



PARCEL 5 STATS

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

West Building

40,000 SF
8 Stories
62 Suites

East Building

83,900 SF
7 Stories
89 Suites

Retail

9,000 SF
2 Stories

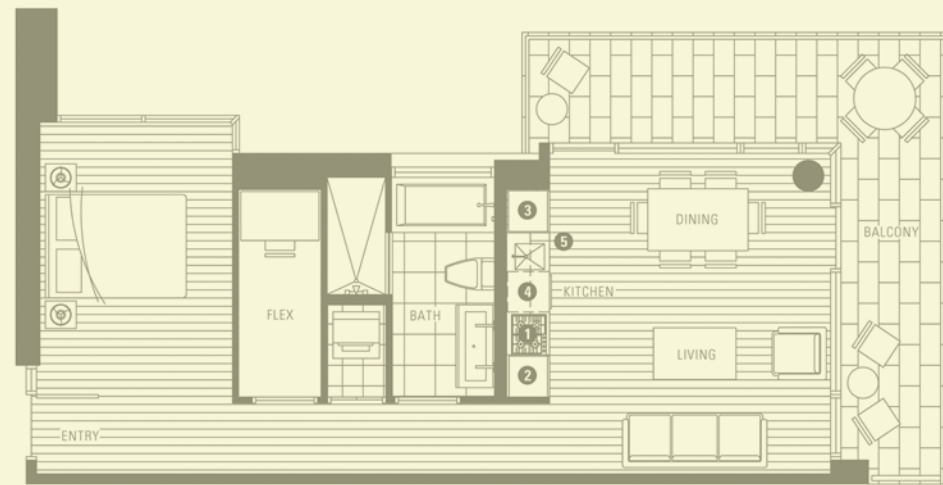
The smallest parcel in terms of total floor space, Parcel 5 also mixes non-market family housing (the building on the centre and west of the parcel) with market housing (the building on the east edge of the parcel). At the southwest corner, Pocket Park offers a green refuge and will feature the Canron gantry crane as a reminder of the site’s industrial heritage. Rooftop gardens offer residents another outdoor amenity.

Unit sizes for non-market housing are dictated by BC Housing. For the market building, however, gBL decided to add some lower-priced units to the

Olympic Village mix. “We developed a small unit on Parcel 5,” says Stu Lyon of gBL. “We were looking to make a point of difference there by designing a market unit averaging around 565 square feet. They’re through units [opening to the outdoors on both sides] so those were fun to do, a little different.”

Parcel 5’s market building also hosts two storeys of retail space facing east to the Salt Building. The commercial façade will be highlighted with red awnings over shop windows, matching similar awnings on Parcel 9’s commercial windows.

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One of many suite variations on Parcel 5, this one offering one bedroom plus “flex,” with 630 square feet of indoor living space and 198 square feet of balcony.

Designing the Social Experience

Stu Lyon oversaw design across the gBL parcels (2, 5 and 9), focusing on connections between buildings as well as the structures themselves. “We tried to add some assets we expect in single-family neighbourhoods,” he says. “You walk along the sidewalk under boulevard trees, say hi to a neighbour, pick up a toy and move it out of the way, enter a front door that is personalized. We tried to bring that feeling into the buildings.

“We’ve always said maybe we could engineer vertical streets instead of cold elevator lobbies and dark corridors. So our corridors are very animated. They’re all daylight, so you know what the weather is outside

and you can see people on the street and they can see in. We wanted those good feelings of the street indoors.

“On the street, there’s always interest and animation: individual residences with windows and porches and stairs; patios and barbecues; storefronts; interesting lobbies that are very permeable, very glassy.”

“I think [this type of design] is pioneering,” says Lyon. “It’s interesting socially and from a livability point of view. But there’s nothing particularly iconic about it; it’s really just a great backdrop and hopefully a great place to live.”



Elevation drawings show Parcel 5’s buildings as seen from the north on Walter Hardwick Avenue (bottom) and from the east on Manitoba Street. Inset detail of the scale model shows the colour palette of deep orange and dark greys. Construction photos taken August 2009.

PROFILE

Tom Bell

MAIBC, MRAIC
PRINCIPAL, gBL ARCHITECTS

Tom Bell started his career with a degree in environmental design at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Encompassing multiple disciplines – architecture, interior design, industrial design – it was also heavily influenced by the nascent environmental movement of the time. “We learned how to do environmental sensitivity analysis,” he says. “It gave me a very strong interest in environmental protection.”

Bell then studied architecture at the University of Calgary Faculty of Environmental Design and worked in Calgary for 14 years, coming to Vancouver in 1989.

Bell greatly enjoyed enhancing the sustainability performance of his building in the Olympic Village. “I haven’t had the chance to do a fully functional green roof to this extent before,” he says. “We’ve learned all sorts of valuable things that we’ll take to the next project.”

Bell says it will be difficult to go back to designing standard buildings. “I saw a building in Kelowna recently with this huge glazed element out front. It looked nice, but with 30 degree weather it was introducing this huge solar gain into the building. Those buildings are going to go extinct because we can’t afford them anymore, on any level. They’re the dodo birds of the past.”

A profile of Stu Lyon was published in Chapter Two.