

Developer:	Actual Developments/VanCity Foundation
Architect:	Hughes Baldwin Architects
Landscape Architect:	Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg
City Staff:	Rob Whitlock (Rezoning Planner) Ralph Segal (Development Planner)
Year of completion:	1997

PROJECT DATA

Zoning:	CD-1
Site area:	12,450 sq. ft.
FSR:	1.26
Use:	Residential
Floor area:	15,700 sq. ft.
Height:	39 ft.



HUGHES BALDWIN ARCHITECTS ILLUSTRATION



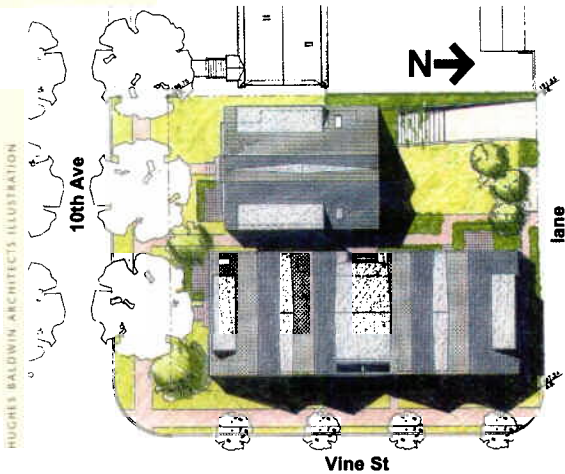
This 15-unit multi-family townhouse development is located on a 100 ft. wide x 125 ft. deep lot at the corner of West 10th Avenue and Vine Street, overlooking Connaught Park in the heart of Kitsilano. The site is in a transition zone between mixed commercial/residential development along Broadway, higher density housing on the Arbutus Lands to the east, and single-family and duplex housing to the west.

The project is notable for how it bridges between these higher and lower density housing forms, while maintaining the look and feel of single family housing. It thereby demonstrates how densification adjacent to a public amenity, in this case a major public park, need not upset the character of a neighbourhood. As Vancouver grows, more people will need to use such amenities, and this strategy optimizes their benefits for the maximum number of people.

The project achieves densification while maintaining a neighbourhood "fit" through several essential urban design moves. The density is split into two separate buildings, taking advantage of the corner site. This allows the buildings to take on a smaller, domestic scale, more in keeping with the context. In addition, the architects have carefully 'read' the adjacent 50 ft. wide rhythm of duplex buildings, and have replicated this in a tightly spaced, regular form which appears like a pair of side-by-side duplex houses on 50 feet wide lots. In reality, the westerly yellow 'house' contains five units and the easterly green building has ten units. One building faces directly onto 10th Avenue. The other building takes up the corner and then extends northwards up Vine Street. The two new buildings are sited as close to the street edges of the lot as practical, to maximize open space to the rear and side. By staggering the front yard setbacks along 10th Avenue from only 15 feet for the corner building to 20 feet for the other building, the siting of the new buildings blends with the 25 foot setback of the neighbouring house to the immediate west. The front yard setback along Vine Street is only five feet, thus maximizing the amount of space available to the rear of the site for common and private space between buildings and units, and the space between the two new buildings.



Vine Street 10 unit building



Another key urban design move to complement the neighbourhood scale and texture was to accommodate the required third floor within the form of a steeply sloping, finely scaled roof form. This serves to minimize the apparent bulk of the buildings, and adds to the single-family aesthetic. The buildings thus read as 'two storeys plus a roof', rather than three full floors. The height of the roof pitch has been carefully set only slightly higher than the adjacent existing duplex. The sloping roof further helps to minimize shadowing and privacy invasion of the adjacent house. The design cleverly plays with strong, sawtooth roof forms, offset by pop-out elements such as dormers and bays, all of which help to maintain a finer scale and sense of individual identity of units. Different colours also further differentiate the two buildings, thus breaking down the potential uniformity of the project.

The units are typically arranged as two-storey units over one-storey units at grade. Each unit has direct front door access from the street, further enhancing the sense of individual identity and privacy. This also contributes to the maximum number of 'eyes on the street', a well proven arrangement for neighbourhood security.

By carefully siting the new project, breaking it down into two buildings, incorporating enough density to render underground parking economical, and skillfully manipulating architectural forms such as roof, bay and window, the project demonstrates that higher density housing can be successfully integrated into lower density neighbourhoods while still protecting cherished single-family characteristics.



10th Avenue houses

