

MASTERPLANNED COMMUNITY NEW WATER, VANCOUVER CANADA



AUCKLAND
DESIGN MANUAL

TE PUKA WHAKAIAIRANGA | A TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU

BUILDINGS + SITES // HOUSING CASE STUDY

New Water
Vancouver, Canada

OVERVIEW

This award-winning four storey apartment is part of the River District master planned development for 15,000 people on previous industrial land fronting the Fraser River in Vancouver. The building is the entry to a new community on the edge of the city.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The building is the first in an area named Pier Point. The wider area will include shops, schools, daycare, parks and a community center. The master plan is based on large rectangular blocks running in a east-west direction, giving the long sides a north-south orientation.

This building covers the entire block and maximizes development opportunity. The block is U-shaped, with the wings having double loaded apartments accessed via an internal corridor. Apartments are all single level with either one and two (and a small number of three) bedroom units. Apartment at ground floor level are all access from the footpath and street (in addition to an internal corridor route), and have small patio spaces raised about 1m above street level. The horizontal and vertical separation from the street provides a sufficient distinction between the public and private realms.

The U-shaped building wraps around a courtyard space, open to a rear walk and cycle way. This courtyard is accessible to residents for recreation use, vegetable gardening, and via a booking system, for events. The design meets the BuiltGreen rating LEED GOLD standard, derived from materials used in the construction, energy saving devices with hot water and heating supplied by the developer owned local District Energy Utility. One parking space per apartment is provided in a basement garage, accessed via a driveway on the east side of the building. Each building also includes a car share vehicle to promote travel share.



A four storey apartment building.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

HOUSING TYPE APARTMENTS	DENSITY 210 dwellings/ha	ARCHITECT & DESIGN TEAM SHIFT ARCHITECTURE; POLYGON INTERIOR DESIGN	YEAR COMPLETED 2012
SITE AREA 7486 m²	PROJECT TYPE 4 STOREY APARTMENTS 157 Apartments across two buildings 1 bedroom range from 656 - 678 sq. ft. 2 bedroom range from 861 – 1055 sq. ft. 3 bedroom range from 1055-1087 sq. ft.	CLIENT/DEVELOPER POLYGON REALTY LTD	PRICE BAND MEDIUM
	PARKING BASEMENT – ACCESS FROM SIDE LANE		

UNDERSTANDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The master planned River District covers 52ha of former industrial land, and when complete will cater for a new community of 15,000 people. Later stages will create a retail and commercial centre. To compensate for the current lack of local services and shops, this phase of development has included the building of a restaurant, weekend market and community centre. The area has been provided with pedestrian and cycle routes along the river. This was the first residential development in the Pier Point area, sitting one street back from river front.

1. The Hill Point community with the River Walk Town home (see Case Study for River Walk)
2. Pier Point community (phase 2 and partly completed or under construction) within the dotted line).
3. New Water case study development (site boundary indicated).
4. Fraser River and pier.
5. Café, community centre and weekly farmer's market.



Master plans for Phase 1 and 2 of the River District Community

UNDERSTANDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

1. Exposure to the natural environment of the Fraser River has been maximised, and this includes a jetty and a riverside walking and cycle pathways.
2. The Fraser River viewed from the jetty (100m from New Water) where timber logs from the hinterland are still floated down the river for processing.
3. Land on the opposite side of the river is part the legally designated agricultural land that cannot be used for urban development.



Logs on the Fraser River viewed from the jetty..

UNDERSTANDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

1. Café and Community Centre established initially to inject some public activities into the former industrial site.
2. Saturday Farmer's Market
3. New Water case study development in the background.



Apartment building viewed from the cafe and community centre, behind the Saturday Farmer's market.

GETTING IT RIGHT PLACING THE BUILDINGS ON THE SITE

1. The U-shape building has three sides located close to the site boundary (and the footpath and street). The set back from the street is approximately 4m, but careful design and landscaping creates sufficient distinction between the public realm of the street and the private realm of the ground floor apartments. This is achieved by raising the floor level about 1m above street level to entrance patios, low walls on the boundary and strategic landscaping.
2. Although apartments to the upper three floors do not have ground access, each has a generous balcony, and provides for good surveillance over the street.
3. Rather than in a straight line, the site has a slight curvature that the building follows. This enhances visual interest by revealing more of the building and its articulation to the street view.



