

**THE ROLE OF HERITAGE REVITALIZATION IN THE DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION PROCESS: THE CASE STUDY OF COLUMBIA
STREET IN DOWNTOWN, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.**

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1985

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
The School of Community and Regional Planning

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

May 1996

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of heritage revitalization in the downtown revitalization process. Heritage revitalization is defined as the economic benefits derived from heritage conservation. Three questions are addressed in this thesis; they are:

1. Does the Provincial Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994 provide local governments in British Columbia with the necessary tools to respond to the unique circumstances of heritage revitalization?
2. Can heritage revitalization strategies improve the economic viability of historic downtowns?
3. What planning lessons can be learned from the experiences of many Canadian and American cities that have implemented successful downtown heritage revitalization strategies?

A case study approach is used in this thesis to evaluate the role of heritage revitalization in the economic renewal of downtowns. The thesis case study is the 400 to 800 blocks of Columbia Street, located in downtown New Westminster, British Columbia. Columbia Street is the historic commercial core of New Westminster.

A conceptual framework is developed which details the planning steps necessary in formulating a heritage revitalization strategy. The conceptual framework is based on approaches from several North American cities successful in rejuvenating their historic downtowns. This framework is applied to the Columbia Street case study and is used in the evaluation of heritage strategies for consideration.

The thesis research concludes that Columbia Street is a sensitive heritage precinct in need of heritage policies, and a balance between heritage regulations and incentives. A heritage revitalization strategy is recommended for Columbia Street. The strategy contains specific heritage policies, zoning amendments and financial incentives designed to protect various heritage buildings on Columbia Street and Downtown New Westminster's overall character.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

There are several people whom I would like to acknowledge. I owe many thanks and appreciation to my husband Neil Colquhoun for his patience during the months I worked on this thesis; and my two year old son Joshua, for reminding me that play time was more important than thesis work. Special thanks go to my colleagues at the City of New Westminster Planning Department, in particular, Mary Pynenburg, Director of Planning, Stephen Scheving, Planner and Leslie Gilbert, Planner, all of whom provided encouragement, and thoughtful comments and critiques on this thesis. Special thanks also goes to Netty Tam, Executive Director of the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society for her useful insights. I would also like to acknowledge Alastair Kerr, Senior Heritage Planner with the Province of British Columbia Heritage Branch for his expert critiques on the thesis methodology. My appreciation also goes to my thesis advisors, Dr. Alan Artibise and Dr. Michael Seelig for their assistance. Lastly, I would like to thank the School of Community and Regional Planning for supporting my application back into the program.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of heritage planning can be termed as the classic dilemma of form versus function.

A central idea of heritage planning ... is that of managing change rather than denying it. It is essentially the choice of a particular balance at a particular time between the preservation of past forms and their modification or removal to accommodate present functions.¹

Heritage planning balances two, sometimes conflicting needs: the need for preservation, on the one hand; and the need for urban structures to reflect the functions of a city, on the other hand. For this reason, heritage conservation requires continuous intervention.

Heritage planning deals with many aspects of urban development, and is concerned with more than the protection from change. The study of heritage planning is based on the need to manage change, vis a vis decisions pertaining to the nature, quantity and timing of change. "Heritage planning policy is as much proactive as reactive: it is not preserving what exists as a survival from the past, ... but shaping a new city in which conserved buildings and sites play an important contemporary role."²

¹ G. J. Ashworth, *Heritage Planning - Conservation as the Management of Urban Change*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1991, 1-2.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

Terms and Definitions

In this thesis, the terms heritage preservation and heritage conservation are used throughout. These terms have distinctive definitions. Heritage preservation "... is the protection from harm and by implication care and maintenance of artifacts, originally conceived of as monuments." Heritage conservation "... has elements of preservation but ... conceptually is much wider and distinctly different.... [Conservation deals with] continued useful existence."³ Heritage conservation is also defined as the "processes of caring for a place so as to safeguard its cultural heritage value."⁴ Cultural heritage value is defined as "possessing historical, archaeological, architectural, technological, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance, associated with human activity."⁵

The purpose of heritage conservation is to care for places of cultural heritage value, their structures, materials and cultural meaning. Heritage resources can provide a community with the following benefits:

- i. teach us about the past and the culture of those who came before us;
- ii. provide the context for community identify whereby people relate to the land and to those who have gone before;

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ New Zealand Charter, *New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value*, International Council of Monuments & Sites Documents, 1992, 5.

⁵ Ibid.

- iii. provide variety and contrast in the modern world and a measure against which we can compare the achievements of today; and
- iv. provide visible evidence of the continuity between past, present and future.⁶

The term heritage revitalization is also used extensively in this thesis. It is an approach which recognizes the economic benefits of heritage conservation. Heritage revitalization typically involves the adaptive reuse of buildings.

The conservation of a place of cultural heritage value is usually facilitated by it serving a socially, culturally or economically useful purpose. In some cases, alterations and additions may be acceptable where they are essential to continued use, or where they are culturally desirable, or where the conservation of the place cannot otherwise be achieved.⁷

Purpose Statement and Thesis Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate if heritage revitalization policies can stimulate market activity in historic downtowns. To assess the role of downtown heritage revitalization, this thesis will address three questions:

1. *Does the Provincial Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994 provide local governments in British Columbia with the necessary tools to respond to the unique circumstances of heritage revitalization?*

⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

2. *Can heritage revitalization strategies improve the economic viability of historic downtowns?*
3. *What planning lessons can be learned from the experiences of many Canadian and American cities that have implemented successful downtown heritage revitalization strategies?*

Methodology

This thesis will use a case study approach to evaluate the role of downtown heritage revitalization. The thesis case study will be the 400 to 800 blocks of Columbia Street, located in Downtown New Westminster, British Columbia. Columbia Street was selected as an appropriate case study for several reasons: it is one of few historic main streets in British Columbia; Columbia Street has a fine stock of Victorian and Edwardian architecture; and Columbia Street, unlike the rest of Downtown New Westminster, is stagnating economically. Columbia Street presently has many under-maintained historic buildings, seedy bars, marginal stores and vacant commercial space.

A literature review of four successful Canadian and American historic downtowns will be reviewed. The purpose of the literature review will be to evaluate heritage revitalization policies that these cities have implemented. An assessment will be made of the benefits created by these strategies. The

literature review will assist in the development of a conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework proposes a methodology which details the planning approaches necessary in formulating a heritage revitalization strategy. The conceptual framework will be applied to the Columbia Street case study and will be used in the evaluation of necessary heritage revitalization policies.

In addition to the literature review, information was sought through key informant interviews. Interviews were conducted with municipal planners, downtown business coordinators and heritage planners. Several interviews were held with the Planners of the City of New Westminster, the Business Coordinator with the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association (BIA) and the Senior Heritage Planner with the Province of British Columbia Heritage Branch.

Relevance of the Thesis Topic to Planning Research

The Heritage Canada Foundation Main Street Canada Program and the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Program have been in operation for several years. An abundance of research and investment in these Main Street Programs occurred over the 1980's; and these programs have many success stories. *Considering this information, why would a study of downtown heritage revitalization be noteworthy today?*

The answer may lie with the Provincial Government legislation, the Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994. This thesis purports that the additional local government powers for heritage management, as granted in this legislation, will help stimulate supplementary private sector investments in heritage conservation. These financial investments may play a major role in the rejuvenation of historic downtowns. Many historic downtowns suffer from a poor image, caused by neglect and lack of investment. It is proposed in this thesis that the Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994 will provide the necessary tools to stimulate reinvestment in historic downtowns. If this happens, Downtown property owners and business people will benefit economically and the community will benefit socially by reclaiming civic ownership.

Scope of the Thesis

The premise of this thesis is that heritage revitalization is a critical component to a successful downtown revitalization process. Notwithstanding, a downtown revitalization strategy must be comprehensive and multi-faceted in approach. It is recognized that heritage revitalization is not a panacea for comprehensive downtown revitalization. Other factors, such as the public's feeling of safety, sufficient customer parking, a balanced merchandising mix

and a marketing strategy based on the assets of the downtown, are all critical components of a successful downtown revitalization strategy. This thesis does not suggest that heritage revitalization alone can stimulate the economic initiatives necessary for a diversified downtown. However, when utilized as part of a comprehensive approach, heritage revitalization can play a key role in adding diversity, vitality and livability in a downtown.

This thesis examines the role of heritage revitalization and looks at indicators such as high pedestrian traffic and well restored historic buildings as evidence of stimulated market activity. This thesis does not quantify the economic activities directly resulting from revitalization policies. An analysis of this nature would require detailed economic modelling.

Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized in six chapters. Chapter II is a literature review of the role of heritage revitalization in the downtown revitalization process. In this chapter, components of the Provincial legislation, the Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994 are explored and the heritage powers for local government is identified. The next section provides a discussion of the decline and re-emergence of urban downtowns. The third section is an overview of the British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs'

Downtown Revitalization Program. The last section of the chapter discusses the benefits of heritage revitalization.

Chapter III provides a literature review of four historically revitalized downtowns in Canada and the United States. The first section of the chapter examines the experiences of Yaletown, Vancouver, and Downtown, Victoria. The second section discusses Lower Downtown, Denver, Colorado, and Downtown, San Francisco, California. The third section of the chapter identifies lessons that can be extrapolated from the case studies. The last section proposes a conceptual framework to assist in identifying the planning approaches for the development of a heritage revitalization strategy.

Chapter IV discusses the history and context of Downtown New Westminster, British Columbia. The first section examines the commercial importance of Downtown, New Westminster to British Columbia's early history. The next section outlines the context for Columbia Street's economic decline. The third section provides a description of the heritage buildings along the 400 to 800 blocks of Columbia Street. The last section of the chapter chronicles the previous revitalization efforts of Columbia Street and the rest of Downtown, New Westminster.

Chapter V provides an analysis of the heritage and economic issues of Columbia Street. The conceptual framework proposed in Chapter III is utilized in identifying and evaluating planning approaches for the revitalization of Columbia Street. The first section of the chapter proposes a heritage classification system to distinguish the heritage buildings on Columbia Street. The second section reviews how New Westminster's regulations, such as the Zoning Bylaw, may be impacting heritage revitalization. The third section of the chapter assesses how possible planning tools, such as transferring of development rights, may be used in stimulating heritage revitalization. The last section identifies planning, urban design and market considerations in the development of the heritage revitalization strategy.

The last chapter, Chapter VI, makes recommendations for a heritage revitalization strategy designed for historic Columbia Street. This thesis concludes by discussing the considerations of this approach to planning research in British Columbia.

CHAPTER II

THE DOWNTOWN HERITAGE REVITALIZATION PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the downtown heritage revitalization process. This chapter will review the amendment to the Municipal Act, namely, the Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994 and outline the legislative context for heritage planning in British Columbia. A literature review will discuss the rationale for the decline and re-emergence of urban downtowns. The next section will provide a synopsis of revitalization efforts in several British Columbia downtowns that have participated in the Downtown Revitalization Program. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the benefits of heritage revitalization.

As this chapter will suggest, the amendments to the Municipal Act have empowered local governments in the management of heritage resources. With these new heritage planning tools, heritage revitalization will play a catalyst role in improving the economic and cultural viability of historic downtowns. In his book, Paving Paradise: Is British Columbia Losing its Heritage?, Michael Kluckner examines the value of heritage conservation. He proposes

that the retention and reuse of old buildings is of philosophical and aesthetic value. "A city that obliterates its past is a city without a soul.... As well as retaining one aspect of the human environment, an awareness of heritage gives a person a sense of roots - of place and citizenship and commitment."¹

HERITAGE LEGISLATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994

In British Columbia, the legislation for heritage planning is contained in the Municipal Act. In October, 1994, the Province of British Columbia proclaimed the Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994 and amended the Municipal Act by adding *Part 30 - Heritage Conservation*, comprising *Sections 1002 to 1036*. The Act has granted municipalities additional powers in the management of heritage resources, and has incorporated heritage resource management within the context of community planning. Several of the powers in the Municipal Act are significant to the thesis topic and are summarized below.

¹ Michael Kluckner, *Paving Paradise: Is British Columbia Losing its Heritage?*, Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1991, 3.

Community Heritage Register (*Section 1009*)

Section 1009 of the Municipal Act states that a municipality can create a list of heritage resources, known as the community heritage register. A community heritage register is an official listing of properties having heritage value or heritage character. Properties listed on the register qualify with eligibility criteria established by the local government. These properties are eligible for special provisions under the British Columbia Building Code Heritage Building Supplement and may be subject to heritage controls, if deemed necessary.

Heritage Revitalization Agreements (*Section 1021*)

To establish a climate for negotiations between property owners and a local government, the Municipal Act created a new tool, known as a heritage revitalization agreement (HRA). A HRA is a written agreement, negotiated between the local government and the owner of a heritage property. The agreement outlines the duties, obligations and benefits negotiated by both parties.

A heritage revitalization agreement is similar to the land use contract previously used in British Columbia. A heritage revitalization agreement allows a local government and a property owner to make a formal, voluntary agreement specifying issues such as density, land use designation and subdivision requirements. When an agreement alters the use or density of a site, the local government must hold a public hearing on the content of the agreement. Once approved, the heritage revitalization agreement is binding and can not be amended or canceled without the voluntary consent of both parties.

Heritage revitalization agreements are intended to provide a powerful and flexible tool which enable agreements to be specifically written to suit unique properties and situations. They may be used to set out the conditions which apply to a particular property. The terms of the agreement supersede local government zoning regulations.²

Heritage Designation and Compensation (*Sections 1022 - 1024*)

The previous Heritage Conservation Act, 1979 enabled local governments to designate properties as municipal heritage sites. Heritage designation is a legal procedure to protect property considered of heritage value. One of the new local government powers is the ability to involuntarily designate a property. *Section 1022 (1)* states that:

² Heritage Branch, Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, *Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994 - Heritage Conservation: A Community Guide*, Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1995, 33.

A local government may, by bylaw, on terms and conditions as it considers appropriate, designate real property in whole or in part as protected under this section if the local government considers that

- a) the property has heritage value or heritage character, or
- b) designation of the property is necessary or desirable for the conservation of a protected heritage property.³

Heritage designation is the only form of heritage regulation which can prohibit a demolition. *Section 1024* of the Municipal Act states that a local government must now provide fair compensation to a property owner if heritage designation can be demonstrated to create a loss in market value. If the local government and the property owner are unable to agree on compensation, the matter can be referred for binding arbitration.

Temporary Heritage Protection (*Sections 1015 - 1020*)

Additional new powers for local government involve the implementation of temporary heritage protection. A local government is able to withhold approvals or demolition permits for a specific area, or property, for a maximum of one year. The purpose of this protection is to allow local government sufficient time to undertake community heritage planning for a specific area.

³ Ibid.

Heritage Conservation Area (*Section 1026*)

Similar to a development permit area, a local government can define heritage conservation areas in an Official Community Plan. A heritage conservation area provides long-term protection to a distinctive heritage area. As part of the heritage controls, properties in a heritage conservation area may require a heritage permit for subdivisions, additions, alterations or new construction.

Incentives

Under *Sections 400.1 - 400.2* of the Municipal Act, local governments are empowered to provide incentives for heritage conservation. The Municipal Act enables a local government to exempt property taxes if a property complies with one of the following conditions: the property is a municipal heritage site; the property is listed on a heritage conservation area schedule; or the property is subject to a heritage revitalization agreement. In addition to tax exemptions, local government can also provide financial and non-monetary support to owners of heritage properties. Direct financial support may include grants to property owners. A local government can also provide non-monetary support to property owners which may include regulatory relaxations or additional density.

The new powers under the Municipal Act give British Columbia local governments more opportunities to facilitate partnerships with property owners and impose heritage controls if deemed necessary. These powers will give local governments greater ability to steward their communities' heritage resources. A common frustration shared by many municipal heritage planners prior to the adoption of the Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994 has been an inability to respond to unique heritage conservation circumstances, such as the withholding or delaying of a demolition permit. The amendments to the Municipal Act now give planners the ability to manage heritage conservation and change within a context of community planning.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION TOOLS

Several of the heritage planning tools in the Municipal Act have been used for several years in parts of Canada and the United States. Many cities have local historic preservation bylaws (or ordinances in the U.S.) including incentive zoning, transfer of development rights and innovative financial incentives, such as revolving loan funds, to promote a desired level of urban development and heritage revitalization.

Incentive Programs

The literature discusses the need for incentive programs in heritage conservation. There are at least five reasons why incentive programs are used in historic conservation. They are:

1. Incentive programs can establish good relationships between property owners of heritage buildings and the public;
2. Incentive programs can counter government forces or land use policies that inadvertently threaten historic resources;
3. Incentive programs can generate systematic rehabilitation of historic buildings;
4. Incentive programs can provide some financial equity for rehabilitation projects to compete with new construction or abandonment; and
5. Incentive programs can compensate owners who may be economically disadvantaged by historic preservation laws.⁴

There are several types of incentive programs in use throughout Canada and the United States. Each has varying degrees of success.

⁴ Marya Morris, *Innovative Tools for Heritage Preservation*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1992, 3.

Incentive Zoning

Since New York City adopted incentive zoning in 1961, many cities have used this tool as a way to accommodate growth, while obtaining various public benefits. Incentive zoning allows a developer to build more space for sale or lease in a building than would otherwise be permitted, in return for a public benefit, such as the historic preservation of a building. The use of density bonusing is a good way of offsetting the costs a developer incurs in offering a public amenity. Moreover, density bonusing establishes partnerships between the public and the private sector in the realization of public amenities. Notwithstanding the benefits, density bonusing can have drawbacks. "Many cities with bonus system experiences have found that bonuses can lead to large numbers of very big buildings and shadowed streets, with few measurable public benefits."⁵ To ensure that density bonuses work in accordance with desired community objectives, local governments need to carefully develop their bonuses and continuously evaluate their effectiveness.

⁵ Richard Collins, Elizabeth Waters and Bruce Dotson, *America's Downtowns: Growth, Politics & Preservation*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1991, 17.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights is an incentive tool which allows an owner of a building, for example a historic landmark, to transfer the development rights from that property to another site. The implementation of a transfer of development rights program creates a market place for their sale.

The first density transfer to take place in British Columbia was in Vancouver, in 1974. The 1890's Christ Church Cathedral at 690 Burrard Street was designated as a heritage building. On the same day, the owners of the neighbouring property agreed to pay the church \$300,000 a year for 106 years, in return for the church's unused density. The transfer of the development rights resulted in the construction of the Park Place office development at 666 Burrard Street, funding for the church's programs and funding for the maintenance of the heritage building.⁶

Financial Incentives

In addition to regulatory tools, many Canadian and American cities use a wide range of financial incentives.

⁶ Kluckner, 20.

Financial incentives to rehabilitation [of] ... historic buildings help foster private participation and investment in preservation. They encourage owners of historic property, who may or may not be active or interested in preservation, to save their structures and become advocates.... Ultimately, incentives are the answer to the property owner's question, 'what's in it for me'?⁷

A report prepared by the Financial Officers in the United States observes that financial incentives affect market forces by attempting to make heritage conservation financially feasible.⁸ One of most popular financial incentives is property tax relief.

Property Tax Incentives

Property tax relief typically comes in three forms: abatements, credits and freezes. Each method is administered differently.

Property Tax Abatements - A tax abatement decreases or delays the taxes due on a given property over a fixed period of time. The programs either reduce a specific percentage of taxes due or apply a lower tax rate than normal.

Property Tax Credit - A tax credit is a subtraction from the actual tax assessment of an amount that offsets certain tax liabilities, such as the

⁷ Morris, 3.

⁸ Susan Robinson and John Petersen, *Fiscal Incentives for Historic Preservation*, Washington D.C.: Government Finance Officers Association, 1989, 3.

increased value of a historic property through rehabilitation. Most property tax credits are a fixed amount or a percentage of the money spent on rehabilitation.

Property Tax Freeze - A tax freeze is accomplished by holding assessments at pre-rehabilitation levels and by not taxing increases in value for qualifying properties.

Due to the powers under the Municipal Act Section 400.1 - 400.2, several cities in British Columbia are exploring the use of property tax abatement incentives to encourage historic revitalization. Property tax incentive programs aimed at heritage preservation have been in use in the United States for 20 years; the first program in Canada was introduced in Edmonton, in 1988. Since that time, several other Canadian cities have introduced property tax incentive programs, including Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. In most cities, tax incentive programs operate as part of a series of programs and incentives designed to encourage and promote heritage revitalization.

Do Tax Incentives Stimulate Investment In Heritage Revitalization?

A comprehensive study by the Government Finance Research Centre in the United States examined various aspects of tax incentives in heritage conservation. They assessed that, since commercial properties are income

producing, financial incentives can be measured against net profits and rates of return on invested capital. They found that tax incentives “may affect the rate of return on investment in [a particular] property by lowering the cost of construction, cost of financing, operating expenses, or more indirectly, by improving prospects for gross revenues.”⁹ The study went on to report that:

The ... property tax abatements examined were capable of increasing the property owner’s rate of return by four to six percentage points. While conditions will vary, it appears that property tax abatements and freezes of various sorts will likely operate in this range (on a pre-income tax basis) in changing rates of return.¹⁰

The study concluded that tax incentives would not be lucrative enough to turn “losers into winners”, but could make almost-viable rehabilitation projects financially feasible.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

According to Roberta Brandes Gratz’s book, The Living City, the suburbs are still growing, but we are in a period of urban renaissance. “People are moving back to cities or resisting the pull to leave, recognizing that experts prematurely pronounce cities dead because they don’t understand what makes

⁹ Clayton Research Associates, *Property Tax Incentives for Downtown Heritage Buildings - City of Victoria*, 1995, 52.

¹⁰ Robinson, *et al.*, 58.

them live.”¹¹ As Gratz claims, “preserving the urban fabric, weaving together the treasured old and the needed new, not being afraid to think small - that is what genuine revitalization is all about.”¹² Neighbourhoods, like the cities they exist in, are dynamic because of the changing forces that affect the way neighbourhoods and cities are shaped. Many residential, commercial and industrial users once located in downtowns have been abandoned for more desirable and affordable locations in the suburbs.

Decentralization trends in urban areas became apparent in North America during the late 1920's with the expanded coverage of the streetcar and the accompanying boom of subdivisions in outlying areas. There were few shopping districts in outlying areas during this period. People did much of their shopping in the downtown, relying on an increasingly complex system of streetcars and suburban railways. The largest component of retail development in North America was composed of independently owned businesses such as the local grocery store, barber shop and hardware store which served the needs of local residents. Two major trends changed shopping facilities and consumer shopping patterns. The first trend was a sharp increase in automobile ownership, which provided shoppers with easy access to suburban malls. The

¹¹ Roberta Brandes Gratz, *The Living City*, New York: Touchstone, 1989, 12.

¹² Ibid.

second trend was the increasing importance of standard brands and nation-wide chain stores.¹³

Due to the availability of inexpensive suburban land, shopping centres started to be built outside of cities. Once shoppers discovered the convenience and accessibility of regional shopping centres, they increasingly turned to these modern facilities. In the early 1970s, shopping centres in Canada and the United States were opening at a rate of 1000 per year, with approximately 10% of them as regional centres.¹⁴ The larger suburban shopping malls offered the same or better range of goods than the downtowns and mall shoppers did not have to be concerned with safety, congestion, parking or poor weather conditions.

Downtowns In The Post Shopping Centre Era

“A major problem in downtowns is the attitude of people, since they often fail to see the assets already in place.”¹⁵ Some argue that local commercial areas no longer serve the needs of nearby residents. Others argue that local merchants cannot compete with shopping centres, nor can they undertake the successful promotions, marketing and customer relations

¹³ Brian Berry, *Urban Planning Analysis and Administration: Small Business in Urban Revitalization*, M.A. Thesis, Department of Regional Planning, Harvard University, 1979, 46.

¹⁴ Blake Hudema, *Growth, Change and Land Use Patterning for Strip Commercial Districts: A Vancouver Case Study*, M.A. Thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1984, 34-35.

¹⁵ Netty Tam, *Commercial Area Revitalization: A Case Study of New Westminster's Downtown*, M.A. Thesis, The Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, 1994, 17.

undertake the successful promotions, marketing and customer relations programs implemented in shopping malls. "Downtowns suffer from an inferiority complex where merchants see everything that is new and flashy going into the shopping centres; they think of downtowns merely as old."¹⁶

The quote below summarizes some of the factors in a declining downtown.

Vacant properties and empty storefronts are indicators of weakness in the local economy. An area with rising numbers of unclaimed or unoccupied buildings with 'For Lease and/or For Sale' signs shows that the commercial area is struggling. Opportunities for vandalism and the congregation of gangs and people with social problems such as drugs and alcohol can result. As the area deteriorates and declines, pedestrian traffic decreases and further social and economic concerns are created. The issues of poverty and drug and alcohol abuse associated with poorly operated hotels are often overlooked problems in depressed commercial areas.¹⁷

What Makes a Downtown Successful?

Downtowns have been important to the growth of cities for decades and will continue to be important despite trends of decline and deterioration. For people to be encouraged to remain or return to the downtown, the downtown needs to be socially, culturally and economically viable. Historic commercial districts represent a tremendous investment of time and money made by past generations in buildings, roads and utilities. At one time, commercial main

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 30.

streets provided important social and economic functions: local stores provided not only services but also gathering places. Downtowns played important roles in the life of communities. By expressing the character and history of its residents, downtowns have long been the heart of the community.

Need For Vitality

There are several factors that create a successful downtown. One factor is vitality. Vitality is defined several ways in the literature. It is defined as various elements: people; activities; and opportunities.

... urban vitality is the synergism of a sizable number of varied and somewhat unique commercial and experiential opportunities, and a relatively dense and socially heterogeneous pedestrian population, which animates certain city areas, almost continuously, throughout each day and evening.¹⁸

Gratz describes vitality as being a result of density: "Density comes when many people are in the same place doing things that gain strength from their interaction."¹⁹ According to William Whyte's book, *City: Rediscovering the Centre*, "the vitality of retail commercial streets depends upon a continuous row of retail establishments which can draw pedestrian shoppers along the length of the street."²⁰ "Contrast, variety, detail, surprise, drama, nooks,

¹⁸ Paul Maas, *Toward a Theory of Urban Vitality*, M.A. Thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1988, 19.

