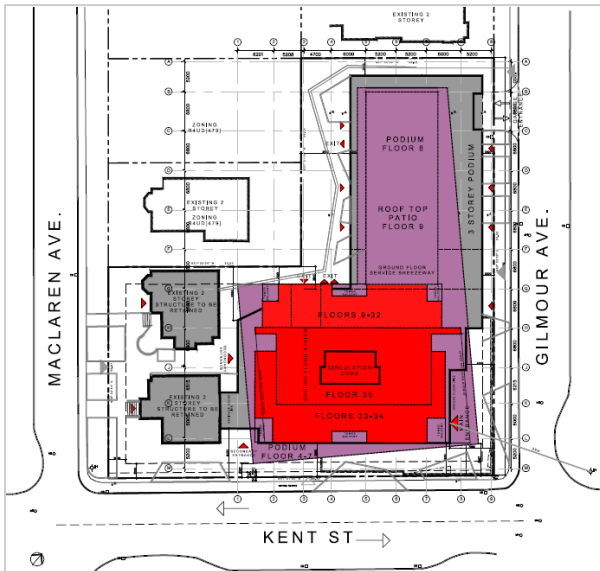


A Special Design Review Panel session was held on March 25th, 2022 to review the proposal at 359 Kent Street. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom.

Panel Members in Attendance:

- David Leinster (Chair)
- Dominic Bettison
- Josh Chaiken
- James Parakh

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



Summary

- The Subcommittee members thanked the proponent for participating in a constructive conversation with the SDRS.
- The Subcommittee believes the proposal needs significant changes and improvements in order to warrant height greater than the maximum 9 storeys for the area envisioned in the Secondary Plan.
- The Subcommittee believes a one-tower approach with the tower facing Kent Street is appropriate for the site, but more studies at a larger scale are required to understand the impact of a landmark building on the surrounding neighbourhood and urban realm.

- The Subcommittee does not consider the present design to be a landmark. Further study is required to create a building which might have a singular expression and meet the street with significant heritage retention, improvements to the public realm and have a civic programmatic element.
- The Subcommittee stresses that the organization of the site should create a great civic space worthy of a landmark building.
- The Subcommittee believes that the integration of (elements of) the former Legion building will assist the project in achieving greater civic importance.
- To assist in the discussion, the Subcommittee presented examples of developments with a heritage component and high-rise towers with public realm elements that integrate well with the neighbourhood.

Massing and Architectural Expression

- The five options presented and the explanation for the preferred option are appreciated, but the members believe there is no clear strong design driver to justify the current massing concept. A robust analysis is required to justify a high-rise building in this location, given the axial relationship down Kent Street to Parliament Hill and the history of the urban fabric of Centretown.
- The design team should study the long views in both directions along Kent Street. Approaching the site from Parliament Hill and from the south. The massing impact on the local context, including how the proposal would integrate with the residential neighbourhood to the west and the homogenous, well-defined neighbourhood to the east should be considered.
- The Subcommittee members believe a cohesive concept with a strong architectural approach is needed as the design evolves.
- However, the Subcommittee cautions the effects of an over-articulated tower, and recommends a tower that includes a reserved expression though still beautifully crafted that can play more of a supporting role in the architectural ensemble. The wall expression should be carefully modulated and detailed with high quality materials.

Heritage

- The subcommittee members see the value of the Legion building and strongly recommend its retention as the building offers some civic qualities that can help achieve the Secondary Plan policies. Although this approach has some constraints, the members encourage the proponent to work with its limitations.
- The Legion building could be retained in situ with the tower pulled back to allow the building to breathe and hug the street or be taken down and rebuilt if agreeable to

staff. Furthermore, the building could activate the street by accommodating a residential lobby and be programmed for institutional uses.

