

Design Rationale

The architecture of the Beach Towers has left a number of missed opportunities on the site. The negative urban realm of the existing site plan include: the large surface parking lot at the corner of Harwood and Cardero Street; the blank façade that extends virtually along the full frontage of the site along Beach Avenue; two different and substantial parkade accesses onto Cardero and the surface parking, parkade entrances and hardscaped plaza of the Columbus house on Harwood Street. The site on a whole is over fifty years old and is in need of rejuvenation. Our proposals propose to remediate and improve these spaces, provide enhanced amenities for existing and future tenants while respecting our Neighbours and the West end as a whole.

At the corner of Harwood and Cardero we propose a 9 storey rectilinear building setback 25' from the property line, to open up street views and to give clear unobstructed views of the water down the Cardero corridor for neighbours across Harwood at Cardero. The new buildings sit atop what is a single entrance to the underground parking. Visually this new form acts as a podium to the Douglas House on Beach Avenue. Physically, however, the mass is separated from the tower by a 20 foot wide grand stair which rises from the entrance courtyard along Cardero up to the Harwood Landscaping.

At the corner of Cardero and Beach, we propose to add a partially submerged one storey amenity building. Currently, in this location, Douglas House reaches grade at an entry court, situated midblock of the site on Cardero; At this elevation a circular balcony exists with a set in, one storey blank concrete parking structure below it. The proposed amenity building's green roof will act as an extension of the entry court landscape. This space will act both as entry and as gathering space for the occupants, creating an opportunity for watching

events on Beach Street such as the Fireworks displays in English Bay. Along Beach Avenue this structure will be exposed as a glass wall draped in vegetation, animating the street with the activity within.

Beyond this structure on Beach will be a series of two storey townhomes, with two more floors above over the centre portion. These new units replace the existing parking structure and echo the sawtooth pattern of the old parkade. All of these ground oriented suites will be two bedroom units.

On Harwood Street (Parcel B), we propose to add two two storey structures on either side of the existing Columbus House. These will contain 11 townhome style units with access either to the street or to the rear landscaped podium. This new massing will cover the existing exposed parking structure.

In total, across Parcel A & B we propose to add 136 new units (66 of which are 2 Bedroom units many of which are suitable for families). A net increase of 102 additional parking stalls and 211 bike parking stalls is proposed within Parcel A. The new development totals 107,055 sf of FSR density and results in an overall increase of FSR across both sites of 0.93 bringing the combined FSR from 3.42 to 4.35.

The proposal falls within the West End planning area and its applicable guidelines which are addressed later in this document. By virtue of the property size and location, it is possible to add the new units with relatively limited impacts on surrounding residents. In order to accommodate the new development, minor relaxation of the normally desired separation distance between buildings may be required. However, this applies only to the separation from other buildings on the same property.

The new amenity facility would be developed in advance of the existing one being demolished. There would be no 'reno-victions'. The project would meet applicable City

of Vancouver sustainability requirements and would meet LEED Gold Equivalent requirements.

As is addressed later in this document, last year, our team had meetings with several neighbours, West End resident groups and the City leading up to this Rezoning Submission. Our preliminary concepts have been revised to take into account some concerns raised by the neighbours and the City including:

- Changing the form of development from a Tower and townhomes to a midrise, low-rise and townhomes.
- Setting back the new Midrise building 25' from the Property Line to open up street end views for neighbours and pedestrians.
- Recessing the Amenity building partially below grade to reduce its visual impact on the site and to reinforce the expression that the towers are resting upon a landscaped podium.
- Bringing the Columbus House Townhomes in line with concrete elements of tower.

This year we had further discussions with neighbours and met with the Vancouver Heritage Commission and heard their comments. This led to further revisions including:

- Reduction of the lowrise from 5 storeys to 4 storeys
- Change of lowrise form from parallel to beach to parallel with Harwood. This brings back the characteristic saw tooth pattern of the existing parkade
- Revision of the Midrise form, removing overhanging section, pulling it further away from the existing tower to open up views for neighbours further down the adjacent lane. Setting back top floors to open up more views for neighbours down the lane.

The West End is at the crossroads between a new urbanism and an old paradigm. A significant percentage of West End housing stock is over 50 years old and all too many of these apartments are not being upgraded or renewed. New housing and a new attitude are needed to regenerate this aging stock and help maintain a vibrant and healthy neighbourhood. Our proposal for Beach Towers is an important step in this direction.

