

FOTENN



359 KENT

359 Kent Street

As We Heard It Report
July 25, 2022



Prepared for Taggart Realty Management

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Public Consultation Meeting #1

As We Heard It Report

1

Address: 359 Kent Street, 436 and 444 MacLaren Street
File No.: D02-02-21-0095 / D01-01-21-0015
Applicant: Taggart Realty Management
Consultants: Fotenn Planning + Design, Hobin Architecture, Lashley + Associates, Parsons
Date: Wednesday June 22nd, 2022
Location: Zoom and Miro

The first public consultation meeting for the 359 Kent Street, 436 and 444 MacLaren Street Zoning By-Law Amendment and Official Plan Amendment application took place on Wednesday June 22nd, 2022. The session was held on Zoom and consisted of a presentation by the applicant team, a Question and Answer period, and then a workshop session discussing the planning and design aspects of the proposal. Over 30 people attended the consultation meeting, including the Councillor of Somerset Ward Catherine McKenney, members of the Centretown Community Association, City planning and heritage staff, and members of the public.

Participant feedback of the following sections and topics are summarized below.

1. General Question & Answer Session
2. Planning & Policy Workshop
 - Landmark Building Policy
 - Development Priorities
 - Building Height
 - Civic Function
3. Design Workshop
 - Built Form
 - Public Realm
 - Ground Level Animation
 - Iconic Buildings
 - Design Concept

The above topics were visually presented through the Miro application and participants freely posted comments on the workshop boards as discussions were mediated by the applicant team. Below is a summary of public feedback. Following the summaries, **Potential Directions** are presented from the project team on how to public comments could be addressed in future development submissions.

1.0 General Question and Answer Session

- / Multiple participants strongly encouraged the proposed development to contribute to the urban tree canopy, specifically along Kent Street. Participants asked to ensure that adequate soil volumes be incorporated into this development proposal such that mature trees would be allowed to grow along Kent, and not be stunted before maturity.
- / Participants strongly commended the retention of the heritage contributing homes along MacLaren and requested that the development not impact the street edge along MacLaren to allow greater soil volumes to remain for mature trees on that street as well.
- / Participants appreciated the increased setback proposed along Kent Street together with the improved the public realm and widening of the sidewalk as compared to the existing condition whereby pedestrians are wedged against a street where traffic travels at high speeds. The proposed street edge condition is a “huge improvement” according to one participant.

- / Concern was raised over the proposed development's adherence to the Urban Design Guidelines for High-rise Buildings as published by the City of Ottawa, primarily relating to transition and the use of an angular plane to measure the transition to surrounding properties, specifically those located west of Kent Street.
- / Affordability was raised as a key issue, with participants looking for information on how many units and at what discount affordable units would be provided.
- / A participant noted that the proposed tower is very high and is adjacent to one of the largest low-rise Heritage Conservation Districts in the City.

Potential Directions:

- / Maintain the proposed setback along Kent and modify parking structure to allow for mature trees to be planted along the street edge with sufficient soil volumes.
- / Retain the two MacLaren heritage houses and limit excavation / superstructure to the south side of the houses – retaining the native soil along MacLaren Street.
- / Work on providing multi-bedroom units at truly affordable rates, going beyond the common financing requirements of 10% below market rent for affordable units.
- / Continue to consider transition and impacts to surrounding properties, while working within the guidelines of the Centretown Community Design Plan and policies of the Centretown Secondary Plan to depart from the built form parameters established for Centretown.

2.0 Planning and Policy Workshop

Landmark Building Policy

Participants were asked how the proposed development meets three key components of the landmark building policy: iconic architecture, extraordinary site design, and unique civic function.

- / Participants throughout the session noted the retention of the Legion House is at odds with meeting the Landmark Building policy. To quote a participant “Do not go to protect the Legion Building. It is [...] impossible to incorporate into any iconic design.”
- / Participants commented that iconic architecture is remarkable design, aesthetically pleasing, and should be known by name across the country. Examples referenced include the National Gallery of Canada, the Merit at 108 Lisgar Street, the National War Museum, and the PSAC building at 233 Gilmour Street.
- / On extraordinary site design, most participants noted the need for greenspace and trees that are accessible to the community, identified as those fronting onto surrounding streets.
- / When asked about the unique civic function, participants are looking for something of use to the community that does not cost money, examples provided include an art gallery, rotating art display, a creative space, a small grocery store, or community services including mental health or employment.