Public Realm and Civic Use

- The Subcommittee members believe that the development should have a meaningful civic use; further thought should be given to the type of civic use being proposed. The renderings show commercial uses open to the public, but the Secondary Plan requires a landmark building to provide a significant public institutional use, and the members question whether commercial uses would be sufficient to comply with the policy.
- The Subcommittee recommended the proponent consider a broader cultural program within a retained corner building to provide a synergy for the surrounding public realm. The proponent should also consider commemorating the former Legion headquarters to speak to the landmark status.
- The members struggled to understand the intent and purpose of the amenity spaces located between the heritage buildings and the proposed high-rise building, noting that those spaces will be in the shade most of the time. More analysis is required to develop a public realm strategy that will create a sensible and meaningful public realm.
- There were mixed opinions on the suitability of a public space at the corner. The Subcommittee noted that corner plazas often require perimeter definition, such as the planters being proposed, making them feel private. The proponent should consider relocating the plaza between the proposed tower and the low-rise residential buildings on Gilmour.
- Further consideration should be given to achieving a transition between the high-rise building and the heritage houses as the cantilever appears to loom over the public realm.

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.

The City of Ottawa's Special Design Review Panel met on **April 14th, 2023**. The meeting was hosted virtually using *Zoom* video-conferencing software.

Panel Members in Attendance:

David Leinster
James Parakh
Josh Chaiken
Dominic Bettison

Meeting Index**April 14th, 2023**

- 1) **359 Kent St., 444 & 436 MacLaren St.** | Formal Review | Zoning By-law Amendment Application | Taggart Realty Management (Derek Howe/Kyle Kazda); Fotenn Planning + Design (Paul Black); Hobin Architecture Inc. (Patrick Bisson)

1) 359 Kent St., 444 & 436 MacLaren St. | Formal Review | Zoning By-law Amendment Application | Taggart Realty Management (Derek Howe/Kyle Kazda); Fotenn Planning + Design (Paul Black); Hobin Architecture Inc. (Patrick Bisson)



Key Recommendations

- The Panel appreciates the retention of the heritage buildings and the work required to preserve the Legion building as a cornerstone landmark and community anchor in the Heritage Conservation District.
- The Panel has concerns regarding the entrance off Gilmour Street into the Legion building and recommends reconsidering its location and redesigning the recessed element.
- The Panel recommends stepping-down the red-brick portion of the podium to better integrate the project design with the adjacent heritage district context.

- The Panel recommends reconsidering the design of the podium's north façade with investigation into the various views on materiality, glazing and the entry canopy given by the Panel.
- The Panel recommends simplifying the architectural expression of the tower to achieve the landmark status requisite for the additional building height. Consideration should be given to the idea of a 'simple elegance', the building being viewed in the round, and therefore all four sides of the tower having a singular simplified iconic expression.
 - The Panel recommends highlighting the Legion building by quieting the tower's architectural expression through simplified yet elegant pattern and materiality.

Site Design & Public Realm

- The Panel recommends the heritage properties at 444 & 436 MacLaren Street be better integrated into the overall site plan and public realm design of this iconic heritage site, as they contribute to the overall iconic status of this site.
 - The Panel strongly recommends removing at-grade surface parking in the site design (436 MacLaren Street), as it is inconsistent with the special landmark status of the site.
 - The Panel members appreciate the public realm spaces included in the design and are intrigued by its features; however, further development of the public space is needed to create a landmark public realm at the ground level.
 - The Panel recommends improving the porosity and connectivity through the site in a way that would allow the public to move through and around the site and historic buildings more openly. Consider the heritage houses as pavilions in a landscape with connected courtyards or mews linking between the north entrance of 359 Kent Street and the MacLaren properties.
 - The landmark status of this project and this site lends itself to a bigger public realm idea rather than a few smaller courtyard spaces that are essentially disconnected from one another and isolated.
- The Panel supports the civic and public use of the site and recommends that—as an integral component of this project—the civic use within the Legion Building should be confirmed prior to the permissions going forward.
- The Panel recommends widening the sidewalk along Kent Street as much as possible by extending the sidewalk to the face of the Legion building.
 - The Panel appreciates the introduction of much needed street trees along Kent Street, but recommends they be aligned with a widened sidewalk

that extends from the intersection of Kent and MacLaren to the NW corner of 359 Kent Street.

- The Panel recommends reconsidering the alignment of the sidewalk along Gilmour Street to provide a clearway that meets the accessibility needs of the visually impaired. As such, greenery and tree plantings should be brought in closer to the building face along Gilmour Street.

