

REZONING RATIONALE

THIS SECTION OF THE REZONING APPLICATION OUTLINES THE SPECIFIC DESIGN RESPONSE OF THE APPLICATION TO THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT POLICY DOCUMENTS AFFECTING THIS SPECIFIC SITE; THE UNDER THE GRANVILLE BRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTRE (UGBNCC) POLICIES AND GUIDELINES AND THE GENERAL POLICY FOR HIGHER BUILDINGS (GPHB). THE EXISTING SITE ZONING (BCPED – BC PLACE / EXPO DISTRICT WEST OF GRANVILLE AND FCCDD – FALSE CREEK COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT EAST OF GRANVILLE) ARE BOTH LONG OUTDATED ZONINGS WITH RESPECT TO THIS SITE, AND SO DO NOT PROVIDE USEFUL COMPARATIVE INFORMATION FOR THIS APPLICATION.

RESPONSE TO: UNDER THE GRANVILLE BRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTRE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S VISION FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD UNDERNEATH THE GRANVILLE BRIDGE FOLDS TWO IDEAS TOGETHER. THE FIRST IDEA IS A PLACE FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPPING, WITH APPROPRIATE LOCAL RETAIL USES. THE SECOND IS A DRAMATIC AND VIBRANT PUBLIC REALM THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY THE BRIDGE STRUCTURE.

BY INCORPORATING A FOODSTORE, DRUG STORE, LIQUOR STORE, RESTAURANTS, A BANK AND SMALLER SCALE RETAIL THIS PROJECT PROVIDES A COMPLETE NEIGHBOURHOOD DESTINATION, WITH ALL KEY BASICS IN A SINGLE LOCATION.

BY PROPOSING A DISTINCTIVE, HARDSCAPE DOMINATED AND FLEXIBLE PUBLIC REALM THAT INCLUDES BOTH A CURBLESS, FLEXIBLE GROUND PLANE FOR IMAGINATIVE EVENTS, AND CONTRASTING SMALLER SCALE PASSAGES AND TWO UNIQUE TRIANGULAR COURTYARDS, THE PROJECT PROPOSES A TRULY URBAN AND MEMORABLE SET OF LINKED PUBLIC SPACES.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES:

• LAND USE AND DENSITY

THE APPLICATION INCLUDES THE GROCERY STORE, SMALL SCALE CRU'S AND RESTAURANTS RECOMMENDED IN THE UGBNCC POLICIES. THE ADDITION OF A DRUGSTORE, BANK, AND LIQUOR STORE ENHANCES THE EFFECTIVENESS AS A LOCAL SHOPPING DESTINATION. OFFICES ARE LOCATED ON UPPER FLOORS, AS REQUESTED. NO NON SUPPORTED USES (AUTO CENTRED OR RESIDENTIAL) ARE LOCATED ON THE TWO TRIANGULAR PARCELS COVERED BY THE GUIDELINES. THE UGBNCC POLICIES NOTE THAT THE GROCERY STORE SHOULD BE TO THE EAST OF GRANVILLE STREET. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MUCH LARGER STORE ON THE ASSOCIATED WESTERN PARCEL ENHANCES THE RETAIL DRAW, RELATIVE TO A SMALLER STORE THAT COULD BE BUILT ON THE EAST PARCEL. ACTIVE FRONTAGES ARE CREATED NOT ONLY ON GRANVILLE STREET, BUT ON KEY SECTIONS OF ROLSTON AND CONTINENTAL STREETS AS WELL. THE CURBLESS PUBLIC REALM, LIKE ON GRANVILLE ISLAND, CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ON STREET GOODS DISPLAY AND OUTDOOR SEATING.

THE UGBNCC POLICIES NOTE THAT "THE ZONING SHALL NOT HAVE A PREDETERMINED FSR". THE PROPOSAL HAS A GREATER COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA THAN ENVISIONED IN THE GUIDELINES BECAUSE OF THE INCLUSION OF THE WESTERN PARCEL FACING ON HOWE STREET AND A DESIRE TO PROVIDE A MORE COMPLETE NEIGHBOURHOOD RETAIL PACKAGE.