¹⁹ Brandes, 25.

²⁰ William Whyte, *City: Rediscovering the Centre*, New York: Double Day, 1988, 348.

compactness, mixture of functions, nothing static, nothing boring -- these are some of the things that make up a lively well functioning street.”²¹ According to Kuchner, vitality is a produce of a City’s social and built composition:

In this era of mobile capital and migrating populations, relatively new cities and towns have a real problem achieving the rich texture that throughout the world is the hallmark of maturity. A city’s texture is a combination of exciting contemporary activities and opportunities, a diverse population, and a mixture of buildings from a variety of eras.²²

Vitality Is Created With People

To help create vitality, a downtown needs a population base. There are many benefits to having a downtown residential base. A resident base needs to be large enough to provide the necessary purchasing power and customer thresholds to support a diversity of businesses in the downtown.²³ A residential base can give the downtown additional security through crime prevention. People living in the downtown can provide “*eyes on the street*”, a term which refers to resident on-lookers watching the activities along the street and in doing so, help prevent criminal or nuisance behaviour from taking place. Residents living in a downtown also provide for a balance of consumers between day time and night time. A problem with some North American

²¹ Brandes, 23.

²² Kluckner, 3.

²³ William Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*, Garden City: Double Day, 1958, 24.

downtowns is that once downtown employees leave for the evening, these areas become abandon.

In addition to a residential base, downtowns also need pedestrian traffic to provide interesting street activity. Empty store space and too few people are two ills that are associated with a depressed commercial area. Without a constant flow of new activities and businesses, a commercial district will stagnate.

It is sad to see how many cities have this emptiness at their core. It is sadder still to see how many are adopting exactly the approaches that will make matters worse. Most of their programs have in common as stated purpose 'relief from pedestrian congestion.' There is no pedestrian congestion. What they need is pedestrian congestion. But what they are doing is taking what people are on the streets and putting them somewhere else. In a kind of holy war against the street, they are putting them up in overhead skyways, down in underground concourses, and into sealed atriums and galleries. They are putting them everywhere except at street level.²⁴

Therefore, a downtown is successful when there is interest and vitality along its streets. Interest and vitality means a diversity of pedestrians and shoppers, a diversity of stores and merchandise, and a sense of identity.

²⁴ Whyte, 1988, 6-7.

DOWNTOWN HERITAGE REVITALIZATION

Heritage revitalization helps create a sense of identity. As early as 1961, Jane Jacobs was writing that physical preservation is an important way to promote the mixture of uses and visual attractiveness, which contribute to the economic health and livability of a city.²⁵

A survey conducted by the National League of Cities in the United States reported that downtown revitalization is the most common strategy used by cities for economic development. Moreover, heritage revitalization is cited as one of the most successful economic strategies. The study listed forty five different economic development tools that cities use. Heritage revitalization was listed as being in the top ten of the economic development list.²⁶

Over the last two decades, improving the economic health of downtown has been a key component in the most effective economic development strategies of American cities. And historic preservation is nearly always a central element in successful downtown revitalization efforts.²⁷

²⁵ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Vintage Books, 1961, 55.

²⁶ Donovan Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation - A Community Leader's Guide*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1994, 55.

²⁷ Ibid.

Downtown Revitalization Program In British Columbia

In 1980, the B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs introduced the Downtown Revitalization Program (DRP) with a \$25 million fund. The program was designed to deal with physical and economic revitalization.

The basic goal of the DRP is to improve economic strengths and viability, and to improve the physical infrastructure of downtown areas by applying municipalities and provide business owners with financial incentives. The program, through grants and low-interest loans, works at bringing together merchants, municipal administrators, provincial agencies, and residents, to undertake concept plans, marketing strategies, and capital improvement projects to revitalize downtowns both physically and economically.²⁸

In the same year, the British Columbia Heritage Trust introduced the Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP), which was similar to the DRP. The difference with the HARP was its focus on heritage commercial areas. Until recently, the two programs have often worked in concert.

In 1993, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs conducted an evaluation of the DPR and evaluated the impacts of heritage revitalization by interviewing participating property owners. The report's overall conclusion was that: "It is clear that saving old buildings - heritage revitalization - when properly planned and supported, can and does serve as an important catalyst for community

²⁸ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Housing, *Downtown Revitalization Program, Issues and Experiences*, Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1993, 5.

economic development.”²⁹ The report outlined the following four observations:

1. Business people have found from experience that heritage revitalization makes good business sense.
2. Heritage upgrading has had a measurable return on investment in almost all cases, due to the beneficial impact on business activities and investment.
3. Heritage revitalization has benefitted the downtown business district and the community in general; even the few business people who were unable to point to increased profitability for their own businesses agreed on the general benefits.
4. All business and property owners said if they had the choice to do it again, they would.

The Province’s evaluation also examined the impacts on sales, rent and property value: “Benefits to individual businesses were measured.... These translated into improvements in business viability, increased employment and additional private investment in business expansion. Significant increases in property values were also noted.”³⁰ The study also examined marketing and

²⁹ Barry Goodwin, *The Impact of Heritage Revitalization: The Business View*, Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1993, 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

service. The study noted frequent references made to the positive impact of a heritage atmosphere on marketing and customer service. "Customers 'like' heritage; they feel 'comfortable' in such a setting; it attracts people to a business and to [the] main street; and it can contribute to a good business image."³¹ Several owners stated that they have a preference for a heritage theme since it does not become dated: "it never goes out of style."

Three Revitalization Projects

Summarized below are three projects that were discussed in the Province's study. The first two projects are relatively small in scale and the third project is relatively large. These three projects have been selected since they each illustrate the economic benefits of heritage revitalization, irrespective of the different magnitude of project.

The first revitalization project was in Rossland. This project involved a facade restoration of a building with three ground level retail spaces and two rental apartments upstairs. The total cost of the restoration was \$12,000. The owner stated that retail rental rates increased by approximately 200 percent after the restoration, and that the retail spaces were now easier to lease. The apartment rental rates also increased after the restoration; they increased from

³¹ Ibid.

\$200 to \$700 per month. The owner estimated that the market value of the property increased by approximately 20 percent per year, over the five years of the restoration.³²

A second revitalization project cited in the evaluation was in Trail. This project involved the renovation of a retail service building. The total cost of the project was \$5,000 for a new awning and paint scheme. The owner also claimed that the renovation improved the market value of the property by increasing the property value of the building by 15-20 percent.³³

The third example was in Nelson. This was a major revitalization project which involved the restoration and renovation of a historic hotel. The total cost of the project was \$1.3 million. The owners of the hotel gutted the building, installed air conditioning, renovated a restaurant, lounge, pub and banquet room, and added a night club. The forty five hotel rooms were all renovated as well. According to the owner, the hotel now operates at 95% occupancy year round. Also, the owner claims that since 1980, when the hotel was purchased, the property value has increased more than 175 per cent over the purchase price and cost of renovations combined.³⁴

³² Ibid., 2.

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Ibid., 11.

Benefits to the Local Economy

Heritage revitalization accrues several benefits for a community. The benefits can include: new businesses being started; private investment being stimulated; increased tourism; increased property values; enhanced quality of life; sense of neighbourhood and community pride; new job creation; and the compatibility of land use patterns.³⁵

The Economics of Historic Preservation - A Community Leader's Guide provides a thorough analysis of the benefits of historic preservation. The study proposes that historic preservation has significant and ongoing economic impact beyond the project itself. "The rehabilitation of historic buildings certainly creates construction jobs. But the economic benefits of preserving historic resources goes beyond the lot line of that building. The benefits accruing to a community are both direct and indirect."³⁶

A declining historic commercial district is often the result of decades of disinvestment by the public and private sectors; for this reason, private investors are typically hesitant to reinvest. Real estate is an interdependent asset; its value is determined, in large part, not by the individual owner's investment but by the investment of others. Uncertainty, instability, and

³⁵ Rypkema, 15.

³⁶ Ibid., 40.

concern about the continuing disinvestment by others will discourage an individual investor from committing capital in a historic district. A firm resolution by local government to begin reinvestment will often act as the catalyst for private investment.

Improvements on Property Values

“In every heritage district designated in Canada in the last 20 years, property values have risen, despite the fact that development potential has been reduced.”³⁷ The Government Finance Research Center of the Government Finance Officers Association measured local economic impacts of historic preservation in two cities in Virginia and Texas.

As revealed in the quote below, commercial properties inside a historic district increased an additional 200 percent over comparable commercial properties not part of a historic district.

Between 1975 and 1991, prices increased by an average 440 percent in East End and by 165 percent in the Silk Stocking district. By comparison, prices in the San Jacinto neighbourhood [not a historic district] increased over the same period by an average 80 percent. We also examined the changes in value of a sample of properties located within the historic district as compared to changes in value of properties located elsewhere in the city.... Commercial properties inside and outside the historic district ... showed differences in average percent increases.

³⁷Ibid., 42.

Commercial property inside the historic district increased by an average 480 percent, and commercial property outside the district by an average 281 percent.³⁸

It is not being suggested in this thesis that merely creating a historic district will generate instant investment. The historic district cited in the above quote is one conservation tool working in concert with other programs. Successful revitalization strategies include business assistance programs, property tax abatements, design assistance, promotional activities, and a series of other tools that complement the historic district.³⁹ The quote above reveals that when a heritage revitalization strategy is carefully developed and implemented, economic benefits can be realized.

Tourism Benefits

Historic resources are amongst the strongest community assets for attracting visitors. "It is widely acknowledged in the travel industry that the character and charm of small cities is a major factor in [attracting] tourism to them.... People travel in large part to visit the past.... This is one of the reasons why the movement for historic preservation is so avidly supported by tourism bureaus and travel companies all over the country."⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., 43.

³⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 78.

CONCLUSION

Heritage revitalization can add to the vitality of a downtown. Coupled with a residential base and pedestrian traffic, heritage revitalization can provide a downtown with a well articulated streetscape, a sense of place and a sense of permanency. The planning tools in the Municipal Act give local government the ability to facilitate private / public partnerships in heritage revitalization, and provide the necessary incentives to improving the economic viability of a downtown.

There are many components necessary for a successful downtown. Strategies that revitalize a downtown must be multi-faceted in approach. It is recognized that heritage conservation is not a panacea for comprehensive downtown revitalization. However, heritage revitalization is a key component to creating economic diversity and livability in a downtown. As shown in some of the examples in this chapter, heritage revitalization policies can improve the economy of an area by appreciating property values as high as 200 percent.

CHAPTER III

CASE STUDIES OF HERITAGE REVITALIZATION IN DOWNTOWNS

Historic preservation plays a central role in downtown revitalization. To become a great American city in the 21st century, a city must preserve those special places that make it a unique, interesting and attractive place to live and work. A city's historic landmarks and districts clearly rank prominently among such places.¹

This quote applies equally well to a Canadian city. Chapter III discusses heritage revitalization strategies in Canada and the United States. Four cities are explored. The Canadian case studies are both in British Columbia, namely Downtown, Victoria and Yaletown, Vancouver. The two American case studies are Downtown, San Francisco and Lower Downtown, Denver.

Information from the case studies will be used two ways: one, strategies will be reviewed and policies that have stimulated market activity will be considered for the Columbia Street case study; and two, a conceptual framework will be developed which details the planning steps necessary in formulating a heritage revitalization strategy. This framework will be applied to the Columbia Street case study and used in the evaluation of heritage revitalization policies.

¹ Richard Collins, Elizabeth Waters and Bruce Dotson, *America's Downtowns: Growth, Politics & Preservation*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1991, 6.

CANADIAN CITIES

In 1981, the Heritage Canada Foundation adopted the Main Street Canada program to revitalize main streets in communities across Canada. Seven pilot projects were set up in the provinces of Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

VICTORIA

Victoria, British Columbia is a city well known for its restored downtown buildings and a city rich in heritage. Downtown Victoria underwent two major commercial construction booms. The first boom occurred between 1890 and 1912, which created the stock of buildings that define the special heritage character of Downtown Victoria. Between 1912 to the late 1950's, the construction boom ended with the slowing of the economy. From the 1970's to present day, the second Downtown construction boom has been underway. As one author notes, a down turn in the economy is a friend to heritage conservation: "[Victoria's] lack of development pressure since the 1920's has left the downtown economically flat but historically intact, retaining the concentrated blocks of human scaled buildings that make it such a pleasant, pedestrian-oriented, old-world city."²

² Michael Kluckner, *Paving Paradise: Is British Columbia Losing its Heritage?*, Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1991, 9.

The heritage movement in Victoria started in the early 1970's. It can be accredited to the demolition of a Victorian mansion in the downtown, which had been operating as a rooming house for several years. In 1971, the mansion was purchased by a developer, who demolished it and erected a high rise hotel. The opposition to this demolition galvanized the community, and was instrumental in forming the Hallmark Society, a non-profit association with over 1300 members interested in promoting heritage conservation.

Heritage conservation plays a prominent and critical role in the Downtown Victoria Plan, 1990: "... here is a plan for Downtown that strikes a balance between development and heritage conservation."³ Downtown Victoria is a vibrant, unique commercial core. It has "... a picturesque harbour, magnificent vistas, and a rich heritage of design excellence. A sense of compactness, of being able to traverse Downtown through a pleasant environment on foot."⁴

Approximately 65% of all designated heritage sites in British Columbia are located in Victoria. The majority of these sites are located in Downtown Victoria. Not surprisingly, the largest concentration of heritage resources in Victoria are also located in the Downtown. The Downtown has 36 heritage

³ City of Victoria, *Downtown Victoria Plan*, 1990, vi.

⁴ Ibid.

designated buildings and 103 buildings listed on the City's community heritage registry.

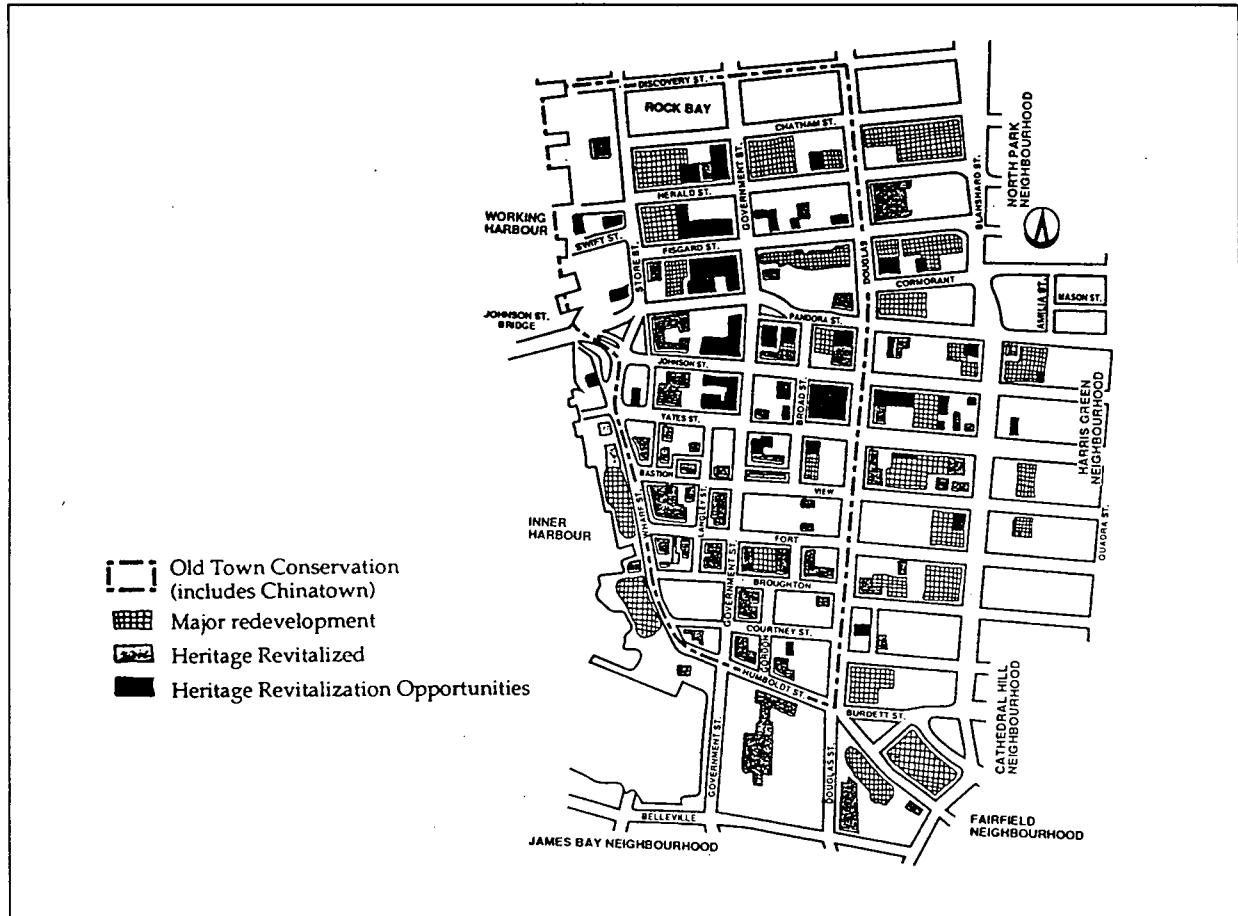


Figure 1: Downtown Victoria⁵

Victoria's Downtown Plan identifies heritage conservation and heritage revitalization within a larger context of investment opportunities. The Plan outlines sites in the Downtown that are heritage revitalization opportunities or major redevelopment opportunities. Refer to Map 1. Classifying properties is a useful approach, since it provides the development industry with guidance and clarity.

⁵ Well restored historic building in Downtown Victoria; building has had a sympathetic addition at the doorway.

Map 1 City of Victoria Downtown Plan⁶



⁶ City of Victoria, 2.

Use of Incentives

The City of Victoria has implemented two types of incentives: density and financial. Each is discussed below.

Density Incentives

Victoria allows density bonusing in the Downtown for heritage restoration. However, if a heritage building has been demolished or has undergone an unsympathetic restoration, the City will reduce the bonus. The City of Victoria also has a transfer of development rights program. An owner is allowed to transfer density if an entire heritage building is restored. The City places parameters on the program: the recipient site can only be within a one block radius of the donor site.

3.2.2.1 Bonus density may be considered where project results in:

- a) the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of an heritage building (keep entire building, not just facade). In cases where entire building is restored, consider “density transfer” to sites within one block.

3.2.2.2 Bonus density provisions are to be reduced in these conditions:

- a) site where heritage building has been demolished (no bonusing).

3.2.2.3 The 3:1 density will be considered as a standard entitlement throughout most of the Downtown. Sensitive sites such as the Empress and waterfront will remain at densities of 2.0:1 or lower.⁷

⁷ Ibid., 21.

An historically sensitive district in the Downtown is Old Town. The City of Victoria has implemented regulations which act as heritage controls. For example, the maximum permitted height is fifty feet and the maximum floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.0. Since the existing building stock in Old Town ranges from three storeys to four storeys and have FSRs close to the current zoning, demolitions have become uneconomic. Moreover, heritage buildings in Old Town are granted parking relaxations.

Financial Incentives

The City of Victoria has implemented a financial incentive program, known as *The Victoria Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program*. This program is designed to promote the designation of buildings. *The Program* is a City grant administered through the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust Society. The City of Victoria has a \$1.9 million Downtown Incentive Fund. This fund was created by the proceeds of a street sale by Cadillac Fairview during the construction of the Eaton Centre shopping mall in Downtown Victoria.

The Downtown Investment Fund provides grant monies for *The Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program*. A property owner is eligible to funding if certain criteria are met: the building must be designated a

municipal heritage site; the building must be located in the Downtown; and the proposed use and rehabilitation work compiles with all City bylaws and regulations. Grants of up to 50% for the cost of heritage work, to a maximum of \$50,000 per project, are awarded.⁸

Benefits of Downtown Heritage Revitalization For Downtown Victoria

While it is difficult to directly measure economic impacts of legislation, the argument can be made that Victoria's grant program has stimulated market activity in the Downtown. A report prepared by the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust reveals that between 1990 to 1995, a total of \$764,000 of financial assistance was allocated to 23 property owners. This resulted in \$3,700,000 of private investment. The Civic Trust reports that \$1.00 of public funds leverages over \$5.00 of private investment. When *The Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program* is combined with the funding for the Heritage Area Revitalization Program (H.A.R.P.), a total of \$4,500,000 of private investment was generated and 31 property owners participated. Moreover, *The Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program* also directly encouraged the heritage designation of 19 buildings in the Downtown.

⁸ City of Victoria, *The Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program*, City of Victoria.

VANCOUVER

Vancouver is also rich in heritage resources. The City of Vancouver plays a key role in conserving Vancouver's heritage. Most of the municipalities in the Lower Mainland have heritage inventories which identify buildings with heritage significance. The City of Vancouver's heritage inventory has a rating system for heritage resources. Vancouver's heritage inventory has approximately 2,400 buildings, with roughly 200 listed as "A" buildings: buildings considered of primary historical and architectural importance. The balance of the buildings on the heritage inventory are "B", which are considered as important individual buildings, and "C" buildings, which have heritage character and are part of a streetscape.

There are several historic districts in Vancouver. In 1971, the Provincial Government designated Gastown and Chinatown to avoid the threat of demolitions for a proposed freeway. This heritage designation covered 230 individual properties, including all buildings of heritage value and the intervening properties. In 1974, the City of Vancouver created new zoning schedules for Gastown and Chinatown. The Provincial Government delegated the authority for issuing permits to Provincially designated properties to the City. Both commercial districts are noteworthy examples of cultural and

building diversity, with good business mixes, and high pedestrian and shopper traffic.

Yaletown

In addition to Gastown and Chinatown districts, Yaletown has also emerged as a vibrant, historic commercial area in Vancouver. Yaletown has been selected as a case study to assess how the recent regulatory amendments in this district have stimulated heritage revitalization.

Yaletown is a former warehouse district located north of Pacific Boulevard between Nelson and Drake Streets, and bounded by Homer Street to the west. The area is characterized by the collection of warehouse buildings, (constructed of heavy timber, brick and concrete) and narrow streets. The massing of buildings, built property line to property line, together with the similarities of style and exterior finishes, give Yaletown its unique, cohesive character.



Figure 2: Streetscape in Yaletown⁹

Most of the buildings in Yaletown were built between 1909 and 1913. Original tenants were truck and transfer companies, warehouses and small manufacturers. During the 1960's, high rise buildings were being erected in Downtown Vancouver. Due to the industrial zoning in Yaletown, the district remained primarily intact. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, Yaletown began to change as urban professionals discovered the old warehouses, conveniently located near the commercial downtown core. "In 1980 and 1981 there was

⁹ Photograph of historic buildings in Yaletown and traditional streetscape.

considerable interest in the rehabilitation and redevelopment of this warehouse district for mixed use commercial and residential uses.”¹⁰

Yaletown Policies and the HA-3 Zone

In 1980, the City of Vancouver adopted nine Yaletown policies. Four policies are of significance to this thesis topic.

1. The future development of Yaletown should be in the context of it being identified as an area having special maximum height (70 feet) and floor space ratio (5) limits;
2. Elements such as the canopies and visual connection to the Roundhouse complex which reflect Yaletown’s origins contribute to its character and should be retained wherever reasonably possible;
3. A broad range of uses should be permitted to promote diversity and day-long activity in the area; residential uses in upper storeys should be encouraged;
4. To increase the flexibility of adapting existing structures to new uses the Zoning Bylaw should allow any of the uses to occupy the full FSR. Design review, assisted by design guidelines, should evaluate specific project proposals for suitability and compatibility.¹¹

In the early 1980’s, the adaptive reuse and renovation of Yaletown’s industrial buildings began. Professional offices, up-scale restaurants and trendy bars started to appeared. In 1986, Yaletown zoning was amended from DD to HA-3. The new zone was specifically designed to encourage conversions and renovation of existing warehouse buildings and the

¹⁰ City of Vancouver, *City Manager’s Report*, March 5, 1986.

¹¹ Ibid.

construction of compatible new buildings. As stated in a City of Vancouver report, the purpose of the zone was: "... to preserve the physical integrity of the area; promote renovation and revitalization; and provide greater incentives to developers by streamlining the regulations, and ... reducing the amount of discretion involved." ¹²

One of the ways that the City of Vancouver promoted renovation and revitalization was by adding new uses and densities in the HA-3 zone. The zone made certain residential, commercial and industrial uses outright uses. The HA-3 zone introduced density bonuses for the revitalization of heritage buildings. Heritage buildings were granted a bonus density of a maximum of 5.0 FSR. Also, the new zone allowed for heritage buildings that exceeded the 5.0 FSR to become legally conforming. By allowing for this provision of conformity, the City of Vancouver encouraged the adaptive reuse of all historic buildings in Yaletown, irrespective of their current density. Like Victoria, Vancouver also allows for the relaxation of parking standards in Yaletown. Recently, the City of Vancouver approved guidelines for improvements to the Yaletown docks and their character canopies. These guidelines recognize the

¹² Ibid.

heritage merit of the docks, and encourage pedestrian traffic, seating areas and outdoor cafes to be assembled on the docks.¹³



Figure 3: Heritage Buildings in Yaletown¹⁴

Benefits of Heritage Revitalization in Yaletown

The HA-3 zone has had a major role in stimulating market activity in Yaletown. Adopting the new zone changed the real estate economics of these buildings. In addition, the provision of amending the conformity of buildings, those that exceeded the allowable density, also stimulated re-investment. The

¹³ City of Vancouver, *Administration Report*, July 19, 1995.

¹⁴ Photograph showing outdoor activities in Yaletown.

new permitted uses in the zone value added the buildings and encouraged investment. As is evident when visiting Yaletown, the combination of policies and regulations working in concert with market forces has created a vibrant historic district and economically viable properties.

