

An earlier and similar proposal for a tower was reviewed by the NWDP on December 12, 2017. From the minutes of that meeting, the following comments were made by the design panelists of that time:

Question 1: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the design and materiality of the proposed tower and how it addresses the draft Iconic Principles and OCP Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines in order to provide for an elegant design that will contribute positively towards the New Westminster skyline.

- In general, the building meets the OCP intention – it is well thought out in terms of materiality and urban design; it addresses the iconic principles and design guidelines, and demonstrates architectural creativity;
- Appreciation was expressed for the proposed tower in terms of its massing, slenderness, and slip;
- Appreciation was expressed for the transition of the glass up the building, however further detailing on the execution of the glazing, guards and railings would be useful;
- The massing diagram provides a better illustration than the elevation drawing of the screening that wraps around the top of building, however it may be worthwhile reconciling the mix of glass and metal for an improved end result;
- The idea of ‘ghosting’ at the top could work well, however it may be worthwhile testing out what this would look like in terms of perforation;
- The white horizontal railings are very striking and could possibly be muted so that they do not stand out as much; and,
- Appreciation was expressed for the landscape design, materiality, and paving choices.

Question 2: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to how this proposal addresses Seventh Avenue and the Crosstown Greenway.

- On Seventh Avenue, ensure that the sidewalk width is adequate and usable;
- The relationship between the bike lane and the site works well; and,
- Consider investigating a change in grade level to distinguish the bike lane from the street parking areas.

Question 3: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the grade-level commercial units and how they address the streetscape along Sixth Street (Great Street), Princess Avenue, and Seventh Avenue (Crosstown Greenway).

- The project could benefit from additional lower planting to differentiate between the retail units and the sidewalk, in order to keep the area relatively open and inviting, but to keep a separation between the uses;
- Adding bike racks to the drawings would be beneficial, if the intention is to provide them;
- Consider adding more street trees to the planting plan on Sixth Street and additional seating along the Sixth Street edge;

- Consider softening the relationship between the vertical piers and the horizontal balconies above; and,
- The podium feels a little monotonous and could use more variation along the residential elevation.

Question 4: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the proposed privately-owned, publically accessible plaza that is proposed at the corner of Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue.

- The plaza area is a generous size and works well with the adjacent amenity area;
- If a regular activation of the public plaza (e.g. with market stalls) does not come to fruition, the area may remain very empty;
- Explore finding a balance between providing opportunity for events and providing permanent seating, planting and lighting;
- Activating the plaza space could be very seasonal, therefore adding elements such as seating and greenery may draw the public into the space at all times of year; and,
- The location of the amenity space near the entry provides a good opportunity for activation along the site edge.

Question 5: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the proposed ground-level indoor amenity area and the proposed green wall and how this interfaces with Seventh Avenue (Crosstown Greenway).

- The ground level indoor amenity area has the potential to be very nice if the proposed vines are successfully grown and area able to flourish;
- Ensure that the green screen glass will be easily cleaned; and,
- Variation in the green screen planting will likely help with filling out the wall, but it may take some time.

Further general comments were noted by the Design Panel:

- Overall, the proposed tower is well-conceived;
- Appreciation was expressed for the attention to details in the package and presentation;
- Consider resolving the residential lobby space as it appears to be a very tight space, which is recessed and not prominent enough;
- Look at adding additional seating in the lobby entrance so that it appears more inviting;
- The black cladding lands bluntly and it may be worthwhile terminating it at the retail level to demarcate the lobby location;
- Consider providing larger units on the west side of the building where there are large balconies, as these could be ideal for family-oriented uses;

- Consider working with the City in regard to ensuring that the existing trees to the West of the building will survive, and possibly provide more planting in order to screen the RCC ramp from the adjacent units, as the RCC ramp can be very loud and disruptive;
- In the loading area, consider adding some planting and paving to follow the lines of the building so there is some variation when looking down onto the area;
- At the podium level, the larger deck spaces could be filled with more planting;
- At level four, some of the areas adjacent to the community planters seem rather bare and could use more seating or planting;
- The seating area near the fire pit is located near to a third bedroom, so it would be worthwhile to consider screening or reorienting the seating in this area; and,
- Consider adding some privacy screening near the residential unit which is adjacent to the amenity space.

MOVED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project, with consideration of the comments.

NOT SECONDED.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project and have the applicant work with Staff to reconsider the residential lobby, the plaza at the corner and the podium.

