



TRANSFORMATIVE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADDRESSING CITY-NEEDS PROPOSED FOR DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER

Glass sea sponge-inspired towers set to deliver broad spectrum of housing, hotel, Indigenous curated public art & space in the downtown core

VANCOUVER, BC — UPDATED JULY 2026 [ORIGINAL MAY 8, 2025] — A transformative, mixed-use development that blends architectural innovation, social responsibility, and urban revitalization has been submitted to the City of Vancouver by Henriquez Partners Architects (HPA) on behalf of the Holborn Group.

At its core, the project is about city-building — unlocking public benefits on currently underutilized land in a way that supports some of the city’s most urgent needs — while contributing bold architecture to the city skyline, including what would be Vancouver’s tallest tower.

Designed by Henriquez Partners Architects (HPA), the architectural expression of the project tells a story that is unique to British Columbia — inspired by rare and ancient glass sea sponge reefs — living structures found off the BC coast that demonstrate strength and adaptability. This natural metaphor is expressed not only in distinct silhouettes and the sculptural form of its tallest tower, but in their environmental performance towards a net-zero carbon operation. Informed by the sea sponge’s structural ingenuity and ecological purpose, the towers embody a distinctly Vancouver approach to sustainability, architectural elegance, and high-density urban living.

Anchored by this landmark architecture, the project is strategically located on three sites that link Vancouver’s business district and the Downtown Eastside — 501 + 595 West Georgia and 388 Abbott Street — defined by its scale, purpose and public contribution. On the West Georgia site, occupying two downtown blocks bordered by West Georgia, Seymour, Richards and Dunsmuir Streets are three tall towers ranging from 776 to 1,033 feet (236 to 314 metres). They are complemented by the Abbott Street tower at 300 feet — a dedicated amenity to the City.

In total, the development will create 1,783 new homes, a 920-room hotel, 70,000 square feet of much-needed conference space, Indigenous-led reconciliation through art, and introduce significant public amenities across both sites. This project will serve as a major economic catalyst for downtown Vancouver, creating thousands of construction and permanent jobs. By bringing a critical mass of residents, workers, and visitors into the core, the project will contribute to the creation of a more vibrant, inviting, and safer downtown.

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The project also redefines how public benefit is delivered in large-scale development, including offering access to space typically reserved for private use. Atop the tallest tower, a publicly accessible “forest in the sky” observation deck by PFS Studio offers panoramic views of the city, ocean, and mountains. A year-round, programmed public plaza along Georgia Street with a 250-seat restaurant, space for gathering, performance, and cultural expression. Indigenous art is integral to the public plaza, honouring both place and reconciliation.

“We are incredibly proud to bring forward this generational project — one rooted in community need, extraordinary architectural innovation and reconciliation,” said Joo Kim Tiah, President, Holborn Group. “This project is designed not only to meet today’s challenges, but to inspire future generations.”

Architectural & Design Innovation

The glass sea sponge metaphor informs many aspects of the project, blending sustainability, science and art.

- In building form, the hotel tower — the city’s tallest tower at 1,033 feet — features an iconic diagrid exoskeleton enabling column-free interiors
- Tall tower construction with world renowned, structural engineer, ARUP — lauded for delivering some of the world’s most ambitious and technically complex buildings
- Residential towers have sculptural balconies that mirror the structure and resilience of these coastal formations
- The three towers honour classic skyscraper profiles while showcasing contemporary materials and architecture
- The BC westcoast is also reflected in the landscaping that permeates both the exterior and interior spaces

Contribution to Vancouver’s Housing Needs

A diverse range of housing option across income levels, designed with shared lobbies and amenities, ensuring equity. Set to deliver 1,783 homes in total:

- 1,270 market condominium units — Georgia Street
- 276 rental homes including 3-bedroom family units — Georgia Street
- 237 non-market homes — one of the largest stand-alone social housing contributions in Vancouver’s history — at Abbott Street

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A Building Gifted for Community Benefit

At 388 Abbott Street, the fourth building — provided to the City of Vancouver — will offer:

- 237 non-market, rental homes
- 37-space childcare facility
- 5,000 square feet of ground level gallery space conceived as an Indigenous Art Gallery

Hospitality and Tourism Driver

- 920 hotel rooms (680 short stay + 240 extended stay units)
- 70,000 square feet of conference, meeting and banquet space
- Thousands of long-term hospitality jobs
- Observation deck atop the hotel – Vancouver’s tallest tower – as an attraction for visitors and locals

Economic Stimulus & Downtown Revitalization

- Replaces surface parking with vibrant, active public space
- Publicly accessible galleria, ground-floor retail and landscaped plaza re-introduce activity, connectivity and safety into the city core
- Also at ground level, a shared podium houses bike storage, and access to underground parking and direct connection to SkyTrain
- 64,000+ square feet of retail space
- Over 3M square feet of mixed-use space
- Creates thousands of construction and permanent jobs

Indigenous Art

An opportunity for cultural storytelling and learning through art.

- Support of Indigenous consultant, Gordon Grant, with the counsel of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh
- Musqueam artist, Susan Point invited to use the public plaza on Georgia as a canvas for dialogue and cultural expression, shifting heritage from static preservation to dynamic, reconciliatory storytelling.
- At Abbott Street, a 5,000-square-foot space provides an opportunity for art, education and culturally significant programming

Sustainable Urbanism

Environmental performance is embedded in the project's DNA.

- The glass sea sponge motif runs throughout the project, marrying environmental symbolism with cutting-edge engineering and sustainability.
- Targeting a 50% reduction in embodied carbon beyond the municipal baseline.
- Towers will feature sculptural exoskeleton and prefabricated balcony elements to reduce material waste and cold bridging.
- Geexchange and air-source heat pumps for net-zero operational emissions.
- Landscape architecture by leading Vancouver firm, PFS, to further animate the public plaza, towers and the observation deck atop the hotel.

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ABOUT HOLBORN

Holborn is an award-winning Vancouver-based developer with an international background and global vision. Holborn's diverse portfolio of projects and real estate management services throughout British Columbia include retail, residential, office and hotel properties. Holborn's mission is to elevate the lifestyle of the people who choose to live, work and stay in what they build. Holborn believes that buildings are living and emotional spaces, which is why they look at how people will move inside them and out. Holborn is built on a foundation of collaboration, integrity and respect – core principles that guide their every decision. Holborn takes pride in building vibrant communities and are invested in creating meaningful connections that have positive impacts on the cities they live in.