

# REPORT

## *Climate Action, Planning and Development*

**To:** New Westminster Design Panel  
**From:** Michael Watson,  
Senior Development Planner  
**Date:** March 26, 2024  
**File:** REZ00191  
SDP00225  
**Item #:** 2024-159  
**Subject:** **811 Carnarvon St – Rezoning Application and Special Development Permit for 44 Storey Mixed-Use Development**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the New Westminster Design Panel review the design submission and provide comments for applicant and staff consideration; and

**THAT** the New Westminster Design Panel consider a motion of support or a motion requesting revisions to the project and re-presentation to the Panel.

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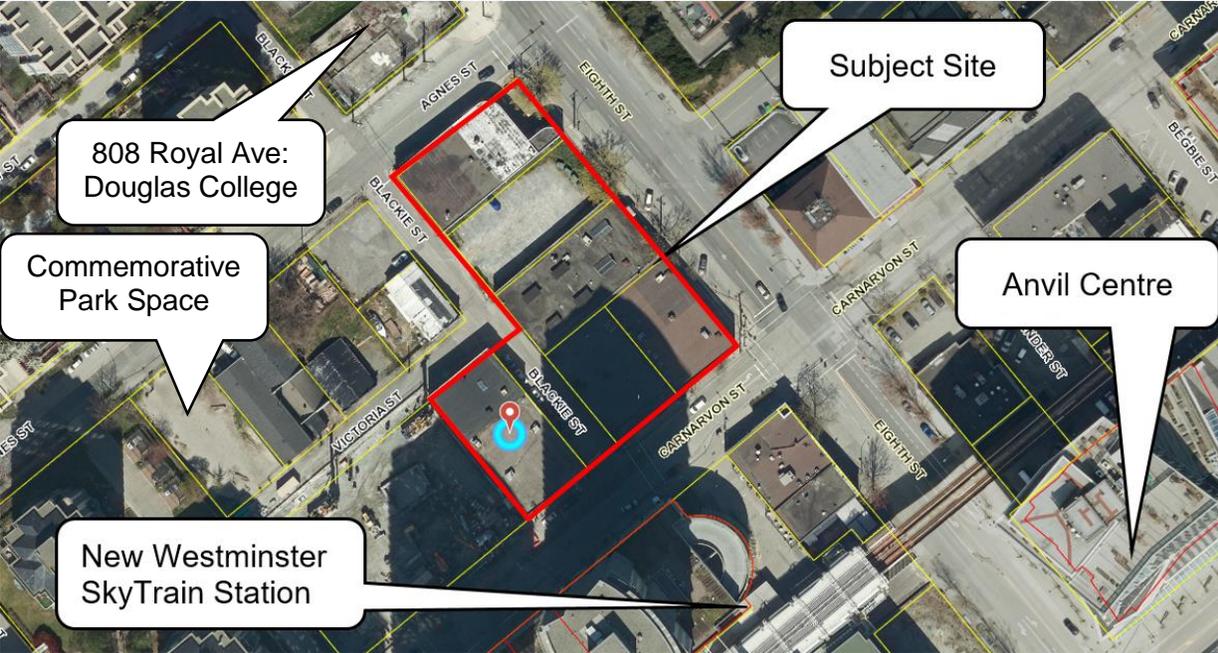
### **PURPOSE**

Rezoning and Special Development Permit applications have been received to develop a 44-storey mixed-use building at 811 Carnarvon Street. The proposal includes 469 stratified residential units, at-grade retail, a 145 room hotel and a 160 sq. metre (1,720 sq. ft.) publically accessible dog parklet.

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the New Westminster Design Panel (NWDP) on the overall project design, and to receive comments from the Panel, with special consideration given to items noted in the Design Considerations section of this report.

### **SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT**

The subject sites are 4,446 sq. m. (47,858 sq. ft.), located in the Downtown neighbourhood and are bounded by Carnarvon, Eighth, Blackie and Victoria Streets. The subject sites are located approximately 50 metres (165 feet) from the New Westminster SkyTrain Station and 85 metres (280 feet) from the Anvil Centre. A portion of Blackie Street is proposed to be purchased from the City.



Additional site context is provided in Attachment 1.

**POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

The application is consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designation for the subject property, which is Mixed Use High Density. Key policy and regulation information is summarized below and additional information is provided in Attachment 2.

**Development Permit Area**

The site is within the #1 Downtown Development and Special Development Permit Area. The Development Permit Area seeks to support the Downtown’s Regional Town Centre designation in the Regional Growth Strategy. This Development Permit Area outlines objectives and guidelines for:

- The form and character of commercial, multifamily, institutional and intensive residential development.
- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted.
- Objectives to promote energy and water conservation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

A Special Development Permit (SDP) is required before doing any work which would result in development or alteration to the lands or exterior of buildings on the lands within this portion of the Downtown. SDPs are issued by the Director of Development Services.

**Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan**

The Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan provides guidance in achieving a high quality, cohesive Downtown that honours the historical and cultural context of New Westminster. This document serves as a toolkit to inform public realm improvements both on- and off-site within the Downtown area.

The subject site is located within the Tower Precinct in the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines. This area is described as follows within the guidelines:

*The Tower Precinct will continue to develop as a highly urbanized component of New Westminster’s Downtown with the SkyTrain Station at its core. Serving as a regional destination, it is anchored by existing and developing education and commercial destinations, including Douglas College, Plaza 88 and the retail mall at the foot of Royal Ave. It is anticipated that the area will accommodate a significant share of Downtown’s residential and commercial growth.*

**Complete Streets**

Both Eighth and Carnarvon Streets have been designated as complete streets in the Downtown Transportation Plan which envisions allocating right of way space to priority modes of transportation (walking, cycling and transit). Directions in the Master Transportation Plan for complete streets include: widening sidewalks, providing boulevard and street trees, prioritizing walking, improving cycling infrastructure, prioritizing cycling, right-sizing road infrastructure, providing seating space for activation and greening and changing curbside uses, loading and, on-street parking based on priority.

Eighth Street and Agnes Street adjacent to the development have been identified as a future protected mobility lane in the [Active Transportation Network Plan \(ATNP\)](#), which anticipates improvement implementation in Year 2 of the plan (2025). The proposed development would provide opportunities for streetscape improvements on both of these key complete streets and implementation of other MTP and ATNP priorities.

**PROPOSAL**

The proposed development proposes a 44-storey mixed-use building at 811 Carnarvon Street. The proposal includes 469 stratified residential units, a 145 room hotel and 1,020 square metres (10,975 sq. ft.) of at-grade retail along Eighth and Carnarvon Street. The proposal would include a 160 sq. metre (1,720 sq. ft.) publically accessible dog parklet at the corner of Victoria and Blackie Streets and improvements to sidewalks, boulevards, seating and furniture for activation and separated bike lanes around the site including to Complete Street standards on Carnarvon and Eighth Streets.

The application includes the purchase of a portion of Blackie Street to allow the hotel use to ‘bridge’ across Blackie Street and incorporate a remainder site (811 Carnarvon Street) within the development. Public access at grade level on Blackie Street would be maintained. Private residential amenity space is proposed above retail units on Eighth

Street between the tower and the hotel portion of the building. Hotel outdoor space is proposed on the roof of the hotel portion of the building. Hotel entrances are provided from Carnarvon Street. Retail entrances are provided along Eighth and Carnarvon Streets. Residential entries are provided along Blackie Street for townhouses and on Agnes Street for the tower. This is illustrated in the “site organization plan” and “overall building massing” sheets within the applicant submission materials.

The application includes 291 residential parking spaces (inclusive of 14 accessible spaces) 24 visitor parking spaces (inclusive of 2 accessible spaces), 10 commercial retail parking spaces (inclusive of 4 accessible spaces) and 82 hotel parking spaces (inclusive of 4 accessible spaces). The application meets requirements for number of long- and short-term bicycle parking space providing 712 and 24 respectively. Appropriate Transportation Demand Management measures considering the proximity of the site to transit, are under review.

**Project Statistics**

	<b>Permitted / Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Lot Area	-	4,446 sq. m. (47,858 sq. ft.),
Site Frontage	-	90.49 metres (296.79 ft.)
Average Lot Depth	-	40.23 metres (132 ft.) to 71 metres (233 ft.)
Total FSR	5.2 FSR	9.62 FSR
Residential FSR	3.0 FSR	7.42 FSR
Hotel FSR		1.97 FSR
Retail FSR		0.23 FSR
Building Height	18.3 – 24.4 metres (60 – 80 ft.)	150.27 metres (493 ft.)
Residential Units	-	469 units
Unit Mix	Min. 25% two- and three-bedroom units Min. 5% three- or more bedrooms	1-bdr: 328 (70%) 2-bdr: 86 (18.3%) 3-bdr: 55 (11.7%)
Off-Street Parking	549	407
Residential	425	315
Hotel	110	82
Retail	14	10
Loading	4	2
Bicycle Parking		
Long-term	712	712
Short-term	24	24

**DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

The applicant’s submission package (Attachments 3 and 4) includes both an architectural and landscape design rationale and a review of the application against many of the individual guidelines from the Official Community Plan and the Tower Precinct within the [Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan](#) (DBPRDGMP).