CARRIED.

All members of the Panel present voted in favour of the motion.

Changes to the design of the high rise tower were made to staff's satisfaction. In 2019, the project was brought to Public Hearing, with all bylaws adopted.

The 2022 application maintains the form and character of the approved design while adding a stepped-back fourth level to the podium and expanding the tower floorplate to 750 square metres (8,073 square feet).

PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of a 24,634 square metres (265,162 square feet), 29 storey, mixed use building with commercial uses at grade along Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue (see preliminary Project Drawings – Appendix 2). There would be 338 secured market rental residential units within the development, of which 10 units would be near-market units. The proponent is working with the City to partner with a 3rd party operator, to manage the affordable units. All units will have private balconies. There would be common outdoor amenity areas located at the ground-level and on the fourth level on top of the podium roof. The number of at-grade commercial units will depend on the commercial tenants who will occupy this spaces and uses permitted within these units would be based on those allowed within the original C-3 zoning (restaurants, cafes, retail, etc.).

Off-site underground parking would be provided at the rear of the site with vehicle access off of Princess Street. There would be a lobby area off of Seventh Avenue.

The project would also contribute to this portion of the Sixth Street “Great Street” through the provision of a privately owned, publically accessible plaza area and streetscape improvements (hard and soft landscaping) along the property frontages. The project also proposes a 4.98m setback from the property line which would provide additional public realm space in front of the commercial units. The plaza space would need to provide for public access through a statutory right-of-way agreement. Both architectural and landscape drawings have been attached to this report – **see Appendix “A”**.

Proposal Data*

	Permitted/Required	Proposed
Existing Site Area (gross)	3,233 sq.m. (34,800.9 sq.ft.)	3,233 sq.m. (34,800.9 sq.ft.)
Site Frontage	80.36 m. (263.6 ft.)	80.36 m. (263.6 ft.)
Lot Depth	40.26 m. (132.1 ft.)	40.26 m. (132.1 ft.)
Floor Space Ratio	Total: 6.46 FSR	Total: 7.41 FSR
Floor Area (gross)	20,472 sq.m. (220,361 sq.ft.)	24,634 sq.m. (265,162sq.ft.)
Residential Site Coverage	65%	45%
Building Height	90.83 m. (298.0 ft.)	90.83 m. (298.0 ft.)
Residential Units	237 units total (142 strata units and 95 secured market rental units)	338 units total (338 secured market rental units) including 10 below-market units
Unit Mix and Family-Friendly Housing	<u>Of 338 Residential Units:</u> 2- and 3-BDR: min. 30% (101 units) 3 BDR: min. 5% (17 units)	<u>Secured Market Rental</u> Studio: 58 (17%) 1 BDR: 160 (47%) 2 BDR: 92 (27%) 3 BDR: 28 (8%) Total: 338 Units

Parking	Total Provided = 313 spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applicant proposing shared parking between commercial and residential visitor - 26 spaces - Applicant proposing 4 car share spaces - Disabled Access Parking provided as per Zoning Bylaw requirements 	Total Provided = 271 spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applicant proposing shared parking between commercial and residential visitor - 20 spaces - Applicant proposing 5 car share spaces - Disabled Access Parking provided as per Zoning Bylaw requirements - 30% reduction achieved through TDM measures
Loading	1 space	2 space
Bicycle Parking	Long Term = 298 Short Term = 18	Long Term = 526 Short Term = 18

* Project data has been provided by the applicant and has not yet been subject to City technical review. Staff considers this reasonable given the New Westminster Design Panel is intended to be focused on design issues, not on land use and density.

Amenity Areas

The proposal includes indoor amenity spaces on the ground level and fourth level that are both connected to common outdoor amenity areas on each respective level. The common outdoor amenity areas are located on the podium level (inclusive of seating areas, outdoor kitchen, fireplaces, multi-purpose turf area and playground) and ground level near the main entrance lobby area on Seventh Avenue (inclusive of seating, and an private outdoor dog run).

