DESIGN RATIONALE

1. Project Context

The project site is located within the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood of the Cambie Corridor Plan area. Bounded by West 27th Avenue to the south, Ash Street to the west, and rear lanes to the north and east, the site occupies a prominent full-block frontage within an established residential neighbourhood.

Currently occupied by single-family dwellings, the property has been pre-zoned RM-8A and RM-8AN to facilitate the gradual transition from detached housing toward medium-density residential development envisioned by the Cambie Corridor Plan. The surrounding context remains predominantly low-density residential, characterized by mature street trees, landscaped front yards, and generous setbacks. More recent townhouse developments throughout the neighbourhood illustrate this planned evolution while maintaining the area's residential character.

The site also benefits from exceptional access to neighbourhood amenities. Queen Elizabeth Park, Braemar Park, BC Children's Hospital, BC Women's Hospital, and the Cambie Street commercial corridor are all within walking distance. King Edward SkyTrain Station is located approximately 400 metres away, providing convenient regional transit access and supporting the site's suitability for increased residential density.

2. Transit-Oriented Area Response

The property is located within Tier 2 of the King Edward Station Transit-Oriented Area (TOA), where Provincial legislation permits building heights of up to 12 storeys and densities up to 4.0 FSR.

This proposal adopts a more moderate form: two six-storey rental buildings at a combined density of 3.0 FSR, delivering 174,315 sf of gross floor area on a 52,204 sf (4,850 sm) site. Choosing roughly three-quarters of the permitted density and half the permitted height reflects a conscious decision to balance transit-oriented intensification with compatibility with the surrounding low-rise context, while still making a meaningful contribution toward the City's housing objectives.

3. Site Opportunities and Constraints

The assembled property presents approximately 127 metres (418 ft) of combined frontage along West 27th Avenue, creating the potential for a building of considerable visual length. A primary design objective was therefore to reduce the perceived scale of the development through massing articulation rather than a single continuous frontage.

The site's topography also presented a significant opportunity: the grade falls from west to east along West 27th Avenue and from south to north along Ash Street. Rather than resisting these changes in elevation, the design integrates them into the building organization.

The adjacent redevelopment to the east at 4261 Cambie Street further reinforces the long-term transition of this portion of the Cambie Corridor toward higher-density residential development.

4. Development Concept

The proposal consists of two six-storey U-shaped rental apartment buildings positioned along West 27th Avenue — 110 units in the west building and 117 units in the east building, for 227 units in total. The development is divided into two distinct buildings separated by a landscaped mid-block pedestrian connection.

The mid-block connection is envisioned as an important element of the future public realm, recognizing that neighbouring properties are also anticipated to redevelop over time. The connection establishes a framework that can ultimately contribute to a more connected and walkable neighbourhood.

The proposal is developed under the City's Secured Rental Policy and provides 227 purpose-built rental homes, of which 85 units (37.4%) are family-sized (two bedrooms or larger) — exceeding the City's 35% family-housing policy target and supporting a broad range of household types.



Figure 1 — Aerial massing view looking northeast from Ash Street / West 27th Avenue, showing the two U-shaped rental buildings and the mid-block pedestrian connection.

5. Massing Strategy

The overall massing strategy is founded on breaking down the significant length of the site into smaller, more legible building forms that relate comfortably to the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

Each building is articulated through a combination of recessed balconies, vertical bays, material transitions, and variations in the roofline, creating a rhythm along both West 27th Avenue and Ash Street and visually reducing the overall scale of the two 108,000–125,000 sf buildings.

The U-shaped building configuration establishes courtyards that provide sheltered outdoor amenity space, cross-ventilation, and a degree of privacy for the units around them. The courtyards face north and receive limited direct sun for much of the day; solar access is instead prioritized along the south-facing West 27th Avenue frontage and at the upper-level and rooftop amenity spaces, while the courtyards serve primarily as quiet, protected communal ground rather than sun-filled gathering space. The building separation further enhances privacy between facing units and preserves sightlines to the mid-block pedestrian connection.

Together, these strategies create a development that reads as a series of smaller residential volumes rather than a single large building.

6. Architectural Expression

The architectural language emphasizes simplicity, permanence, and material quality. Warm-toned brick forms the primary cladding along the principal street frontages, establishing a durable base that complements the mature residential character of the neighbourhood. Wood-tone accent materials and carefully proportioned vertical elements provide depth and shadow at the building face.

