

384 Frank Street | *Formal Review* | Zoning Amendment and Site Plan | unpoised Architecture; Novatech Planning & Engineering



Summary

- The Panel is disappointed that the project has come back in a similar form to the previous iteration, however is appreciative of the architectural improvements presented. The Panel expected further refinement of the project and a redesign more compatible with the context and responsive to the site constraints.
- Given the constraints of this small site, and the proposed height and density, the Panel finds this building represents over development of the site. The issues relating to quality of life, both on this site, and on surrounding adjacent sites, in addition to the lack of compatibility within the heritage context, make this a project that the Panel cannot support.

Site Constraints

- The Panel finds the project represents over development of the site. The Panel highlights considerable issues relating to the constructability, long term maintenance, fire access, and the potential for Building Code issues with the proposed design.
 - The tight site would make the installation of cladding extremely difficult.
 - The ongoing functionality of the building would be problematic, pushing loading and moving activities to the street.
 - The height of the access under the cantilevered portion of the building can only fit a small truck or a cubed van, thereby impacting access to the adjacent

properties fronting Bank Street which benefit from a legal easement through this property.

- The Panel finds that the proposed project is not replicable in its context (a good test to determine if a project is good urban design), and building to the lot line creates considerable problems for development on adjacent properties. For example, if a similar nine-storey building was constructed at the adjacent Miele site on Bank Street, this would result in several consequences relating to constructability, access to light, serviceability and general quality of life.
- The Panel highly recommends investigations into the costs and the feasibility of constructing on this site, as well as a Building Code study to determine compatibility.
 - One Panel member suggests that the second storey exit does not satisfy the provisions of the Building Code.
- Considering the size of the property, the Panel suggests between four, and up to a maximum height of six stories could be possible for the site.

Livability

- The Panel has serious concerns regarding livability given the high density proposed on a very small property. In addition to a lack of amenity area, there is also a concern from the Panel with respect to a lack of natural light in the basement apartment units.
- The Panel suggests that if there is future adjacent development, there will also be issues with meeting daylight requirements for the corner bedrooms where the plans show small windows.
- The Panel does not support the proposal to construct all the way to the rear property line as sunlight is required to ensure a minimum quality of life for rear units.

Heritage & Urban Context

- The Panel appreciates the animation of the wall facing Bank Street, given the inability to add fenestration to this wall, however is concerned that the five stories of exposed wall visible from Bank Street does not represent a successful transition, and will appear like a dark cloud over the street. Since the proposed building is not connected directly to Bank Street, the Panel finds that the property should be developed as a transitional site between the medium density residential area to the east, and the traditional main street condition on Bank Street.

- It is the opinion of the Panel that the small eight foot retail space with limited glazing will have very limited uses, and does not sufficiently 'give back' to the city.

Architectural Expression

- The Panel appreciates the cleaner and clearer volumes of the revised plans, and believes that the building is now better grounded. The use of colour, and the architectural explorations evident in the massing, the expression of the base, and the notch at the top, are successful.
- The Panel does have concerns that the dark treatment proposed for the wall facing Bank Street is not appropriate given its volume.
- There is some concerns from a Panel member that the appliqué brick element on the base needs some refinement, with particular consideration for its visibility from Bank Street.