The redevelopment of the Expo lands and the Granville South lands created market pressure to revitalize Yaletown. With the anticipated high resident populations adjacent to Yaletown, market opportunities were created, such as the need for coffee bars, restaurants and retail stores. It is also difficult to measure the direct economic impacts of the Yaletown regulations on the market place; however, several of the factors listed below can act as general economic indicators:¹⁵

- in 1993, commercial office space was selling at an average of \$40 a buildable square foot;
- in 1996, commercial office space is being bid up in price for residential use;
- in 1996, residential buildings are selling for an average of \$65 - \$70 a buildable square foot;
- between 1991 to 1995, 188 loft units were built in Yaletown;

¹⁵ *Multiple Listing Service*, Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board; and interviews with local developers.

- in 1993, the average selling price of a strata loft unit was \$140 a square foot;
- in 1996, the average selling price of a strata loft unit is \$250 a square foot;
- commercial office space in a historic building in Yaletown is leasing quicker than office space in the financial core of Downtown Vancouver;
- the average office lease rate in Downtown Vancouver is \$11 a square foot;
- the average office lease rate in Yaletown is \$13 a square foot; and
- Yaletown office space is leasing up faster than Downtown Vancouver for two reasons: taxes are lower in Yaletown; and the ambiance of Yaletown is more desirable.

AMERICAN CITIES

In the 1980's, a great deal of innovation occurred in American cities to improve their downtowns, and historic conservation was prominent amongst these efforts. In 1977, the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched the Main Street program. The Main Street approach relied on a unified management for the downtown through public and private partnerships.

Four Approaches to the Main Street Program

The Main Street Program is based on four approaches, discussed briefly below:

1. *Organization* - establishing consensus and cooperation by building partnerships that create a consistent revitalization program and develop effective management and advocacy for the district.
2. *Promotion* - creating a positive image of the business district to attract customers and investors and rekindle community.
3. *Design* - enhancing the visual quality of the business district through buildings, storefronts, signs, public improvement, landscaping, merchandising displays and promotional materials.
4. *Economic Restructuring* - strengthening the existing economic assets of the business district while diversifying its economic base.¹⁶

“The key to the success of the Main Street approach is its comprehensiveness. By carefully integrating all four areas into a practical revitalization strategy, the approach produces fundamental changes in the [downtown’s] economic base.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Suzanne Dane, *New Directions for Urban Main Streets*, Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 19888, 6-

7.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

SAN FRANCISCO

In 1906, San Francisco was destroyed by earthquake and fire. Within two decades, an “instant city” emerged. The new San Francisco was built on the same lots and along the same streets that had existed prior to the fire.

Unlike their Victorian predecessors, the new buildings were described as: “light coloured, masonry-clad structures from six to twelve storeys in height with rich, distinctive and eclectic designs.”¹⁸

Unlike the architecture of many cities, the architecture of San Francisco buildings is unusually cohesive. Much of the charm of the city is a result of the application of certain design principles during rebuilding:

Conscious efforts were made to relate buildings to both the street and adjacent buildings [through the] use of similar cornice and belt course lines and sympathetic [building] materials, scale and color. Buildings were constructed [all the way up] to the street and property lines, defining the street edge and producing a sense of enclosure.¹⁹

From the Depression until 1950, no major buildings were built in San Francisco’s Downtown. Between 1965 and 1983, 36 million square feet of new office space was constructed. During this period, the City witnessed the loss of several popular historic landmarks. Among these was the City of Paris building. The old City of Paris building, a Beaux Arts-style structure on Union

¹⁸ Collins, *et. al.*, 132.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Square, was demolished in 1981. See Figure 4. The demolition took place in spite of a four year legal battle and a petition signed by 60,000 citizens protesting the building's destruction.



Figure 4: City of Paris Building, San Francisco²⁰

²⁰ As copied from Collins, *et. al.*

San Francisco Downtown Plan

In 1985, San Francisco adopted the Downtown Plan. The San Francisco Downtown Plan, unlike typical plans, embodied policies and zoning regulations. Taken as a whole, the Downtown Plan provided legally empowering tools in several areas, including heritage conservation. The major heritage initiatives in the plan were: a landmarks rating and identification system; a ban against the demolition or alternation of the City's 250 most important landmarks; the creation of six architectural conservation districts; a transfer of development rights program; financial penalties to discourage the "demolition by neglect" of historic and architectural landmarks; major down zoning in the City's downtown area; an overall cap on new downtown office space of 2.85 million square feet over three years; and design guidelines for new construction.²¹ The policies and regulations of importance to this thesis are discussed below.

Landmark Ratings and Demolition Controls

The Downtown Plan identifies two types of buildings in the Downtown Zoning District, significant and contributory. Significant buildings are structures of at least 40 years old, excellent in architectural design and

²¹ San Francisco Downtown Plan, City of San Francisco, 1985.

influential in creating the distinctive character of an area. The Plan states that significant heritage buildings cannot be altered or demolished unless there is an “imminent safety hazard” or “no substantial remaining market value of reason use” is available to the owner.

Contributing buildings also, have to be at least 40 years old, but are defined as “contextual”. In other words, they contribute positively to the character of an area. The Downtown Plan does not ban the demolition of contributory buildings; however, the City of San Francisco provides major economic incentives for their retention. One incentive is that contributory buildings can act as density donors to properties in the Downtown.

Architectural Conservation Districts

The Downtown Plan created six architectural conservation districts, which are groupings of architecturally distinctive buildings, aided by protective measures for maintaining their character. For historic properties in the districts, demolition controls are imposed and design guidelines for alteration and new construction are in place.

Demolition-by-Neglect-Controls

Demolition by neglect occurs when an owner of a historic building ignores local regulations and avoids maintenance in the hopes that it will

necessitate a demolition. The San Francisco Downtown Plan protects against demolition by neglect by legislating that all significant and contributory buildings be properly maintained. Failure to comply with the City of San Francisco's property maintenance bylaws and building code requirements can result in fines of \$500 per day.

Downzoning

The San Francisco Downtown Plan reduced overall building bulk and height limits in various places of the Downtown. For example, in the financial district where high rise development had been the most intense, the FAR was reduced from 14.0 to 9.0, (FAR is the same density calculation as FSR). The base FAR for the downtown retail was lowered from 10.0 to 6.0. Allowable building heights was also lowered. FAR and height limits in areas where historic buildings are concentrated were also substantially lowered.

Density

The Downtown Plan also provides density bonuses for uses that enliven the Downtown. To encourage street level retail stores, affordable housing and open spaces in the Downtown, the Plan permits developers to omit space devoted to these uses from their overall FAR limits.

Results from the San Francisco Downtown Plan

Under the previous San Francisco City Landmarks Law enacted in 1967, an average of only two Downtown buildings were being designated annually. Moreover, the City was unable to protect these historic buildings. San Francisco's Planning Commission could not deny a demolition permit; a demolition could only be delayed for up to one year. Under the Downtown Plan, 250 significant buildings, 183 contributory buildings and six conservation districts in the Downtown were designated at the time of the Plan's adoption.

Protection for historic buildings in San Francisco have been strengthened by the Downtown Plan. The Plan is significant since it adopted both policies and regulations designed to conserve and revitalize heritage resources. One such policy was the outright denial of demolishing landmark buildings unless the public's safety was in jeopardy. Moreover, it can be argued that the downzoning policies in the Plan may have had the greatest effect: "... planning and zoning controls, by alleviating economic pressures for property owners to tear down and build anew, can often be more important to the protection of historic buildings than traditional preservation ordinances."²²

²² Ibid., 140.

DENVER

The Lower Downtown is a warehouse district located at the north end of Denver's Downtown. The Lower Downtown, or LoDo as referred to by Denver residents, is Denver's birth place and the original location of many of its institutions, such as Denver's City Hall and the County Jail. The Lower Downtown a 25-block area made up almost exclusively with turn-of-the-century warehouses. Most of the buildings were constructed between 1870 and 1940, with the majority of the character buildings being built between 1881 - 1893, during the Great Silver Boom. The Lower Downtown contains the largest concentration of urban historic buildings in the Denver region. Most of the historic buildings are low in scale and built of orange red brick. While they are not necessarily distinctive when considered individually, together these warehouses make an impressive and cohesive streetscape. See Figure 5.

During the 1970's, preservationists began to identify historic buildings in the Lower Downtown worthy of conservation. In 1982, the City of Denver amended its zoning ordinance for Lower Downtown to provide incentives for residential development, historic conservation and street level retail. The



Figure 5: Historic Warehouses in the Lower Downtown²³

ordinance permitted developers to build larger buildings in exchange for the creation of new housing units and to purchase development rights from historic property owners. However, the ordinance had to be repealed. The ordinance failed to preserve the historic character of the Lower Downtown since it did not include demolition controls nor design standards for new construction.

²³ Photograph of historic streetscape in Denver.

Denver's Downtown Area Plan

In 1986, the City of Denver adopted the Downtown Area Plan. The Plan made recommendations for the preservation and revitalization of Lower Downtown. The Plan recommended that a comprehensive strategy be developed designed to stimulate economic demand. The Downtown Area Plan states that Lower Downtown's special historic character, human scale and architectural detail is a "market asset to the Downtown", and describes it as "one of the most sensitive and vulnerable districts in the Downtown."²⁴

Lower Downtown is an asset to the entire city and region, the last remaining historic commercial district in the downtown core ... [It] could be one of Denver's great landmarks - the not-to-be-missed place. To function in that fashion, a strong, critical mass of older buildings in the area must be preserved, restored and reactivated. The preservation of only the 'best' or most historic buildings will not meet the need.²⁵

Lower Downtown Historic District

In 1988, Lower Downtown was designated a protected local historic district. Also in 1988, the City of Denver adopted the Lower Downtown District Ordinance which outlined policies, incentives and regulations for the Lower Downtown Historic District. An objective of the ordinance was to give property owners market choices. This objective was deemed necessary in order

²⁴ City and County of Denver, *Downtown Area Plan. A Plan for the Future of Downtown Denver*, 1986, 46.

²⁵ Ibid.

to stimulate the type and amount of preservation and revitalization desired for the Lower Downtown. A discussion of the Lower Downtown District Ordinance is provided below.

Classification System

The Lower Downtown District Ordinance established a classification system for the historic buildings in the Lower Downtown. The system developed two categories, landmark buildings and contributing buildings. Contributing buildings were those that added to the quality of the district, however, lacked individual distinction.

Zoning - Amendments to Density Bonuses

The ordinance also amended the zoning in two ways. The first amendment involved the reduction of bonuses previously offered for building atria and plazas. These bonuses were removed since these design features were conflicting with the district's traditional street patterns and building styles.

The second zoning amendment involved increasing the density bonuses for sympathetic heritage preservation and revitalization. The objective of the ordinance was to make the renovation and reuse of historic buildings economically feasible by lifting the rigid restrictions on permitted land uses.

Through changes in allowable FAR, the ordinance encouraged uses that enliven the area, such as retail stores and housing. The base FAR was set at 2.0. A bonus of 5.0 FAR would be permitted if a developer was to provide housing, underground parking or street-level stores, all activities which would enhance the pedestrian traffic in the Lower Downtown.

To encourage redevelopment of contributing buildings, consider permitting those built to 4.0 FAR or under to add or transfer up to 2 FAR with design review. Existing buildings already built to 4.1 FAR or more may add up to 1.0 FAR with Design Review. ... For 36 months after new zoning is implemented, additional parking will not be required for floor area added to existing or renovated buildings.²⁶

An incentive was also adopted for design review. The ordinance states that sympathetic restorations and infill developments will be eligible for a bonus.

Transfer of Development Rights

The City of Denver also implemented a transfer of development rights program for the Lower Downtown. Landmark and contributing buildings are permitted to act as donor sites.

Demolition Controls

The Lower Downtown District Ordinance also implemented demolition controls. Demolition controls were adopted in order to “draw a reasonable

²⁶ City and County of Denver, *B-7 Lower Downtown District Ordinance*, 1988.

balance between private property rights and the public interest in preserving the critical mass of historic character in the district.”²⁷ The ordinance states that it is the responsibility of the property owner to demonstrate the infeasibility of renovating or reusing a historic building.

Public Investments

The ordinance also adopted certain public investments such as civic design improvements and business promotion activities. These public investments were initiated to alleviate property owners’ concerns over the proposed design and demolition controls.

Revolving Loan Fund

The financing for many restorations in the Lower Downtown was provided through a revolving loan fund. The revolving loan fund was initially created with a \$950,000 contribution made jointly contributed by the City of Denver, Historic Denver Inc., the Piton Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This fund provides gap financing, emergency rehabilitation funds, interest guarantees and interim construction loans to property owners of historic buildings in the Lower Downtown.

²⁷ *Downtown Area Plan*, 48.

Biennial Reviews

Another significant provision in the ordinance was its requirement for review every two years, for a six year period (which ended in 1994). The biennial review specified that the City determine whether to retain or repeal the ordinance's demolition controls. The biennial review required that the City hold a public hearing and the Planning Board present a progress report. This review was considered a critical component in receiving property owners' support for the adoption of the Historic District, and necessary in placating property owners' objections to design standards and demolition controls.

Lower Downtown Today

Denver, Colorado is a vibrant metropolitan city with a cosmopolitan downtown. The Lower Downtown is distinct both architecturally and culturally from the rest of the Downtown. Lower Downtown is developing into a sustainable neighbourhood. Several of the warehouses have been converted to loft housing. Currently, residential land uses make up 8% of the total area in Lower Downtown . Moreover, the largest land use is office space. At present, 2.5 million square feet of office space exists in the Lower Downtown,

or 35% of the total area. The remaining land uses are: 22% for parking facilities; 14% retail use; 16% industrial use and 5% open space.²⁸

Visiting the Lower Downtown is an enjoyable experience of reading historic plaques along buildings and sidewalks, eating in restaurants and browsing through art galleries. The Lower Downtown is also quickly becoming the hub of Denver's art community. One of the more successful areas within the Lower Downtown is Larimer Square. Larimer Square is part of Denver's entertainment district and is a two block area, framed in lively decorative street banners, well restored buildings, outdoor cafes, art galleries and jazz clubs. See Figure 6.

Has the Lower Downtown District Ordinance Assisted in the Revitalization of the Lower Downtown?

It is clear from the land use statistics noted above that the Lower Downtown District Ordinance has played a role in the revitalization of the Lower Downtown. The ordinance presented a comprehensive package of policies, regulatory controls and incentives specifically designed to preserve

²⁸ Data provided by Downtown Denver Partnership at 1995 International Downtown Association Conference, Denver Colorado.

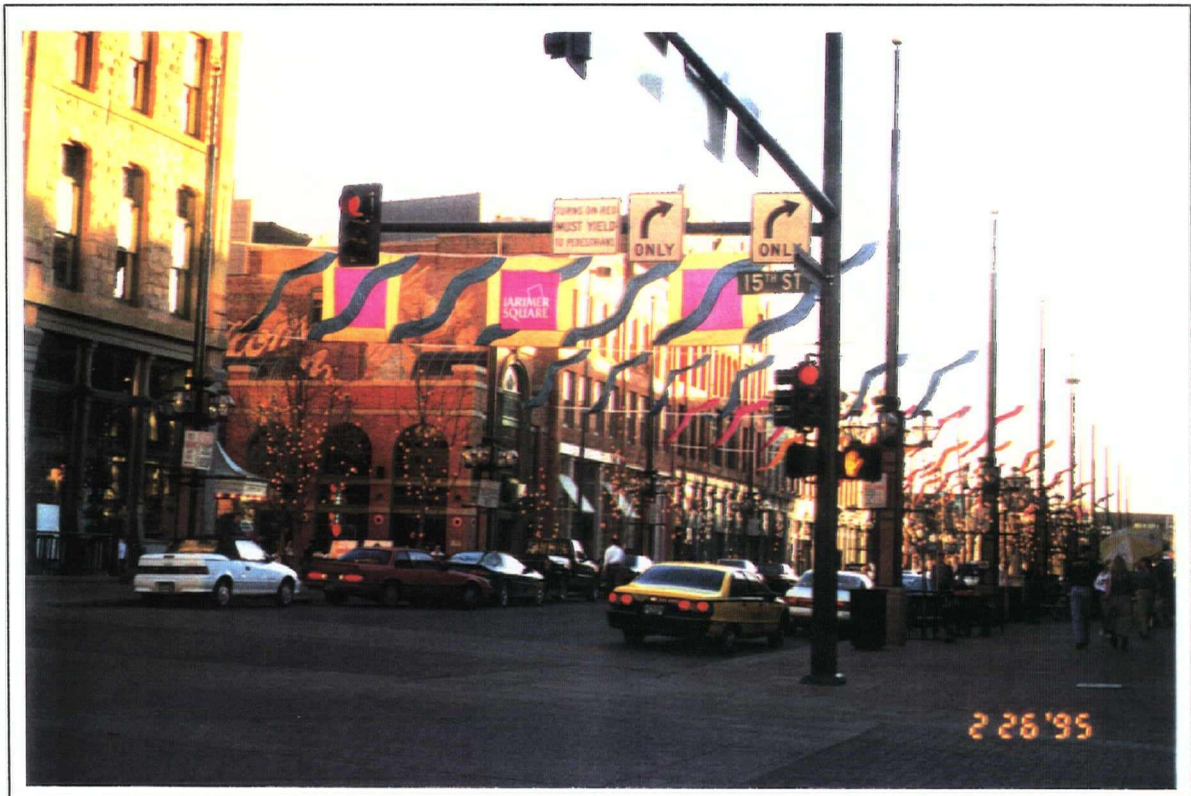


Figure 6: Larimer Square, Denver²⁹

and revitalize Lower Downtown. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to measure the economic impacts of legislation. Notwithstanding, the following market activities may reveal economic trends in the Lower Downtown.³⁰

- in 1991, there were 23 liquor licenses in the Lower Downtown;
- in 1995, 80 liquor licenses were in operation;
- in 1990, there were 89 loft units in the Lower Downtown;
- in 1993, 258 loft units were constructed in Lower Downtown;

²⁹ Photograph of Larimer Square showing festive street banners.

³⁰ Downtown Denver Partnership.

- in 1990, the average selling price of loft housing was \$60 per square foot;
- in 1995, the average selling price of loft housing was \$140 per square foot;
- and
- new businesses opening in the Lower Downtown has increased 40% since 1991.

LESSONS LEARNED

Several lessons can be extrapolated from the four case studies. Each city has utilized planning incentives and heritage controls as components of their revitalization policies. Three main lessons can be derived from the case studies. Each is discussed below.

Lesson # 1: Need for Multi-Faceted Planning Approach

The Canadian and American Main Street Programs identified the importance of integrating private / public partnerships, the need for marketing strategies and the use of heritage revitalization strategies to help diversify the economic base. The Main Street programs also revealed that a multi-faceted planning approach is instrumental to successful downtown revitalization.

Downtown revitalization is an incremental process. Long term revitalization requires careful realignment of many aspects of the downtown.

The four case studies have illustrated how a downtown must capitalize on its assets. "The preservation of special places is too important to be left to chance; it requires planning, citizen involvement and constant monitoring."³¹ The case studies have also illustrated the links between heritage planning and planning for the broader community. In Denver, for the example, designation of the Lower Downtown Historic District was a critical component to the livability of the Downtown. In San Francisco, the Downtown Plan focused on the conservation of heritage as an approach for growth management. In Victoria, the preservation of historic buildings was a key component in the City's tourism strategy. In Yaletown, the conversion of older warehouses was instrumental in creating a new residential base near the commercial core, and a lifestyle alternative for many Vancouver residents.

The case studies have also suggested that heritage revitalization can diversify an economy. Reductions in allowable building heights and incentives in San Francisco; financial assistance and density bonuses in Denver; new permitted uses in Yaletown; and financial incentives for designated heritage buildings in Victoria are all examples of initiatives which have stimulated both economic diversity and heritage conservation. Quite apart from efforts to slow

³¹ National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Main Street - Revitalizing Downtown Training Manual*, 1988, 1.

growth, these cities have generated greater variety of activities in their downtowns. Ties between historic preservation, new downtown housing, increases in tourism, an expanding service sector and other major downtown goals are becoming clearer. The case studies have shown that heritage revitalization can play a catalyst role in economic diversification.

Lesson # 2: Understand the Economic Relationships of Heritage Conservation

Prior to a revitalization process, real estate values and rents rarely reflect a property's true profit potential. Buildings that once produced income from several rental units, end up typically generating rent from only one space, the ground floor; and the amount of capital a property owner is able to invest in building maintenance, declines over time.

Downtown real estate development cannot take place without a reasonable expectation of financial gain for the owners. There cannot be financial gain unless downtown buildings generate rents sufficient to cover an owner's rehabilitation costs.

Redeveloping historic commercial real estate differs in several ways from developing new commercial property. To justify the costs of rehabilitating a downtown building, an investor must have confidence that the

projected rents will cover the rehabilitation expenses and provide a financial return. The potential rents that a building can command is dictated largely by the level of commercial activity in the area. The investor must feel confident that downtown commerce is sufficiently healthy to attract a good tenant for the rehabilitated building. Thus, investing in historic buildings is often riskier than investing in new construction.

Heritage designation is one approach to reduce uncertainty, and hence, risk in the investment process. The designation of historic buildings is one way for a community to indicate which properties are likely to provoke public outcry if targeted for demolition. Given the risks that are inherent in the development process, it is understandable why developers would value whatever certainty and predictability can be provided.

Lesson #3: A Successful Heritage Revitalization Strategy is a Careful Balance of Controls and Incentives

The case studies have shown how the careful assessment of the downtown economy and the appropriate combination of regulatory and financial tools can create strategies which achieve measurable results in heritage revitalization. As the case study of the Lower Downtown revealed, incentives need to be evaluated carefully to determine their effectiveness in

meeting community objectives: the original bonuses for building atria and plazas had to be repealed since they conflicted with the Lower Downtown's traditional street patterns and building styles. Attempting to develop a comprehensive package of planning incentives, regulations and heritage controls is the intent of the conceptual framework.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE REVITALIZATION

A conceptual framework has been developed to identify and assess a heritage revitalization approach that could stimulate economic activity. The conceptual framework is based on the successful policies, incentives and regulations of the four case studies. The conceptual framework is a five step process. Each step is discussed below and illustrated in Figure 7.

Classification System for Heritage

The purpose of the classification system is to distinguish between the relative merits of heritage buildings. The classification system should incorporate community values and objectives of heritage conservation. Classifying heritage buildings enables recommendations to be made specific to the class of building. All the classification systems identified in the case studies have merit and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate each system. Therefore, for the purposes of illustration, a classification system

similar to the San Francisco model will be used: a system which characterizes heritage buildings into two categories, significant and contributory.

Evaluation of Existing Regulations on Market Forces

Identifying market opportunities for the downtown, such as the need to expand the residential base, is necessary. This assessment will include evaluating the downtown's zoning bylaw. The purpose with this step is to reveal if historic buildings are in threat of demolition; in other words, testing the "highest and best use" of the zone. Also, the assessment of parking standards needs to be undertaken to determine if the standards work in accordance with heritage restorations. Another assessment will be on the British Columbia Building Code to determine if these requirements place an undue financial hardship on the restoration of heritage buildings.

The intention of these analyses will be to determine if existing regulations are too restrictive and do not work congruent with market opportunities and heritage revitalization.

Propose Amendments to Current Regulations and the Use of Financial Incentives

If the evaluation of existing regulations reveals a need for amendments, this part of the conceptual framework will assess the use of regulatory incentives and controls, and financial incentives.

Use of Regulatory Incentives

Considerations include: the need for density bonuses; the need for parking relaxations; the need to increase allowable density; the need to allow for Building Code equalivancies; and the need to allow for additional permitted uses in the zone.

Use of Regulatory Restrictions and Controls

Considerations include: the need to impose demolition controls; the need to decrease allowable density in the zone; and the need to remove permitted uses in the zone.

Use of Transfer of Development Rights

Considerations include: determining a market for transferring of development rights; and determining the appropriate location for the transfer of development rights.

Use of Financial Incentives

The purpose of this analysis is twofold: one, to evaluate if financial incentives will stimulate historic restorations; and two, to identify the appropriate financial incentive for implementation. Considerations include: evaluating the use of property tax abatements; evaluating the use of restoration grants; and evaluating the use of low interest loans.

Development of Heritage Strategy

The fourth step of the conceptual framework is the development of an appropriate balance between the controls and incentives, which were evaluated in the previous step. Also, an implementation approach will need to be devised. Considerations include: the use of a heritage conservation area; or the use of a special zone.

Evaluate Strategy

The last step in the conceptual framework is to evaluate if the proposed heritage revitalization strategy addresses the following objectives:

1. Will the strategy result in higher quality heritage restorations?;
2. Will the strategy generate market opportunities?;
3. Will the strategy add vitality to the street?; and
4. Will the strategy result in more sympathetic infill developments?

