135 Keefer Street

Constructed in 1910 for the Vancouver Gas Company, the building and surrounding site was used primarily by blacksmiths servicing the teamsters of the transportation industry until 1949. This site like Yaletown, serviced the adjacent industrial land and rail yards surrounding False Creek.
211 Main Street
Golden Crown Centre

The Golden Crown Centre is a mixed use building currently comprised of retail, office and parking uses. At the ground level are several retail spaces facing Main Street and one facing East Georgia Street. A two-way parking entry/exit also faces East Georgia Street. Approximately 40% of the second, third and fourth levels were designed for office/business use.

The building site measures 107 feet along Main Street and 120 feet along East Georgia Street.

City of Vancouver permits for the building were applied for in 1986. The building was probably completed in 1987 or 1988. It was one of a number of buildings of similar size and smaller building in the same period. The large proportion of the building dedicated to parking is indicative of an attitude prevailing at that time that it was partly a lack of parking in Chinatown that make the area increasingly uncompetitive with new shopping opportunities being developed primarily in Richmond.

The structure is a cast-in-place concrete slab, slab band and column structure. The concrete is faced with red brick on the Main Street, East Georgia Street and land facades. The vertical column/slab grid is infilled with: glazing at the retail and office spaces; concrete masonry units at the party wall; and is open at the parking levels.
Chinatown Market Housing Study

Background
The upper storeys in many Chinatown buildings are vacant and/or underutilized. In addition, a number of storefronts are also vacant. Through the community development process that shaped the Chinatown Vision, the idea of residential intensification was identified as a goal. Having more residents in the area would help reoccupy upper storeys plus have the added benefit of increasing business opportunities in the area particularly for the provision of services for local residents.

Objective
1) Identify typical characteristics of Chinatown buildings and its urban development pattern, and
2) To determine opportunities and challenges in accommodating market housing.

Map of Chinatown Market Housing Study Sites
**Key Findings of the Study**

### Small Lot Developments Are Economically Viable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Including land value (For both property owners and developers)</th>
<th>Excluding land value (For existing property owners)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strata Sale (PL charges)</td>
<td>Strata Sale (No PL charges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25' Lot 4-storey Wood frame</td>
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<tr>
<td>50' Lot 4-storey Wood frame</td>
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<tr>
<td>25' Lot 8-storey Concrete</td>
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<td>50' Lot 8-storey Concrete</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>150' Lot Multi-storey Concrete</td>
<td>Parking provided on-site</td>
<td>Parking provided on-site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Viable](image1)  ![Marginally Viable](image2)  ![Not Viable](image3)

*Unless the new construction maintains the physical and social character of Chinatown, the whole effort at reconstruction could be more damaging than beneficial to this historic resource*. - Daniel Solomon

*Unless there is wholesale aggregation, it is not feasible to provide retail frontage and a parking space for every unit, even with reduced density goals*. - Daniel Solomon

### Recommendations for the By-laws:

1. **Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law & Associated Guidelines**
   - Regulations for maximum heights of buildings for residential developments to be considered for relaxation for certain sites and projects where retention of existing buildings is desired and where the additional height and mass is not visible from the street and there are no negative impacts on views and shadow.
   - Rear yard setbacks for residential uses and widths and height/width ratios of courtyards to be relaxed to encourage the development of livable urban housing with a focus on delivering light and ventilation from interior courtyard as opposed to the lane.

2. **Vancouver Parking By-law**
   - The existing parking and loading requirements for buildings on sites with width of 50 feet or less must have provision for relaxation to encourage finer grain development and retention of existing historic buildings on typical Chinatown sites. The degree of difficulty and complexity to provide underground parking on these sites is prohibitive to development of smaller properties.
   - Requirements for loading should have same provision for relaxations for the same reasons as parking.

3. **Vancouver Building By-law**
   - A recurring item requiring relaxation for renovation of existing buildings will be the rise, run and landings of existing exit stairs. Many of these “noodle” stair are integral to the historic character and use of the buildings in Chinatown and should have provision for relaxations for retention.

### Impact of Land Aggregation on Chinatown’s Fine-Grain Development Pattern

- **25' Lot 4-storey Wood frame**
- **50' Lot 4-storey Wood frame**
- **25' Lot 8-storey Concrete**
- **50' Lot 8-storey Concrete**
- **150' Lot Multi-storey Concrete**

200 Block Union Street

100 Block East Pender Street

City of Vancouver

Central Area Planning

Chinatown Market Housing Study

Key Findings of the Study
**Scheme 1: Rehabilitation of Heritage Buildings**

**Wong Building - 121 East Pender Street**

The original building was constructed in 1910. During the boom years of the early 1920's, an additional storey was added, which by that time, conformed to the established “Chinatown Style” of the area. The fourth floor addition by J.A. Radford included family association meeting rooms and recessed balconies, typical of the area at that time. Typical of many buildings in Chinatown, the existing building occupying approximately half of the site depth, is retained in this study. The existing single storey retail/storage area at the rear of the site is replaced by a new structure which could range between six and eight storeys in height. The new structure is built up to the rear property line at the ground floor level with a 5’ setback and 23’ wide courtyard is located between the existing and proposed new buildings.

**Cross Section of the Wong Building**

**Mah Society Building - 137 East Pender**

The original building was constructed in 1913. An additional storey was constructed in 1921 for the Mah Gim Do Hung Society. The assembly hall on the added top floor continues to be used by the Mah Society. The hotel use is introduced as a reference to the historical use of the building.

**Cross Section of the Mah Building**

City of Vancouver
Central Area Planning

Chinatown Market Housing Study
Scheme 1: Acton Ostry Architects Inc.