• BUILT FORM, MASSING AND CHARACTER

THIS SECTION OF THE UGBNCC POLICIES OUTLINES THE REQUIRED CLEARANCES FOR BRIDGE MAINTENANCE, THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A GRANVILLE STREET URBAN ROOM, THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLOWING THE CONTINUITY OF THE "GREAT STREET" STRATEGY ALONG THE SOUTH EDGE OF PACIFIC, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE FOR SEASONAL STRUCTURES. THIS PROJECT WILL MEET ALL THE NECESSARY SETBACKS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR BRIDGE MAINTENANCE ACCESS, AND FOLLOWS ALL THE BUILD TO LINE STRATEGIES RECOMMENDED IN THE UGBNCC POLICIES. THE PROJECT WILL ALSO ALLOW SUFFICIENT NORTH PROPERTY LINE SETBACK TO PERMIT THE "GREAT STREET" SECTION CONTINUITY. LASTLY, WE HAVE ALLOWED SPACE FOR, AND ENVISION FREQUENT USE OF SEASONAL STRUCTURES FOR DAY TO DAY USE AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

IN TERMS OF BUILDING HEIGHT, THE PROPOSED STRATEGY OF ALLOWING THE GREEN ROOF TOPPED DISTINCTIVE TRIANGULAR FORMS TO POP OUT ABOVE THE BRIDGE DECK ENHANCES THE CITY SUPPORTED STRATEGY OF CREATING A GRANVILLE GATEWAY.

THIS SECTION OF THE UGBNCC POLICIES ALSO OUTLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING ACTIVE STREET EDGES ON GRANVILLE. TO RESPOND TO THIS, WE HAVE LOCATED THE MAJOR IMPEDIMENTS TO ACTIVE EDGE CONTINUITY, THE LOADING DOCKS, ON ROLSTON AND CONTINENTAL, ALLOWING FULL RETAIL CONTINUITY ON GRANVILLE STREET.

THIS SECTION ALSO OUTLINES THE DESIRE FOR AN "INDUSTRIAL" ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON TRANSPARENCY- ESPECIALLY AT GRADE. IT ALSO NOTES "MASSING AND BUILDING FORM SHOULD BE RECTILINEAR AND SIMPLE AS A STRATEGY TO COMBINE INDIVIDUAL SITES INTO A MORE COHESIVE, IDENTIFIABLE PRECINCT CHARACTER." OUR PROJECT PROPOSES A COMBINATION OF SIMPLE WALL PLANES AND GEOMETRIES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE TRIANGULAR SITE, ENHANCED BY DRAMATIC TRANSPARENCY TO THE LIFE OF THE BUILDING. THIS OVERALL STRATEGY WILL CREATE A COMBINATION OF AN ARCHITECTURALLY UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOOD, THAT RESPONDS TO THE EXTRA LARGE SCALE OF THE BRIDGE STRUCTURE WITH CLEAN LINED, RICH BUT NOT OVER ARTICULATED FORMS, AND SUBSTANTIAL TRANSPARENCY TO EXPOSE THE LIFE WITHIN THE BUILDINGS.

SUPPORTED BUILDING MATERIALS INCLUDE CONTEMPORARY METAL CLADDING SYSTEMS; HEAVY TIMBER STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS; GLASS AND STEEL; BRICK; AND ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE. WE PROPOSE USING ALL OF THESE EXCEPT FOR BRICK AND HEAVY TIMBER.

THE ROOF OF PARCELS 2 AND 3 WILL BE LANDSCAPED WITH GREEN ROOF TREATMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES. THE UGBNCC POLICIES SUGGEST LOADING AND RECYCLING AREAS SHOULD BE SCREENED. THIS WILL BE TRUE FOR, AND /OR THEY WILL USED AS OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE INTEREST WITH ACTIVITY AND COLOUR.

• MOVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

THE REZONING DESIGN RESPONSE TO PARKING AND LOADING IS COMPLEX, AND HAS BEEN DISCUSSED EXTENSIVELY WITH THE CITY. THE MOST SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE FROM THE MOVEMENT, PARKING AND LOADING STRATEGY OUTLINED IN THE UGBNCC POLICIES IS OUR INTENT TO HAVE ROLSTON AND CONTINENTAL STREETS BOTH TWO WAY. THIS WILL SLOW TRAFFIC, ALLOW RIGHT-ANGLED PARKING, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, CREATE ROUTE FLEXIBILITY IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE CHALLENGES OF CLOSING GRANVILLE STREET FOR EVENTS.

WITH RESPECT TO STREET PARKING LOCATIONS AND LOADING BAY LOCATIONS THE PROJECT CONFORMS TO THE GUIDELINES FOR PARCEL 2 AND 3. PARCEL 1 LOADING IS OFF OF CONTINENTAL STREET – A SUPERIOR LOCATION TO HOWE STREET.