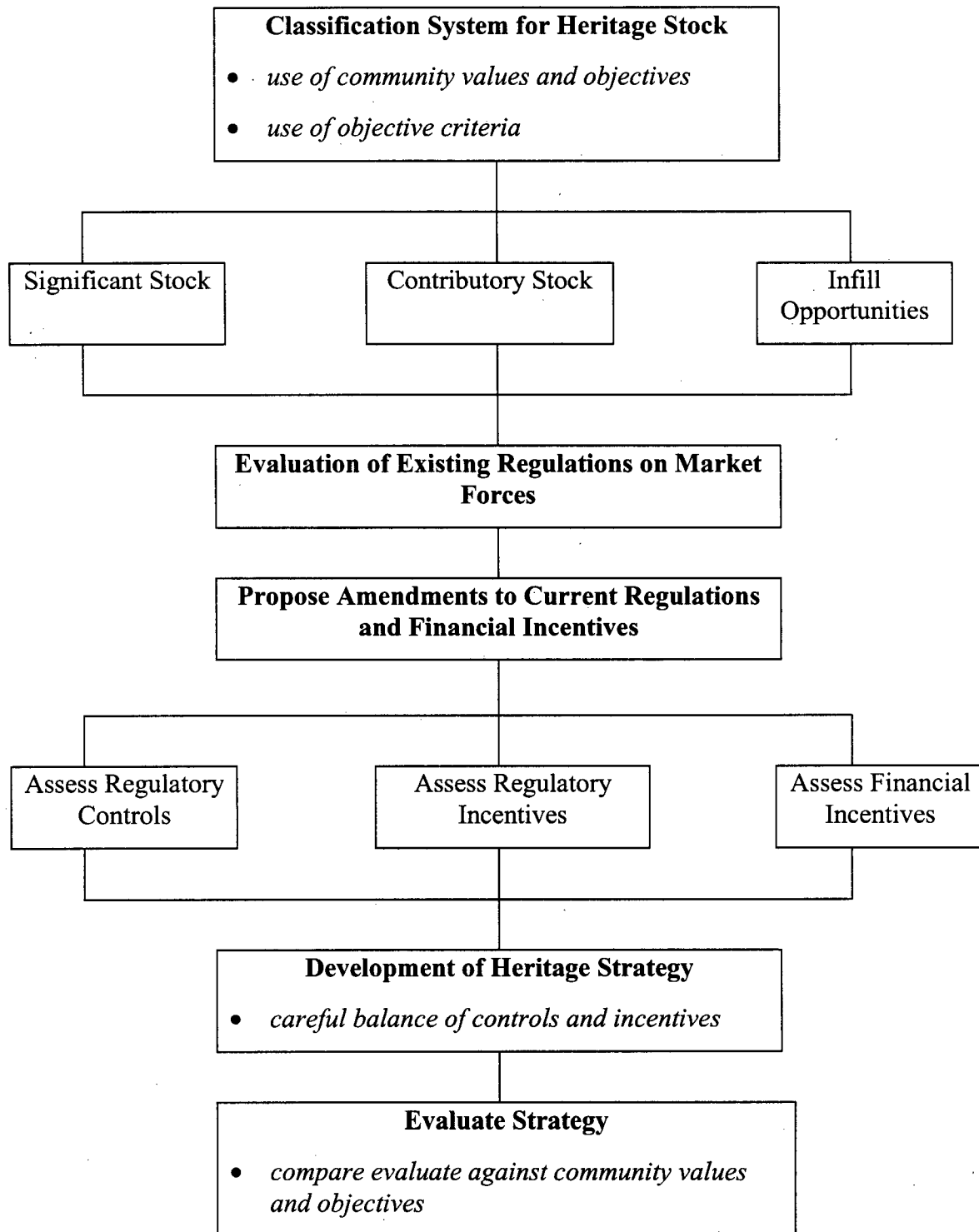


Figure 7: Conceptual Framework³²

³² Conceptual framework has been developed for this M.A. Thesis.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored several strategies that have successfully revitalized downtowns. These strategies have recognized the critical role of heritage conservation in a downtown's economy. The four case studies have shown how strategies need to capitalize on the assets of the downtown.

Several lessons have been learned from these case studies. The case studies have shown that the market can be stimulated with amendments to the zoning bylaw and that property owners can develop "buy-in" by the provision for financial incentives. Also, the case studies have shown that heritage revitalization does not work in isolation. The Main Street programs have taught that downtown revitalization is a comprehensive, four pronged approach of marketing, economic diversification, management and heritage restoration.

A lesson for planners is that heritage revitalization can have similar goals with other community initiatives, such as the need for additional housing, and increased tourist and visitor revenues. Heritage revitalization can play a catalyst role in economic diversification.

The successful strategies of the four case studies have helped to develop a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework will be applied to Columbia Street in Downtown New Westminster, with the purpose of identifying the most appropriate set of heritage tools needed to meet the community's objectives for downtown revitalization.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY OF COLUMBIA STREET IN DOWNTOWN NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the case study for this thesis, Columbia Street in Downtown, New Westminster. Historic Columbia Street is approximately one kilometer in length and is the commercial core of New Westminster. The majority of its commercial building were built prior to 1913. The street was built with a human scale, and provides New Westminster with a strong sense of place.

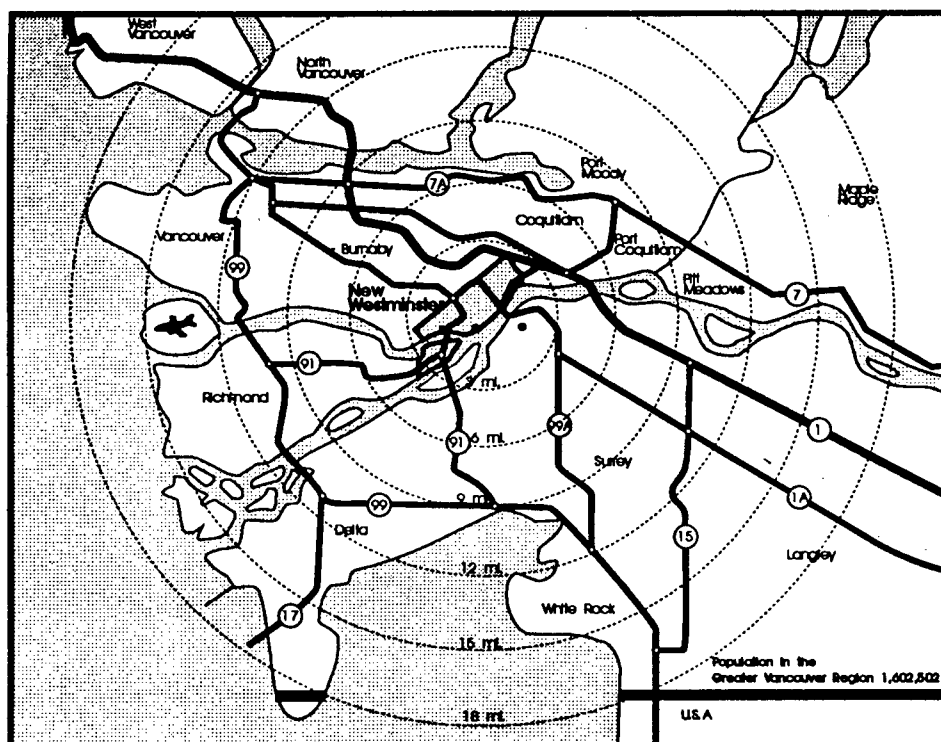
This chapter is organized in four sections. The first section provides a socio-economic and land use profile of New Westminster. The second section provides a historical chronology of New Westminster and the Downtown, and gives an overview of the revitalization strategies over the last two decades. The third section discusses the *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory* and its application to the Downtown. The final section provides an analysis of historic Columbia Street.

OVERVIEW OF NEW WESTMINSTER

Context

New Westminster, the first incorporated city and the first capital of British Columbia, is positioned at the hub of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). It is central in location to Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, Delta and Surrey. New Westminster is easily accessible by road, river and public transportation. Two Skytrain stations are located in Downtown New Westminster, linking New Westminster to Vancouver in 20 minutes.

Map 2
Location of New Westminster¹



¹ Map provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

Population

The current population of New Westminster is estimated at 48,000 people.² As will be discussed in this chapter, New Westminster has been affected by many downturns in its local economy. Economic prosperity of the 1940's and 1950's created a peak population of approximately 43,000 residents by 1971. However, downturns in the economy caused an outflow of residents; after a sharp decline, New Westminster had little growth for the next fifteen years. As Table 1 indicates, New Westminster has only recently regained its population base that was lost during the 1970's.

Table 1
Historical Populations 1966 - 1991³

Year	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
Female	19261	21789	19860	20095	20660	22485
Male	18752	21046	18530	18450	19315	21100
Total	38013	42835	38393	38550	39972	43585

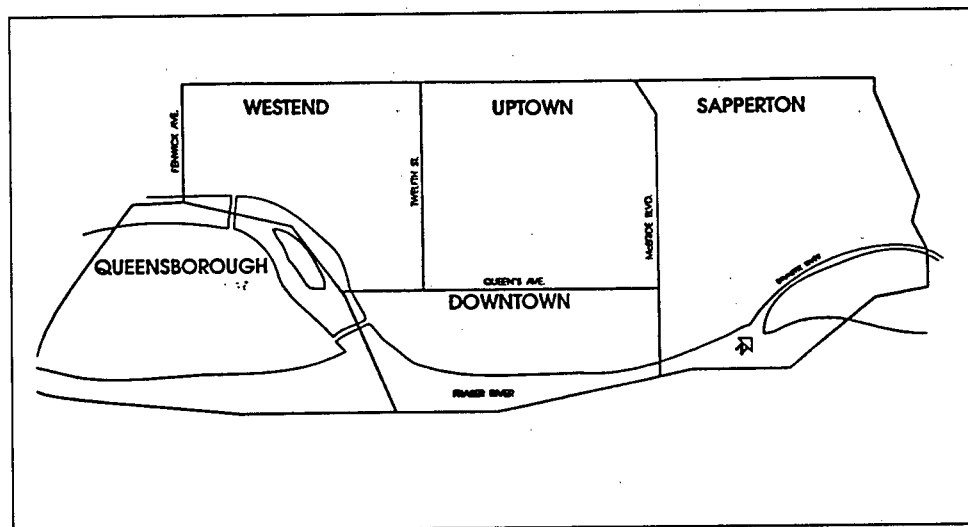
² BC Stats Census Data, 1995.

³ Statistics Canada Census Data, 1991.

Geographic Areas

New Westminster is divided into five geographic areas: Queensborough, West End, Uptown, Sapperton and Downtown. Each area is distinct with respect to its land use characteristics. Queensborough, which is located on Lulu Island, is single family and rural in nature. The West End is predominately a single family area, with some commercial development along 12th Street and a Skytrain station at 22nd Street. Uptown is predominately low rise and high rise, with the exception of the Kelvin and Queen's Park neighbourhoods, the latter being a historic single family area. Many of the City's parks are located in Uptown. Sapperton is predominately single family in nature. The Downtown is New Westminster's central business district.

Map 3
New Westminster Neighbourhoods⁴



⁴ Information provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

As Table 2 shows, the residential development of New Westminster can be characterized as predominately two types of housing: relatively low density, single detached housing; and relatively high density, multi-family housing. The housing stock in the Downtown is quite distinct from the rest of New Westminster. In the Downtown, there are predominately two housing forms: apartments in buildings over 5 storeys (high rise); and apartments in buildings less than 5 storeys (low rise). The rest of New Westminster, on the other hand, is primarily low rise apartment and single detached housing.

Table 2
Housing Breakdown by Stock⁵

Characteristic	Downtown	New Westminster*
	%	%
Apartment over 5 storeys	42	18
Apartment less than 5 storeys	54	42
Detached duplex	1	5
Row house	1	1
Semi detached	0	1
Single Detached	2	33
Total	3,205	17,990

* excluding the Downtown

⁵ Statistics Canada, 1991.

Table 3 reveals the residential capacity, as dictated in the New Westminster Zoning Bylaw. The majority of the housing will be located in two areas, Downtown and Uptown. Due to the densities permitted in the Zoning Bylaw, the majority of future residential growth will be in these two areas: Downtown has a residential capacity of 17,000 units; and Uptown has a residential capacity at 13,500 units. With a projected household size of 1.5 persons per unit, it is estimated that the Downtown will have a residential population of 25,500 people by its build out.

Table 3
Residential Units by Neighbourhood Area⁶

Neighbourhood	Total Number of Units Permitted in the Zoning Bylaw	Projected Population Capacity*
Queensborough	2307	4774
West End	2837	6969
Sapperton	8508	11808
Uptown	13503	19559
Downtown	17056	28459
Total	41508	71570

** Based on average household sizes*

⁶ Data provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

Downtown New Westminster

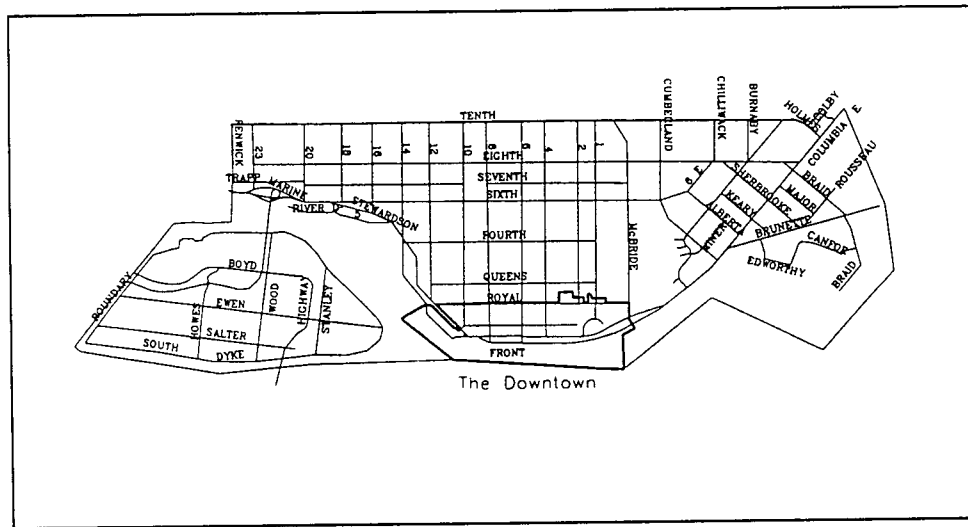
The Downtown contains New Westminster's central business district. The Downtown includes the Waterfront development's, namely Westminster Quay Public Market, the Inn at the Quay Hotel and adjacent office complex, Columbia Square, Land Titles Office, six major banks and retail along Columbia Street, Douglas College and the Provincial Law Courts. The corporate and legal sectors are the backbone of New Westminster's business community. Downtown New Westminster is the second largest financial and commercial centre in the Lower Mainland, next to Downtown Vancouver.

Downtown New Westminster is defined as the area bounded by Front Street to the south along the Fraser River and the railroad tracks, Royal Avenue to the north, 10th Street and Columbia Square to the west, and the Patullo Bridge to the east. Refer to Map 4.

Zoning

The zoning in the Downtown is predominately C-4, Central Business District, with some RM-6, Multi-Family District and RS-2, One Family Dwelling District. These zoning schedules are fairly traditionally zoning tools; they attempt to control the physical impacts between adjacent sites by regulating siting, bulking and density.

Map 4 Downtown New Westminster⁷



Columbia Street properties are all zoned C-4 Central Business District. Appendix A provides a copy of the C-4 Zone. The zone allows for the highest density in New Westminster, at a maximum FSR of 5.2. As will be discussed in Chapter V, the majority of the historic buildings on Columbia Street have actual densities below what is permitted in the Zoning Bylaw. This creates a possible threat of demolishing some historic buildings to realize “a highest and best use” on these sites.

Age of Household Maintainer

Residents heading households in the Downtown are similar in age to those living elsewhere in New Westminster. However, as Table 4 shows, there

⁷ Map provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

are two notable exceptions: there are more empty nesters living along the Downtown waterfront; and the majority of seniors live outside the Downtown, mainly in Uptown.

Table 4
Age of Household Maintainer⁸

Age	Downtown %	New Westminster* %
15 - 24 years	13	14
25 - 34 years	25	23
35 - 44 years	18	20
45 - 54 years	16	12
55 - 64 years	12	11
65+	15	26
Total Number	3,205	17,990

* excluding the Downtown

Gender

The gender breakdown of residents in the Downtown is consistent with the rest of New Westminster. In the Downtown, 52% of residents are female and 48% are males. In New Westminster, 51% of residents are female and 49% of residents are male.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 1991.

Income

New Westminster has a lower median income than that of the GVRD. The 1991 median income for New Westminster was \$32,439; the 1991 median income for the GVRD was \$41,026. Examining the fifteen neighbourhoods in the city, the Downtown ranks just below the overall median income for the City. The median income for Downtown residents was \$32,239 in 1991. Table 5 breaks down the median household income for each neighbourhood.

As Table 6 shows, the income distribution in the Downtown is similar to the rest of New Westminster. A large portion of residents earn under \$20,000 annually. The distribution of low incomes in the City would lead one to assume that New Westminster has always been a city with poor economic prospects. Ironically, as the next section will show, New Westminster was once the commercial hub of the region.

Table 5
Median Income in 15 New Westminster Neighbourhoods⁹

Neighbourhood	Median Household Income 1991
Victory Heights	\$56,538
West End	\$46,282
Glenbrooke South	\$45,681
Queen's Park	\$45,666
Queensborough	\$40,937
Connaught Heights	\$40,313
Sapperton	\$36,914
Kelvin	\$36,316
<i>All New Westminster</i>	\$32,439
Downtown	\$32,239
Glenbrooke North	\$27,968
Brow of the Hill	\$27,516
Uptown	\$23,473

⁹ Statistics Canada, 1991.

Table 6
Income Distribution¹⁰

Incomes	Downtown %	New Westminster %
under \$20,000	28	30
\$20,000 - \$29,999	19	17
\$30,000 - \$39,999	15	15
\$40,000 - \$49,999	13	11
\$50,000 - \$59,999	7	8
\$60,000 - \$69,999	7	7
\$70,000+	12	13

HISTORY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

New Westminster once played a major role in the development of British Columbia, particularly in the lower Fraser Valley area. When gold was discovered in 1858, in the interior of what is now British Columbia, there was an influx of people to the area. Colonel Richard Clement Moody and the Royal Engineers arrived in the area in 1859. They were responsible for building roads, established communication, maintaining law and order, and choosing a site for the capital of the new colony.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, 1991.

The Royal City as the First Provincial Capital

James Douglas, then Governor of the mainland colony, favoured Fort Langley (Derby) as the site of the capital, but Colonel R.C. Moody, Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers, overruled Douglas' decision. His decision to choose New Westminster over Fort Langley was for military reasons. The early settlement occupied a strategic military position high on the north bank of the Fraser River. From 1859 to 1868, New Westminster served as the first capital of the crown colony of British Columbia.¹¹

Colonel Moody and James Douglas could not agree over the name for the new capital. The problem was resolved by writing to Queen Victoria, asking her to provide a name. She chose New Westminster, after her favorite area of London. Thus, New Westminster became known as "the Royal City."

On July 17, 1860, New Westminster became the first incorporated municipality west of the Great Lakes. During this period, it was the most important commercial and government centre on the mainland and the gateway to the interior of British Columbia. It remained the capital until 1868 when an Act of British Parliament amalgamated the two colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, and Victoria became the capital of the province.

¹¹ City of New Westminster, *Heritage Resource Inventory*, 1984, 15 - 20.

The 1870's to 1900

By the 1870's, several businesses were operating in the Downtown, including salmon canneries, lumber mills, a metal works yard, a woolen mill and a grain company, all located on the Fraser River waterfront. Front Street was filled in and the docks were extended further into the Fraser River. In the early 1880's, construction of the CPR transcontinental rail link to Vancouver, with a branch line to New Westminster, brought prosperity and optimism for the future.

From 1887 to 1892, many of the frame pioneer buildings were replaced by new brick commercial buildings along Columbia Street between Fourth and Eighth Streets. The Lower Mainland's first Chinatown was established in the area between Eighth and Tenth Streets, while industrial plants were located along the waterfront. By 1891, New Westminster was directly connected to Vancouver by an interurban railway running along Columbia Street.

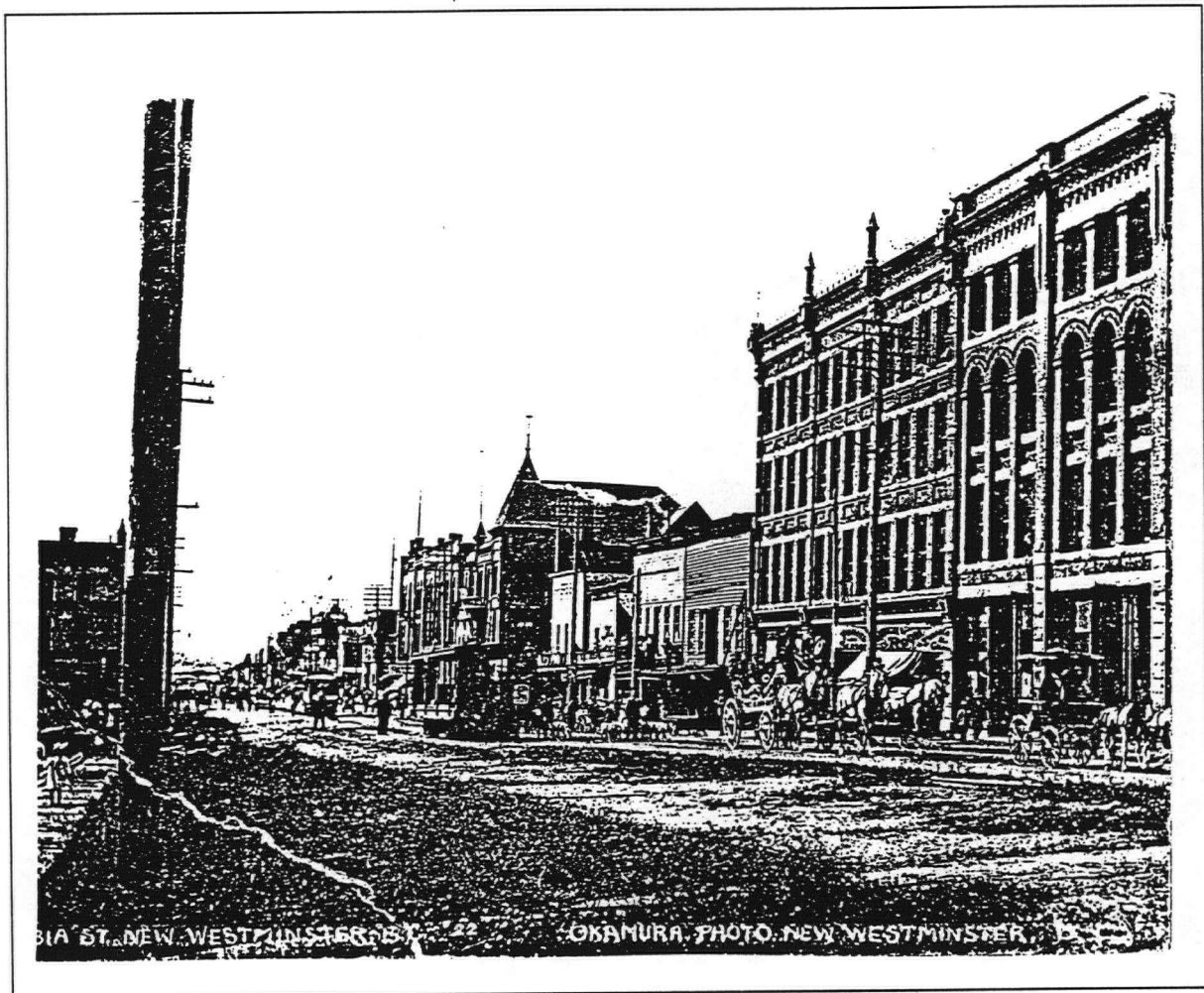


Figure 8: Columbia Street Pre-1898¹²

The Downtown commercial area experienced a severe depression during the late 1890's. During this period, the Great Fire of 1898 destroyed all but two buildings in the Downtown. Only the Burr Block built in 1892 and the Guichon Block built in 1887 survived the fire; (*the Burr Block is shown in Figure 8 as the Victorian Romanesque building to the right*). However, the devastation did not totally destroy the Downtown. Settled in temporary

¹² Photograph provided by the New Westminster Archives.

quarters, the merchants were immediately back in business. By 1899, nearly all the buildings were reconstructed, however, slightly less elaborately than in the pre-fire era.

1900 - 1913

From 1900 to 1913, New Westminster saw a boom in construction and business activity. The Downtown was almost entirely rebuilt and many new industries came to locate in the city. Many of the buildings, designed by architect George Grant, remain today. See Figure 9.

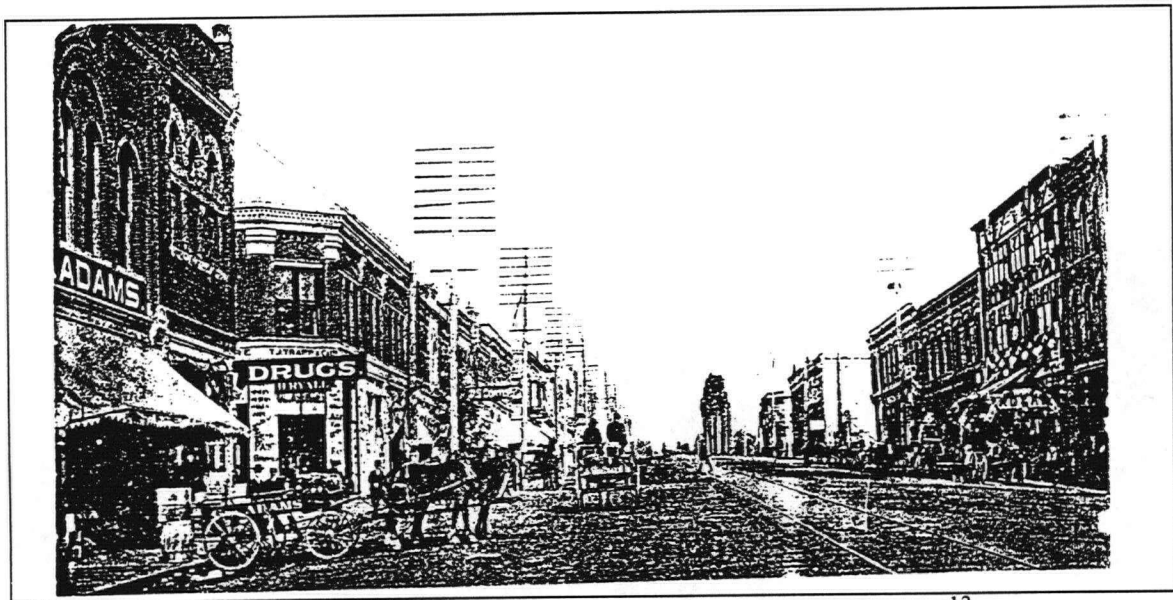


Figure 9: Columbia Street Pre-World War I¹³

¹³ Photograph provided by the New Westminster Archives.

By 1902, the Downtown was experiencing unprecedented growth. One of the major projects was the completion of the Fraser River Bridge, an auto, wagon and rail link from New Westminster to Surrey. New Westminster also became the centre of the BC Electric Railway network serving the Fraser Valley communities. Prominent commercial buildings on Columbia Street, like the 1911 Westminster Trust building and the 1912 Trapp building were built during this prosperous period.

