed to Gary Dyke, Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Cambridge on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, regarding the third level cantilever meeting room on the west (river side) elevation. The drawing package Issued for Building Permit on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 was the basis of the review.

## 2. Public and Community Participation

In keeping with a key City of Cambridge goal for the design of the Old Galt Post Office – Idea Exchange and Restaurant Project a **public and community participation process** was developed. This process has involved a number of meetings where the public was welcome to attend and provide comments:

- January 15, 2013 – Budget Task Force Meeting - Delegation Night
- January 18, 2013 – Budget Task Force Meeting
- March 4, 2013 – Council Meeting
- June 17, 2013 – Council Meeting
- July 8, 2013 – Council Meeting
- August 12, 2013 – Council Meeting
- October 28, 2013 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- November 18, 2013 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- December 16, 2013 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- January 16, 2014 – Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting
- January 20, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- January 21, 2014 – Budget Task Force Meeting – Delegation Night
- January 23, 2014 – Budget Task Force Meeting
- February 10, 2014 – Council Meeting
- February 18, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- February 24, 2014 – General Committee Meeting
- March 3, 2014 – Council Meeting
- March 17, 2014 – General Committee Meeting
- March 24, 2014 – Council Meeting
- March 31, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- April 14, 2014 – Council Meeting
- April 22, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- May 12, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- May 15, 2014 – Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting
- June 3, 2014 – Public Meeting
- June 23, 2014 – Council Meeting
- July 10, 2014 – Public Meeting
- July 14, 2014 – Council Meeting
- September 2, 2014 – General Committee Meeting
- September 8, 2104 – Council Meeting
- September 15, 2014 – Design Steering Committee Meeting
- October 20, 2014 - Design Steering Committee Meeting
- December 8, 2014 - Design Steering Committee Meeting

Throughout the process the Design Steering Committee took into consideration feedback received from the Public and in turn six design iterations were made to the design of the proposed south and west additions to address both volume and site lines prior to the September 2014 acceptance of the design by the Design Steering Committee.

Further consideration in potential volume reduction of the third floor meeting rooms was considered in the fall of 2014 and an analysis of the library program was conducted. The analysis concluded that any further reduction of volume would be detrimental to the library program.

### **3. Description of the Property**

The Old Galt Post Office is located at 12 1/2 Water Street within the downtown core of the City of Cambridge. The building is situated tight to the sidewalk on the east elevation with neighbouring buildings set in close proximity to both the north and south side elevations.

Over the years a series of one and three storey infill structures, inclusive of a roof mounted fire escape and exposed ductwork, were constructed on the south elevation and are clear visibily from both Water Street and the Grand River. On the west elevation fronting the river a poorly constructed addition was added that hangs over the river wall and is quickly deteriorating. In order to provide access to this addition the original ground floor masonry window openings were crudely modified with no consideration for the original stone detailing, clear and coloured glass windows and decorative wood trim.

The exterior is in poor shape however as ERA notes in the Conservation Master Plan the exterior is relatively stable due to the recent City initiated preventative maintenance measures put in place to heat the building and make it secure and watertight.

The interior fabric is in worse shape with the destructive removals of original heritage fabric including wood trim, coloured glass transoms, wood floors and both wall and decorative plaster finishes. Fortunately there is clear evidence of where heritage materials once existed and enough original fabric still exists that can be used as the basis for replication and reinstatement by skilled heritage trades.

#### 4. Identification of the Significance and Heritage Attributes of the Cultural Heritage Resource

The Old Galt Post Office was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) in 1982 by City of Cambridge By-law No. 2291 as being of architectural and historical value or interest, with reasons for the designation set out in Schedule 'B' and cited below:

*The exterior of 12 ½ Water Street South, originally called the Galt Customs House and Post Office, now known as the Old Post Office, is designated for historical and architectural reasons. Historically, the building was designed by Thomas Fuller, Dominion architect, as one of many buildings intended by the government of Sir John A. MacDonald and his successors to impressively express the presence of the federal government across Canada. Fuller also designed the Parliamentary Library in Ottawa, which survives of his earlier Parliament Buildings. The Old Post Office building is dated 1885 and was constructed by Michael A. Pigott, founder of a construction firm that became internationally known.*