CONTEXT

Site Characteristics and Context

The site consists of two parcels with frontages along Sixth Street, Princess Street, and Seventh Avenue. The lots currently contain existing commercial buildings (two storey height) which are leased. Directly to the north of the subject site is a two-storey commercial building (Rexall Drugstore), the New Westminster United Reform Church, and Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church. To the west of the site is a 10 storey mixed-use building with retail at grade and residential above (2.84 FSR) and a three storey commercial building. To the south of the site is the Royal Centre Mall and a 22 storey multi-unit residential building (2.56 combined FSR between shopping centre and multi-unit residential). To the east of the site are a 14 storey multi-unit residential building (3.08 FSR) and a 24 storey multi-unit residential building (2.92 FSR).

Sustainability Considerations

The proposal will meet the City's Energy Step Code requirements, and is designed as a LEED Gold building. The proposal also aligns with the City's sustainability objectives in terms of creating a more intensive use of land to support local businesses and a net increase in the City's property tax base.

Proximity to Transit Service

There is a bus stop located in front of the site on Sixth Street, which is part of the Frequent Transit Network with regular bus service.

POLICY CONTEXT

Official Community Plan

Land Use Designation

The subject property is designated (MH) Mixed Use - High Rise. The purpose of this designation is to provide for low-mid and high-rise commercial or commercial and mixed use buildings which would create active and engaging streets. This proposal would be consistent with the designation.

Development Permit Area

The subject property is located within the Uptown Mixed Use Node Development Permit Area. The intent of this DPA designation is to "facilitate new commercial and mixed use development, with active commercial uses oriented towards the principle streets: Sixth Street, Sixth Avenue, and Belmont Avenue. This area is designated with the following purposes:

- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, mixed use and multi-family development,
- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems, and biological diversity,
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.

A copy of the proposed DPA guidelines for the Uptown Mixed Use Node are included as **Appendix "B"** to this report.

Zoning Bylaw

The subject property is zoned as a Comprehensive Development District (616 and 640 Sixth Street) (CD-80). The intent of the CD-80 zone aligns with the updated project design, allowing for a large-site high rise, mixed use commercial and residential development. The proposal includes pedestrian-oriented commercial businesses and multi-family residential. While the current text amendment application is consistent with the intent of the 2019 rezoning, the following changes to the project are proposed:

- Increase in the number of secured market rental housing units from 237 to 338 (i.e., increase of 101 units)
- Increase in density from 6.46 FSR to 7.41 FSR (i.e., increase of 0.95 FSR, or 15%)
- A 15% increase in the tower floorplate from the originally approved 650.3 square metres (7,000 sq. ft.), which was reviewed by the NWDP. The City subsequently approved an increase to 689 square metres (7,414 sq. ft.) in support of converting the building to 100% rental units. The current floorplate is proposed at 750 square metres/ 8,073 square feet).
- Increase in the height of the podium from three to four storeys with the proposed fourth story being set back 3 metres (10 feet).
- decrease in the off-street parking from 313 to 271 parking stalls.

As a result, this proposal requires a Rezoning application.

Secured Market Rental Housing Policy

The project proposes to provide 100% secured market rental housing and support the City's objective of increasing the supply of rental housing and ensuring security of tenure over time. Should this proposal proceed, the applicant would be required to enter into a Housing Agreement as a condition of rezoning.

Family Friendly Housing Policy

The proposed building would need to provide family-friendly housing units in accordance with the Family-Friendly Housing Bylaw. As evident in Proposal Data, the project exceeds the requirements of the Family Friendly Housing

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Urban Design

The applicant has provided a Design Rationale which also includes a massing overview, shadow study, view analysis, details on site circulation, and precedent images (see Appendix A – Pages x to x). The key features of the proposed development include:

- Twenty five (25) storey Residential tower located at the top of a four storey podium (stepback above podium level provided as per OCP Guidelines). Height of overall development is twenty-nine (29) storeys.
- Building line setback provided along Sixth Street in order to provide area for commercial uses to spill out onto street without impacting sidewalk movement and to facilitate streetscape improvements along Sixth Street

- Commercial units with demising walls that can be adjusted based on leasing space requirements of commercial tenants (to allow flexibility for businesses of various sizes). Applicant proposing to create better distinction between the CRU units given the long length of the site along the Sixth street frontage site through the use of signage, and entrance recesses.
- Privately-owned, publically-accessible plaza located at the corner of Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue (Crosstown Greenway) with space for programmed events (i.e. outdoor market or other community events).
- Indoor amenity areas that open up onto outdoor amenity areas (at ground level and top of podium level).
- Landscaped plantings at the ground level as well as podium and top level.

