

Architecture

'One of the most beautiful buildings in Toronto'

MoZo fits effortlessly into neighbourhood



Christopher Hume
Critic's Eye

It isn't even finished yet, but already it's clear that the condo under construction on the northwest corner of King and Sherbourne Sts. will be one of the most beautiful buildings in Toronto.

MoZo, as it's (unfortunately) called, occupies its site, a former parking lot, as if it had always been there. Clad in brick, steel and glass — mostly glass — this mid-rise structure feels completely right; its size and scale are perfectly suited to the surroundings.

What distinguishes MoZo is the attention to big stuff, as well as small details. The building fits effortlessly into the neighbourhood in terms of height and bulk. It also brings architectural life to the street, which it goes to great pains to address.

For example, the double-height glass panels that make up the exterior at grade don't actually touch ground; they are separated by a thin concrete lip that rises maybe 24 centimetres from the sidewalk. The effect is to raise the building ever so slightly off the street and allow it to float.

This sensation of incredible lightness is enhanced by the remarkable transparency of the exterior. Masonry is used sparingly to add a sense of solidity rather than heaviness.

The front, which faces King,



BORIS SPREMO C.M.

MoZo at King and Sherbourne Sts. gets full marks from Christopher Hume — his first-ever A+.

rises vertically from the property line before stepping back on the ninth floor. On the east side, MoZo presents a different look, with high-tech-style French balconies and huge expanses of glazing.

Another exquisite detail, on the north side, is a series of thin steel strips that run horizontally every second storey. It is a small touch, but one that helps create a sense of horizontality and thereby makes the building feel less overwhelming.

The image of MoZo is of a building that has been machined more than constructed.

The steel elements — window frames, balcony barriers — are clean and crisp. Then, of course, there is the remarkable sensation that this most transparent of structures remains firmly rooted to the ground.

This is a building that belongs, that accepts the conditions of this historic but long-neglected part of Toronto and raises them to a new level.

The original 19th-century industrial architecture is gradually being brought back to life and the '90s condos just west at King and Jarvis — King George Square and the St. James — are

among the finest in the city.

MoZo goes one step farther; it could serve as the prototype for downtown residential development in 21st-century Toronto.

Sensitive, smart, innovative and beautiful, it deserves full marks.

Now, about that name . . .

GRADE: A+

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