

YAMAMOTO ARCHITECTURE

DATE –

July 5, 2016

TO –

City of Vancouver, Development Services Department
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4

ATTN –

Pat St. Michel

Dear Pat,

Re: DESIGN RATIONALE: Parcel 8A River District Area 2

CONTEXT

Parcel 8A is located along the CPR Railway, on the northern edge of the Southwest Precinct within Area 2 of the West Neighbourhood.

To the west on Parcel 7B is a recently completed 4-storey residential building. To the east is a 6 storey residential building not yet under construction. A pedestrian mews is located to the west between Parcels 8A and 7B, and on axis with the Neighbourhood park across Riverwalk Avenue to the south.

To the north across the CPR Railway is the Northwest Precinct of the West Neighbourhood, with townhouses fronting the north side of Kent Avenue North opposite Parcel 8A.

Parcel 10 to the south across Riverwalk Avenue is designated for residential buildings up to 7 storeys on the western side, flanking the pedestrian mews leading south to the Neighbourhood Park. Up to 6 storeys are envisioned for the eastern portion of Parcel 10, directly opposite the eastern portion of Parcel 8A.

This site is designated for affordable housing.

PROGRAM AND SITE PLANNING

The Parcel follows the basic form of development set up in the guidelines, both in terms of building siting and program.

Underground parking access is provided off of the shared lane mews on the eastern portion of the site. This SRW also provides pedestrian connectivity through the site from Riverwalk Avenue, to the pedestrian walkway that runs along the northern edge of the site. One full level of underground parking is provided.

ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT, FORM AND MASSING

As this is a non-market residential building, we have interpreted the guidelines in a way that will enable for a more cost-effective and efficient building. The guidelines suggest a building that steps from 4 storeys on the west, to 6 storeys on the east. However, this introduces the following inefficiencies:

- Additional stair core required to provide egress from the upper level
- More extensive building envelope with more exterior surfaces
- Complexity in building framing with floors and roof on the same level

The stepping of the building as outlined in the Guidelines is meant to provide the following:

- Frame views from the NW Precinct to the SW Precinct and river
- Provide a unique building form mirrored in 7B
- Create interest in the Kent frontage flanking the CPR ROW

To simplify the construction and improve the building efficiency we are proposing a building that is entirely 5 storeys. This will improve the efficiency of the building envelope, simplify construction, and allow the non-market housing to be delivered at a lower cost.

Although we have taken a simplified five-storey approach to the building massing, we feel that we have designed it in a way that it respects the intent of the guidelines while creating a unique and dynamic form. The building is conceived as a simple volume with punched windows, in a response to the industrial heritage of the site. However, the simple form and pattern of punched windows is broken down at the building ends. At these locations, the shape of the fourth and fifth floors changes to create the appearance of slabs emerging from the simple 5-storey volume. The change in massing is paired with an increase in glazing that emphasizes the slabs of the floor and ceiling in contrast with the solid walls of the rest of the building. These "interventions" into the simple building volume occur at focal points of the building that will help to:

- Frame views from the NW Precinct to the SW Precinct and river in a dramatic way
- Create interest in the Kent frontage flanking the CPR ROW

While the building form does not mirror the building on 7B, the siting does mirror the siting of Parcel 7B. Volumetrically, the cantilevered 4th level responds to the large overhang created on the eastern, over-height 3rd level of Parcel 7B. Even though these two elements are not mirrored, they create a gateway into the pedestrian mews shared by the two parcels.

The colour of the building cladding panels further reinforces the "erosion" of the building form at the building edges. The pattern of dark grey panels gradually become lighter towards the projecting and recessed floor slabs. This helps to reduce the visual weight of the building form, and allow the projecting 4th and 5th floors to read more dramatically. A five-storey high, recessed area is clad with brightly coloured metal panels and marks the entry to the building.

