

PRESS COVERAGE LIVING AT SHAW TOWER

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City's Tallest Building Will Have a Unique Foundation; Shaw Tower Architects Had to Envision Street Grind

Business in Vancouver

by Glen Korstrom

When they begin a design project, architects typically have a clear image of the streets that will frame their building. But Vancouver's future tallest building, the 146-metre high Shaw Tower, is now under construction, even though part of its surrounding street grind is nothing more than air.

"This site was very challenging because the ground plate doesn't exist right now," said architect James Cheng of the 40-storey live-work building developed by a consortium led by Westbank Projects Corp.

The Shaw Tower construction site is to the west of the Marine building at Burrard and Hastings streets. Just north is land owned by Marathon Developments Inc. that is frequently mentioned as the future site for a \$495-million expansion to the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Cheng said Marathon and the City of Vancouver know the road system is needed for the future convention centre expansion and a new performing arts centre and worked with him to fit the Shaw Tower's needs into that grand plan.

Cordova and Thurlow streets will both be extended to the new elevated road system. Underneath those roads, Skytrain will run and riders will be able to peer out from the underground line to the convention centre's loading bays, service roads, parking lots and bus-only areas, Cheng said. Marathon has finished the caissons to support the Cordova Road expansion and other infrastructure work is ongoing to help keep the Shaw building's construction on schedule. It is due to open sometime in 2004.

Cheng said aside from the complex road system plans, the biggest challenge designing the building was integrating two separate lobbies and two elevator shafts because residential tenants and office tenants will have different entrances.

General contractor Kirk Chan from Ledcor estimated that the Shaw project would create at least 450 full-time jobs during the building's 18-month construction schedule.