FOR A MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES PLEASE SEE THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION SECTION (7) OF THE DOCUMENT AND THE SEPARATE BUNT AND ASSOCIATES REPORT.

THE DESIGN OF UTILITIES WILL ADHERE TO THE UGBNCC POLICIES.

• PUBLIC REALM TREATMENT

THE UGBNCC POLICIES ARE NOT PRESCRIPTIVE WITH RESPECT TO THE PUBLIC REALM DESIGN (EXCEPT FOR LIGHTING), NOTING ONLY THE IMPORTANCE OF A COHESIVE URBAN (HARDSCAPE) STRATEGY, QUALITY MATERIALITY, AND FLEXIBILITY FOR EVENTS.

THE PUBLIC REALM DESIGN OF BEACH AND HOWE MEETS AND EXCEEDS THE INTENTIONS OF THE UGBNCC POLICIES. IN PARTICULAR, THE GRANVILLE ISLAND LIKE CURBLESS PAVING TREATMENT AND OUR AGENDA TO BUILD IN A DRAMATIC DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY FOR GRANVILLE STREET WILL CREATE A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ANCHOR A COHESIVE SENSE OF URBAN PLACE THAT COULD STRETCH SOUTH TO FALSE CREEK IN FUTURE.

WE SEE DRAMATIC AND FLEXIBLE LIGHTING AS CENTRAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT. THE UGBNCC POLICIES ARE PRECISE WITH RESPECT TO LIGHTING, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER PROPOSED BY THIS APPLICATION, AND THE RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES IN LIGHTING POSSIBILITIES MEANS THAT THE LIGHTING STRATEGY PROPOSED IN THE UGBNCC POLICIES SHOULD BE REVISITED. THE AGENDA OF THE DESIGN TEAM IS TO DO THIS DESIGN WORK AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PHASE.

FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC REALM ISSUES INCLUDING LANDSCAPE DESIGN PLEASE SEE THE PUBLIC REALM SECTION (2.3) OF THE DOCUMENT.

• ENVIRONMENT

THE PROJECT IS FAR MORE AMBITIOUS FROM A SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE THAN OUTLINED IN THE UGBNCC POLICIES. FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES INCLUDING LANDSCAPE DESIGN PLEASE SEE THE SUSTAINABILITY SECTION (3) OF THE DOCUMENT AND THE NOTES BELOW WITH RESPECT TO THE RESPONSE TO THE MORE AMBITIOUS TALL BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS.

RESPONSE TO: GENERAL POLICY FOR HIGHER BUILDINGS

THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S VISION FOR THE REMAINING FEW TALL BUILDING SITES IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE IS THAT OF INVIGORATING ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE FUSED WITH A COMPREHENSIVE, ADVANCED SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY. THIS PARTICULAR SITE ALSO HAS A KEY GATEWAY ROLE. OUR PROJECT THEREFORE PROPOSES THE MOST DISTINCTIVE TOWER FORM IN THE CITY. ONE THAT IS BOTH RESPONSIVE TO THE UNIQUE SITE CONDITIONS CREATED BY THE GRANVILLE BRIDGE AND ARCHITECTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOR A PROMINENT GATEWAY SITE. IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY, WE PROPOSE ONLY THE SECOND APPLICATION OF LEED NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY – AN UNUSUAL DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE BEYOND GREEN BUILDINGS INTO GREEN NEIGHBOURHOODS.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES:

• BUILDING HEIGHT

THE 497' HEIGHT PROPOSED IS HIGHER THAN THE 425' STATED IN THE GPHB. HOWEVER, THE GPHB RECOGNIZES THAT THIS GATEWAY SITUATION COULD ACCOMMODATE A HIGHER HEIGHT BY ITS USE OF THE WORDS "GENERAL HEIGHT OF HIGHER BUILDING", SUBJECT TO URBAN DESIGN, SHADOW AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS. STAFF REQUESTED THAT THE TEAM INVESTIGATE 3 HEIGHTS: 425 FT, 450 FT AND 470 FT. THE APPLICANTS PROPOSED A HEIGHT OF 497 FT. THE DOCUMENT CONTAINS MULTIPLE RENDERINGS AND COMPARATIVE ELEVATIONS THAT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE A 497' TALL TOWER, AND THAT SUCH A TOWER PROPORTION SUPPORTS THE OVERALL AGENDA OF ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE.