View along the street , showing the building set back from the boundary and height..

GETTING IT RIGHT PLACING THE BUILDINGS ON THE SITE

1. Both the New Water building (left) and the adjacent apartment block are both located in close proximity to the site boundary. The space between New Water on the left and a similar building to the right provides the vehicle entry to basement parking.
2. The Riverwalk townhouses can be seen in the distance (also included as a Case Study in this Design Manual).



Entrance drive that separates New Water from a similar development on the opposite side, that leads to an underground parking garage.

GETTING IT RIGHT STREET TO THE FRONT DOOR

1. Careful consideration is given to the street to front door design. The building is set back approximately 4m from the site boundary (marked by the low wall).
2. Street access is provided to all ground floor apartments, through a garden gate that leads to the front door. All ground floor units can also be accessed off the internal corridor.
3. All ground floor apartments also have a small patio between the building and the street boundary, raise above the basement parking by about 1m, and is used for activities such as barbeques.
4. The careful placement of landscape helps to define the public and private realms.



Good public and private space definition.

GETTING IT RIGHT STREET TO THE FRONT DOOR

1. The apartments on the upper three floors are all accessed via the internal corridor, and shared a common entrance lobby that opens directly to the street.
2. The entrance lobby also provides access to the rear shared courtyard, where provisions for resident's events are provided.
3. A ramp has been designed into the main approach to the building to allow level access.



Public entrance to the building off the street.

GETTING IT RIGHT THE BUILDING

1. The four storey building has a strong visual presence to the street especially from the corner (here viewed from community centre/café).
2. Clear demarcation between public and private realms is achieved in the placement of the building within 4m of the site boundary.
3. Strong roof lines are also achieved by the exaggerated overhanging eaves.
4. The articulation of the façade create visual interest by the use of different materials, and the horizontal pushing forward of parts of the facade.
5. Use of different materials: painted fiber-cement cladding; brick veneer, steel and glass, and timber.
6. Investment in high quality street landscaping, that includes street trees.



View of the building from Kerr Street.

GETTING IT RIGHT THE BUILDING

1. Overhanging eaves line to the top floor, where apartments also have higher floor-ceiling heights.
2. All upper floor apartments have generous balconies
3. Building entrance directly off the street provides access to upper floor apartments.
4. Use of different material and the articulation of the facade creates visual interest to the street.
5. The building has a BuiltGreen GOLD rating and incorporates many sustainability features. This includes using construction materials with recycled content, high levels of insulation (above code), a hydronic (water based) in floor heating system, 1 share car per building, and hot water and heat supplied by a local District Energy Utility.



Detail showing façade articulation.

GETTING IT RIGHT OUTDOOR SPACES

1. Private courtyard space at the rear of the building, raised above the basement parking.
2. The east and west wings will receive either morning or afternoon sun.
3. The courtyard provide hard paved areas, lawned areas and vegetable gardens. The vegetable garden areas are allocated to residents by ballot.
4. Rear public pathway - adjacent to railway tracks.



Resident's shared landscape garden within the U-shape of the building, and includes vegetable growing. .

GETTING IT RIGHT OUTDOOR SPACES

1. Rear publically accessible pedestrian walkway.
2. Vegetable growing lots allocated to residents by annual ballot.
3. Railway tracks.



Rear (south side) pedestrian lane, with rail corridor to the left.

GETTING IT RIGHT ACCOMMODATING THE CAR

1. There is one garage entry per building, located off a side lane to minimise impact on the main street. The vehicle access has been combined with a through site link to provide pedestrian access through the development.
2. All buildings include a share car to promote travel share and reduce vehicle use.
3. Large refuse bins are stored in the basement for weekly collections.

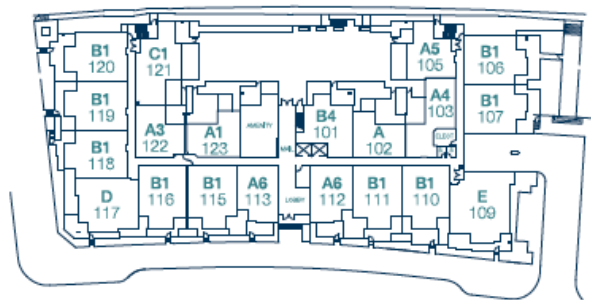


Basement parking access drive and ramp.

