A catalyst for regeneration, River City Phase 3 (RC3) draws inspiration from its industrial roots in the heart of Toronto’s West Don Lands. Rising 29 storeys tall, RC3 is the first and only residential high-rise tower in the city’s emerging eastern neighbourhood. Black and white and angular, the dramatic faceted architecture anchors the surrounding landscape and existing River City community.

Transforming a former brownfield site with its tall asymmetrical form and cantilevered cubes, the final phase of the award-winning community seamlessly integrates with surrounding mid-rise buildings. Interpreting the site’s heritage, the tower’s architecture features an industrial palette of aluminum, translucent glass and formed concrete – its vertical volumes representing black and white crystalline minerals.

RC3’s soaring jagged elevation thoughtfully fosters an opening for new building types, welcoming a variety of residential units including townhomes, condos and penthouses. Surrounded by parks and public spaces, extruded box-shaped windows provide exceptional views, looking outward over Corktown Common Park and Toronto’s Don River.

RC3 is the third act of the 4 phase River City residential development and once completed, it will provide 332 of the total 1,074 residential units of LEED Gold Certified development. The site master plan was conceptualized in 2005 as a LEED Gold community and a demonstrable example of sustainable development on a neighbourhood scale. It successfully engages the city, linking a public realm of pedestrian friendly streets/wooners and exceptional parks with an architecture inspired by flow, movement and continuity. The development team’s decision to tap into buyer’s interest in sustainable condominium development distinguished the project when it was launched for pre-sales. The result is a building that is 100% sold and sustainability is major part of that public success.

The facade conceptually erodes to symbolize this dual mineral nature: a solid black object inset with white diaphanous crystals.

The tower’s vertical volume is inspired by elements found on the site: angular minerals of black and white.
The latest chapter in the River City development, RC3 carries on the black, white and angular style of previous phases but with additional zeal. It presents a demure, flat back to the south but, toward the community, its face resembles a mass of dark igneous rock inset with white crystals. These extruded viewfinder-like boxes, clad in aluminum and glass, house residential units that mirror the exterior’s aesthetic with interior design completed by the architects.
The West Don Lands Precinct Plan determined use, setbacks and overall massing of all four phases of the River City development. The design of RC3 has been liberated from the standardly applied formula of slender tower perched above a stepped podium base. This was achieved through alternative built form studies where mid-rise merges with high-rise to provide a continuous architectural form and culminating with a slender tower overlooking a park.
Separated on all sides by expressways and streets, the tower acts as a beacon, visually prominent from all directions and anchoring both the adjacent square and park.

A continuous 2-storey retail base extends along the base of the tower to create a vibrant streetscape facing the adjacent public square and park.

The extruded viewfinder-like boxes contain residential units as well as common amenity areas stacked in a cascading form, that also creates a variety of balconies and terraces for outdoor private and common space activity.
The site plan for RC3 is a complex fit of program into an awkward plot where the building is viewed from all sides. The public realm is carefully considered in the planning where retail stretches along the public Square, building entrance occurs at the site corner apex, and townhouses face onto the park. A 6-storey above grade parking garage is embedded and concealed within the mass of the building’s base.

Previous River City phases are hybridized in the Phase 3 tower, where mid-rise merges with high-rise to provide a continuous architectural form and culminating with a slender tower overlooking Corktown Common Park and the Don River.
MATERIAL APPLICATION

- WHITE COMPOSITE PANELS
- BLACK COMPOSITE PANELS
- CURTAIN WALL
- WINDOW WALL
- BOARDFORM CONCRETE
- ARCHITECTURAL LOUVRES

ENVELOPE SECTION DETAIL 3/A600
River City is a sustainable, 4-phase residential development located on one of Toronto's largest downtown, former brownfield sites. It's the result of an international selection process that attracted the interest of developers and the design community around the world, and is the first private-sector building development in the West Don Lands.
Although separated by an elevated roadway, the 29-storey tower is an architectural continuity of the angular white and black volumes that distinguish the River City neighbourhood.
The design for River City was conceptualized in 2007 as part of an international competition. At the time, there was no built form context in the West Don Lands, so the project drew its inspiration from the industrial, brownfields heritage of the surrounding area. This is interpreted architecturally through faceted, sculptural forms and an industrial material palette of aluminum panels, translucent glass systems and rough board formed concrete.
The landscape strategy on Level 7 elevates the terrace and pool deck to promote long, unobstructed views over the neighbourhood and create a mood of unbounded openness.
The tower presents a black, austere facade facing the park, with a cascading face resembling a mass of dark igneous rock inset with white crystals.
Although separated by an elevated roadway, the 29-storey tower is an architectural continuity of the angular white and black volumes that distinguish the River City neighbourhood.
The design for River City was conceptualized in 2007 as part of an international competition. At the time, there was no built form context in the West Don Lands, so the project drew its inspiration from the industrial, brownfields heritage of the surrounding area. This is interpreted architecturally through faceted, sculptural forms and an industrial material palette of aluminum panels, translucent glass systems and rough board formed concrete.