Sustainability

- The Panel strongly supports the environmental design of a low-energy all-electric building.
- The Panel suggests that curtain-wall glazing is perhaps not the most environmentally efficient and recommends adding more shading elements or more solidity behind the glass to give better insulation factors—especially given cold winters.
- The Panel appreciates the idea of photovoltaic paneling but has concerns over how that may appear in built form. Therefore, the Panel recommends displaying in greater detail how that will appear.

Built Form & Architecture

- The Panel appreciates the progression of the project, including the retention of heritage buildings as an anchor to the design.
- The Panel also appreciates the Legion building being integrated as a grounding element for the tower.
- The Panel suggests re-imagining the building's articulation, and the materiality—especially the tower—to satisfy the landmark status at this location. The current tower expression appears more like an 'everyday tower' that doesn't have the gravitas of a 'landmark tower'.
- The Panel suggests simplifying and quieting the architectural expression of the tower would be the right approach for this heritage site—being an iconic landmark isn't necessarily about making a bold statement. Consider accentuating the heritage building at the base by simplifying the tower, creating a quiet elegant vertical expression that compliments the heritage identity of the site.
- The Panel appreciates the tower being set back from the corner and the glazed separation between the tower and Legion building at the amenity level.
- The Panel appreciates the idea of simplicity in the tower design but feels that the current tower design is overly complex and appears busy, owing to several overlapping features in the architectural expression of the tower:

- The Panel recommends the tower design have a simplified singular expression and be understood as unified composition on all four sides.
- The current tower design has competing architectural expressions in the three-storey striating rhythm and the vertical 'break' element.
- The Panel suggests using the vertical 'break' element as a design idea that evolves from the base of the building—perhaps at the junction between the limestone and brick portions of the podium—to inform the design and architectural expression of the tower.
- The Panel suggests considering noble materials as part of the tower's expression to render a higher-quality landmark appearance (e.g., limestone). The current use of aluminum cladding could appear conventional as it is a more commonly used material in Ottawa.
- The Panel recommends reconsidering the crown element at the top of the tower. In its current form, the crown adds a cap element to the building that renders its appearance heavy. Consider using a lighter, less opaque, tower top.
- The Panel recommends redesigning the crown element to accentuate the verticality of the tower, while maintaining the focus of the Legion building as the gem from which the tower elegantly elongates into the sky.
- The Panel recommends dropping the scale of the red-brick podium along Gilmour Street by at least one storey to:
 - Improve the relationship of the building with the surrounding neighbourhood scale and heritage context,
 - Enhance the prominence of the heritage Legion building on the corner as a landmark, and
 - Complement the vertical striation of the building design.
- The Panel supports the vertical rhythm and articulation of the red-brick podium but recommends improving the transition to the neighbouring buildings by lowering the full length of the podium down to be one storey lower than the Legion building, or by stepping the podium down on the east and north sides to better relate to the adjacent heritage house form context.
- The Panel recommends forgoing the canopy element above the red-brick podium as it adds unnecessary bulk and height to the design.
- The Panel recommends—along with the lowering of the podium by one storey—maintaining the amenity programming as a bi-level amenity with terracing that supports the already established programming.
- The Panel recommends designing the east façade of the red-brick podium to be more visually interesting—consider more windows or architectural details.
- The Panel suggests the recessed five-storey curtain-wall on the north façade of the podium, deceptively, appears as a commercial atrium space when it is not.

Consider a more consistent legibility of the Legion building on the non-heritage façades through continuation of the architectural expression.

- The Panel recommends reconsidering the expression of the three-storey entry canopy element to be more refined and timeless and suggests the volume of the entry canopy alludes to a three-storey interior space, creating a sense of incongruity between the exterior and interior volumes and functions of the Legion building.
- The Panel recommends re-imagining the ground-level treatment of the Legion building along Gilmour Street—perhaps as a squared recess rather than an angular one. Consider relocating the entry point closer to the corner of Kent Street where it currently is placed or along Kent Street where the two-storey opening stands.
- The Panel strongly recommends rebuilding the Legion building façade as closely as possible to the original, which includes retaining the light-coloured window treatments and mullions.

Next Steps

- The Panel recommends the applicant's revised design be circulated with the SDRP for review and comment, with the option of requiring a fourth meeting with the SDRP to be determined upon review.