The development of the Harbour as a deep sea port in 1912-1913 and the building of a second trans-continental rail link with Canadian Northern in 1914 were further economic generators to the local economy. By 1913, New Westminster was one of Western Canada's leading industrial centres, behind only Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary in value of manufacturing output.

The Miracle Mile

The prosperity at the early turn-of-the-century came to an abrupt halt in 1913 when the Lower Mainland suffered a severe depression. The economy did not improve until the Second World War. During World War II, the demand for commercial floor space was limited but industrial activity flourished. The building of the Pattullo Bridge led to an economic revival after

1937. After W.W.II, Downtown New Westminster regained its stature as an established centre for commerce.

During the 1940's and early 1950's, retail sales in Downtown New Westminster increased faster than the provincial average. Columbia Street -- the heart of the Downtown business community -- was dubbed the 'Miracle Mile' as more money was made per square foot on this one mile stretch than any other retail location in North America.¹⁴

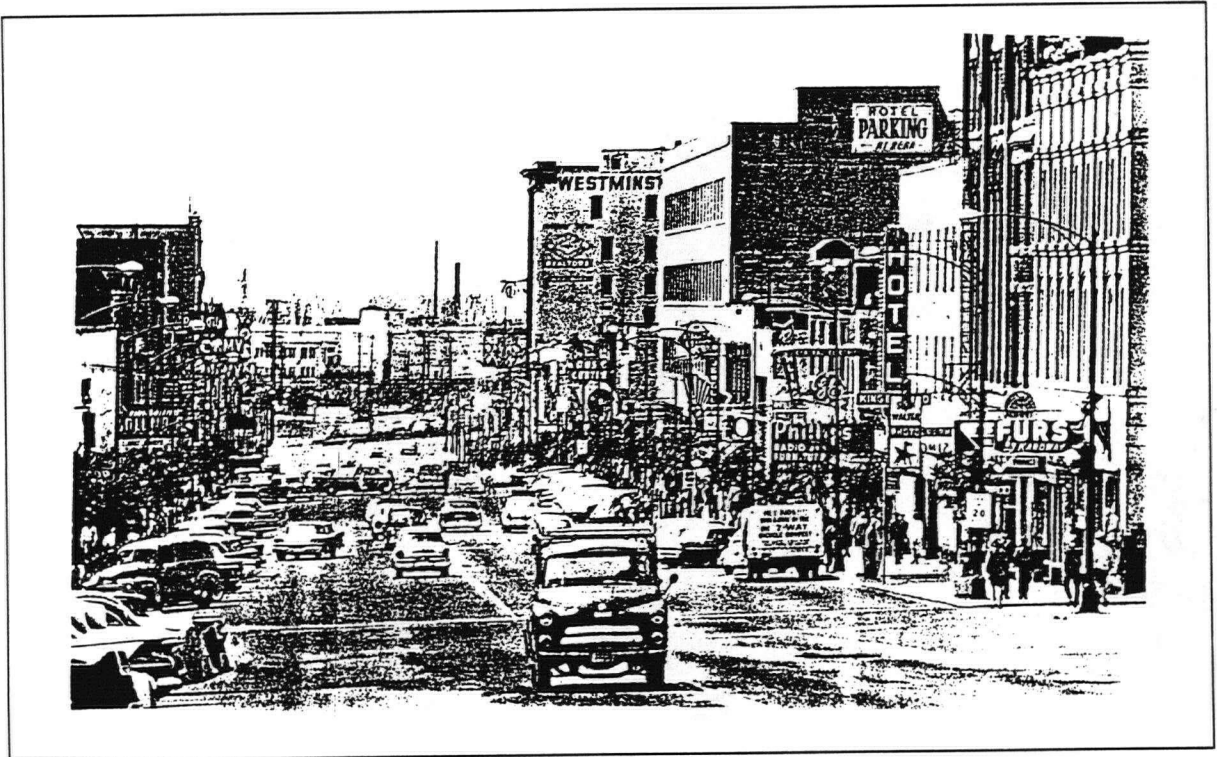


Figure 10: The Miracle Mile¹⁵

¹⁴ Netty Tam, *Commercial Area Revitalization: A Case Study of New Westminster's Downtown*, M.A. Thesis, The Faculty of Environmental Design, the University of Calgary, 1994, 46.

¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

The Automobile and the Suburban Shopping Centres

The Downtown area began to decline economically in the mid - 1950's with the growth of regional shopping centres. Many of the major department stores, such as Eatons Department Store, moved to shopping centres. In 1952, Woodward's Department Store was permitted to locate on Sixth Street in Uptown. Faced with a declining commercial area, the Downtown Businesses and the Property Owner's Association lobbied the City of New Westminster for the construction of a parkade for the Downtown. The business people believed that the provision of a Downtown parking facility was a means of competing with the shopping centres. In 1959, the Front Street Parkade was opened. In 1978, a new commercial centre, Westminster Mall, with over 140,000 square feet, was also developed in Uptown. This made the Uptown the city's leading retail area and further threatened the Downtown's viability.

By the beginning of the 1970's, with new regional shopping centres in Coquitlam and Surrey, Downtown New Westminster experienced drastic decline. The onslaught of the private automobile also allowed the region's population to spread throughout the Fraser Valley, creating new land uses and new market opportunities.

Revitalization Efforts in the Downtown

In 1976, the Greater Vancouver Regional District proposed its Livable Region Plan to rationalize growth in the Lower Mainland. The five objectives of the Plan were: one, to encourage residential growth in the central part of the region; two, encourage new employment outside the Downtown Vancouver core; three, develop a coordinated regional transportation program; four, conserve open spaces; and five, create Regional Town Centres that would offer employment, recreational and cultural opportunities. New Westminster was designated as one of the first Regional Town Centres.

First Capital City Development Corporation

The recognition of the deterioration of the Downtown and the need to revitalize the area, especially in the acknowledgment of the Regional Town Centre concept, led to the formation of the First Capital City Development Company in 1978. The company was a partnership formed between the City of New Westminster and the British Columbia Development Corporation. Its objective was to develop a staged program for the revitalization of New Westminster's Downtown including the Waterfront, in accordance with the guidelines established for the Regional Town Centre concept.

The Ten Year Downtown Redevelopment Strategy

Planning began in 1976 for an innovative official community plan, a new central business zone (the C-4 Zone), and a special comprehensive development zone for the redevelopment of the Fraser River waterfront. The Downtown Redevelopment Strategy was intended to be a 10 year program to transform the Downtown from an industrial land base to a large scale residential and commercial development area.

The first stage of the development was the construction of the Law Courts on Carnarvon Street and an urban plaza known as Begbie Square. The complex was officially opened in 1981, and received an Architectural Institute of BC award for design excellence. The second stage was the construction of Douglas College, a 445,000 square foot educational and cultural complex that opened in the Fall of 1982. The third stage was the construction of the Westminster Quay, a 25 acre waterfront redevelopment featuring a quality pedestrian scale 'urban village'. The Westminster Quay project provided over 1200 housing units overlooking the Fraser River, as well as a major office tower, a first class hotel and a world class public market. The 72,000 square foot festival market, specialty retail and restaurant complex which overlooks the Fraser River, was opened in 1986.¹⁶

¹⁶ Tam, 64.

In 1985, two Skytrain Stations were constructed in Downtown New Westminster. One station was located at 8th Street and Carnarvon Street. The second station was located at 4th Street and Columbia Street, which opened in 1989.

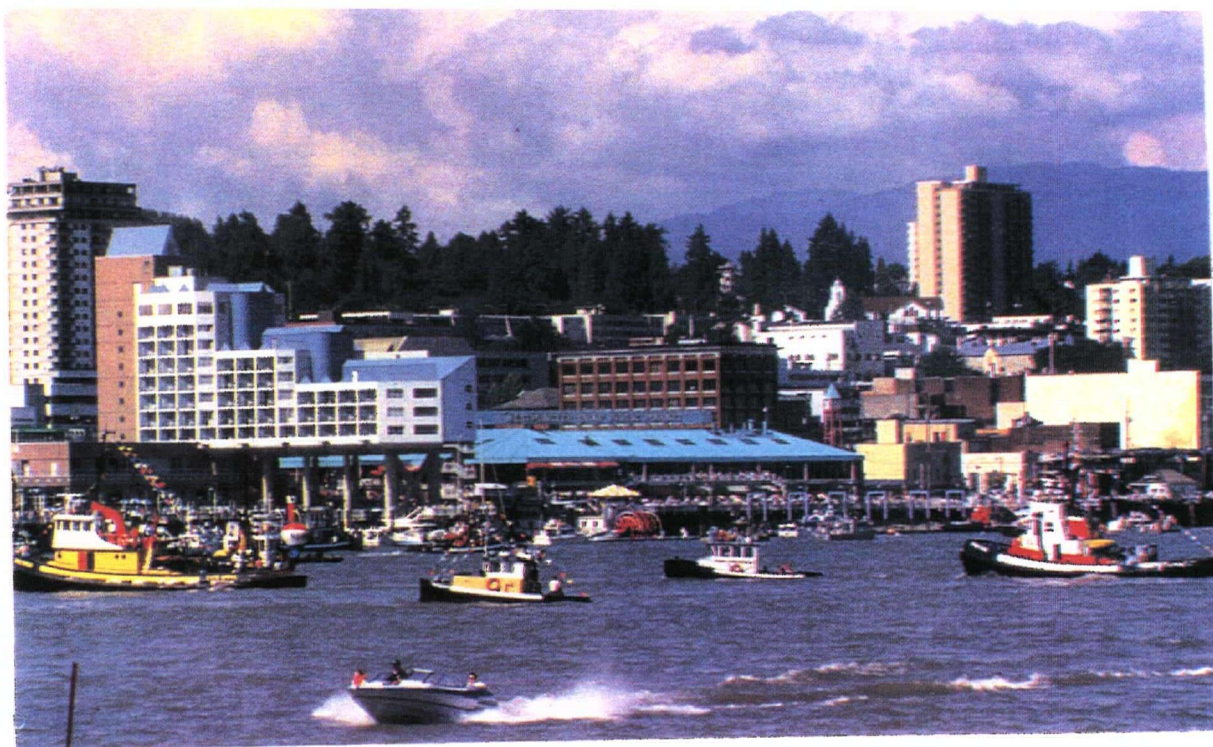


Figure 11: New Westminster Waterfront Developments¹⁷

¹⁷ Photograph showing the Inn at the Quay and the Westminster Quay Public Market.

At one time, the Fraser River waterfront was not accessible to the public. It consisted of shipyards, canneries and docks. Today, New Westminster has a spectacular waterfront, with a variety of housing and commercial developments that are connected to nearby transportation systems, and a 1.5 mile esplanade along the waterfront. The remaining 20 acres of waterfront property are also planned for redevelopment. A five tower, 1000 unit development is to be built east of the Westminster Quay Public Market. Next to the Public Market is planned a major museum, anticipated to be the third largest tourist attraction in the Lower Mainland. Under the existing zoning, the full development capacity of the 45 acre waterfront is over 4000 housing units. The fourth stage of the Downtown redevelopment program is the revitalization of Columbia Street. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Downtown New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory

New Westminster has a Heritage Resource Inventory which includes properties for every neighbourhood of the city. A Heritage Resource Inventory identifies buildings and places of historic significance. The image of the Downtown is made up largely by its built environment. There are four features which contribute to the significance of the built environment; they are:

1. Street Pattern and Historic Plan;
2. Open Space and Landscaping;
3. Landmarks and Historic Sites; and
4. Historic or Architecturally Significant Buildings.¹⁸

1. Street Pattern and Historic Plan

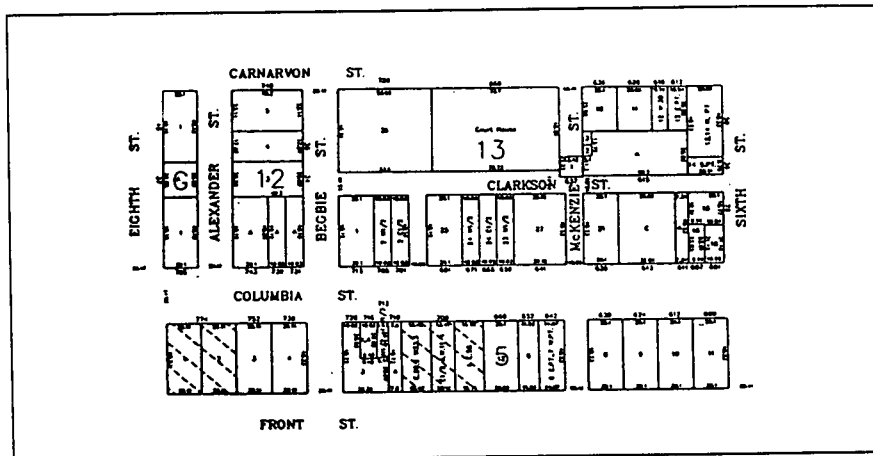
Streets provide a stable and unifying component of city pattern. One of the most distinctive qualities of the Downtown is its steep hills, superimposed by a rigid grid pattern of streets. The layout consists of long, slim blocks, separated by narrow feeder streets which join wider main streets at right angles. The Royal Engineers in the 1860's created a rectangular grid pattern without any regard for the topography, which resulted in extremely steep streets down to the Fraser River. As the Heritage Resource Inventory notes: "the width of the Downtown streets was determined by the length of the surveyor's chain: lanes are one chain wide, collector streets are two chains, and major streets are four chains."¹⁹ Many of the streets in the Downtown are quite narrow, bringing buildings and activities closer together and contributing to the

¹⁸ *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory*, 63.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Downtown's human scale. Map 5 shows the typical subdivision patterns along Columbia Street.

Map 5
Typical Subdivision Pattern in the Downtown²⁰



2. Open Space and Landscaping

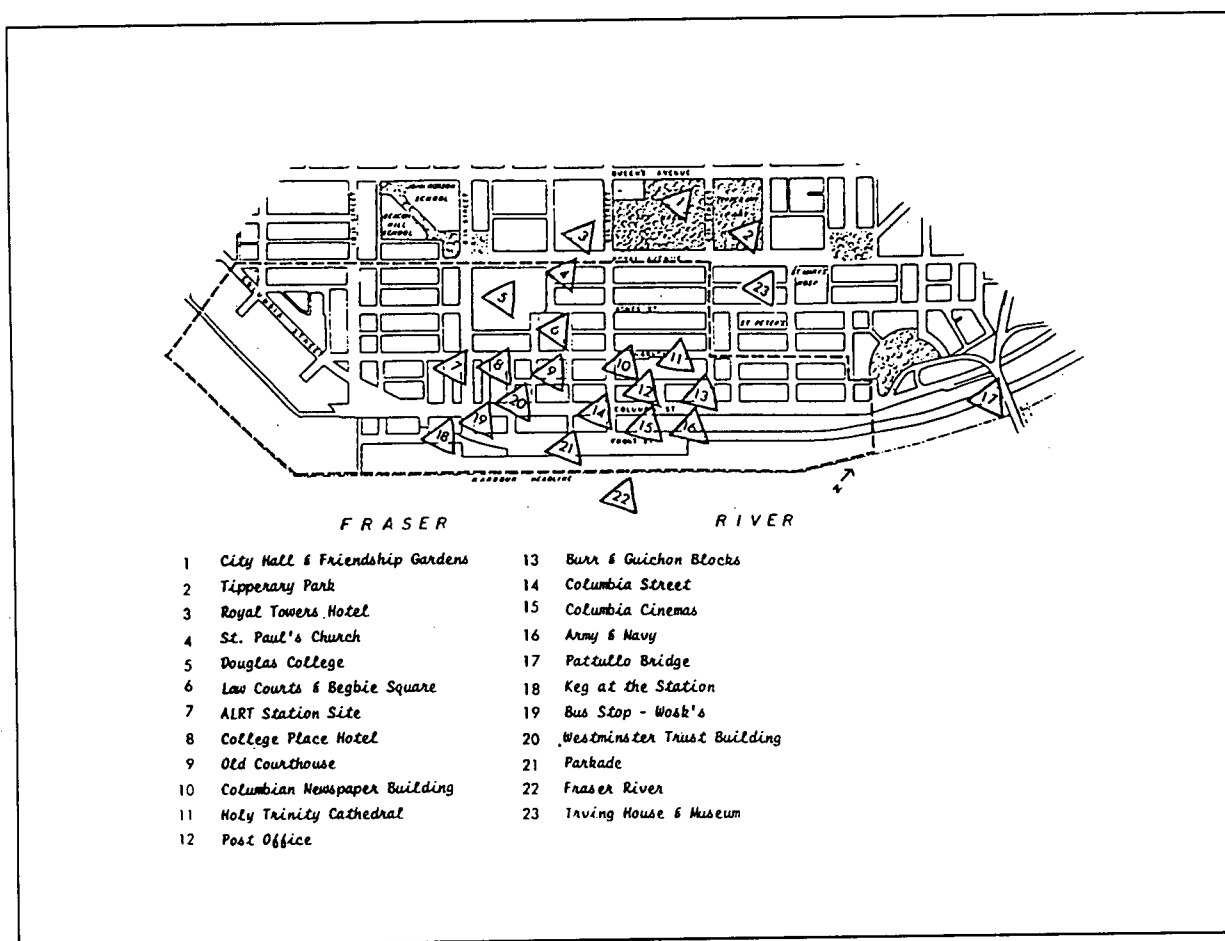
Downtown New Westminster has only a small amount of open space and landscaping. This consists of Begbie Square, the small landscaped grounds of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, at 514 Carnarvon Street and the 1.5 mile esplanade along the Waterfront.

²⁰ Map provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

3. Landmarks and Historic Sites

Landmarks are elements in the natural or built environment which act as reference points to make the city more legible to its users. Landmarks may be natural reference points or they may be elements in the built environment, such as structures, sites or parks. Map 6 identifies some of the better known landmarks and historic sites in Downtown and in New Westminster.

Map 6
Landmarks in the Downtown²¹



²¹ New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory, 76.

4. Historic or Architecturally Significant Buildings

The Heritage Resource Inventory lists sixty buildings in the Downtown that have historic significance. The Downtown has one of the highest concentrations of turn-of-the-century buildings in British Columbia. These buildings add a sense of permanence and contrast to Downtown's urban environment; and they provide diversity in style, character, texture and scale.

Downtown New Westminster possesses many unique features which identify it as a district within the larger City, but within this district heritage precincts can be identified due to their distinctive physical, functional, and historic character.²²

A heritage precinct or concentration of older structures often retains the character and feeling of the time period in which they were constructed; a precinct may be unified by a similar use, architectural style, type of building material, or scale. Heritage precincts are important for the character of the setting as a whole. They possess a unity in their shared character and components, and due to their consistency and limited size, precincts can be more effectively planned and managed.

²² Ibid., 82.

When developing the Heritage Resource Inventory, the City of New Westminster used a comprehensive set of criteria from the US National Trust for Historic Preservation to determine the boundaries of heritage precincts. Five criteria were used.

1. **Historic factors:** boundaries of an original settlement or an early planned community; concentrations of early buildings and sites.
2. **Visual factors:** edges determined or influenced by an architectural survey; edges related to development in stages rather than over a continuous period; edges based on topographical considerations; edges drawn to include gateways, entrances and vistas to and from a district.
3. **Physical factors:** railways; major open spaces; rivers, marshlands and other natural features; major changes in land use; walls, embankments, fence lines.
4. **Surveyed lines and lines of convenience:** legally established boundary lines; streets and other local rights of way; property lines, uniform setback lines; lines of convenience, for example, connecting two points determined by other edge factors.

5. Political, economic and social factors: public held lands, personal relationships of significance.²³

The *Downtown New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory* identifies six heritage precincts in the Downtown. They are: College / Courts precinct; Railway precinct; Old Market precinct; Sixth and Clarkson precinct; Church precinct; and Main Street precinct. Map 7 shows the boundaries of the six heritage precincts.

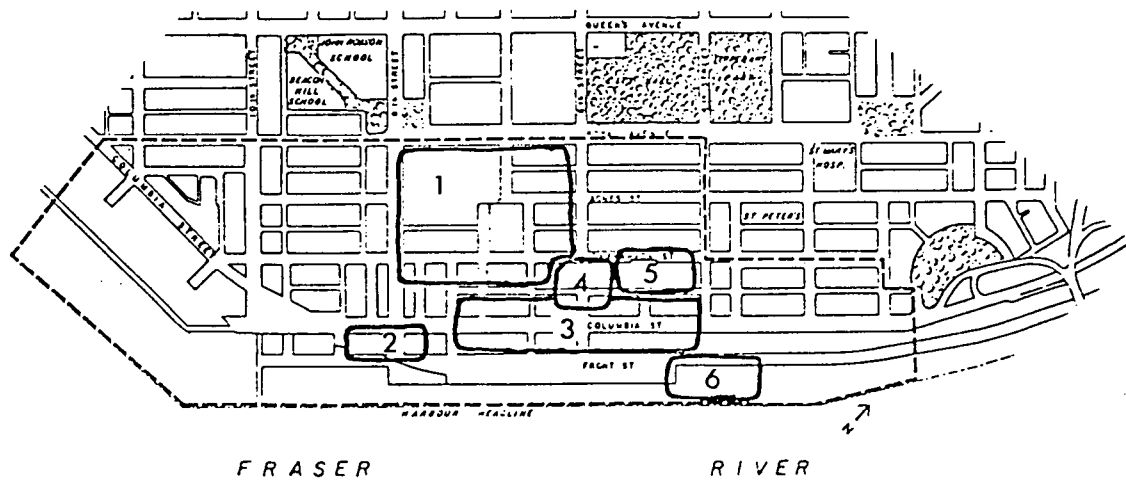
HISTORIC COLUMBIA STREET

Downtown New Westminster has a clear urban identity which provides the city with its sense of place. This is especially evident along Columbia Street. The four blocks of Columbia Street between Fourth and Eighth Streets constitute the historic heart of New Westminster. This area contains the City's largest concentration of heritage commercial buildings. Unfortunately, Columbia Street has not experienced the revitalization that has been occurring in the rest of the Downtown. See Figure 12.

²³ Ibid., 75-76.

Map 7 **Six Heritage Precincts in the Downtown**²⁴

- 1 College/Courts
- 2 Railway
- 3 Main Street
- 4 Sixth and Clarkson
- 5 Church
- 6 Market



²⁴ Ibid.



Figure 12: Columbia Street Today²⁵

There are 49 buildings and 3 vacant properties along Columbia Street between the 400 and 800 blocks. There is a total of 843,000 square feet of net leasable commercial floor space, with a total value of land and buildings of \$40.5 million.²⁶

²⁵ Photograph of Columbia Street showing historic buildings and derelict buildings.

²⁶ City of New Westminster Tax Assessment, 1995.

The Main Street Historic Precinct

Columbia Street is one of the longest 'main streets' in British Columbia, stretching from the CPR Station (800 Columbia Street) eastward along the flat land next to the Fraser River. Panoramic views up and down the River are available from the viewpoint at the foot of Fourth Street where Columbia begins to rise and the River begins to curve.

The character of the Main Street Precinct is primarily due to its buildings and functions which give it the traditional 'main street' flavour. The building heights range from one to eight storeys but most are between two and four storeys. Storefronts are generally fairly narrow. The Precinct maintains a human scale.²⁷

Of the 49 buildings in the study area, 33 are listed in the *Downtown New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory*. Table 7 lists the 33 historic buildings in the study area.

²⁷ *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory*, 109.

Table 7
Buildings Listed in the Main Street Precinct²⁸

Name of the Building	Address
Guichon Block	401 - 407 Columbia Street
Burr Block	411 - 419 Columbia Street
Elks Building	435-439 Columbia Street
Evans Dean Block	445 Columbia Street
Army and Navy	502 Columbia Street
Bank of Montreal	511 Columbia Street
Gifford Block	513-523 Columbia street
Fraternal of Order Eagles	530 Columbia Street
CIBC	544 Columbia Street
Ellis Block	548 Columbia Street
Federal Government Building	549 Columbia Street
Dominion Trust Block	600 Columbia Street
The Ellard Block	601 Columbia Street
Coulthard-Sutherland Block	607 Columbia Street
Chess Block	612-618 Columbia Street
W.O. Hamley Block	622-626 Columbia Street
E.L. Lewis Block	630 Columbia Street
Collister Block	635 Columbia Street
Dupont Block	642 Columbia Street
Paramount Theatre	652 Columbia Street
David S. Curtis Block	659 Columbia Street
Windjammer Hotel	660 Columbia Street

²⁸ Ibid.

Benjamin Young Block	665-669 Columbia street
Trapp Block	668 Columbia Street
James C. Armstrong Block	671-675 Columbia Street
Hart Building	701 Columbia Street
Adams Block	705-707 Columbia Street
Westminster Trust	713 Columbia Street
Occidental Hotel	716 Columbia Street
Bank of Nova Scotia	728 Colombia Street
Windsor Hotel	738 Columbia Street
CPR Station	800 Columbia Street
Mc & Mc Block	811 Columbia Street

Table 8 lists all of the buildings between the 400 and 800 block Columbia Street by the year that they were constructed. Not surprising, many of the buildings were built during the years of economic prosperity. During the 1880's boom, much of the Downtown was built with masonry structures that were comparable to those being built in Victoria. The depression of 1893 delayed business activity for about five years. As noted earlier, just as rebuilding was nearing completion, one-third of the city was ravaged by the Great Fire of 1898.

Table 8
Year of Construction for Buildings in Study Area²⁹

Year of Construction	Number of Buildings
1887 - 1890	1
1891 - 1890	15
1901 - 1910	8
1911 - 1920	5
1921 - 1930	3
1931 - 1940	2
1941 - 1950	9
1951 - 1960	3
1961 - 1970	0
1971 - 1980	2
1981 - 1990	1
1990+	0
Total	49

²⁹ List developed from information in the New Westminster GIS.

The financial collapse of 1913 ended the Downtown's building boom. Two distinct building types remain on Columbia Street from the period between 1899 and 1913. The first building type is the Late Victorian structures which were built the year after the fire, in 1899. See Figure 13. The second building type is Edwardian which ended with the depression of 1913.³⁰ See Figure 14.

