

A second Special Design Review Panel session was held on August 15th, 2022, to review the proposal at 359 Kent Street. The meeting was held virtually on *Zoom*.

Panel Members in Attendance:

David Leinster (Chair)
James Parakh
Dominic Bettison
Josh Chaiken

**359 Kent Street | Special Design Review Panel | Taggart Realty Management;
Hobin Architecture Inc.; Fotenn Planning + Design**



Summary

- The Panel held a second special design review meeting to discuss the retention of the Legion Building. The applicant's heritage consultant submitted a report which states that the Legion Building has value as an important heritage building. The Panel agrees with the applicant's heritage architect. The Applicant presented five options resulting from the Panel's previous feedback and stakeholder and community outreach engagements.

- The Panel thanked the proponent for the submission package and the different options that would help solidify the site layout. The Panel previously had struggled to see the iconic architecture or the civic use and suggested that as a potential site layout, the proponent should look at retaining the Legion Building, as the Heritage Report from the applicant indicates that the building has value.

Landmark Status

- In the Panel's view, iconic architecture, civic use, and extraordinary site design are the key criteria for creating a landmark building as outlined in the Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan. The Panel firmly believes that Option 3 offers the best potential, if properly designed, to achieve a successful architectural outcome and believes achieving a strong architectural design may be directly associated with preserving the Legion Building, which has the potential to integrate programming elements for institutional or community uses and become a great example of city building.
- The proponent should continue working on Option 3 as the six-storey building has a strong corner presence and the vertical glazing, stretching three storeys, marks the corner well. This option also sets back the tower above a six-storey podium and provides breathing space between the two, which may help to advance the iconic architecture requirement.
- The tower should contrast with the Legion Building in creating a landmark site. The Panel notes the vertical corner combined with the horizontal striation in the architectural expression of the heritage building provide some cues to develop the tower architecture.

Heritage Resource

- The Panel came to understand that while the Legion Building was first constructed at three storeys, the intention was always for it to be a six-storey building. Therefore, the entire six-storey expression should be preserved, given also that a six-storey volume would create a more coherent composition with the tower and blend well with the scale of Kent Street.
- The idea of honesty and integrity in terms of building preservation is related to retention in place. The Panel encourages the Legion Building to be preserved in situ, without being a reconstruction or partial retention, as a rebuild or partial rebuild may create a pastiche appearance.
- The Panel expressed their opinion regarding the reasons the other options were not the optimal solution for the site.
 - Option 1's post-modern frame with the arcade does not appear to lead anywhere, and the tower and podium expression is quite aggressive.

- Although Option 2 retains the Legion Building, it sets it back from the property line; moving the building will be challenging, due to materials being unable to withstand the move, resulting in a reconstruction of the building. The Panel also noted that the tower was in line with the podium, creating a sheer wall and an aggressive appearance.
- Option 4 does not maintain any notion of the Legion Building; rather, it creates a token element in its place. The Panel believes that the size and location of the proposed open space associated with this option in and of itself would not warrant a landmark project overall.

Public Realm and Open Space

- The Panel believes that although the public realm is relatively smaller compared to the other options, the public space on Option 3 is a benefit to the project. The idea of a small pocket park could work well; however, the proponent should ensure the space between the two residential homes and the tower is well designed. The Postal Station K redevelopment in Toronto was cited as a successful example of the relationship between the townhouses, the heritage building, and its public realm.
- The Panel understands that retaining the building in situ would result in the sidewalk along Kent Street maintaining its existing dimension, but the Panel believes there is an opportunity for the proponent to work with the City to improve the quality of the public realm. Widening the sidewalk along Kent Street should be considered to integrate street trees, possibly as a traffic calming strategy.
- The terrace above the Legion building has the potential to be accessible to the community and become a valued public space.