THE SITE ITSELF IS CHALLENGING GIVEN ITS TRIANGULAR SHAPE AND THE REQUIRED 30 M BRIDGE SETBACK, WHILE FORM AND CHARACTER ARE DERIVED FROM THE SITE'S LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS. THE TOWER SIZE AND HEIGHT RESPONDS TO THE KEY CHALLENGE OF THE SITE FROM A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE- THE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THE NECESSARY DENSITY TO MAKE THE PROJECT FEASIBLE AND VIABLE. INNOVATIVE DESIGN WAS NECESSARY TO GET THE DENSITY WHICH LED TO THE FORM OF THE BUILDING STARTING FROM A TRIANGULAR SHAPE AT THE BASE TO A RECTANGULAR SHAPE AT THE TOP. INEFFICIENT TRIANGULAR LOWER FLOOR PLATES ARE COMPENSATED FOR BY EFFICIENT UPPER FLOOR PLATES.

ACCORDINGLY, THE HEIGHT IS DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO ACHIEVE A CERTAIN DENSITY BUT, THE RESULTANT HEIGHT IS A FUNCTION OF THE DESIGN, AND NOT THE DRIVER OF THE DESIGN.

• CREATIVITY AND EXCELLENCE

THE TOWER AT BEACH AND HOWE COMBINES AN EXTRAORDINARY ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND EXPRESSION WITH AN EXTRAORDINARY STRUCTURAL SOLUTION. CITY OF VANCOUVER DESIGN HAS TOO OFTEN LIMITED ITSELF TO ARCHITECTURAL "EXPRESSION" AT THE COST OF ARCHITECTURAL INVENTION. THE TOWER AT BEACH AND HOWE WILL BE THE MOST DISTINCTIVE FORM OF ANY TOWER IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, AND THAT FORM IS GENERATED BY A THOUGHTFUL AND SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO A PARTICULAR SITE.

• LEADERSHIP AND ADVANCES IN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION / ADVANCING THE CITY'S CARBON NEUTRAL OBJECTIVES

IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY THE MOST AMBITIOUS ASPECT OF THIS SCHEME IS TO INTEGRATE MULTIPLE BUILDINGS IN A GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD. AS NOTED, WE PROPOSE TO APPLY FOR LEED ND PLATINUM AND WE ARE TARGETING LEED PLATINUM FOR THE TOWER AS WELL, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT YET CERTAIN TO BE ACHIEVABLE. THIS WILL INVOLVE MULTIPLE DETAILED EXPLORATIONS. THESE INCLUDE THE INVESTIGATION OF DISTRICT ENERGY POSSIBILITIES, TRANSFER OF ENERGY BETWEEN COOLING DOMINATED COMMERCIAL SPACES AND HEATING DOMINATED RESIDENTIAL SPACES, GEOTHERMAL ENERGY AND ADVANCED ENVELOPE DESIGN.

THE PROJECT WILL MEET AND EXCEED THE REQUIREMENTS IN THE GPHB.
SEE ALSO THE SUSTAINABILITY SECTION (3) OF THE DOCUMENT

• ENHANCED DESIGN REVIEW

IN ADDITION TO THE ADVANCED DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS OUTLINED IN THE GPHB, WESTBANK HAS SPONSORED A FREE PUBLIC LECTURE IN APRIL BY BJARKE INGELS AND A FOLLOW UP PANEL DISCUSSION FOCUSING ON THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS PROJECT BECOMING A NEW BENCHMARK FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN EXCELLENCE IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER. OUR AGENDA IS TO USE THIS PROJECT AS AN EXEMPLARY EXAMPLE OF RAISING THE DESIGN BAR IN OUR CITY.

• COMMUNITY BENEFITS / PUBLIC REALM

BEACH AND HOWE WILL MEET OR EXCEED ALL THE PUBLIC REALM AND SIGNAGE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS OF THE GPHB. SPECIFIC COMMUNITY BENEFITS INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF RENTAL HOUSING, AND THE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS. HOWEVER, WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE GREATEST COMMUNITY BENEFIT OF THIS PROJECT IS TO ACT AS AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE ANCHORED IN A UNIQUE URBAN PUBLIC REALM- AN OUTSTANDING DEMONSTRATION THAT VANCOUVER CAN BE A "CITY BY DESIGN" AND A "CITY OF DESIGN".