*Architecturally, the building is an eclectic mix of architectural styles, mainly French and Italian, but it is based on the popular 19<sup>th</sup> century Italianate style. It is built of pink and gray local granite finished in the rock-faced style, with limestone architectural feature work. The building has the most elaborate exterior in Cambridge. Outstanding architectural features include: mansard roof, deeply recessed windows, round-topped arches, entrance porch with tessellated marble floor, square tower and “apse-like” projection, gable bossage, massive chimney stack, slate roof, elaborate flower designs carved in stone, decorative iron grille and coloured glass windows. The building was meant to be seen from all sides and was finished accordingly.*

##### **Draft Statement of Significance** (as excerpted from the Conservation Master Plan)

###### **Description:**

*Constructed between 1884 and 1887, the former Galt Post Office is a solidly built, granite and limestone building, situated on a narrow, mid-block site in downtown Cambridge. Facing the city’s main commercial street on one side and the Grand River on the other, it was designed to be seen from all sides and has almost identical front and rear elevations.*

*The building originally housed the city’s post office, as well as offices for the Customs, Internal Revenue, and Weights and Measures departments, and an examining warehouse. Although it ceased to serve as a post office in 1936, its exterior has changed very little over time.*

###### **Heritage Value:**

*The former Galt Post Office was designated in 1982 by the City of Cambridge for its architectural and historical value, and because it is a prominent local landmark.*

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*The Galt Post Office is considered to be one of the finest of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century small urban post offices designed by the Chief Architect's Office of the Department of Public Works, under the supervision of Thomas Fuller. Constructed on highly visible sites in urban centres, these structures established a federal presence and identity across the country.*

*The construction of a monumental federal building in Galt in the mid-1880's illustrates the city's importance and prosperity during this period, as a manufacturing centre. The building features a handsome design that successfully blends the High Victorian Gothic and Second Empire styles in a distinctive composition, and is highly responsive to its site and setting. It represents an excellent example of the work of M.A. Pigott, a local contractor whose firm rose to national prominence, and is characterized by its striking stonework, finely executed detailing, and prominent clock tower.*

*Designed to be a focal point within its urban setting, the former Galt Post Office is one of the city's best-known architectural landmarks.*

*The former Galt Post Office was designated as a National Historic Site in 1983, as an example of a small urban post office designed by Thomas Fuller, and for its excellent design and masterful stonework.*

#### **Character-Defining Elements:**

*The composition and massing of the building, which represent a skillful blending of the High Victorian Gothic and Second Empire styles and are characterized by:*

- *A symmetrical central block, from which radiates a series of picturesque attachments (arched entrance porches, clock tower, apse, and ell);*
- *Strong groupings of deep-set arched, lancet and squared windows;*
- *A picturesque roofline composed of a tall, slate-clad mansard roof; high pointed central gables on either side; hipped dormers; and tower, balanced on the other side of the roof by a chimney;*
- *The building's responsiveness to its site, through its almost identical front and rear facades and the location of additions to the side of the central block, which serve to enhance the oblique and rear views of the building, and conform to the shape and characteristics of the site;*
- *The exceptional stonework, which features a combination of rock-faced ashlar walls in blue granite, and carved decoration, and smooth ashlar trim and banding in Guelph limestone, and reflects a very high level of craftsmanship;*
- *The picturesque effect created by the combination of colours and textures on the building's exterior; and*
- *The exterior detailing, some of which is medieval in inspiration and includes a corbelled cornice, bossage in the central gable, coloured glass in the windows, tessellated marble flooring in the entrance porch, sculpted porch capitals and trim around the entrance [porch] openings.*

In addition to the OHA designation, the Old Post Office was recognized as a **National Historic Site in 1982** and was listed on the **Canadian Register of Historic Places** in 2009.