Staff would appreciate comments from the NWDP on the proposed development, including how it responds to the guidelines within the DBPRDGMP. Some items identified by staff for consideration and feedback from the Panel are outlined in the sections below.

**Consistency with Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan.**

The applicant has provided a detailed evaluation of the proposal against key policy including the [Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan](#) (DBPRDGMP) which is included in their submission package. Some sections of the DBPRDGMP have been omitted from design rationale evaluation, including sections: 7.3.4.7 Street Activity; 7.3.4.11 Signage; 7.3.4.13 Blank Sidewalls; and 8.1.7 Public Art.

In regards to these sections, staff note:

- Signage information has been provided for direction and regulatory signage and some information related to commercial uses. Detailed information on wayfinding signage has been provided, but no locations have been proposed. The commercial signage provided is unclear as some renderings showing under canopy signage, but elevations only including modestly sized fascia signs which may not meet the needs of retail operators.
- There are several blank walls on the site in need of consideration, especially along Blackie Street which is steeply sloping.
- There may be art opportunities in several locations on-site such as the plaza at Eighth and Agnes Streets and adjacent to the dog parklet.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP regarding the application’s consistency with Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan.*

**Streetscape Interface**

Eighth and Carnarvon Streets have been designated as complete streets in the [Downtown Transportation Plan](#) (DTP) which envisions improving the overall public realm experience and providing convenient and comfortable walking and cycling connections. These streets serve as a ‘front door’ to the city for those arriving by SkyTrain and provides access to Anvil, Douglas College, Hyack Square, pedestrian crossing to the river front, etc. and carry a high volume of pedestrians. The DTP reallocates right of way space to priority modes of transportation including walking, cycling and transit.

An important consideration in streetscape design is how buildings meet the street and interface with and contribute to the public realm. This is particularly tricky on steeply sloping streets such as Eighth and Carnarvon Streets (both which have slopes over 8.3%).

In regards to Eighth Street the right of way is expected to include a sidewalk with a minimum width of 3.0 metres plus a 2.0 metre landscaped boulevard, 0.9 metre bike lane, street tress, pedestrian scale lighting, weather protection and benches and seating opportunities. A conceptual cross section from the Downtown Transportation Plan is included below

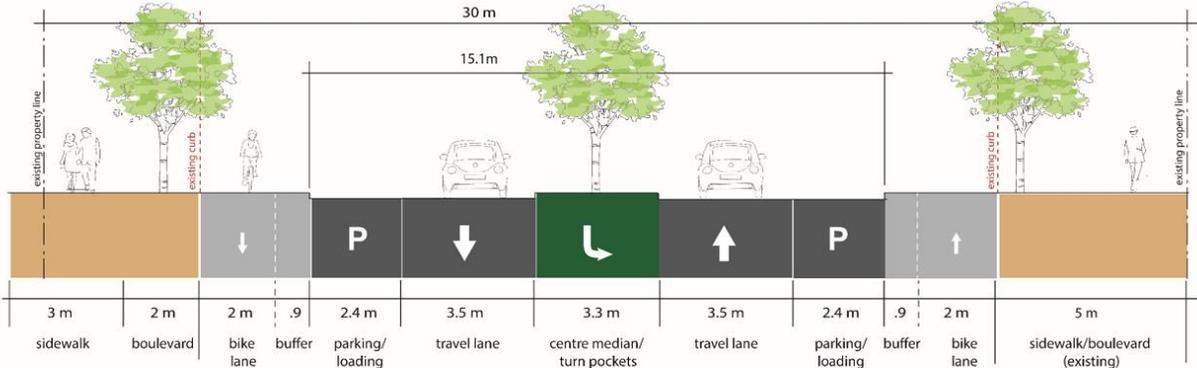


Figure 19 Potential cross section for upper Eighth Street (Royal to Carnarvon) looking north

The proposal transitions from a residential frontage at Eighth and Agnes Streets to a retail frontage at Carnarvon Street. To address grade along the retail portion of the frontage, the building has been setback 3.7 metres (12.1 feet) and has a secondary walkway parallel for access to five retail units separated from the public sidewalk by retaining walls and landscaping. There is limited space would be available for retail activities to spill outdoors into the space in front of the units and a perception of separation of the retail from the public sidewalk.

In regards to Carnarvon Street the right of way is expected to include a sidewalk with a minimum width of 2.5 metres plus a landscaped boulevard, street tress, pedestrian scale lighting, weather protection and benches and seating opportunities. A shuttle bus stop is to be provided west of Blackie Street. The applicant has proposed to set the building back 3.68 metres (12.1 feet) from the Carnarvon Street lot line. In addressing grade, a stepped approach has been used. A restaurant entry and modest patio space is included at the corner of Eighth Street and retaining walls step to a lower hotel entry and lobby further west at Blackie Street. Across Blackie Street a CRU is proposed fronting grade. The Carnarvon frontage includes a high percentage of glazing and visual permeability. Focused renderings, elevations and plan views have been provided in the applicant submission package.

