

19 November 2024

The University of British Columbia
Campus and Community Planning
Vancouver Campus
2210 West Mall
Vancouver BC,

Attention: Karen Russell, Manager, Development Services

Re: Development Permit Application – GTN Gateway North

Dear Karen,

We are pleased to provide the following information and design rationale in support of the Development Permit Application for the above referenced project.

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Gateway North project is a mixed-use development designed to provide a much-needed lab space for UBC, along with transit-oriented grocery store and small-scale retail shops that will enhance the vibrancy of the 'University Town'. Situated to complete the northern half of the General Services Administration Building (GSAB) site, as outlined in the University Boulevard Precinct Design Guidelines, this development will help shape a vibrant academic and social hub for the campus. It will serve to complement the prominent Gateway South Building, reflecting UBC's identity and values while offering a diverse range of services.

2. USE

Gateway North has a total floor area of approximately 65,000 sq ft, excluding the rooftop mechanical space and basement. The program includes a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Lab, shell wet lab space, a grocery store, and small-scale retail.

The GMP and shell wet labs are located on levels 3-6, serviced by a rooftop mechanical penthouse. GMP labs, licensed by Health Canada, require strict controls for temperature, humidity, air quality, hygiene, and sanitation. The Level 6 lab requires a floor-to-floor height of 5.5 meters to accommodate a walkable interstitial mechanical service space for dedicated utility system components that are isolated from the lab to ensure easier, more efficient maintenance access and reduced interference with research operations. The lab spaces are set back from the perimeter to maintain a stable, clean environment. Access to the labs is provided via a circulation loop along the north and south façades, with lobbies at the two cores that bookend the building.

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The wet labs will be used for testing chemicals, biological samples, drugs, and fluids, with shell spaces to be fitted out by future occupants. Access to both GMP and wet labs is through a ground floor lobby facing the bus exchange at the northwest corner.

The grocery store will occupy level 2, accessed from a ground floor lobby facing the bus exchange and Wesbrook Mall at the northeast corner. Transparency is prioritized on the north side to enhance street activity and indicate shopping areas above. Back-of-house facilities, including loading and storage, will be located on the south side.

Small-scale retail spaces are positioned at ground level, oriented toward the bus exchange.

3. SITE CONTEXT

The site is located within the Contemporary District and University Boulevard Precinct of the UBC Vancouver campus, situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation. The Gateway North site is adjacent to the Bus Exchange to the north, the Gateway Building to the south, Wesbrook Mall to the east, and the War Memorial Gym to the west.

The Contemporary District encourages architecture that is open and transparent, and that expresses UBC's leading-edge research, technology, and sustainability pursuits. Building designs take inspiration from UBC's early International Style architecture that feature the use of light-coloured masonry, inviting/permeable ground planes, plain sculptural end walls, cladding panels, structural frames, and the interplay of building and landscape.

In response to the Gateway North Campus and Community Planning Initial Design Directions Brief, the north-facing entry facade at the bus exchange is highly transparent and activated, while the southern back-of-house facade features solid wall and reduced glazing that acts as a backdrop for Gateway South. At ground level, both facades are inset to provide weather protection and to address their differing functional requirements to provide safe and efficient delivery and loading activities at the shared service lane for both Gateway North and Gateway South.

4. DESIGN RATIONALE

Gateway North is seven stories in height with a rectangular form and massing. Façades are aligned with Gateway South and War Memorial Gym. Stair and elevator cores are located on the east and west of the floor plate, with an 11m structural grid in between to maximize useable area and modular functionality for the GMP labs, wet labs, and grocery store.

The east and west façades are bookended with large expanses of white masonry split with a ribbon of glass, revealing the stairways within. The white masonry planes are raised above grade to accommodate lobby corner-wraps, revealing a warm wood-like soffit above that provides lighting and continuous weather protection below.

The northeast corner of Level 1 is chamfered to mark the primary entrance to the grocery store, guiding pedestrians around the building and providing much needed crush space next to the bustling transit exchange hub.

The south elevation, with reduced glazing and increased infill metal cladding, reflects its back-of-house function and background building support for Gateway South. The north elevation is highly glazed to provide activation at the bus exchange by revealing the GMP and wet labs contained inside. The glass enclosure will be animated with varying bird-friendly frit patterns and prints, which in combination with carefully considered lighting and finishes at the lab walls within will create an artful layered composition.

The mechanical penthouse is set back from the parapet and features vertical metal cladding that is articulated to highlight four sculptural high-plume exhaust stacks, proudly signaling to the UBC community the innovative science taking place at Gateway North.

5. PUBLIC REALM

The Gateway North landscape design is a continuation of the Core and Gateway South streetscapes. To the north, the concrete unit paving currently used at the Bus Exchange departure bay is extended up to the entry façade. Along Wesbrook Mall, the cast-in-place concrete paving and boulevard planting design of Gateway South is extended north across the lane and meets the concrete unit paving at the Gateway North entry façade.

The existing bus canopy to the north will remain. Custom bench elements, positioned under the southern edge of the bus exchange canopy, will mitigate the grade changes between the commercial retail entrances and the sloping sidewalk, while also enhancing the ‘waiting’ experience. The bus stop to the east will be reinstated. A loading bay providing loading and delivery access to the War Memorial Gym is located to the west.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

The project is targeting LEED Gold Core and Shell certification and will be in alignment with the UBC LEED Implementation Guide for mandatory LEED credits and guidance where practical. Some of the sustainability measures include bird-friendly frit glazing, light pollution reduction, water use reduction and optimized energy performance. The project will be designed to BC Energy Step Code – Step 2. The building will connect to the UBC District Energy System.

7. DESIGN POLICY COMPLIANCE

The Gateway North development has been designed in consideration of the Gateway North Campus and Community Planning Initial Design Directions Brief and in compliance with The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus Plan. Specifically, Part 3 Design Guidelines of the Campus Plan were used to inform the design of the building, landscape, and infrastructure of the project to ensure that all component systems work in harmony to achieve the functional, sustainability, and character objectives of the campus.

The building will be owned and operated by UBC Properties Trust and is not required to comply with the UBC Technical Guidelines.

Please contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Wood', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Wood ARCHITECT AIBC MRAIC ARB(UK)
PRINCIPAL