## 5. Conservation Strategies

In keeping with its Provincial and Federal heritage designations and in advance of design work starting for the Old Post Office; the City commissioned the preparation of a Conservation Master Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant (ERA Architects) and prepared in keeping with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. The Conservation Master Plan *outlines an overall historic preservation and treatment approach to ensure the proper retention, care and repair of the historic building.*

In terms of the Part IV Designation with respect to **exterior heritage attributes** the designation cites the *mansard roof, deeply recessed windows, round-topped arches, entrance porch with tessellated marble floor, square tower and “apse-like” projection, gable bossage, massive chimney stack, slate roof, elaborate floor designs carved in stone, decorative iron grille and coloured glass windows.* Accordingly these heritage attributes are slated for conservation inclusive of restoration, replication and preservation measures dependent on the present state of the particular heritage attribute. Given the quality of the original design and materials; many of these heritage attributes have survived despite unsympathetic interventions and harsh treatment over the years and are in dire need of heritage conservation methods.

Though the Part IV Designation is silent with respect to the remaining **interior heritage attributes** the City has adopted as a key design mandate that the project scope of work address the restoration and replication of key interior heritage attributes including plaster walls and decorative plaster cornices within the Ground Floor Reading Room and the restoration of the Tower Stair decorative plaster and woodwork.

The ***Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties*** were prepared by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and are based on international charters that have been established over the past century. These principles provide the intellectual framework for decision making in architectural conservation and provide the conservation rationale for interventions that may affect the character, features or context of a heritage property.

*Principle 1: **Respect for Documentary Evidence***  
*Do not base restoration on conjecture. Conservation work should be based on historic documentation, such as historic photographs, drawings and physical evidence.*

*Principle 2: **Respect for the Original Location***  
*Do not move buildings unless there is no other means to save them. Site is an integral component of a building. Any change in site diminished heritage value considerably.*

*Principle 3: **Respect for Historic Material***

*Repair or conserve rather than replace building materials and finishes, except where absolutely necessary. Minimal intervention maintains the historical content of the resource.*

*Principle 4: **Respect for Original Fabric***

*Repair with like materials, to return the resource to its prior condition without altering its integrity.*

*Principle 5: **Respect for the Building's History***

*Do not restore to one period at the expense of another. Do not destroy later additions to a house solely to restore it to a single time period.*

*Principle 6: **Reversibility***

*Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. For instance, when a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are numbered, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.*

*Principle 7: **Legibility***

*New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.*

*Principle 8: **Maintenance***

*With continuous care, future restoration will not be necessary. With regular upkeep, major conservation projects and their high costs can be avoided.*

Principles 6: **Reversibility** and 7: **Legibility** are key governing principles for the Idea Exchange and Restaurant Project.

**Principle 6: Reversibility**

With the exception of specific elements on the south side elevation the proposed additions to the Old Galt Post Office are designed to be reversible.

**Principle 7: Legibility**

With regards to legibility the new work is distinguishable from the Old Galt Post office and is recognizable as a product of its time and clearly is distinguishable from the old.

**The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada** identify 9 Standards for all projects and 3 additional standards relating to Rehabilitation and 3 additional standards relating to Restoration.

**General Standards (all projects):**

- Standard 1:** *Conserve the heritage value of a historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character-defining elements. Do not move a part of a historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.*
- Standard 2:** *Conserve changes to a historic place, which, over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.*
- Standard 3:** *Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.*
- Standard 4:** *Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.*
- Standard 5:** *Find a use for a historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character-defining elements.*
- Standard 6:** *Protect and, if necessary, stabilize a historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbance of archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.*
- Standard 7:** *Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.*
- Standard 8:** *Maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes.*
- Standard 9:** *Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place, and identifiable upon close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference.*

**Additional Standards Relating to Rehabilitation:**

**Standard 10:** *Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the characters of the historic place.*

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

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

**Additional Standards Relating to Restoration:**

**Standard 13:** *Repair rather than replace character-defining elements from the restoration period. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements.*