Agnes Street would be the primary entrance for the residential tower. Agnes Street is identified within the as a future protected mobility lane. At this time off-site works to for the development to build the protected mobility lane have not been identified. 2.5 metre sidewalk and 2 metre wide landscaped boulevard have been identified.

Blackie Street would be the primary vehicular access to the site and would include a publically accessible dog parklet at Victoria Street and would have four townhouse units fronting the street. Minimum 2 metre wide sidewalks would be required on Blackie St frontages. The slope of the site creates some blank retaining walls along the southern portion of Blackie Street.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to how the design of this proposal addresses the streetscape around the site and in particular along Eighth and Carnarvon Streets with regard to providing a vibrant, animated, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape.*

**Building Materials and Colour Palette**

Both the Downtown Community Plan Design Guidelines seek building materials, colour palettes and architectural elements that reinforce or celebrate the overall character of the precinct in which the building is located. They also call for high quality building materials, such as stone, brick and concrete, particularly at street level.

The applicant has provided a material and colour palette that includes largely glazing for street level retail along Eighth Street. Upper portion of the building base are articulated with stone textured panels. On Carnarvon Street, again there is primarily glazing for street level hotel and retail uses and upper levels are a metal panel in a horizontal configuration in Colorado gold colouring. Upper hotel levels use brilliant silver metallic fins/panels. Townhouses fronting Blackie Street are clad with stone textured panels dark metal panels

The residential tower is primarily clad in “metal panel – arctic frost” and trimmed with grey guardrails and window/door frames. There is little variation or articulation in material colour, or massing or design.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP on the proposed building materials and colour palette in respect to best design practice and City design guidelines.*

**Building Conclusion and Skyline Contributions**

The Downtown Community Plan Design Guidelines call for reinforcement of the building conclusion (the top several floors, roof and mechanical systems) through special consideration of the form, massing, and detail for the top several floors and rooftop. Per the guidelines, rooftop mechanical and service equipment should be screened in a way that incorporates it as an integral part of the building’s architectural design.

The applicant has proposed a tower design which does not distinguish or reinforce the tower conclusion from the rest of the tower and continues a pattern of horizontal ‘Arctic Frost’ metal panels. The applicant has indicated that the design is intended to have the top dissolve into the sky.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to how the design of this proposal addresses design guidelines regarding reinforcement of the building conclusion.*

**Exterior Architectural Lighting**

Considering the height, visibility and prominence of this building on the city skyline from great distances, the applicant has been asked to consider how the building would present during dark evening and night hours. Consideration should be given to a deliberate exterior architectural illumination which is well integrated into the overall architectural design.

This approach has recently been successfully integrated into other projects in the city including 268 Nelson’s Crescent within the Brewery District development. It is expected by the City with large projects with prominent impact on the city skyline. The applicant has provided a lighting strategy which depends on glow from within the building and has included a rendering of the building in the evening within their submission package.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP on a deliberate lighting strategy which provides opportunities to enhance the building presentation on the city skyline during evening and night hours.*

**Transition to Neighbouring Properties**

The proposal is in close proximity to several towers, the closest of which would be the academic portion of the Douglas College building under development to the north at 808 Royal Avenue and the residential tower under construction at 810 Agnes Street to the west. The downtown DBPRDGMP require a tower separation of 27 metres and requires that in no case, shall it be less than 24 metres (page 64).

The applicant has proposed a separation to both building of 24 metres to the balcony edges and notes an addition 0.8 metres to the west and 0.37 metres to the north when measured to the building edge. A rationale, including mitigation measures, should be provided for further consideration of reduction of tower separation from 27 metres to 24 metres.

*Staff seeks input from the NWDP on mitigating measures which could be further considered by the applicant to provide a rationale for reduction of tower separation requirements.*

**Questions for the Design Panel’s Consideration**

In addition to seeking general comments from the NWDP in regard to the overall design of the proposed development and the above-mentioned design considerations, staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to:

1. consistency with design best practices and City guidelines, including the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan;
2. building streetscape design and interface;
3. building material and colour palette;

4. building conclusion and skyline contribution; and
5. transition to neighbouring properties and tower separation.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Site and Character Context

Attachment 2: Summary of Key Policies and Regulations

Attachment 3: Applicant's Architectural Submission Package

Attachment 4: Applicant's Landscape Submission Package

## **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:

Mike Watson, Acting Manager of Development Planning