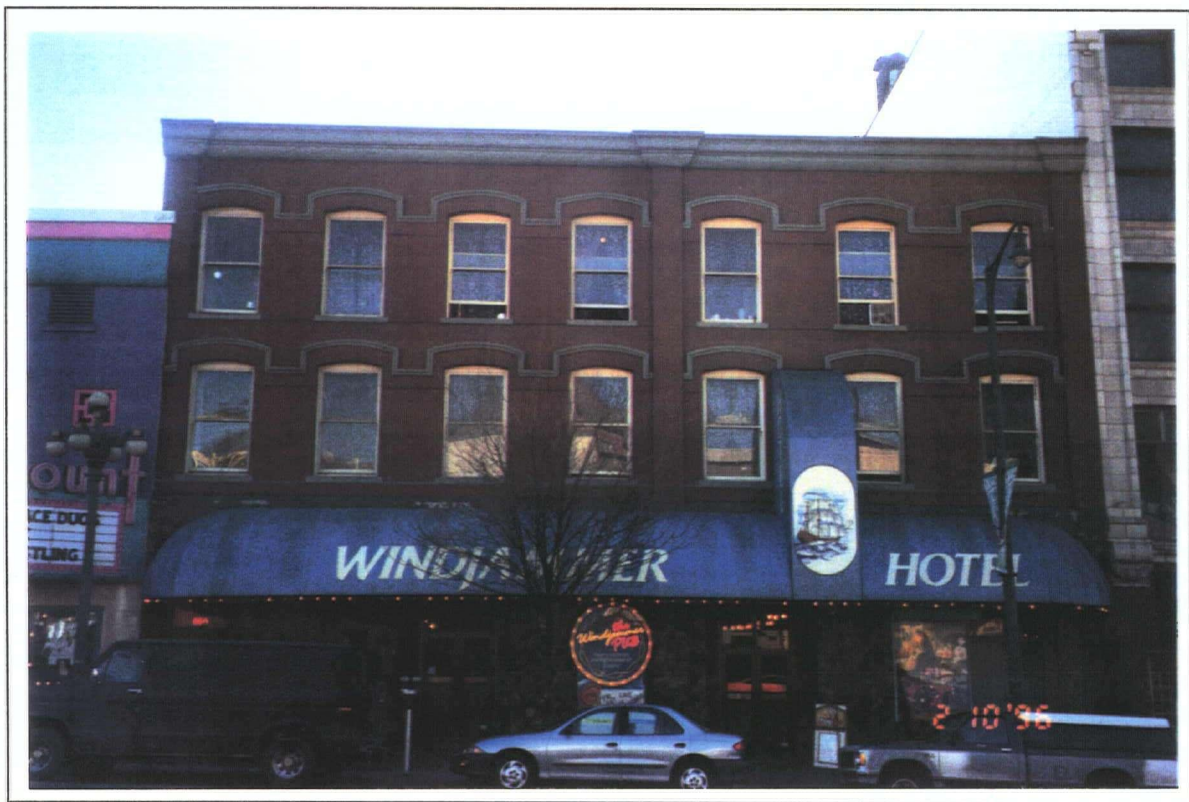


Figure 13: Late Victorian Architecture, Columbia Street³¹

³⁰ *Heritage Area Revitalization Program Guidelines*, Prepared for the New Westminster Planning Department, 1990, 1.

³¹ Photograph of the Windjammer Hotel, 660 Columbia Street.

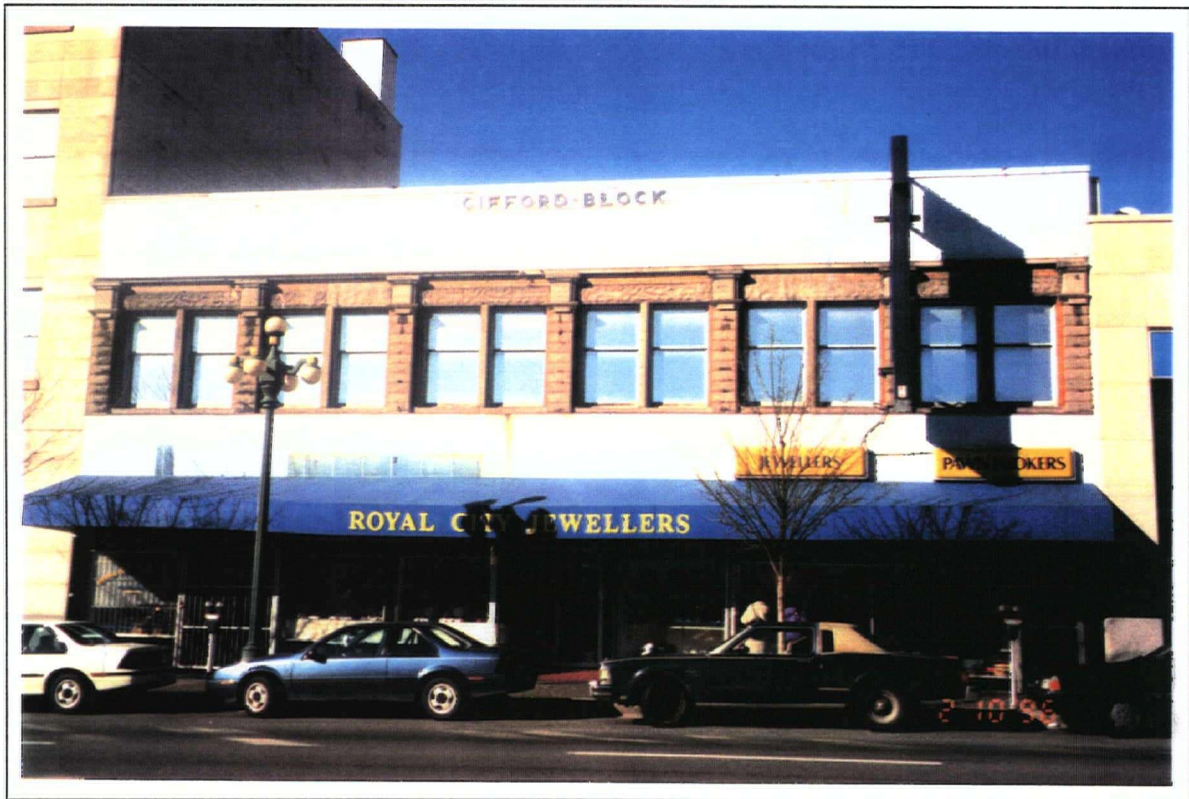


Figure 14: Edwardian Architecture, Columbia Street³²

Revitalization Efforts of Columbia Street

With some exceptions, Columbia Street generally contains marginal uses, thrift stores and pubs, that fulfill a particular social role, but which are not conducive to the prosperity and amenity of the district [Downtown] as a whole. The waterfront redevelopment has recently created a strong identity of place, and to date this is perceived as a contrast to Columbia Street as opposed to a complement.³³

The road configuration of Columbia Street has been physically altered several times since the early 1950's. At that time, the street was designed for

³² Photograph of Gifford Block, 513 Columbia Street.

³³ Arlington Group, *Downtown New Westminster Urban Plan*, Prepared for the New Westminster Planning Department, 1991, 9.

two lanes of traffic with diagonal parking on both sides of the street. Planters, trees and lamp standards were placed at intervals in an attempt to make the area more attractive for shoppers. This revitalization did not reflect the historic character of the streetscape nor did it enhance the adjacent heritage buildings.

Beautification Plan

In 1988, a major beautification plan for Columbia Street was initiated. The beautification plan included infrastructure work, such as new sewer installation, road paving and new sidewalks. The plan also included street beautification, namely, new decorative street lamps, benches, decorative pavers, Victorian bollard lanterns, bus shelters, trash receptacles and landscaping. These initiatives improved the overall attractiveness of Columbia Street. The physical improvements were completed in May, 1990. The total cost of the beautification project was \$2.2 million, which was funded by a cost sharing mechanism between the Province, the City of New Westminster and the 53 property owners on Columbia Street.

The Business Improvement Association

Also in 1988, the Business Improvement Area (BIA) concept was proposed for Downtown New Westminster, to assist with the ongoing revitalization efforts. The Downtown Revitalization Program, offered through

the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs, identifies three necessary ingredients to a successful and lasting revitalization program; namely, streetscape improvements, facade improvements, and marketing and promoting the Downtown. The mandate of the BIA is the third focus. Together with the streetscape improvement completed in 1990, the Heritage Area Revitalization Program which commenced in 1990 (to be discussed shortly), the BIA was implemented to manage the Downtown.

The BIA concept is a multifaceted tool. It is used to aid businesses and property owners in strengthening their commercial area through organization and management, design and physical improvements, marketing and promotional activities, and recruitment and development strategies.³⁴

Through a BIA mechanism, the business community formed an economic union and pays an annual levy through property taxes. The levy is then channeled back to the BIA as a municipal grant.

Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP)

In 1990, the City of New Westminster, assisted by the BC Heritage Trust, initiated a Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP) for the 400 to 700 blocks of Columbia Street. The HARP program was a voluntary, cost-sharing program to benefit the owners, tenants and retail merchants of historic

³⁴ Tam, 85.

buildings in this area. HARP funding was to cover up to 50% of the cost of sympathetic facade upgrading. The program ran for four years, and the funds were allocated on a “first come, first serve basis.” The program developed guidelines for 27 prioritized buildings along Columbia Street.

HARP funding was designed to cover four items.

1. Structural stabilization of facade elements: repointing, repair of lintels, new flashings;
2. Cleaning and repair of surface elements;
3. Painting;
4. Rehabilitation / replacement of storefront windows and doors; and
5. Awnings and canopies, signs and lighting.

However, the HARP funding would not cover: abrasive cleaning of masonry (sandblasting); removal / replacement of original window sashes unless completely beyond repair; inappropriate new facing materials, such as plywood, concrete block; backlit fluorescent or plastic signs; or backlit or translucent fabric awnings.

During the four years that the program was in place, a total of nine buildings applied and used HARP funding. The majority of the funding was used for facade restoration. Not all of the buildings that received HARP funding were on the prioritized list of 27 buildings on Columbia Street. See Table 9.

Table 9
Buildings Under HARP Program³⁵

Address	Name	Funding	Proposal	Total HARP Costs
705 - 707 Columbia Street	Adams Block	50% funding	facade restoration	\$32,150
701 Columbia Street	Hart Block	50% funding	facade restoration	\$60,000
28 - 32 Columbia Street	Cliff Block	50% funding	facade restoration	\$60,000
540 - 544 Columbia Street	CIBC	20% funding	signs and lighting	\$10,500
771 Columbia Street		20% funding	signs and painting	\$2,600
668 Columbia Street	Trapp Block	50% funding	removal of later metal canopy, new awnings and repairs to storefront	\$5,200
665 - 667 Columbia Street	Young Block	50% funding	facade restoration and signs	\$20,000
50 8th Street	Old Spaghetti Factory	20% funding	sympathetic facade rebuilding	\$18,000
404 - 412 Columbia Street		20% funding	repairs and repainting in sympathetic colour scheme	\$1,400
703 Front Street	Waterfront Athletic Club	20% funding	sympathetic awning	\$2,300

³⁵ HARP Annual Report, provided by the New Westminster Planning Department.

Total expenditures made during the program were \$605,800. \$300,000 was paid by the HARP program, the City of New Westminster paid for \$70,300 and property owners contributed \$235,500. The HARP program ended after four years. Figures 15 and 16 show one of the particular buildings, 701 Columbia Street, before and after a facade restoration under the HARP program.



Figure 15: 701 Columbia Street - Before the Historic Restoration³⁶

³⁶ Photograph and H.A. R.P. guideline for 701 Columbia Street.



Figure 16: 701 Columbia Street - After the Historic Restoration³⁷

The Downtown Action Plan

Have the revitalization efforts utilized for Columbia Street been successful? As the quote would suggest, while Columbia Street has improved somewhat, its overall economic viability is still limited.

The Downtown commercial ... still needs much attention. The image of the area remains a major obstacle to growth and development. A common problem faced by the Downtown is the lack of control over the merchandising, storefront displays, overall aesthetics of the storefronts and customer service. The lack of central retail management, which is the strength of shopping centres, allows for the diversity and uniqueness of neighbourhood commercial areas but also allows businesses to

³⁷ Photograph of 701 Columbia Street.

become deteriorated and dilapidated.... Another concern area is the marginal use of many of the buildings, and the lack of desirable retail mix in the Downtown, particularly on Columbia Street. Empty storefronts, increased number of marginal businesses and thrift stores all create a negative image of the area, attracting more low-income customers.³⁸

Clearly, when one observes Columbia Street today, unfortunately the images of derelict buildings, marginal uses and high traffic volumes are the most prominent features of the street. Notwithstanding, the street beautification program did uplift the image of Columbia Street, and the HARP program did rejuvenate portions of the Downtown. However, as both the street beautification and the HARP program reveal, physical improvements alone cannot revitalize Columbia Street. The challenge is in having property owners, merchants, the City and residents all sharing in the collective vision of the area.

In 1995, the BIA and the City of New Westminster embarked on a visioning process for the revitalization of the Downtown, with particular emphasis for Columbia Street. A visioning process is intended to create an overall vision through broad based consensus building. Both the BIA and the Planning Department recognize that the issues facing the Downtown are complex and multi-faceted in nature.

³⁸ Tam, 86-87.

Unlike previous processes and programs, a strong emphasis of this process is to deal with the social problems plaguing Columbia Street. There is a recognition that sole reliance on physical improvements will not produce the desired revitalization results for Columbia Street. A summary of the recommendations from the Downtown Action Plan are outlined below. Six committees were created to examine specific issues. The overall vision for the Downtown is as a destination neighbourhood:

New Westminster's Downtown Vision - Building The Future Now³⁹

Downtown New Westminster is the geographic centre of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, with the second largest concentration of financial services in the region. In addition, Downtown New Westminster is the transportation and communication cross-roads of the region with two SkyTrain stations leading to the core.

Downtown New Westminster is a special Riverfront destination neighbourhood centre that reflects the heritage and historic traditions of the City and provides economic opportunities and growth within the City.

Downtown New Westminster is a vibrant neighbourhood - a safe, attractive and appealing people place that derives energy from the diversity of peoples and activities located here. It is a friendly place to live, work, shop, enjoy arts and cultural events, socialise, revisit history and take a stroll along the Fraser River.

Downtown New Westminster is an 18 hour neighbourhood that connects its past with its future. It offers diverse residential accommodations, a strong business core, entertainment and educational opportunities. Its setting on the historic Fraser River, provides economic opportunities and attractions that include points of historic interest and modern Waterfront recreation and relaxation.

Downtown New Westminster is attractive, well lit, landscaped, with pedestrian friendly streets and pathways encouraging people to move between its unique areas -- the Waterfront promenade and residential areas, Columbia Streets and Front Street.

³⁹ City of New Westminster, *Draft Downtown Action Plan*, 10-11.

These areas feature speciality retail stores, arts and crafts galleries, financial and business services, restaurant, sidewalk cafes, cultural and entertainment services. Columbia Street and Front Street are people streets with local traffic and landscaped, pedestrian walk ways acting as the key links to the Waterfront and throughout the Downtown, featuring public art, street activity, interpretative displays and sidewalk cafes for residents, workers and visitors to meet and interact.

- *The Social Vision:* That the Downtown's social ambiance be based on neighbourhood friendly, street activity which in turn provides social vitality and "eyes on the street."
- *The Development Vision:* To encourage high quality design that integrates the Waterfront with Columbia Street through amendments to regulations.
- *The Heritage and Arts Vision:* To encourage arts and cultural facilities in the Downtown and use heritage restoration as a unifying theme for Columbia Street.
- *The Economic Vision:* By building on the existing economic strengths of the Downtown, market it as a good place to locate a business.
- *The Transportation Vision:* That movement to and throughout the Downtown be planned on a neighbourhood friendly scale.

It is the aspiration of both the BIA and the Planning Department that this multi-faceted approach will provide a comprehensive framework for the revitalization of Downtown and Columbia Street. As will be discussed in the next chapter, one approach that may assist in revitalizing Columbia Street will be the utilization of planning tools in the Municipal Act, in order to develop incentives that will stimulate market activity along the street.

CONCLUSION

Downtown New Westminster has gone through various cycles of growth and decline, dating back to the turn of the century. Beginning in the late 1970's, the vision of developing the Downtown and the Waterfront was a major catalyst for growth and investment. Despite the success of the Waterfront development, the Columbia Street corridor continues to struggle. In general, there has been a lack of investment on the street, several historic buildings are in need of upgrading, many businesses are marginal and several commercial spaces are vacant.

In the Downtown Action Plan, the heritage resources of Columbia Street are viewed as economic opportunities. They have the ability to generate tourism revenue in the Downtown by acting as an attraction for visitors. The Plan also identifies the need for continued financial assistance to property owners of heritage buildings and the need to explore adaptive reuses for these buildings.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC COLUMBIA STREET

The role of heritage and historic traditions are important to the Downtown economy [of New Westminster]. Columbia and Front Streets heritage buildings will promote tourism in New Westminster... These initiatives will reinforce the need for a balanced mix of uses, that have been expressed as desirable in the overall vision of a vibrant downtown neighbourhood.¹

This statement reflects the community's desire to use heritage conservation as a means to diversify the local economy. The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the heritage characteristics and market forces of Columbia Street buildings in order to recommend heritage revitalization strategies. The conceptual framework proposed in Chapter III will be used to form the methodology for this analysis.

This chapter is presented in four parts, which follow the main components of the conceptual framework. The first section will propose a classification system for the heritage buildings on Columbia Street. The second section will assess existing municipal regulations to determine their impacts on heritage revitalization and market opportunities. Understanding the economic relationships between zoning, heritage conservation and investment will be critical to identifying effective revitalization strategies.

¹ City of New Westminster, *Draft Downtown Action Plan*, 1996, 32.

The third section will analyze possible tools, (e.g. regulatory incentives, regulatory restrictions and controls, transfer of development rights and financial incentives) for inclusion in a heritage revitalization strategy. The last section of this chapter discusses planning considerations in a heritage revitalization strategy, such as the identification of heritage clusters.

APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework identified in Chapter III proposes five components for the development of a heritage revitalization strategy. See Figure 17.

1. Classification System For Heritage Stock

The first component of the conceptual framework is the need to classify heritage buildings. Several municipalities use classification systems to differentiate between heritage buildings. As discussed in Chapter IV, New Westminster has a heritage resource inventory. However, New Westminster's heritage inventory does not distinguish between the relative merits of heritage buildings. As discussed in Chapter II, the Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, 1994 has created a new planning list, known as the community heritage register which identifies heritage buildings of value to a

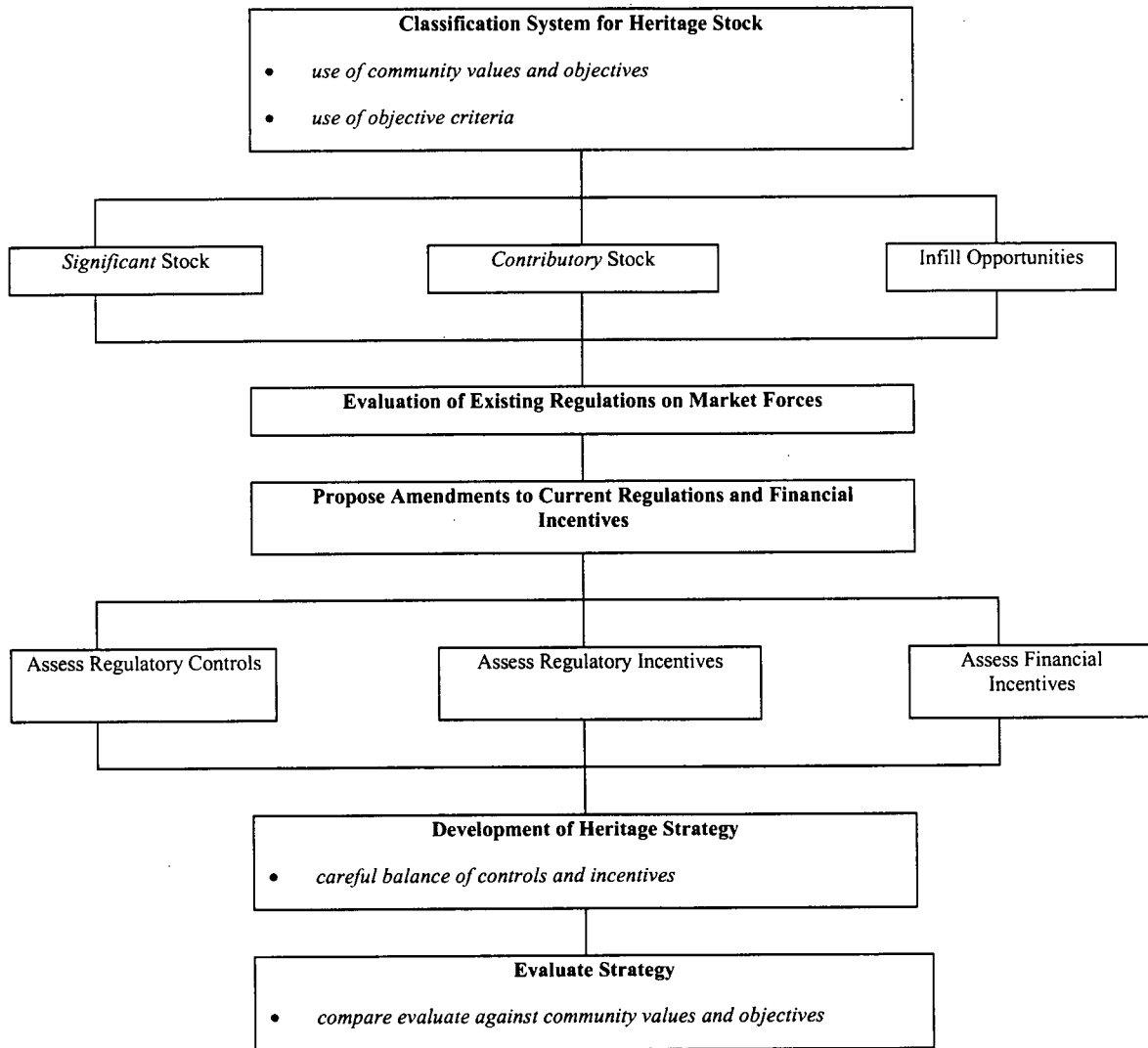


Figure 17: Conceptual Framework

community. It is questionable whether all of the heritage buildings listed in the *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory* would be eligible for inclusion to community heritage register. The heritage legislation dictates that buildings in a heritage register be evaluated with eligibility criteria. There are two

factors when developing eligibility criteria: community values concerning heritage; and technical standards.

Also as discussed in Chapter IV, the City of New Westminster and the New Westminster BIA have been participating in a visioning process for the revitalization of the Downtown. There is community consensus that heritage conservation is a critical component to the revitalization of New Westminster's Downtown. Some of the community viewpoints on strengths and challenges of Columbia Street, and the vision for heritage conservation are summarized below.

Strengths and Opportunities

The strengths and opportunities of New Westminster's Downtown can be summarized as follows:²

1. The importance of New Westminster and its Downtown in the historical development of British Columbia has resulted in a strong heritage character;
2. Downtown New Westminster's location adjacent to an active working waterfront -- the Fraser River
3. New Westminster's central location in the Lower Mainland
4. The Downtown has excellent access with two transit facilities, and as a cross roads easy transportation access;
5. The Downtown has a relatively large daytime office population;
6. There is a large residential population in the Downtown with additional residential development underway;

² Notes from BIA Planning Retreat, 1991, provided by the BIA.

7. The Waterfront is an attraction and is a traffic generator -- Westminster Quay Public Market, a relatively new hotel (Inn at Westminster Quay) and commercial development along the waterfront;
8. The Downtown has a strong institutional and service sector including Douglas College and the Courthouse; and
9. The Downtown has a strong and organized business community and BIA.

Challenges

There are also several challenges to overcome. It is important to note that several of these challenges relate to Columbia Street.

1. There is a lack of retail mix and variety, and many poor quality stores;
2. There are several empty storefronts and vacant buildings;
3. Many of the Downtown's old buildings are functionally obsolete;
4. There is general deterioration of Columbia Street commercial buildings;
5. There are many second hand stores;
6. The Downtown has a poor image which is exacerbated by the number of hotels and pubs on Columbia Street;
7. The 8th Street Skytrain Station has been besieged by drug trafficking;
8. There are problems with ambiguity of the existing zoning;
9. There is a perceive shortage of convenient customer parking; and
10. The surrounding suburban shopping centres are affecting the commercial viability of Downtown.³

³ Minutes from committee meetings, *Draft Downtown Action Plan*, 1996.

The heritage policy in the Downtown Action Plan states that “the heritage of Downtown buildings are to be enhanced and preserved based on their economic strengths, historic potential, and financial feasibility.”⁴ The Action Plan also identifies a vision for heritage conservation, as follows:

The Downtown has rich, unique heritage and historical traditions which are deeply rooted and displayed in our integrated architecture and landscaped urban neighbourhood. Downtown will offer a wide range of arts, culture and entertainment activities where people come to play, visit, learn, and shop on a 18 hour basis.⁵

The plan recognizes that heritage revitalization can unify the Downtown streetscape: “the importance of an unified theme based on Victorian and Edwardian architecture ...will add to the tourism potential and the creation of a distinctive neighbourhood.”⁶ Thus, with respect to the community’s values of heritage, it is clear that New Westminster residents and businesses appreciate the need for heritage revitalization within the context of economic diversification.

The second factor when developing eligibility criteria is the use of technical standards. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate the relative merits of one heritage classification system over another. Accordingly, for the purposes of this analysis, the classification system used combines the

⁴ *Downtown Action Plan*, 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

approaches of two cities, Vancouver and San Francisco. As discussed in Chapter III, the City of Vancouver classifies heritage resources with an A, B and C system. The City of San Francisco classifies heritage resources as significant and contributory. In this analysis, the evaluation forms from the City of Vancouver have been used. Appendix C provides a sample evaluation form.⁷

Building that would have been rated as “A”, will be classified as “*significant*”. *Significant* buildings will be those which exhibit excellence in architecture and are considered culturally valuable. Buildings that would have been rated as “B” and “C” under the Vancouver system, will be classified as “*contributory*”. *Contributory* buildings will be those which have architectural merit and form part of a cohesive historic streetscape. All of the buildings identified in the *Heritage Resource Inventory* for the 400 to 800 blocks Columbia Street have been evaluated for this thesis.