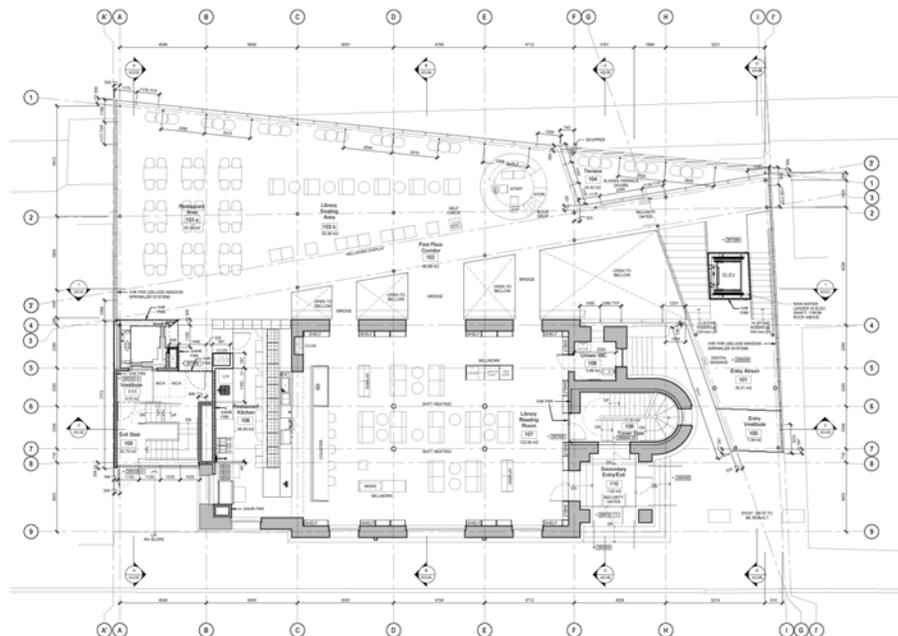
**Standard 14:** *Replace missing features from the restoration period with new features whose forms, materials and detailing are based on sufficient physical, documentary and/or oral evidence.*

## 6. Description of Proposed Undertakings, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives

In order to address program requirements and the resultant space needs to make the new Idea Exchange Project viable an addition was determined to be necessary. Without the adaptive reuse and addition to the existing building the City has clearly stated that the project will not be viable. Much effort and consternation has gone into the design work to address the required additional space given the site constraints of being located tight to the sidewalk on the east side, hemmed in by neighbours on both the north and south elevations and bound by the Grand River wall on the west side.

In rehabilitation projects; additions or new construction may be needed to assure the continued use of heritage buildings and as it has been shown through the design evolution to date the program requirements for the IDEA Exchange greatly exceed the relatively small footprint of this grand building. As cited within the Standards and Guidelines new work should be physical and visually compatible with; subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place. Subordination is not a question of size; a small ill-conceived addition could adversely affect a historic place more than a large well designed addition.

The designation notes that the building is ***an eclectic mix of architectural styles*** and ***was meant to be seen from all sides and finished accordingly***. The second point has been ignored over the years and poorly designed and constructed additions with likewise poor materials have been constructed on the south and west elevations resulting in masonry damage, loss of both clear and coloured glass windows, and roof damage due to the addition of an exposed fire escape. These interventions will be carefully removed and the resultant damages to the heritage attributes addressed within the scope of the project.



**Front – East Elevation**

**Principle 6: Reversibility**

*Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. For instance, when a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are numbered, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.*

**Principle 7: Legibility**

*New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.*

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

**Proposed Undertaking, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives**

The proposed design has purposely maintained the existing Front Elevation on Water Street to be proud and materialistically heavier than the new glazed additions to the north and south and in turn the heritage structure is clearly visible from Water Street. The full extent of the heritage building's exterior is slated for conservation inclusive of restoration, replication and preservation measures dependent on the present state of the particular heritage attribute. Given the quality of the original design and materials many of these heritage attributes have survived despite unsympathetic interventions and harsh treatment over the years and are in dire need of heritage conservation methods.

The new glazed and barrier free entrance addition, adjacent to the restored heritage portico on the northeast corner, has been set back from the existing east façade and its physical connection to the Old Galt Post Office is limited to the northwest corner. Likewise the three storey glazed circulation tower on the southeast corner of the heritage building, designed to accommodate barrier free accessibility and exiting requirements, has been set back from the street and its physical connection to the existing masonry is limited and reversible. The current location of this element is the direct result of site constraints in combination with the designation of west and east facades as having primary heritage significance. Further to this, the fact that there is a zero lot line condition to the north; a need for a fully barrier free entry; an existing heritage entry point; and an existing historic clock tower; all further necessitated the need to locate the circulation tower to south.