Development Priorities

Participants were asked to rank project considerations in terms of importance.

- / In a poll to participants (16 responded) the top three priorities were: environmental sustainability, affordability, and pedestrian and cycling priority.
- / “Massive street-facing greenspace accessible to all” was proposed by some participants as a trade off to consider height greater than the existing zoning.
- / Participants commented that lower height, and the inclusion of two- and three-bedroom apartments are priorities.

Building Height

The group was asked if their experience of the development would change if the height was 27-storeys instead of 34-storeys.

- / Participants feel that even 27-storeys is too high for the community and will have an adverse effect on the views of surrounding residents. Desire was expressed to build to the current zoning of 9-storeys.

- / Concern was raised that approval of the building height in this application may set a precedent for future development in the neighbourhood.

Civic Function

One of the MacLaren homes is proposed to be offered at a nominal cost to a local community organization. Participants were asked what services would be of benefit to the community.

- / Participants would like to see a focus on providing highly-accessible community services such as mental health, addiction, social, or non-profit child care. Examples provided included the Boys and Girls Club, highjinx, and shelter space for LGBTQ2+, youth or Indigenous Peoples.
- / The request to keep large trees and designing the site to allow for more mature trees to grow was restated when discussing the use of the MacLaren homes.

Potential Directions:

- / Continue to work on the architecture to create a truly “iconic” design for the proposed development. Continue to refine the building height through the design development process.
- / Ensure the proposed development makes significant contributions to the public realm, with open space and areas for large trees.
- / Continue to explore options for the civic space that will serve an important civic function and serve the community.
- / Work to develop a comprehensive affordable housing strategy for the proposed development that is in line with City policies.

3.0 Design Workshop

Built Form

The group was asked how the language of the architecture should balance between speaking to the context and local fabric of Centretown or departing from it.

- / Opinions were mixed on whether the built form should deviate from the existing fabric or attempt to match it. Calls to make the design harmonious with the local fabric were countered by appeals to make the design unique and innovative.
- / Interest was expressed in moving the tower back from Kent Street.

Public Realm

Participants were asked what they liked about the public realm and what they would add or change.

- / General consensus was that the Legion House did not bear protection, as it crowds the street and does not allow for improvements along Kent that could result in a positive public realm or iconic or extraordinary design.
- / Participants noted that benches, and having an area where the public can interact with the site design is important, as opposed to a space to simply walk through.
- / Concern was raised over the sun-exposure and accessibility of the proposed rear courtyard.

Ground Level Animation

Attendees were prompted to consider what type of ground level uses would contribute to a pleasant pedestrian experience.

- / Interactive uses were suggested to increase foot traffic, these included publicly accessible bike racks, greenery and flowers, public play spaces for kids, and public art by local artists.
- / There was one comment about retaining the heritage structure per the landmark guidelines in this section, another participant supported its removal to allow for positive redevelopment.

Iconic Buildings

The group was asked for examples of landmark buildings in Canada and elsewhere, and what made them iconic.

- / One participant defined iconic as “originality in design combined with new applications of technology/sustainability combined with engaging people in public spaces that are uses intensely.”
- / Examples of landmark buildings referenced included Milan’s Bosco Verticale, Habitat 67, Canadian War Museum, the Merit, and Hudson Park (‘the Kent towers’).
- / Participants noted that the form of the tower was a great contributor to iconic architecture, as exemplified by buildings such as Absolute World in Mississauga, and the L Tower in Toronto.

Design Concept

Participants were encouraged to determine what elements of the design to retain and change moving forward.

- / The participants provided responses creating the following word cloud:



Potential Directions:

- / Integrate an improved public realm along Kent Street as a priority in the redevelopment. Explore heritage retention options for 359 Kent that widen the streetscape along Kent and Gilmour to allow for an improved public realm, including greater tree canopy and green space.
- / Ensure well-designed public spaces that have purpose, get sun exposure and serve the broader community.
- / Ensure an active ground floor that will contribute to the vibrancy of the public realm components of the project.
- / Continue to develop the “iconic architecture” for the site while exploring other ways a building can be a landmark (e.g. sustainability).
- / Consider community priorities in further design refinements.