RELAXATIONS REQUESTED

We are requesting the following relaxations from the CD Zoning Guidelines:

1. Relaxation of Class B Loading

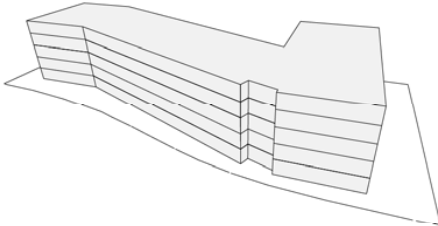
The proposed loading arrangement for the building is for two off-street Class A Loading spaces. Through experience, affordable housing has a much lower turnover of units due to its residents not being in a financial position to move as frequently as the private market. This particular development will be secured rental at discounted rates therefore any turnover after the initial tenancing is likely to be seldom. It is therefore assumed that this behavior results in loading demand well below what a 100 unit market building would observe. In addition, the building will have an on-site operator which will, among other duties, manage the use of loading stalls to ensure that they are available in order to minimize the use of City street.

2. Relaxation of Setbacks

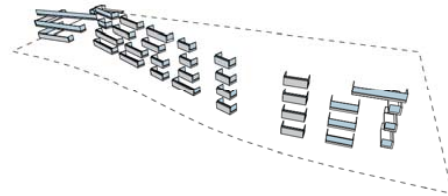
As described in the Design Rationale, we are requesting minor relaxations for projections into the Guideline setbacks. The minor relaxations occur on the southwest and northeast corners of the building. These projections reinforce the design concept, and the "splitting" of the building mass at its ends. By projecting into the setback, the cantilevered elements become more dramatic and take on a scale more in balance with the scale of the building.

DESIGN CONCEPT

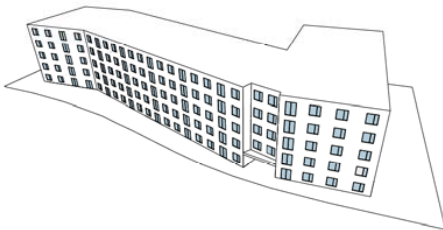
Diagrammatic Approach



- 5-storey stacked form
- simple massing and construction
- minimized jogs in envelope
- interesting form resulting from site geometry



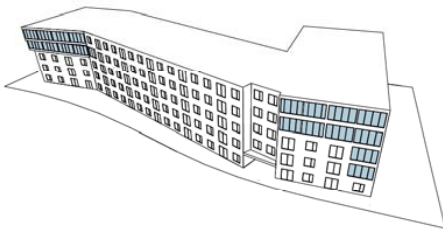
- balconies cantilevered from building face
- increasing length and randomness towards building ends



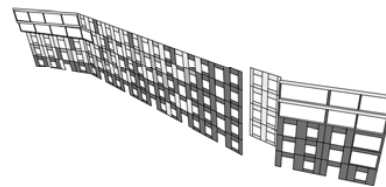
- grid of simple punched windows
- standardized, simple construction
- low window to wall ratio for energy efficient envelope



- changes in guardrail material create further variation



- areas of larger-scaled glazing at focal points
- splitting of building mass at ends and corners to break up simple building volume



- variation in panel colour further emphasizes "dissolving" of building volume towards edges

LANDSCAPE RATIONALE

Located within the new and upcoming River District neighbourhood, the public realm will reflect the character of the community and tie seamlessly into the surrounding developments.

Along Riverwalk Avenue, new street trees, layered planting along the building frontage and raised residential patios above the street will enrich the public realm experience. The private patios facing the street will be individually addressed and connected to the public sidewalk to encourage eyes on the street and foster a sense of ownership to achieve CPTED design principles.

Along the north edge of the site, a public gravel walkway is proposed to provide a continuous pedestrian corridor connecting the neighbouring sites to the east and to the west. Terraced landscape walls with evergreen planting will soften the southern edge of the public walkway and a double row of trees will establish a full canopy over the pedestrian corridor.

The large courtyard north of the building includes a variety of outdoor amenity spaces to encourage residents to enjoy the outdoors. Residents can take their cues from familiar and inviting spaces which include: children's play areas, outdoor dining and barbequing, open lawn space, and attractive seasonal gardens. The variety of different outdoor spaces will allow many groups of people to use the garden and to find places of respite, while also encouraging people to meet and socialize with their neighbours.

Sustainability points provided in the landscape plan include areas of shrub and perennial planting to reduce heat island affect and provide habitat for birds and insects. Selected plants are adaptable to temporary drought and wet periods and will be irrigated using high efficiency irrigation technology.

Regards,

Taizo Yamamoto Architect AIBC