

1698 West Georgia

(Application Approved)

Nearly two years after it acquired the property for \$72 million, local developer Anthem Properties submitted a rezoning application to turn the former Chevron gas station site on West Georgia at the border of the West End and Coal Harbour districts into a new residential building.

The proposal calls for a 326-ft-tall, 33-storey tower at 1698 West Georgia Street — the southeast corner of the intersection of West Georgia Street and Bidwell Street. There would be 127 residential strata units, with the unit mix consisting of one studio unit, 24 one-bedroom units, 71 two-bedroom units, and 31 three-bedroom units.

“The facade design takes inspiration from the fine textures on the mountain rocks, made by numerous facets and cracks,” reads the architect’s design rationale. “Gently twisting in profile, subtly varying in colour, the uniquely designed vertical facade fins help break up the monotony and the severity of an all-glass tower and create a dynamic facade that animates the building through different views and angles of sunlight.”

While recently approved it was not without some controversy regarding its reduced height of 326 feet. City staff mandated the proponents to cut the tower’s allowable height of 385 ft — as prescribed by the city’s West End Community Plan — to 326 ft, amounting to a reduction of 59 ft or about six storeys. This was done to reduce the shadowing on Marina Square Park, located about 160 ft to the north of the tower site.

In his closing comments, the Mayor said he had prepared a motion to send the proposal back to city staff for reconsideration for additional height, but ultimately decided not to as it would add to delays on what has already been a lengthy review process for the proponents. “I do agree with some of the callers that we only have so many opportunities to densify downtown, and this would’ve been a good one,” said Stewart. “I’m hopeful that in the future, if we have choices to make like this, we don’t take the policy as law, which it isn’t, and that staff would consult with local residents through the regular process to see if there would be any flexibility in the application of the shadowing policies... I worry about missing opportunities.”

Additional density through height would have also served to provide more public benefits to the West End.

New York City-based Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), with Chris Dikeakos Architects as the architect of record, is behind the design of the tower. KPF's past work includes the new 5 World Trade Centre tower in NYC and International Commerce Centre in Hong Kong.



