



PARCEL 2 STATS

Usage: West building is market housing. East building is non-market family housing.
Materials: Fritted glass and cementitious panels.

West Building

138,800 SF
13 Stories
127 Suites

East Building

87,100 SF
5 Stories
84 Suites

One of two parcels that includes non-market family housing, Parcel 2 is also distinctive because of its cladding: “spring green” fritted (enameled) glass panels attached with stainless steel studs. Glass and brick were chosen for their local availability and reduced carbon footprint.

A market building overlooks Hinge Park on the west side of the parcel. The non-market building wraps around the other three sides of the courtyard. “We sought a seamless mix of the two,” says Stu Lyon of gBL Architects, “such that you wouldn’t be able to identify a market building versus a non-market building when you’re walking through the Village.”

A “seamless mix” of market housing and non-market (social) housing.



The units on the wings of the non-market building have exterior corridors, giving residents fresh air on both sides of their suites. West-facing windows include sun shades and rain barrels collect water for gardening. A spacious glassed oval lobby creates a “ceremonial front door.”

“Building this has been a fascination and a love – we really got to figure out how to make these concepts work,” says Tom Bell of gBL, designer of the non-market building. “One of the things I love is that I can imagine people living there, and enjoying it, and that they have a better life. It feels good.”



North elevation of Parcel 2 as seen from Walter Hardwick Avenue.

The Friendly Roof

“On a typical building, the roof is a dead zone,” says Bell. “But on this [non-market] building, the roof has been designed for people. You can walk along your exterior corridor to an outdoor staircase, and go to the roof at any time.”

The centre section of Parcel 2’s non-market building (social housing) has an extensive green roof that traps and slows stormwater, protects the rooftop membrane and adds to the insulation value. The buildings’ two wings feature accessible areas where residents can garden, picnic or just pass the time outdoors.

“It’s there as part of the social sustainability of the building,” says Bell. “Kids can play on the roof, people can grow vegetables there. In other buildings, you go from underground parking, up an elevator into a dark corridor to your unit. With this building, you have a safe place that’s not the street and not your house. It’s like a front yard where people can gather, a place where you can get some connectivity you don’t get on most buildings’ roofs. I believe it will be the social centre of the building.”



Perspectives of Parcel 2, showing fritted glass panels and playground courtyard. An eight-foot visor system (far right) shields the building’s parapet from rainwater, increasing material longevity. Water collected on the visor flows to rooftop rain barrels and a cistern in the parkade, to be used for garden irrigation and toilet flushing.

“I decided to treat the subject of rain falling on buildings, since that’s such an issue in Vancouver,” says architect Tom Bell. The visor, green roof and garden rain barrels provide “a visible demonstration of how water can be collected and used for purposes other than going down the drain.”