Design Rationale

Rezoning Rationale

The proposed complex of buildings will meet West End Guidelines. The project seeks the following variances:

- The outright zoning (RM-6) permits 2.50 FAR, we seek an additional 7.10 FAR to reach a total of 9.61 FAR.
- The max height for (RM-6) permits 210ft but we seek additional 175’ for both towers to reach West End Guidelines max of 385’.
- 12% Balcony will be provided.

Design Rationale

Vancouver and its signature skyline have always had a special and unique relationship with the sky, the mountains, and the water. We sought to capture this in our architecture, paying special attention to the dynamic relationship of ever changing reflections and patterns of wind upon waves.

Tower

Tower massing design in Vancouver is governed by a progression of zoning rules governing height, setback, separations, and footprint. A signature aspect of Vancouverism is promoting thin towers by limiting the bulk of each tower to approximately 70’ square and spacing the towers approximately 80’ apart. On this particular block we must also recognize a third future neighboring tower, resulting in a very prescriptive allowable zoning envelope for our two towers.

We chose to shape the towers by sculpting their balcony edges in a playful and expressive manner. These expressions are scaled for Vancouver’s skyline and composed along the facade like the rippling wake of a boat turning in water or like the passing of wind through clouds. The tower tops respond to shadow restrictions while culminating the tower form in an elegant and responsive manner; a sloping gesture nested within vertically expressive tower corners. We maintain a similar language of tower top articulation by orienting their sculpted faces in the same direction, much like sails catching the same gust of wind or the movement of waves flowing past stationary posts. The eastern tower is more vertical, reaching to the sky and the western tower is more restrained, thoughtfully responding to the preservation of daylight in nearby Marina Park. Our design intention wasn’t simply to propose an abstract sculptural form, but to shape our towers so that they touch the sky in a very delicate and graceful manner and have some connection to the natural environment of Vancouver.

Podium

A tower podium should be a sensitive transition from a vertical, city skyline scale to a horizontal pedestrian scale. On our site, Vancouver zoning calls for a massing diagram that is either “tower on podium” or “tower in the park”. Our podium design is a hybrid which brings together the best qualities of each.

We dematerialized the bulk of the podium by lifting the building mass up and creating apertures in the middle which allows through block views from Alberni to Georgia. We then carved from the center of the podium to create a central courtyard which will allow daylight and fresh air in from above. Daylit courtyard landscaping will soften, animate, and enrich the middle of this unique urban pedestrian forecourt. Visually permeable lobbies and building amenity spaces will border our central courtyard and the vehicular entrance ramp will be tucked into a much smaller aperture deeply hidden within the courtyard. It is our vision that the courtyard is a pedestrian space first and, like many successful urban forecourts, can be briefly shared by slow passing vehicles. Residential units and amenity spaces will bridge over the entrance and overlook apertures of the podium creating an elegant and welcoming sense of a gateway.

Our visually permeable podium design is softly expressive with modulated and sculpted balcony edges. For the podium façade, we propose softly angled and rounded balconies sized at human scale and modulated like ripples in water. Townhomes will be located along a western edge of our project and will serve to further break down the scale of the project along a pedestrian mews.

Materiality

High quality materials will be used throughout the development. The façade will be composed of Window wall in Low-E transparent and spandrel glass with painted concrete slabs at balconies and aluminum panel at accent elements near base and tower tops; stone is featured at landscape levels and exposed walls along street edges.

Design Rationale

Alberni Street

Ground floor edges are the interface between indoor and outdoor with design features including transparent glass in lobby and amenity, and an open courtyard with special paving pattern, seatings and landscape. Only one vehicular crossing to entry point into underground parking and drop off area. The Alberni streetscape continues the dedicated on-street bike lanes. Street trees to be retained as many as possible.

Cardero Street

The design concept brings the new Cardeoro streetscape with a unified public realm treatment for the Triangle West. A wider sidewalk area accommodates pedestrian movement. The pedestrian and cyclist greenway along Cardero will be enhanced by access into the Public Bike Station at the southeast corner of the building.

West Georgia Street

It is designed as per City's West Georgia Street Tree and Sidewalk Design Guidelines with wider sidewalks, double rows of street trees, and dedicated on-street bike lanes. Seating high walls at the toe of the planting slope provide social and seating opportunities for pedestrians.

Mid-block Connection

Between the Alberni Towers site and the adjacent new development at the west, the public realm is designed to permit mid-block connection. A sequence stairs with pattern paving leads pedestrian down from Alberni Street to the West Georgia Street. Townhouse patios following the stairs and stepping down to West Georgia Strreet can provide active edge and a safe mid-block connection.

Landscape Strategies for LEED

The landscape will be designed to achieve credits for stormwater design, with pervious paving and stormwater harvesting for irrigation, for reducing heat island effects, with at least 50% of the roof in vegetation and materials with high solar reflectance, and for water efficiency with diverse and climate-tolerant plant selection and smart irrigation controllers.