Although both buildings share the same architectural vocabulary, subtle colour variation distinguishes each building: the west building adopts a lighter palette, while the east building incorporates deeper earth tones. Both remain intentionally restrained, relying on texture and material richness rather than contrasting colours or decorative elements.

The varied roofline further contributes to a distinctive skyline that responds to the length of the site.

7. Response to Topography

The site's natural grade changes are incorporated directly into the building organization.

Along Ash Street, where the grade rises, the primary residential lobby of the west building is located one level above the lower street frontage. This allows bicycle storage and building service functions to occupy the partially recessed tower level, minimizing the apparent building height while maintaining active residential uses above.

Primary building entrances are located along West 27th Avenue and are emphasized through recessed entry courts framed by warm wood-tone materials. These entry sequences establish clear residential addresses while contributing to the pedestrian character of the street.

Rather than masking the site's topography, the proposal celebrates the changing grades, allowing the architecture to step naturally with the landscape.

8. Public Realm

A key objective of the proposal is to strengthen the pedestrian experience along both street frontages while introducing a new publicly accessible mid-block connection.

Generous landscape setbacks, continuous street tree planting, and carefully integrated building entrances create an attractive and comfortable streetscape consistent with the residential character of the neighbourhood.

The mid-block connection increases neighbourhood permeability and establishes a potential future pedestrian network as adjacent properties redevelop. Landscaped open spaces along this connection create moments for gathering and passive recreation while visually extending the public realm into the centre of the site.

9. Safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Given the introduction of a new publicly accessible mid-block connection through the site, the design incorporates CPTED principles to ensure the route remains safe, active, and well-overlooked. Units are oriented to provide natural surveillance ("eyes on the street") along the connection, while landscape lighting and clear sightlines minimize concealment opportunities.

10. Livability

The U-shaped building configuration provides outlook and cross-ventilation for the majority of residential units while minimizing direct overlook between opposing façades. Because the courtyards face north, daylight access is strongest along the south-facing West 27th Avenue frontage and at upper levels and rooftop amenity areas; the courtyards themselves are valued primarily for the sheltered, private outdoor space and greenery they provide rather than for direct sun. As noted in Section 4, 85 of the 227 units (37.4%) are family-sized homes, supporting a diverse residential population within a transit-oriented location.

Indoor amenity rooms are located at grade and connect directly to the landscaped courtyards, encouraging year-round use. Rooftop amenity spaces on both buildings — which benefit from unobstructed southern exposure above the surrounding roofline — provide additional opportunities for sunlit recreation, social gathering, and views over the neighbourhood.

Because the mid-block connection naturally separates the development into two distinct residential communities, each building contains its own indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, allowing both buildings to function independently while providing convenient access for all residents.

11. Accessibility and Universal Design

All 227 dwelling units in the development are designed as adaptable units in accordance with the Vancouver Building By-law (VBBL 2019, 3.8.5). Accessible entries are provided at grade along West 27th Avenue, with barrier-free paths of travel connecting building entries, courtyards, and the mid-block pedestrian connection. Elevator access is provided to all residential levels, parking, and amenity spaces, ensuring the development is fully navigable for residents and visitors of varying mobility.

12. Sustainability

The proposal supports the City's sustainability objectives by delivering compact, transit-oriented residential development within walking distance of rapid transit, parks, employment, and daily services.

The moderate building height, durable material palette, generous landscape areas, and high-quality public realm collectively contribute to the long-term environmental and social sustainability of the neighbourhood. The project will comply with the City of Vancouver Green Buildings Policy, with detailed energy modelling and sustainability measures to be provided at the Building Permit stage.

CICCOZZI ARCHITECTURE

zail properties

AUGUST 11, 2026

REGISTERED ARCHITECT ROBERT CARL CICCOZZI BRITISH COLUMBIA

2026-08-11

ISSUED

2025-07-08	REZONING SUBMISSION
2026-01-13	REZONING RE-SUBMISSION
2026-08-11	DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SUBMISSION

PROJECT

W27TH + ASH

VANCOUVER, BC

KEY PLAN

REVISIONS

TITLE

DESIGN RATIONALE

A0.03

Copyright © 2026 Ciccozzi Architecture

2026-08-11 3:38:56 PM