Table 10 lists a total of 10 heritage buildings on Columbia Street which were rated as *significant*. Table 11 lists 19 heritage buildings which were rated as *contributory*.

⁷ Provided by the City of Vancouver Planning Department.

Table 10
Significant Buildings⁸

<i>Significant Buildings</i>	Address
1. Guichon Block	401 Columbia Street
2. Burr Block	415 Columbia Street
3. Bank of Commerce	544 Columbia Street
4. Trapp Block	700 Columbia Street
5. Federal Government Building	549 Columbia Street
6. Hart Building	701 Columbia Street
7. Westminster Trust Block	713 Columbia Street
8. Bank of Nova Scotia	728 Colombia Street
9. The Station	800 Columbia Street
10. Mc & Mc Block	811 Columbia Street

⁸ List developed for this M.A. Thesis.

Table 11⁹
Contributory Buildings

<i>Contributory Buildings</i>	<i>Address</i>
1. Gifford Block	513 Columbia Street
2. Fraternal Order of Eagles	530 Columbia Street
3. Ellis Block	548 Columbia Street
4. Dominion Trust Block	600 Columbia Street
5. The Ellard Block	601 Columbia Street
6. Coulthard/Sutherland Block	607 Columbia Street
7. Chess Block	612 Columbia Street
8. W.O. Hambley Block	624 Columbia Street
9. Lewis Block	630 Colombia Street
10. Dupont Block	642 Columbia Street
11. Collister Block	635 Columbia Street
12. Paramount Theatre	652 Columbia Street
13. Curtis Block	659 Columbia Street
14. Windjammer Hotel	660 Columbia Street
15. Benjamin Young Block	665 Columbia Street
16. Armstrong Block	671 Columbia Street
17. Adam's Block	705 Columbia Street
18. Bryson Block	710 Columbia Street
19. Occidental Hotel	716 Columbia Street

⁹ List developed for this M.A. Thesis.

The location of *significant* and *contributory* buildings are shown in Map 8.

Map 8
Significant and Contributory Buildings on Columbia Street¹⁰



2. Evaluation of Existing Regulations on Market Forces

The second step of the conceptual framework is to assess if the existing regulations are working congruent with market opportunities. The Downtown Action Plan recommends that under-utilized buildings explore residential

¹⁰ Map developed for this M.A. Thesis.

conversions to create a critical mass of residents living in the Downtown core.

An urban design report prepared for the New Westminster Planning Department in 1992 also identified the need for a large residential population in the Downtown, as being a central element of revitalization.¹¹ The report states that there are several reasons why Columbia Street has not experienced residential growth:

1. Perceived regulatory complications of rehabilitating heritage buildings;
2. The small parcel size of most of the Columbia Street properties;
3. The cost of upgrading older buildings to meet seismic requirements and other Building Code requirements; and
4. Many heritage buildings not having on-site parking facilities.

Notwithstanding that several of these reasons are inherent challenges when dealing with older buildings, the zoning in the Downtown is also problematic. In particular, the density formulae of the C-4 Central Business District zone exacerbates the inherent challenges of restoring historic buildings.

¹¹ Arlington Group, *Downtown New Westminster Urban Design Study*, Prepared for the New Westminster Planning Department, 1991, 15.

The C-4 Central Business District Zone

Table 12 describes the two density formulae of the C-4 zone. One residential calculation is based on units per acre; the second calculation is based on FSR.

Table 12
C-4 Zone Explanation¹²

Site Size	Residential Density	Commercial Density	Mixed Use Density
Site less than 9,000 sq. ft.	1.2 FSR OR 60 units per acre (and with maximum FSR of 4.0)	5.2 FSR	1.2 FSR + 4.0 Commercial
Site of 9,100 sq. ft.	1.2 FSR + .015 FSR OR 60 units per acre + .75 units per acre (and with maximum FSR of 4.0)	5.2 FSR	1.2 FSR + 4.0 Commercial
Site of 21,000 sq. ft.	FSR 3.0 OR 150 units per acre (and with maximum FSR of 4.0)	5.2 FSR	If Maximum Residential FSR 3.0, Commercial = 2.2 If Maximum Residential = 150 units per acre Maximum Commercial = 1.2 FSR

¹² Analysis of C-4 zone, New Westminster Zoning Bylaw.

The original New Westminster Zoning Bylaw allowed for 6 storey buildings on Columbia Street, with rear yards of 10 feet for a commercial building and 25 feet for a residential building. This, in effect, translated into a FSR of 4.85 for sites developed as residential and 5.55 for sites developed as commercial, and averaged a 5.2 FSR. In 1942, the City amended the Zoning Bylaw to require 6 foot setbacks from the side property line for the residential component of buildings higher than two storeys. This regulation reduced the effective residential FSR to 4.0. In 1966, the City again amended the Zoning Bylaw to reduce the residential FSR on Columbia Street to 3.0. In 1978, the FSR calculation was adopted, and in 1989, the FSR limit of 4.0 for calculating units per acre was also adopted.

The 1978 Zoning Bylaw was amended to connect the density calculation of units per acre to lot sizes. For sites less than 9,000 square feet, the allowed density became 60 units per acre. For larger lots, the density would increase by .75 units per acre, (for each 100 square feet over 9,000 square feet) until it reached a maximum of 150 units per acre, (for properties at 21,000 square feet or larger). The C-4 zone was also amended so that residential density would also be determined by FSR. The residential FSR is a function of site size. The FSR became 1.2 for sites of 9,000 square feet or less, and would increase by .015 for each 100 square feet of site area. As the majority of sites on Columbia

Street are less than 9,000 square feet, they effectively only qualify for a residential density of 60 units per acre and a FSR of 1.2. Appendix B shows the density calculation: the units per acre calculation is labelled as Table A; the FSR calculation is labelled as Table B.

Impact of Zoning and Building Code Regulations

Does the C-4 Zone encourage the restoration of heritage buildings?

Does the C-4 Zone promote the revitalization of heritage buildings by encouraging the conversion of under-utilized space into residential use?

Arguably, the answer to both these questions is no. The two density calculations in the C-4 zone may threaten heritage buildings: these density calculations encourage the consolidation of lots into larger parcels to obtain a higher density. Hence, heritage buildings are at a greater risk since the consolidation of sites would probably necessitate demolitions.

The formula to limit residential FSR was implemented to encourage commercial use. It was desired that residential use not compete with commercial use. However, at present, many of the upper storeys of existing buildings are vacant and have been so for over two decades. The limitation on residential FSR precludes the conversion of this space to residential use. This is particularly unfortunate, as in most cases, heritage conversions would not increase the total floor space of the building.

As discussed in Chapter II, the cost to rehabilitate an older building can be prohibitive. Most municipalities, with the exception of the City of Vancouver, have adopted the 1992 B.C. Building Code as their building bylaw. The Building Code recognizes that heritage buildings have unique upgrading requirements. The Alternate Compliance Methods in the BC Building Code may be used as a substitute for typical code requirements. All of the building listed in the *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory* would likely qualify for these alternatives.

There were no seismic design requirements in the Building Code prior to 1965. When analyzed for existing seismic capacity, older buildings tend not to rate well, since their large expanses of brick masonry walls, as well as post and beam timber construction are not considered structurally stable in earthquake conditions. Modern codes were created for new building construction. Old buildings are harder to assess, even with destructive testing and sampling prior to restoration. Unknown variables can cause concern for municipal building inspectors who are expected to be cautious and not expose the local government to liability.

Heritage buildings also have to consider sprinklers. New Westminster's Fire Limits Bylaw requires that any building with more than three residential units must be sprinklered. It can be argued that the cumulative effect of these Code requirements make the cost of rehabilitation prohibitive and act as disincentives to revitalization.

3. Propose Amendments to Current Regulations and the Use of Financial Incentives

The third component of the conceptual framework is to evaluate the need for amendments to current regulations and to identify the need for financial incentives. Amendments to regulations involves both the use of regulatory incentives and regulatory controls.

Analyzing the Regulatory Impacts for the Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Building

It is important to understand the economic relationships of heritage conservation, as stated in Chapter II. To assess the economic relationships, a financial proforma approach will be used. The benefit of this methodology is that costs and revenues are measured and used to quantify the potential profit and risk of a development (known as the internal rate of return, or IRR). Developments yielding an IRR below 20% are typically deemed as being

overly risky; developments yielding an IRR over 20% are typically considered as financially feasible.

In Table 13, a financial proforma for a planned development on Columbia Street is summarized.¹³ The project proposes to convert under-utilized upper storey space into loft housing. Five floors are to be converted into 45 units. The building is the Trapp Block, built in 1912 and has been identified as a *significant* heritage building. Since a residential conversion in this commercial building is considered a change of use in the Building Code, parking will need to be added to comply with the Zoning Bylaw (i.e. 1.5 parking spaces per 1 residential unit, or payment into the New Westminster parking fund). The assumptions for the proforma are listed in Appendix D.

As the internal rate of return shows, at 31%, this project would be considered financially feasible. However, this development can not proceed under this scheme. The project does not conform to the density regulations of the C-4 zone. As discussed earlier, there are two formulae for residential density. This proposed conversion exceeds both the unit per acre calculation and the FSR calculation. To proceed with this scheme, a rezoning would be necessary which is perceived to be costly, time consuming and risky. Under

¹³ The project is currently being reviewed by the New Westminster Planning Department.

this financially viable scheme, the project would have a residential density of 270 units per acre and a residential FSR of 5.2.

Table 13
Financial Proforma of Residential Conversion, 700 Columbia Street¹⁴

<u>Assumptions</u>	
Residential Building Size (sq. ft.)	38,200
Saleable/ Leaseable Building (sq. ft.)	33,300
<u>Costs</u>	
Construction Costs (per square foot)	\$69
Parking (payment in lieu)	\$810,000
Land Costs	\$400,026
Real Estate Commission	3%
Total Construction Costs	\$3,440,070
<u>Revenues</u>	
Residential Saleable (per sq. ft.)	\$140
Residential - Total Revenues	\$4,662,000
<u>Financing</u>	
Lending Rates (Annual)	10%
% of Construction Costs Financed by Debt	50%
Internal Rate of Return	31.44%

¹⁴ This financial proforma has been prepared for sole use in the M.A. Thesis.

The Trapp Block site is under 9,000 square feet. The allowable density under the C-4 zone is 60 units per acre, or a total of 12 units. Conversely, if the residential density is being measured by FSR, the permitted residential density on this site would be 1.2. Financial proformas were run for this building using allowable densities. None of the proformas yielded financially feasible schemes. From this analysis of financially testing the zoning requirements, it is understandable why many upper storeys on Columbia Street are vacant and / or under-utilized.

Evaluating Heritage Controls and Incentives

Columbia Street is a cohesive historic precinct. However, the C-4 zone does not protect the heritage buildings nor encourage their revitalization. In many cases, the C-4 zone is incongruent with heritage conservation. Moreover, the C-4 zone is also at variance with the community's objectives for encouraging the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

Threat of Demolitions - Extra Density

In order to identify which amendments would promote heritage revitalization, it is important to firstly understand the market characteristics of the heritage buildings. Table 14 outlines the FSR of each *significant* heritage building by order of highest residual density. The purpose of this analysis is to

identify if buildings are in threat of demolition as a result of high residual development potential on their sites.

Table 14
Significant Buildings¹⁵

<i>Significant Buildings</i>	Address	Site Area	Current FSR	Residual FSR ¹⁶
1. The Station	800 Columbia Street	34,848	0.2	5.0
2. Bank of Nova Scotia	728 Colombia Street	7,867	1.2	4.0
3. Guichon Block	401 Columbia Street	8,712	1.6	3.6
4. Mc & Mc Block	811 Columbia Street	17,406	2.6	2.6
5. Burr Block	415 Columbia Street	8,712	2.7	2.5
6. Bank of Commerce	544 Columbia Street	5,412	2.7	2.5
7. Hart Building	701 Columbia Street	4,349	3.0	2.2
8. Federal Government Building	549 Columbia Street	28,692	4.6	1.6
9. Trapp Block	700 Columbia Street	7,260	7.1	exceeds
10. Westminster Trust Block	713 Columbia Street	8,700	8.7	exceeds

As is shown in Table 14, six of the 10 *significant* buildings could be threatened by demolition to realize a higher development potential on these sites. These six sites could accommodate an additional 50% of density.

¹⁵ This list has been developed for this M.A. Thesis.

¹⁶ Assumes maximum FSR of commercial development or mixed use development to 5.2 FSR.

The same analysis has been undertaken for the 19 *contributory* buildings. Table 15 identifies the *contributory* buildings, their existing and residual densities, and lists the buildings by order of highest extra density.

Table 15
Contributory Buildings¹⁷

<i>Contributory Buildings</i>	Address	Site Area	Current FSR	Residual FSR¹⁸
1. Paramount Theatre	652 Columbia Street	5,168	1.0	4.2
2. Fraternal Order of Eagles	530 Columbia Street	8,690	1.3	3.9
3. Gifford Block	513 Columbia Street	8,018	1.4	3.8
4. W.O. Hambley Block	624 Columbia Street	8,708	1.7	3.5
5. Armstrong Block	671 Columbia Street	4,353	1.9	3.3
6. Curtis Block	659 Columbia Street	4,353	2.0	3.2
7. Adam's Block	705 Columbia Street	4,349	2.0	3.2
8. The Ellard Block	601 Columbia Street	2,596	2.0	3.2
9. Collister Block	635 Columbia Street	8,708	2.2	3.0
10. Coulthard / Sutherland Block	607 Columbia Street	2,167	2.4	2.8
11. E.L. Lewis Block	630 Columbia Street	8,708	2.5	2.7
12. Dupont Block	642 Columbia Street	6,443	2.5	2.7
13. Benjamin Young Block	665 Columbia Street	4,353	2.5	2.7
14. Ellis Block	548 Columbia Street	4,356	2.8	2.4

¹⁷ List is developed for this M.A. Thesis.

¹⁸ Assumes maximum FSR of commercial development or mixed use development to 5.2 FSR.

15. Bryson Block	710 Columbia Street	3,234	2.8	2.4
16. Chess Block	612 Columbia Street	8,707	3.0	2.2
17. Windjammer Hotel	660 Columbia Street	8,709	3.4	1.8
18. Occidental Hotel	716 Columbia Street	2,177	5.0	.2
19. Dominion Trust Block	600 Columbia Street	8,708	6.0	exceeds

As Table 15 reveals, 13 of the 19 *contributory* building sites could accommodate additional density of up to 50%. As with six of the *significant* buildings, these *contributory* buildings could also be threatened with demolition, in order to realize the “highest and best use” of these sites.

Encouraging Heritage Protection

The Municipal Act states that the only method for local government to protect against demolition is through designation. With respect to the heritage buildings on Columbia Street, it is recommended that all *significant* buildings be encouraged to designate. The top three buildings listed in Table 14 are potentially the most at risk. This is problematic when considering that two of the three buildings are culturally important as well: The Station at 800 Columbia Street is the original CP Rail station in New Westminster; and Guichon Block at 401 Columbia Street is one of the two remaining commercial buildings that survived the Great Fire of 1898.

There are several approaches that a local government could take. For example, the heritage legislation enables a local government to involuntarily designate heritage buildings. However, a more proactive approach would be to discourage demolitions through regulatory and financial incentives. A program that promotes the need for heritage controls would have a twofold benefit for local governments. The first benefit to a local government would be that an incentive program would facilitate cooperation and private/ public sector partnerships. The second benefit would be financial. Since the heritage legislation states that a property owner is entitled to compensation if an involuntary designation affects market value, if heritage designation is encouraged, then the financial burden could not be placed on a local government if the designation affects its value.

Incentives to Encourage Residential Conversions

There are several regulatory incentives that could be utilized to encourage residential conversions. The predominant approach used by other cities is to bonus density. This could take two forms: one, by allowing additional density to be built on site for residential conversions; and two, by amending the density provision. Under the first approach, increasing the allowable density, since the majority of these heritage buildings have excess

density, it is questionable if this would generate sufficient interest and favourable results.

The second approach may be possible. Amending the residential formulae in the C-4 zone could possibly stimulate market activity by adding economic value to the zone. For this approach to achieve measurable results and not affect the overall historic streetscape, three factors are to be considered. One, rather than the present zoning which imposes arbitrary restrictions on the amount of residential space, the C-4 zone should be amended to allow for mixed uses in heritage buildings without a specific limitation on the percentage of each use. Two, the overall density in the C-4 zone should remain at 5.2 FSR. This is important so that the overall streetscape is not affected and the human scale of Columbia Street is maintained. Three, the units per acre calculation should be deleted as a density calculation. Conversions of older buildings tend not to impact the streetscape, since there is typically no increase to building mass. On the other hand, new developments invariably impact an existing streetscape. The unit per acre calculation is designed to regulate overall bulk of a development. Since residential conversions typically work within the envelope of an existing building, this density calculation should not be applied.

A telephone survey of some cities with historic downtowns revealed that New Westminster is the only city from this survey which uses a unit per acre calculation for its downtown zoning.¹⁹ An argument against the deletion of the units per acre calculation may be that without it, small unit sizes and a lack of unit mix may result. However, the size and mix of residential units should be market driven. Moreover, neighbourhoods like the Downtown attract residents desiring more urban lifestyles.

Transfer of Development Rights

One regulatory incentive that could be implemented is a “transfer of development rights” program. Since many of the *significant* and *contributory* buildings have excess density on their sites, they could be encouraged to act as density donors. This program could then mitigate the threat of demolition for economic reasons, since property owners would be financially compensated.

Financial Incentives

The Municipal Act allows local government to abate property taxes if a heritage building is listed as part of a heritage conservation area or if the

¹⁹ Interviews with municipal planners in the City of Vancouver, City of North Vancouver and the City of Victoria.

building is designated as a municipal heritage site. The approach used in Downtown Victoria is noteworthy: only designed buildings are eligible for grant funding. The City of New Westminster does not currently contribute to the New Westminster Heritage Foundation, however, the principle behind the City of Victoria's program could still be implemented. As an effective approach in encouraging heritage designation, in particular for the 10 *significant* buildings, a program of property tax abatements could be implemented for designated buildings.

Identifying Heritage Revitalization Opportunities

Once all of the steps have been undertaken, it is important to identify which heritage buildings have opportunities for revitalization. The purpose of this step is to determine the characteristics of the *significant* and *contributory* buildings.

An assessment of the heritage revitalization opportunities of the 29 *significant* and *contributory* buildings along Columbia Street was undertaken. Map 9 plots these findings. "Heritage Revitalized" is defined as *significant* and *contributory* buildings that have been restored sympathetically and are fully utilized. Nine buildings are in this category: 6 are *significant* buildings; and 3 are *contributory* buildings. "Heritage Revitalization Opportunities" are

defined as *significant* and *contributory* buildings that are in need of sympathetic restorations and/or are under-utilized. 20 buildings are in this category, 4 *significant* and 16 *contributory* buildings. "Redevelopment Opportunities" are defined as non-heritage, marginal buildings. "Existing Buildings" are defined as either new buildings or well maintained, non-heritage buildings.

As discussed in Chapter IV, several historic buildings in the Downtown participated in the HARP program. The HARP program generated \$600,000 worth of restorations and renovations which improved the streetscape surrounding the participating buildings. However, participation in the program was not complete and the result is that only few blocks on Columbia Street have been cohesively restored as a heritage streetscape.

Map 9 Heritage Revitalization and Redevelopment Opportunities²⁰



²⁰ Map developed for this M.A. Thesis.

The 20 buildings categorized as “Heritage Revitalization Opportunities” are important to the rejuvenation of Columbia Street. An assessment of the heritage revitalization opportunities for these 20 properties was undertaken. The analysis involved the rationale why the building was being identified as a heritage revitalization opportunity and proposed revitalization uses.

As Table 16 reveals, the majority of these buildings require exterior restorations, have vacant or under-utilized space and their storefronts lack interest. Some of these buildings have marginal street level commercial uses, such as thrift stores. Heritage revitalization uses have been proposed for these buildings.

Heritage Restorations

Nearly every building identified as a “heritage revitalization opportunity” is in need of sympathetic heritage restorations. A total of 19 buildings should be restored (i.e., 17 buildings require major restoration and 2 buildings require minor restorations). The notable exception from this list is the Burr Block at 415 Columbia Street which has recently renovated the commercial level with an upscale restaurant and pub.

Residential Conversions

Of the 20 buildings, 10 buildings could be converted to residential use. Assuming an average unit size of 800 square feet, approximately 160 units could be added to Columbia Street. This would add between 160 to 320 residents and consumers for local businesses.

Neighbourhood Retail

A total of 13 buildings could add neighbourhood retail services at their street level. This would conform with the Downtown Action Plan that states that additional neighbourhood services be encouraged in the Downtown helping to make the area more neighbourhood friendly.

Office Use

Four buildings could accommodate additional commercial office use. The C-4 zone allows commercial use to a maximum FSR of 5.2. As was discussed in the Yaletown case study, the market place desires office space in well restored historic buildings.

Theatre Use

Columbia Street has two historic theatres. Neither one is currently being used in this manner. One building, the Fraternal Order of Eagles at 530 used to operate as the Columbia Street. This building is only one of three atmospheric theatres left in Canada. This location is currently being reviewed for the Raymond Burr Performing Arts Centre (the actor, Raymond Burr, was a New Westminster resident).

The second theatre is the Paramount at 652 Columbia Street. The Paramount Theatre used to house community arts groups. Presently it is being used for adult entertainment, a use which is problematic for Columbia Street. Returning the Paramount Theatre to community use would enhance the street.

Table 16
Proposed Heritage Revitalization Opportunities for Columbia Street²¹

Name of Building	Address	Classification	Rationale for Heritage Revitalization Opportunity	Proposed Heritage Revitalization Uses
Burr Block	415 Columbia Street	<i>Significant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upper storeys are vacant • exterior has been restored • new restaurant and pub at street level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loft housing in upper floors - potential for 14 units • hotel use
Trapp Block	700 Columbia Street	<i>Significant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upper storeys are vacant • exterior is in need of restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loft housing in upper floors - potential for 45 units • neighbourhood based retail at street level • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level
Federal Government Building	549 Columbia Street	<i>Significant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marginal street level businesses and storefronts are in need of visual interest • the building does not have a relationship with the street • the property is considered residual by Public Works Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neighbourhood based retail at street level • office use in upper floors • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level

²¹ Analysis developed for this M.A. Thesis.

Mc & Mc Block	811 Columbia Street	<i>Significant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upper storeys are vacant • exterior is in need of restoration • marginal street level businesses • storefronts are in need of visual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loft housing in upper floors - potential for 35 units • neighbourhood based retail at street level • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level needed, such as awnings and gateway features
Gifford Block	513 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storefronts are in need of visual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level, such as awnings
Fraternal Order of Eagles	530 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exterior is in need of restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposed Performing Arts Centre • sympathetic restorations needed to enliven and show case the Theatre
Ellis Block	548 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storefronts are in need of visual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neighbourhood based retail at street level • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level, such as awnings
Dominion Trust Block	600 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exterior has been restored, however, facade lacks interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level
Coulthard/Sutherland Block	607 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exterior is in need of restoration • upper storeys are vacant • storefronts are in need of visual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neighbourhood based retail at street level • office use in upper floors • sympathetic restorations, especially at street level, such as awnings
Chess Block	612 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exterior is in need of restoration • upper storeys are vacant • storefronts are in need of visual interest • marginal street level businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loft housing in upper floors - potential for 20 units • neighbourhood based retail at street level • sympathetic restorations needed to enliven the street

W.O. Hambley Block	624 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of restoration storefronts are in need of visual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> neighbourhood based retail at street level sympathetic restorations
Lewis Block	630 Colombia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior has been restored some vacant upper storey space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minor restorations needed
Dupont Block	642 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> upper storeys are vacant exterior has been restored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 10 units office use in upper floors minor street level restorations needed
Collister Block	635 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of sympathetic restoration building has little relationship with the street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sympathetic restorations, especially at street level, such as awnings
Paramount Theatre	652 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of sympathetic restoration strip club business is considered problematic for the Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> neighbourhood based retail at street level sympathetic restorations in historic colours return to community theatre use
Curtis Block	659 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of restoration upper storeys are vacant storefronts are in need of visual interest marginal street level businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 4 units neighbourhood based retail at street level sympathetic restorations

Windjammer Hotel	660 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> grand fathered liquor license which is considered problematic for the Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 11 units hotel use neighbourhood based retail at street level sympathetic restorations, especially at street level
Armstrong Block	671 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of restoration storefronts are in need of visual interest marginal street level businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 4 units neighbourhood based retail at street level office use in upper floors sympathetic restorations
Bryson Block	710 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of restoration upper storeys are vacant vacant space at street level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 6 units neighbourhood based retail at street level sympathetic restorations, especially at street level, such as awnings
Occidental Hotel	716 Columbia Street	<i>Contributory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior is in need of restoration upper storeys are vacant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loft housing in upper floors - potential for 9 units hotel use neighbourhood based retail at street level street level restorations to enliven the area

4. Development of a Heritage Revitalization Strategy

The fourth component of the conceptual framework is the development of a heritage revitalization strategy. An objective of the strategy should be to provide guidance in the revitalization process. As discussed in Chapter III, there are inherent complexities and risks when rehabilitating and investing in commercial heritage buildings. A local government can assist the revitalization process by providing clarity to property owners and investors.

Planning Considerations for Columbia Street

Columbia Street exhibits many characteristics of a cohesive heritage precinct. The precinct approach can offer a method of description and prescription. Regarding a method of description, a precinct allows for the organization of buildings in a streetscape context. With respect to prescriptive tools, a precinct act as a planning unit with programs and strategies developed to preserve its unique character and function.²²

²² *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory*, 163.

