

Vancouver's Urban Design

A Decade of Achievements

Eleven Projects Introduction



This brochure highlights eleven projects completed in the past decade which have made significant contributions to the urban design of their respective precincts or neighbourhoods and enhanced the city's emerging form. The objective of this brochure is to increase awareness by highlighting these completed projects in the hopes of inspiring others, and fostering a better appreciation of the civic virtues and public values of good urban design. Their excellence is, in large part, the result of a true public/private partnership combining private developers' initiatives in response to their individual development programs, and their architects' skill and vision interacting with City staff on urban design policies and public objectives.

What is urban design? Simply put, it is the design of the city and all its visible components. That is, how buildings and the spaces between them - open spaces and parks, bridges and streets, sidewalks and walkways, bodies of water, trees and landscaping, lighting and signage, etc. - are all designed together over time to create an attractive, memorable, and safe city. All great cities show evidence of this significant, but seldom appreciated, interdisciplinary activity. To Vancouver's urban design is added the challenge of integrating the built environment with the city's spectacular natural setting.

Cities take a long time to develop and are the sum of the efforts of many people and agencies. With Vancouver's recent surge in development, its citizens are beginning to see a noticeable improvement in the city's urban form within a relatively short time. While the decade has seen the addition of many spectacular public parks, these spaces have been specifically excluded, in order to focus on private sector development contributions to the public realm.

The selected projects are intended to illustrate as wide a variety as possible of urban design strategies that respond to both City policy and good practice and benefit the public realm such as: view creation and protection; compatible building scale and massing; enhanced street character and activity; provision of public open space; improved public safety and security; enhanced residential livability; and improved pedestrian access and comfort.

Each project is briefly described and illustrated, including development statistics. There is then a discussion of how it contributes to good urban design. While the selected projects have each demonstrated some aspect of urban design excellence, it is recognized that many other worthy projects have not been included due to space limitations.



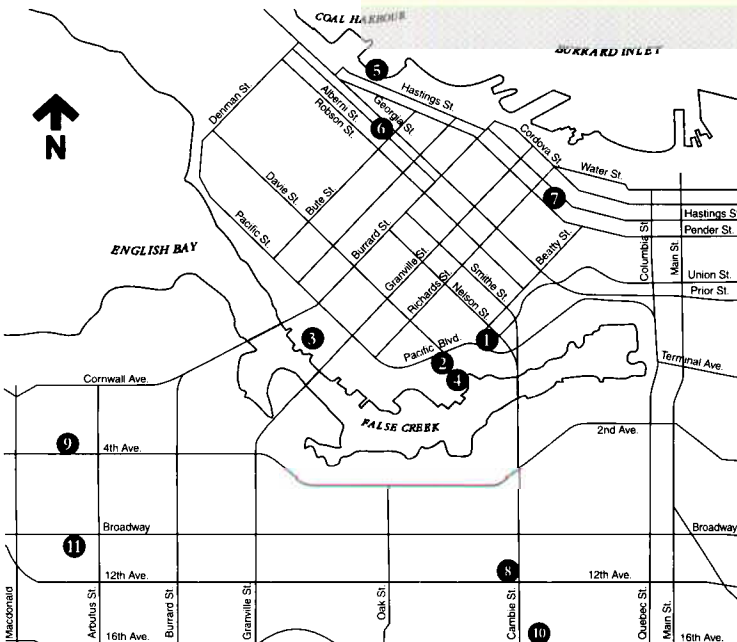
Foreword

Since Expo '86, Vancouver has been carefully and methodically reshaping itself into a uniquely different and extraordinarily special kind of contemporary North American city. This is a story of inventive urban design; of new approaches for interdisciplinary cooperation in design; and of new techniques for delivery of amenities and to accommodate our disadvantaged through the integrated neighbourhoods we have dared to design. Our designers - both in the public and private sectors - have become powerful innovators of high quality, high density housing, comfortable and safe streetscapes, attractive public places and diverse, complete communities.

And the results are worth talking about - even worth celebrating. We offer these few memorable examples of our best recent buildings and spaces both as a challenge for further excellence among our own design professionals, politicians and citizens and as prototypes for other people in other places who are also enjoined in our struggle to discover the liveable, beautiful, vital, humane and sustainable city of the new century.

Larry Beasley
Co-Director of Planning
City of Vancouver

List of Projects



- 5 'Waterworks/Beatty Mews' - 1005 Expo Boulevard
- 6 Roundhouse Community Centre
- 7 888 Beach Avenue
- 8 'The Crestmark' - 1200 Marinaside Crescent
- 9 Coal Harbour Waterfront Walkway
- 10 'Residences on Georgia' - 1200 West Georgia Street
- 11 Central City Lodge - 415 West Pender Street
- 12 City Square - 555 West 12th Avenue
- 13 'Capers Block' - 2211 West 4th Avenue
- 14 'Mayor's House' - 320 West 15th Avenue
- 15 2315 West 10th Avenue (at Vine Street)