



## **Design Rationale**

- **General Project Background**

The proposed project seeks to maximize density and height on the site, to the extent that an appropriate response to the surrounding context and the City will accept. The corner site on the northeast corner of Hornby and Drake Streets is small at 14,955 sf, and surrounded by taller and larger projects. To the east is 41 storey 'Tate', nearing completion, and across Drake Street to the south is 31 storey 'Salt'. Burrard Place to the west across Hornby is under construction and when complete will be a dominant neighbourhood landmark at 53 storeys. The north property line is shared with 'Pure', a 15 storey mixed use project that sits only 25 feet from the common property line.

Given the close proximity to other buildings, it was understood at the outset of the project that any redevelopment in tower form would have to be tall, elegant and slender, and demonstrate a character that would make it 'stand out in a crowd'. The project was seen as an opportunity to demonstrate that redevelopment of small sites is not only feasible, but can enhance the built environment through unique and original architecture.

The challenge to achieve feasibility has been much more difficult than anticipated, primarily due to two significant encumbrances on the property that were not fully anticipated at the outset. To achieve the City-mandated 80 foot separation between towers, a setback on the north side of the property had to be increased from the typical 40 feet to 55 feet, due to the atypical proximity of 'Pure' to the common property line. This condition meant that the tower floor plate of the proposal could not be much greater than 5,000 sf, which limits efficiency and the number of suites per level. It also forced a 2 versus 3 elevator solution, to keep the core as small as possible.

Even so, a practical floorplate size proved impossible when responding to adjacencies, and without intrusion into the lane setback. City staff acknowledged this, and suggested that a lane setback relaxation could be considered, conditional on maintaining an 80 foot tower separation to the 'Tate' tower across the lane, which is nearing completion. Responding to the geometry of the 'Tate' façade, the current parallelogram floorplate configuration was developed, which intrudes into the lane setback while pulling back from the street corner, thereby increasing penetration of daylight to the lower facades of all buildings fronting the intersection, and enhancing their outlook.

The second parameter came later in the process. The applicant was always committed to providing some form of community benefit, and in response to early recommendations of the City, proposed in the original scheme the provision of a daycare facility. Ultimately, this was seen by all participants as impractical on such a small site, and City direction shifted to request provision of a minimum 10,000 sf cultural amenity space in the podium. This condition introduced an exciting aspect not typical of many downtown projects, wherein the street facades could express the unique design character possible in a public culture-focused use. Provision of the gallery space has become a signature cornerstone of the project, a use that will animate the intersection and the Hornby street façade. Further, with the gallery space providing a defining component of the project, an artistic composition of the podium was pursued to further reinforce creative expression.

The thesis which has resulted is a careful balance of practicality and original expression. A tall and slender tower rises out of an artfully composed podium, crowned by an articulated top intended to be an interesting addition to the skyline while capping the form of the floorplate. The goal to achieve originality has been tempered by a quest for efficiency in construction and spatial layout, in order to address financial and functional constraints. The two distinct uses housed in the lower levels of the podium – the main residential



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lobby and the public gallery space – have been considered with equal importance, and exist in close juxtaposition while maintaining clarity of separation and access.

- **Response to City Guidance**

The proposal has been strongly shaped by dialogue convened with City staff in the 2 years leading to the formal Rezoning Submission. Modifications to the original concept in direct response to City requirements have included:

- Development of a small floorplate which responds to 80 foot tower separation requirements, but intrudes into the lane setback.
- Reduction in proposed height from 38 to a maximum of 35 partial floors (34 inhabited). Height ascends from a low point at 30 floors in the northwest corner. Shaping of the height responds to adjacencies and consideration of skyline impact, while height has considered overshadowing on the rooftop amenity of Burrard Place.
- Acknowledgement by the applicant that more refinement may be required for the top of the building during the DP stage. As presented, the elevator core, which protrudes through the angled roof planes has been sculpted and terraced to minimize bulk while offering an attractive composition when viewed from taller surrounding buildings. Care has been taken to integrate mechanical equipment and maintain the dominance of the angled roof planes to provide added interest on the skyline, and a contrast to the massing of adjacent buildings.
- Accommodation of a 10,000 sf cultural amenity space within the ground, mezzanine and second levels of the podium. This includes through-site indoor access from the gallery's main entry on Hornby Street to the lane 'courtyard' and a route to the gallery spaces within 'Tate' beyond.
- Refinement of the corner exposure of the gallery to maximize transparency on the street façade.
- Clear definition and separation of the entry points for the amenity space (on Hornby Street and from the lane) and the residential lobby. The latter fronts Drake Street and the vehicular drop off courtyard adjacent the lane.
- Provision of separate elevators for both the amenity space and below-grade bicycle storage.
- Provision of separate garbage/recycling rooms and parking for the amenity and residential use.