Throughout the process the Design Steering Committee took into consideration feedback received from the Public and in turn changes were made to the design of the circulation tower including reduction in building height, visibility of the stone chimney and maximizing the setback of the new façade from Water Street.

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**Existing Front – East Elevation**  
Credit: SBA, 2014



**Proposed Front – East Elevation**  
Credit: RDH, 2014

**Rear – West Elevation**

**Principle 7: Legibility**

*New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.*

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

**Proposed Undertaking, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives**

The proposed west addition includes for the removal of the existing unsympathetic, poorly designed and constructed addition and the restoration of the full extent of the west elevation damaged by the previous addition. The proposed full width glazed addition is limited to the Ground Floor and will allow for the restored masonry from the Basement to Ground Floor to be internally seen, touched and enjoyed while maintaining a transparency to the exterior.

The third floor cantilever design element is relatively modest in size, clearly separated from the heritage building with a glazed link that acts as a reveal between the two and positioned to the south and west to ensure that it does not obscure the key views of the site from the northeast and northwest. Interestingly this design element provides for a third vista, the panoramic view of the heritage river and the context of the old town of Galt. The cantilevered meeting room is flexible by design and will serve as a classroom, meeting room and project collaboration room. Additionally it provides an important utilitarian purpose; namely to house and conceal the mechanical equipment behind the roof parapet. The previous designers accommodated the mechanical services on the southeast addition, in a highly visible location. The proposed design makes use of the roofs of the additions to house the new mechanical services without obstructing views to the site or of the building. If the meeting room was deleted the only viable location for the mechanical units would be on the highly visible roof terrace overlooking the Grand River.

Throughout the process and in consideration of the feedback received from the Public changes were made to the design of the cantilevered meeting room including reduction in height and area, increased setback from the river wall, reduction in the area of the façade and the incorporation of diagonal view plane angle to open up views of the existing building from the south. Further consideration in potential volume reduction was considered in the fall of 2014 and an analysis of the library program was conducted. The analysis concluded that any further reduction of volume of the third floor cantilever would be detrimental to the library program.

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**Existing Rear - West Elevation**  
Credit: SBA, 2014



**Proposed Rear – West Elevation**  
Credit: RDH, 2014

**North – Side Elevation**

**Principle 6: Reversibility**

*Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. For instance, when a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are numbered, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.*

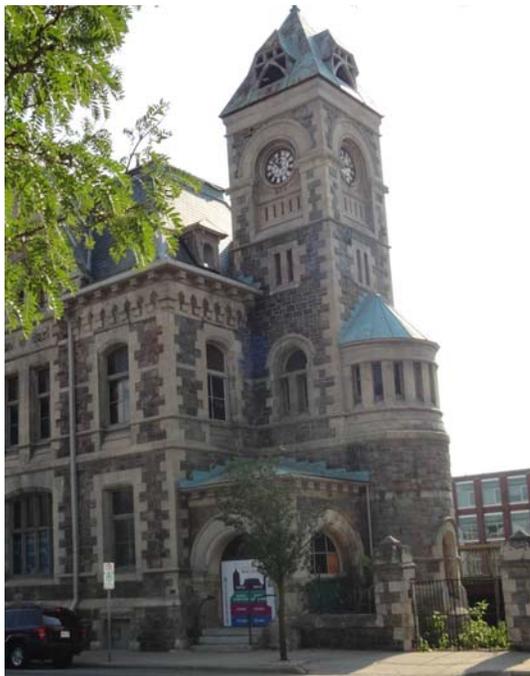
**Principle 7: Legibility**

*New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.*

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

**Proposed Undertaking, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives**

The new glazed and barrier free entrance, adjacent to the restored Heritage Portico on the north east corner, has been set away from the existing north façade and its physical connection to the Old Galt Post Office is limited to the northwest corner. In addition to addressing the principle of reversibility this previously overgrown and poorly maintained elevation and heritage portico will be restored and now fully visible from the new landscaped courtyard and through the new glazed entrance addition.