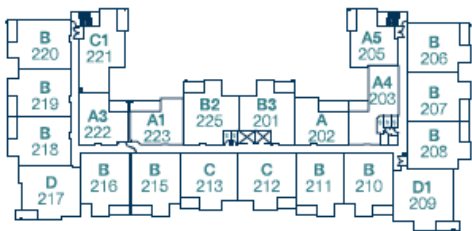
GETTING IT RIGHT SITE PLAN



Site Plan 3133 Riverwalk Avenue



Ground Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Site Plan with apartment layout on each of the four floors.

GETTING IT RIGHT FLOOR PLANS



1 bedroom, 1 bathroom
Approx. 656 square feet

A



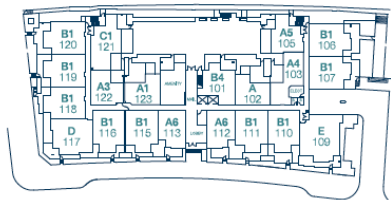
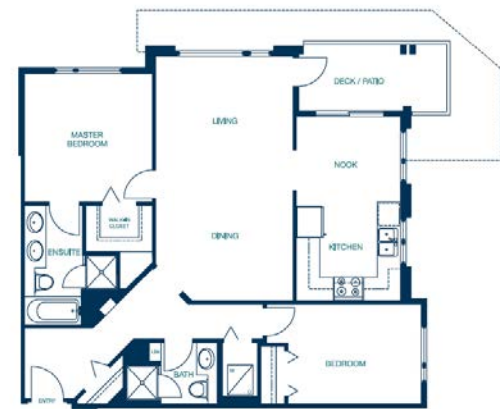
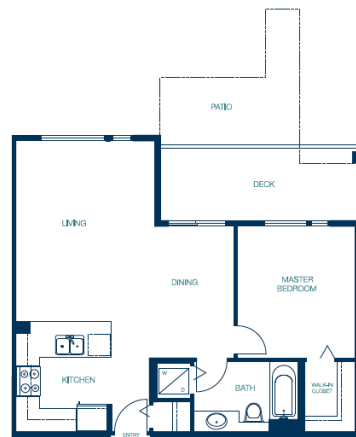
2 bedroom, 2 bathroom
Approx. 861 - 871 square feet

B



2 bedroom, 2 bathroom
Approx. 1,000 - 1,022 square feet

D



Ground Floor

Ground floor level. apartments with three types A, B and D (key plan bottom left)

GETTING IT RIGHT REFERENCES AND AWARDS

Address

3133 River Walk Avenue, River District, Vancouver, BC.

Latitude 49° 2' 22.06" N

Longitude 123° 2' 30.32 W

Information Sources

River District Vancouver. Available at: <http://www.riverdistrict.ca/>

Polygon Homes <http://www.polyhomes.com/community/river-walk>

Polygon Homes <http://www.polyhomes.com/community/new-water>

River District Vancouver Community Plan: <http://www.riverdistrict.ca/explore-here/community-plan/>

PWL Partnership/River District

<http://pwlpartnership.com/our-news/2013/songbird-city-vancouvers-river-district>

Awards

2012, The Urban Development Institute – Pacific Region (UDI) 'Award for Excellence'

2012: Gold Nugget Award of Merit for the 'International Site Plan' and 'International Commercial & Special Use Project' categories.

2012: Award of Merit for International Site Plan Urban Development Institute

2011: Park Lanes Homes' River District is REFBC's Private Sector 2011 Land Award winner.

2008: Best Process and Proposal Canadian Society of Landscape Architects

2007: Canadian Institute of Planners (2007): Award for Best Neighbourhood and Master plan Design.

Case study provided by Errol Haarhoff and Lee Beattie, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland, 2015.

All photographs are by the authors except where otherwise noted.

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The Auckland Design Manual provides practical advice, best practice processes and detailed design guidance to enable us to design and build the world's most liveable city. The manual will enable us all to make informed choices, to build houses and develop our streets and neighbourhoods to not only look good but to ensure they are built to last, sustainable and give the best return on investment.

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