Tower Design

The City has developed a set of draft design guidelines for Iconic Towers within the City. These principles include the following:

Design Principles for Iconic Towers

1. *Exhibit Significant and recognizable architectural creativity and excellence while contributing to the strength and beauty of the city's skyline*
2. *Contribute to a strong urban design concept in relation to the surrounding buildings, streetscape and open space context*
3. *Have a form that is slender, sleek, and clean in its overall configuration. Groups of iconic buildings should relate to each other such that they read as a unified cluster rather than simply as individually-designed structures*
4. *Have a modern character, providing an urban design contrast which would enhance the heritage character of the overall city*
5. *Use high-quality architectural materials such as large surfaces of glass, white-toned walls of metal and stone or high-quality painted concrete*
6. *Consider roof forms that add to the iconic quality of a building and / or grouping of buildings. At the street level, sweeping steel and glass canopies should provide both weather protection for outdoor uses and an iconic base element to the building*

7. *Sit within a ground plane that is designed to complement and enhance the tower design. For example, the use of water and fountains is encouraged at the base of the buildings, as well as generous tree planting and well-designed paving, walkways and spaces to site and be entertained.*
8. *Locate functions on the ground floor that animate the public experience of the site with outdoor retailing, restaurant patios, and displays.*

The high rise tower at this location – which has already been approved at 29 storeys in height – will potentially be one the tallest that is developed within the Uptown Area. As such, it has been recognized throughout the development review processes associated with the subject property that it's important that the architectural design (including materials) contributes positively towards the city skyline. Design panelists and staff worked through a number of design issues (see Background section, above) with the original rezoning process. This included efforts to ensure that the tower would address the principles noted above, in addition to the Uptown Mixed Use Node DPA guidelines.

Streetscape

As per Section 180 of the Zoning Bylaw, there is a building line setback requirement along Sixth Street of 2.13 metres (7 feet) to accommodate future road widening along the west side of Sixth Street (from the north side of Carnarvon Street to south side of Eighth Avenue). The applicant will be required to provide a statutory right of way to the building line setback requirement, upgrade the sidewalk and install street trees along the Sixth Street frontage.

Sixth Street is identified as a “Great Street” within the Master Transportation Plan (MTP). As per the MTP, Great Streets “require planning and design that goes beyond the typical street function of supporting through traffic. Planning and Designing Great Streets means providing characteristics that make streets destinations – places for people to be, instead of places to move through.” The project needs to be considered in light of the MTP objectives of making Sixth Street a “Great Street” in regard to streetscape improvements (sidewalks, landscaped boulevards, etc.), building setbacks, and other design aspects.

The project also has a frontage along Princess Street which is also an important consideration in regard to how the proposal fits within this streetscape context, especially given that vehicular access to the building will be located off of this side of the site. It is important that the project address Princess Street for a pedestrian and vehicle perspective. The applicant is proposing to provide for a landscaped boulevard and sidewalk along this frontage, with the sidewalk located closer to the building in order to create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Seventh Avenue (Crosstown) Greenway

The subject property is located along the Seventh Avenue Greenway. This is an important pedestrian and cycling route within the city and it is important that any proposed development on this site provides a good commercial/public realm interface and the necessary streetscape improvements. The proposal responds to the Greenway through the provision of commercial units which are oriented towards Seventh Avenue and the corner of Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue, ensuring that there is only pedestrian and vehicular access to the building off of Seventh Avenue, provision of short term bicycle parking for residents and the ground-level commercial units, landscaping improvements, and the provision of a privately-owned, publically-accessible plaza area at the corner of Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue.

Question for the Design Panel's Consideration

The previous NWDP review on December 12, 2017 provided feedback to the then-applicant and the same design firm in regard to the overall design of the proposed application and the design considerations noted above (e.g., urban design, tower design, streetscape, Crosstown Greenway).

The purpose of this NWDP review is more narrow in scope. Staff has identified the following questions for the NWDP to provide specific response to:

- 1) *Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the design of the four storey podium, and how the design team have addressed the challenges of adding a fourth level to the podium.*
- 2) *Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the size of the new tower floorplate, which was generally supported by the Land Use and Planning Committee in March 2022, given the NWDP's previous "appreciation expressed for the proposed tower in terms of its massing, slenderness, and slip."*

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Project Drawings (including Design Rationale) dated 25/03/22

Appendix B: Uptown Mixed Use Node Development Permit Area (DPA) Guidelines

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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