**Existing North – Side Elevation**  
Credit: SBA, 2014



**Proposed North - Side Elevation**  
Credit: RDH, 2014

### **South-Side Elevation**

**Principle 6: Reversibility**

*Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. For instance, when a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are numbered, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.*

**Principle 7: Legibility**

*New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.*

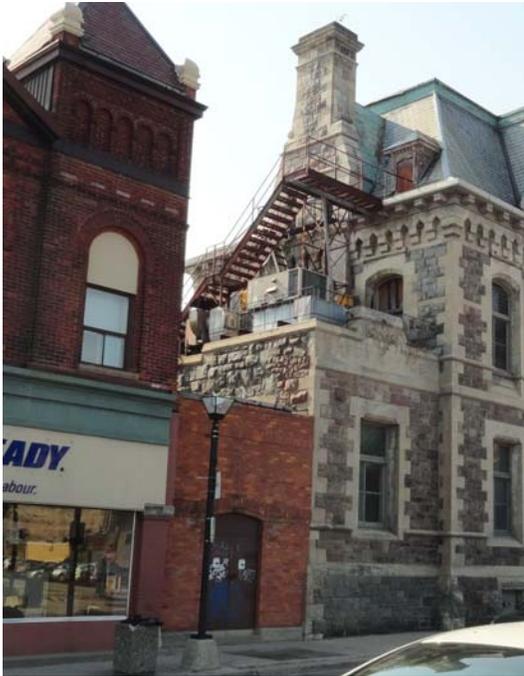
**Standard 11:** *Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to a historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.*

### **Proposed Undertaking, Impact, Mitigation Measures and Considered Alternatives**

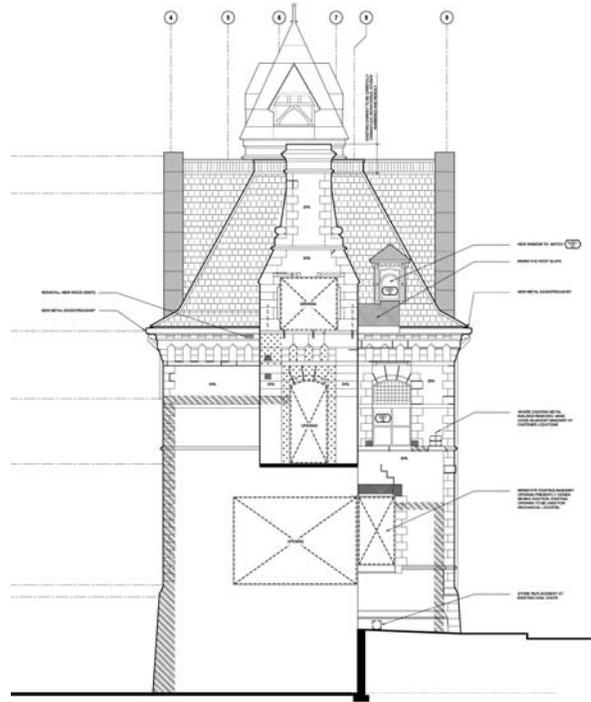
As previously discussed the southeast corner of the front elevation and south elevation have been severely altered over the years with the addition of a red brick infill building located tight to the sidewalk, exposed mechanical equipment and ductwork, a metal fire escape, the loss of original window openings including a roof dormer, and the loss of the corner masonry detailing at the southeast corner of the one storey Post Office Addition.

In order to accommodate barrier free accessibility and exiting requirements a new glazed circulation tower has been set back from the street and its physical connection to the existing masonry is limited and reversible. Access to the required exit stair and new elevator from the attic floor necessitated the enlargement of two existing masonry openings into one larger opening. A plywood infilled masonry opening on the second floor will be reopened to provide access to the Glazed Link on the second floor.

The removal of the later red brick addition; restoration of the masonry and masonry openings on the now exposed south elevation; recreation of the lost dormer window and reinstallation of the south east masonry corner detailing of the Post Office Addition are the proposed mitigation measures.



**Existing Side – South and East Elevations**  
Credit: SBA 2014



**Proposed South – Side Elevation**  
Credit: RDH, 2014

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## **7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The proposed design for the Idea Exchange and Restaurant Project is in keeping with the Eight Guiding Principles and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. The proposed IDEA Exchange and Restaurant Project will have a positive impact on the heritage attributes and features of the Old Galt Post Office by establishing a dynamic and progressive library experience housed simultaneously within the heritage building and within the new state of the art addition.