- **Rationale for Specific Project Components**

In addition to the direction provided by City staff to date, the design thesis has aimed to respond to the Downtown South Guidelines while creating a distinctive building, one that respects the neighbouring context while establishing a recognizable identity of its own. The comprehensive Pre-Rezoning letter submitted to City staff on June 6, 2018 (appended) provides detailed rationale for some aspects of the design, and explains reasoning for some of the design evolution. A concise rationale follows, referencing applicable City guideline criteria.

The overall massing is comprised of a 5-level podium fronting Hornby and Drake Streets, topped by a tall, slender, and distinctive tower which culminates in an ascending crown ranging from 30 to 35 levels above grade. The top of the building aims to emphasize the unique parallelogram shape of the typical tower floor plate. The tower form is further emphasized by corner balconies, expressed as signature 'vertebrae' through the length of the tower and a unique sloping roof treatment. Unlike many towers in downtown, and in response to evolving energy management, slabs are not overtly expressed (except at the thermally broken balconies), and the tower has been conceived as a continuous shaft, clad in metal panels of varying colours to achieve a subtle dappling effect (to be considered in more detail at the DP stage). Fenestration is grouped in randomly arranged vertical expression to emphasize the verticality of the tower, a theme continued in various massing components projecting from the primary faces of the tower.



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The tower massing is integrated with podium elements at various levels of the podium, so as to minimize the effect of a tower placed 'on top of' a podium form. The podium has also been shaped to highlight the public amenity/gallery space and frame the laneway courtyard, which aims to complete the courtyard of 'Tate' opposite, creating a sense of place at the southern terminus of the lane, and opportunity for vehicular drop-off for both the eastern amenity entry and the residential lobby. Entry portals are boldly expressed to identify the distinctly separate entrance points of the gallery and the residential lobby. Glazing in the podium emphasizes the horizontal, or is framed by the entry portals, in contrast to the verticality of the tower. Light and sun control in the podium glazing will be provided by horizontally-expressed sunscreens. The roof of the podium beyond the tower footprint is landscaped as part of the residential amenity space and will introduce foliage as 'green relief' to the lower portion of the design. Foliage is also introduced at various terrace points and in the upper roof terraces of the 2 large penthouse suites.

- **General Design Considerations**

The design offers a distinctive aesthetic which acknowledges and compliments the general character of the neighbourhood. The angled tower form offers view relief to both 'Salt' and 'Burrard Place' while emphasizing the corner exposure of the gallery, and connection of the tower to grade. A high proportion of suites are corner units owing to the diminutive size of the floorplate. These will afford excellent outlook and enhance ventilation. Exposure and security is maximized on the three exposed sides of the design, and entrances are all weather protected.

- **Uses**

Mid to upper-range strata-residential is the primary proposed use via the provision of 159 market suites, offering a ratio of 63% one-bedrooms, and 37% 2-bedrooms or larger. Layouts are constrained by the configuration of the site, but have aimed for functionality and variety, while responding to outlook, setback and privacy needs. The maximum 10.3 FSR being sought to achieve economic viability is balanced by the provision of a valuable community amenity space, the only other proposed use on the site, and a cornerstone of the design thesis. Loading is shared between both uses, and parking/bicycle requirements for each use are met within the 6 below-grade levels.

- **Architectural Components**

All design elements aim to respond to City design guidelines, wherever feasible, especially with regard to sculpted roof forms, definition of entrances, identity and separation of uses, animation of the street facades, integrated balcony expression (some are enclosed), respect for adjacent street walls (and continuation thereof), and enhancement of the lane. Elemental details of materiality, lighting, rooftop sculpting and canopies are, amongst others, features that the applicant anticipates will be further refined during the DP stage.

- **Open Space and Landscaping**

Provision and enhancement of Open Space has been maximized within the limitations of the site. Sidewalk landscaping to City standards will be provided along the street facades, complemented by both hard architectural features and soft landscaping. A columnar tree is proposed for the laneway courtyard, which is flanked where possible by areas of soft landscaping. The roof of the podium introduces green enhancement to the lower portions of the design, and is recalled at various terraces throughout the height of the building.



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### **Summary**

The applicant is enthused to realize this unique project, which is proposed as a synthesis of feasibility and originality. Every aspect of the design has sought to respond to the guidance of the City and an ambition to compliment the neighbourhood with a thesis that is both memorable and compatible with the surrounding context. Moreover, the provision of a significant public amenity, conceived in direct response to the needs of the City's Cultural Services Department, will help establish a legacy of use and identify within the community, an objective that will only be possible with the proposed lift in density and relaxation of the height. The applicant looks forward to working closely with City staff to achieve the goals of the proposed Rezoning Submission.

Yours truly,

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