Need for Inclusion on Community Heritage Register

As discussed in Chapter II, a community heritage register is an official listing of properties identified by a local government as having heritage value or heritage character. Properties are listed on a register by applying criteria, are eligible for special provisions under the Building Code and, if deemed necessary, could be subject to heritage controls. All of the *significant* and *contributory* properties should be included in a community heritage register.

Need for Heritage Conservation Area

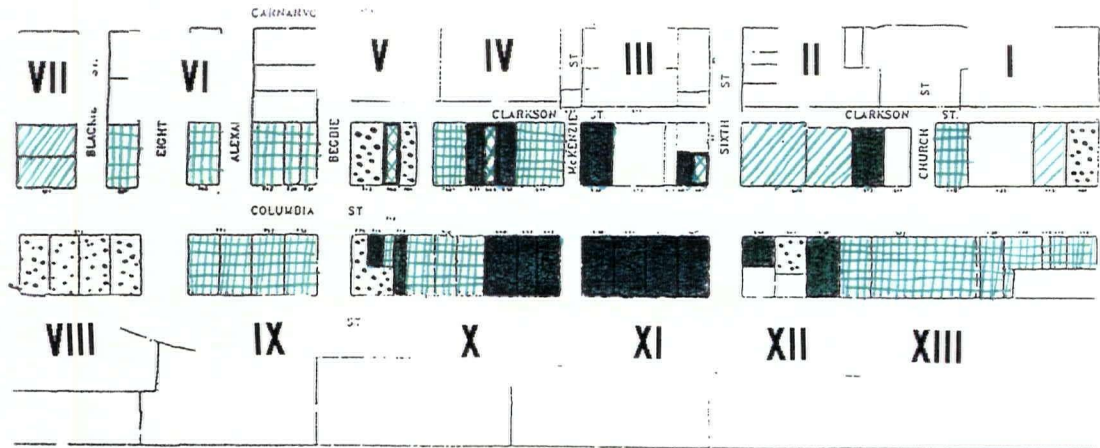
The Municipal Act has also created a new planning area, the heritage conservation area. As discussed in Chapter II, a heritage conservation area is similar to a development permit area. A conservation area must be included in the Official Community Plan. A heritage conservation area provides long-term protection to a distinctive heritage area. A heritage conservation area can dictate that various rules be in place such as regulating the design for infill development and ensuring that alternations are done in a sympathetic manner. As the literature review stated, properties within heritage conservation areas do not depreciated in market value. Rather, as was shown in two conservation areas in the United States, properties within historic areas have a higher market appreciation rate than comparable properties not in conservation areas.

The area of the 400 to 800 blocks of Columbia Street is a cohesive heritage precinct and for this reason should be designated as a heritage conservation area. This heritage conservation area could be “framed” by *significant* historic buildings on three of the four street corners: Guichon Block, 401 Columbia Street, on the north east street corner; the Mc & Mc Block, 811 Columbia Street, at the north west street corner; and the Station, 800 Columbia Street, at the south west street corner.

It is recognized that the Downtown is a special development permit district in the New Westminster Official Community Plan. Notwithstanding, the quantity and the quality of the historic buildings on Columbia Street would necessitate that a planning and development review process be implemented which focuses specifically on heritage conservation and heritage revitalization.



The planning considerations have been illustrated in Map 10. Thirteen heritage clusters have been identified for Columbia Street. The characteristic of each cluster is dependent on the number and quantity of *significant* and *contributory* heritage buildings and by the investment opportunities available through redevelopment sites. The majority of the clusters are one street block in length.

Map 10 Heritage Clusters on Columbia Street²³



Legend

Heritage Conservation Area

Heritage Revitalized: *Significant*  *Contributory* 

Heritage Revitalization Opportunities: *Significant*  *Contributory* 

Redevelopment Opportunities 

Existing Buildings 

²³ Analysis for this M.A. Thesis.

Cluster I - 400 Block North

This is a critical intersection since it can act as a gateway into historic Columbia Street. This cluster has two *significant* buildings, the two remaining commercial buildings to survive the Great Fire of 1898. The main consideration for this cluster will be the redevelopment of the south side of the street to ensure sympathetic redevelopment. One of the *significant* buildings has the potential for loft housing.



Figure 18: Two *Significant* Buildings in Cluster I²⁴

²⁴ H.A.R.P. Guidelines.



Figure 19: Photographs of Cluster I²⁵

²⁵ Photographs of historic buildings in the 400 block Columbia Street.

Cluster II - 500 Block North

This block is dominated by the Federal Government Building. Although considered a *significant* building, at present it does not encourage pedestrian traffic. The corner of 6th Street and Columbia Street is a key intersection. The Federal Government Building could greatly enhance the street by converting its ground floor into retail use thereby “opening up” the street with storefronts.



Figure 20: Federal Government Building²⁶

²⁶ Photograph of 549 Columbia Street.

Cluster III - 600 Block North

One *contributory* building at the corner of 6th Street and Columbia Street, has recently been renovated and “anchored” by a Starbucks Coffee. The outdoor seating of the Starbucks Coffee and the neighbouring restaurant could greatly enhance the street activity. A restaurant to the north of Starbucks has an open court yard with outdoor seating overlooking Columbia Street. With both indoor and outdoor activity generated by a Starbucks business, and outdoor restaurant seating one building away, this block has the opportunity of becoming the most active section of Columbia Street.



Figure 21: Contributory Buildings in Cluster III²⁷

²⁷ H.A.R.P. Guidelines.



Figure 22: 601 Columbia Street in Cluster III²⁸

²⁸ Photograph of building in the 600 block of Columbia Street.

Cluster IV- 600 Block North

The main consideration with this cluster is that new developments on both sides of the three *contributory* heritage buildings be designed sympathetically and not dominate the height and scale cohesiveness of the sub-precinct of three buildings. These buildings have the potential for upper storey housing.



Figure 23: 3 Contributory Buildings in Cluster IV²⁹

²⁹ H.A. R. P. Guidelines.

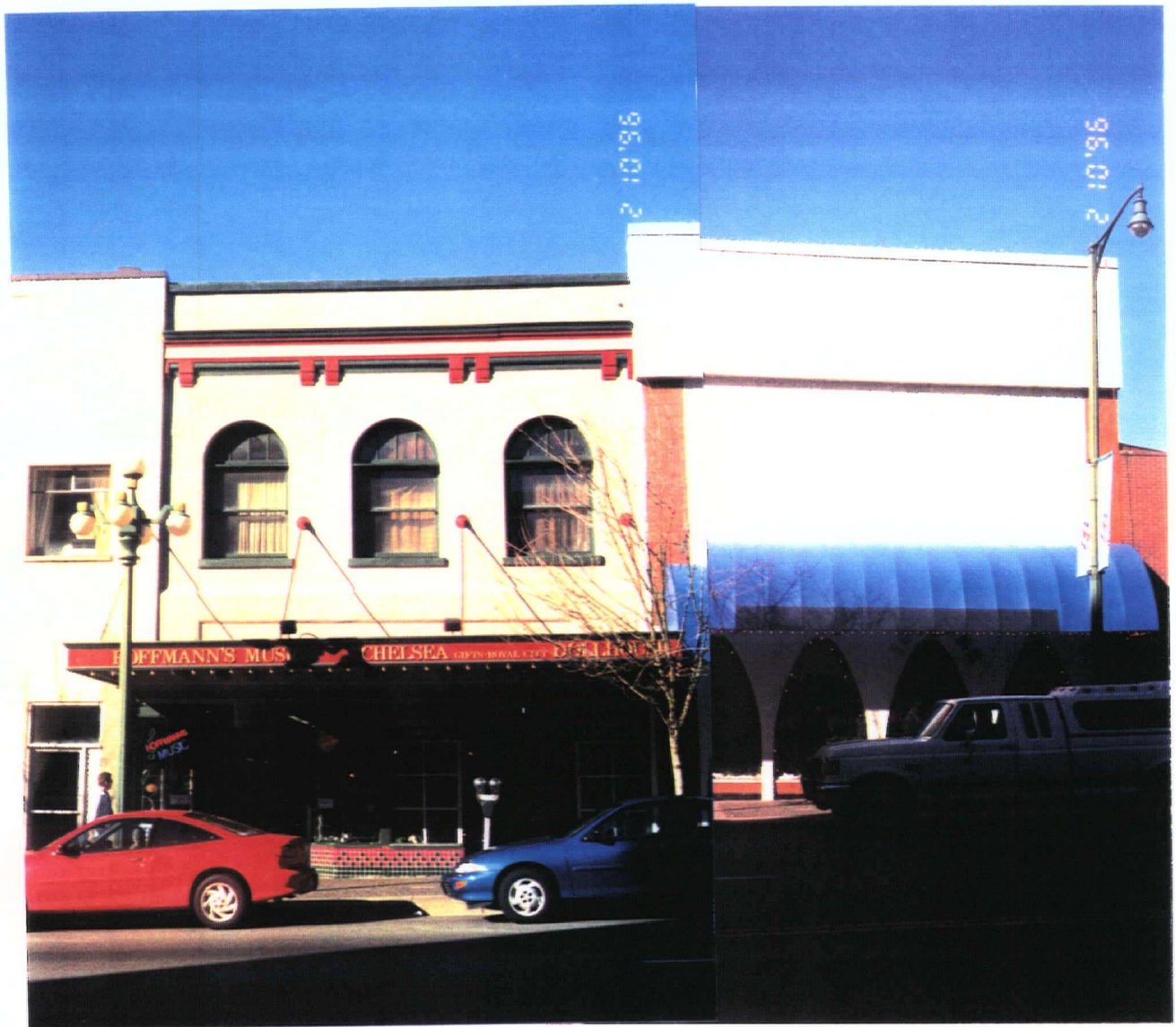


Figure 24: Photographs of Cluster IV³⁰

³⁰ Photographs of the 600 block Columbia Street.

Cluster V - 700 Block North

This block is Columbia Street's premier heritage cluster. The two *significant* buildings, which are two of New Westminster's landmarks, are located on this block, (the Westminster Trust Block and the Hart Block). Although the building in the middle is considered *contributory*, it has been superbly rehabilitated and adds to the stature of this block. The main considerations for this block will be that neighbouring redevelopment projects be carefully reviewed to ensure that they are compatible and sympathetic in design with this block.

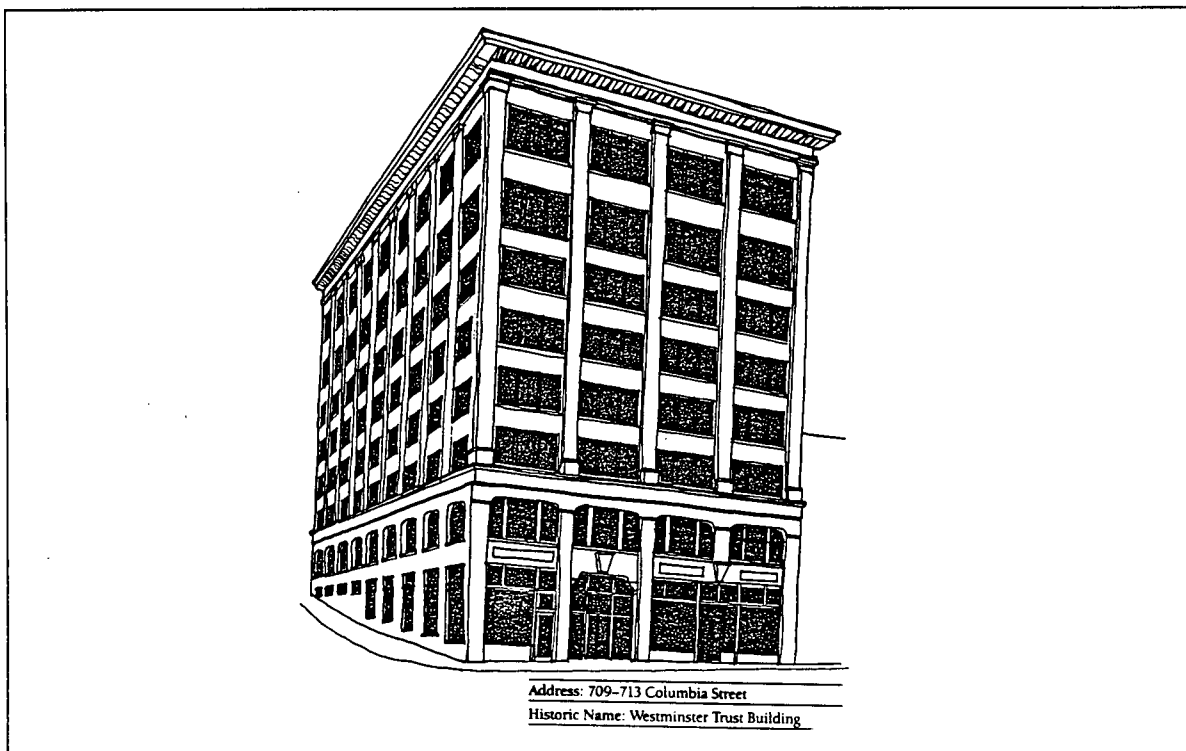


Figure 25: Westminster Trust Block in Cluster V³¹

³¹ H.A.R.P. guidelines of Westminster Trust Block.

Cluster VI - 700 and 800 Blocks North

This redevelopment cluster is important because it borders three *significant* buildings. New developments within this cluster must be sympathetic with the *significant* buildings to the east, west and northwest (Westminster Trust Block, Mc & Mc Block and The Station). Moreover, this cluster is important since the corner of Eighth Street and Columbia Street is a key intersection into the Downtown. New developments on either side of Eighth Street should recognize a possible gateway opportunity with the intersection. Also, Eighth Street and Columbia Street has a Skytrain Station. Redevelopments in this cluster should capitalize on the pedestrian traffic from the Skytrain Station and encourage the flow of pedestrian onto Columbia Street.

Cluster VII - 800 Block North

This cluster is made up of one building classified as a *significant* heritage building. Like Cluster I, this property is at the entrance into historic Columbia Street. A gateway treatment should be considered as part of this property. This building is also the only Arts Moderne architecture in the Main Street precinct. Its large windows and open spaces make this building ideal for loft housing.



Figure 26: 811 Columbia Street in Cluster VII³²

³² Photograph of the Mc & Mc Block.

Cluster VIII- 800 Block South

This cluster is made up of one *significant* building, The Station. This building is also at the entrance of historic Columbia Street and a gateway feature should be considered. This site is also important since it is located next to Hyack Square, one of the few public open spaces in the Downtown and directly to the north of the Westminster Quay Public Market. Outdoor festive activities should be encouraged which would build on the surrounding attractions.



Figure 27: CPR Station³³

³³ Photograph of 800 Columbia Street.

Cluster IX - 700 Block South

This cluster is exclusively made up of redevelopment opportunities.

This street block has the ability to greatly improve Columbia Street by developing new building which would enhance the *significant* buildings to the west and to the east. This cluster borders the Eighth Street and Columbia Street intersection. New developments on this block should promote pedestrian traffic along Columbia Street and to the Waterfront.

Cluster X - 700 and 600 Blocks South

This cluster is important for several reasons. It is a large cluster with sub-clusters in it. The major reason for the lack of continuity along this long street block is the redevelopment properties in the middle of this block. These infill sites need to adhere to strict design which could unify this block. This cluster has two *significant* properties which act as anchors of the infill properties, (the Trapp Block, 700 Columbia Street and the Bank of Nova Scotia, 728 Columbia Street). Three *contributory* buildings make up about half of the block; these buildings are consistent and complementary in scale to each other. The majority of the heritage buildings in this cluster are considered heritage revitalization opportunities. Five buildings in this cluster could be converted to residential development. Also, interesting storefronts should be encouraged in this cluster.

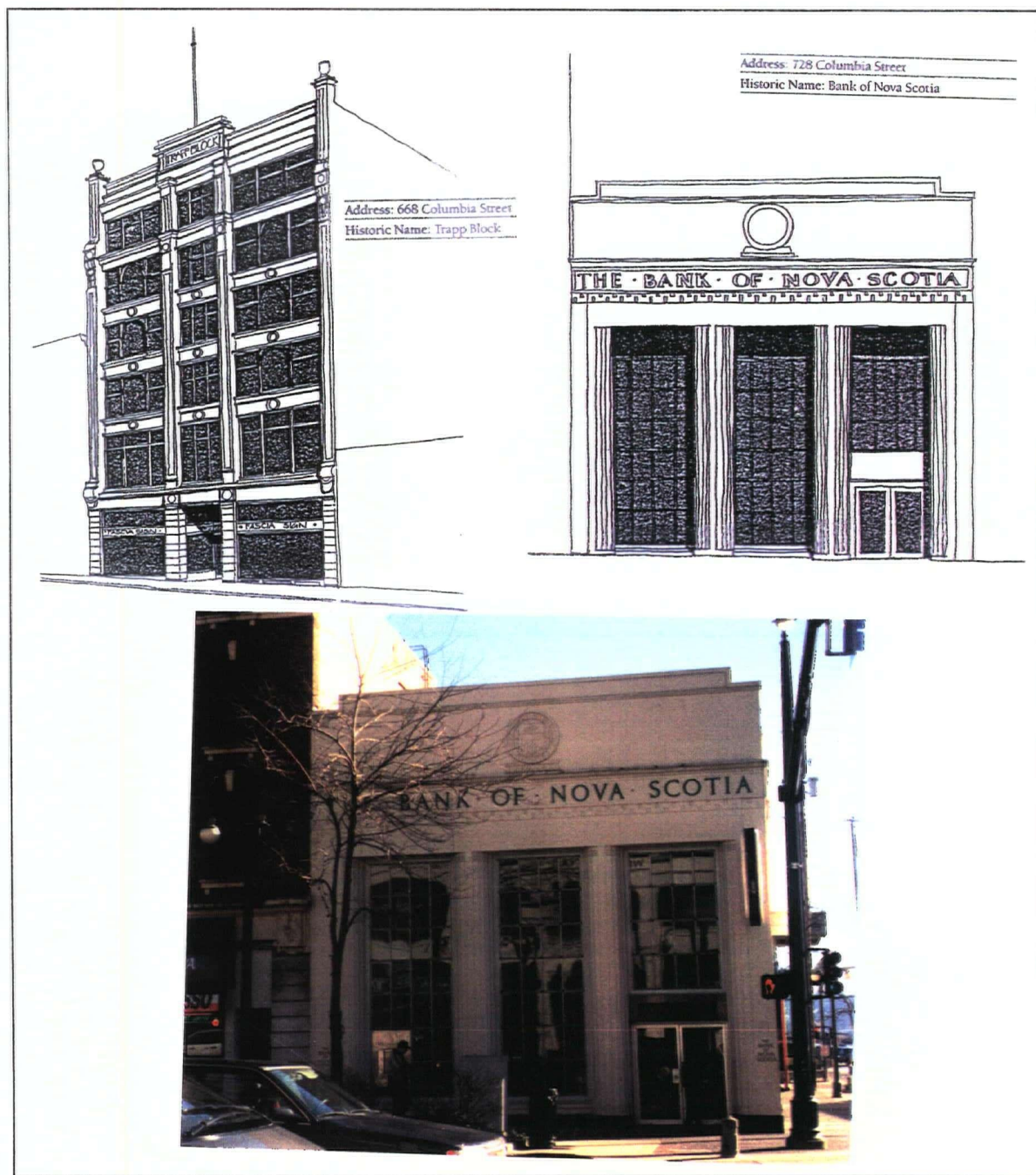


Figure 28: Significant Buildings in Cluster X³⁴

³⁴ H.A.R.P. Guidelines.

Cluster XI - 600 Block South

This cluster is important since it is the only block in the Columbia Street precinct made up entirely of *contributory* buildings. This block is architecturally cohesive and makes the streetscape quite consistent. This cluster needs more animation at street level, however, such as colourful awnings and interesting signage.

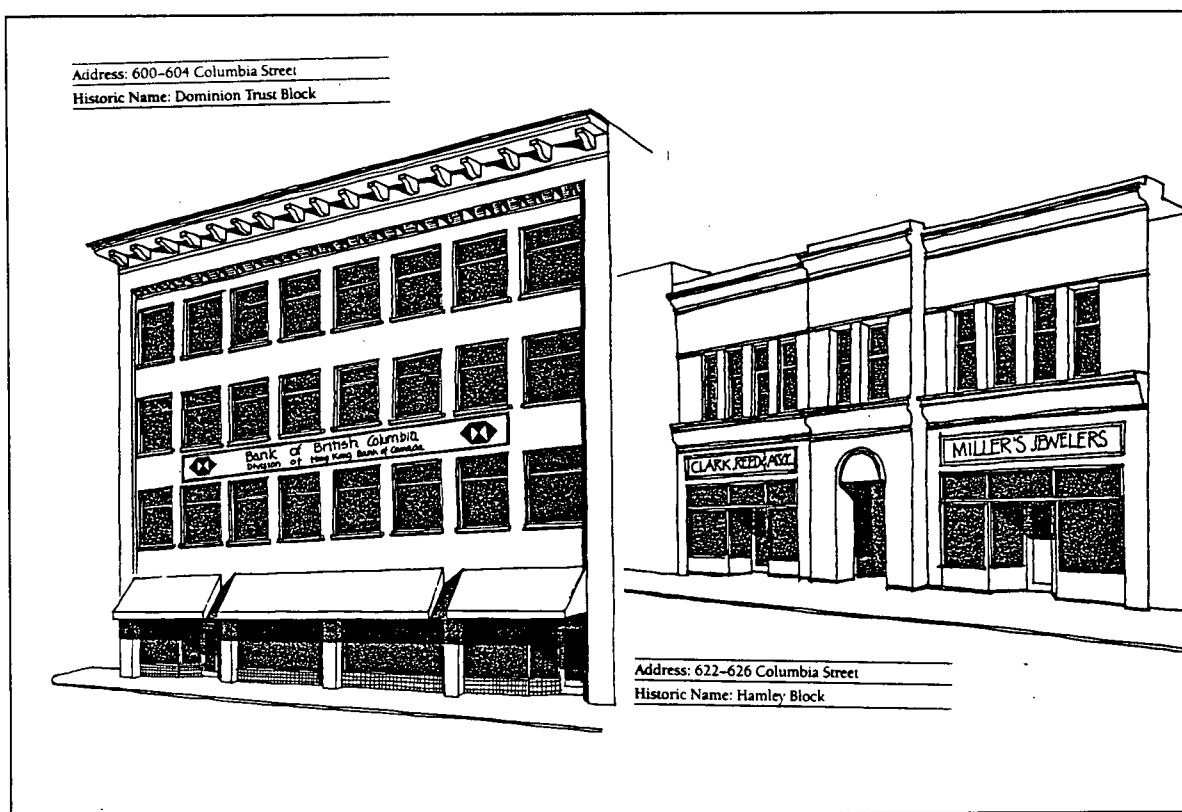


Figure 29: Contributory Buildings in Cluster XI³⁵

³⁵ H.A.R.P. Guidelines.

Cluster XII - 500 Block South

This small cluster is part of the important 6th Street and Columbia Street intersection. Also, one of the City's landmarks, the Bank of Commerce building, 544 Columbia Street, is in this cluster. A Performing Arts Centre is proposed next to the Bank of Commerce, in one of the *contributory* buildings. The proposed Raymond Burr Performing Arts Centre has the potential of increasing the number of visitors to the Downtown.



Figure 30: Building in Cluster XII³⁶

³⁶ Photograph of Cluster XII.

Cluster XIII - 500 and 400 Block South

This long cluster of buildings are all redevelopment opportunities. If this cluster is redeveloped with high quality projects which provides interest at street level and community based retail, the argument could be made that the revitalization of Columbia Street has been accomplished. Much of the criticism of “tired”, derelict buildings, with marginal businesses, is founded in this cluster. This cluster is also important since there are three *significant* buildings across the street. This cluster can be part of the gateway into historic Columbia Street. It is the only corner of the two entrances into the heritage conservation area without a *significant* heritage building.



Figure 31: Cluster XIII³⁷

³⁷ Photograph of redevelopment sites.

CONCLUSION

By following the steps of the conceptual framework, the heritage and economic characteristics of Columbia Street have been identified. Applying the conceptual framework revealed that Columbia Street is a sensitive heritage precinct, with approximately 30% of the stock being classified as *significant* and possibly in threat of demolition. Approximately 70% of the heritage buildings can be classified as *contributory*. The majority of this stock could also be threatened by demolition.

The benefit of classifying heritage buildings is that strategies can be developed specific to the type of stock. This analysis has shown that some form of heritage protection is needed. Perhaps the most proactive approach would be to implement controls through the use of incentives. Regulatory incentives should be considered which encourage the protection of heritage.

In addition to heritage controls, regulatory amendments will be needed to encourage the adaptive reuse of under-utilized space for residential conversions. The literature review of successfully revitalized historic downtowns reveals that the benefit of a residential base in a downtown is twofold: it provides a critical mass of permanent consumers for local businesses; and it provides "*eyes on the street.*" Heritage revitalization

opportunities for both *significant* and *contributory* buildings was undertaken.

The analysis revealed that 10 of the 20 heritage buildings could be converted into residential use. If these buildings were converted, approximately 160 loft units could be developed along Columbia Street. If this was to occur, up to 320 residents could be residing along the commercial corridor.

CHAPTER VI

THESIS RECOMMENDATIONS

A heritage revitalization strategy is proposed for historic Columbia Street. The goal, objectives and recommendations of the strategy are discussed below.

COLUMBIA STREET HERITAGE REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Goal for the Strategy

The goal for the Columbia Street Heritage Revitalization Strategy is as follows:

To diversify Downtown New Westminster's economic base by encouraging property owners to revitalize their historic buildings with developments and businesses that create vitality along the street and help foster community pride.

The Heritage Revitalization Strategy is intended to rejuvenate the Downtown by increasing the residential base of Columbia Street and introducing shops which attract customers and increase pedestrian traffic.

Two Objectives for the Strategy

In addition to the goal, the Columbia Street Heritage Revitalization Strategy has two objectives.

1. *That the City of New Westminster encourage Downtown property owners to restore their historic buildings by providing regulatory and financial incentives.*
2. *That the City of New Westminster encourage property owners to designate their heritage buildings by providing regulatory and financial incentives.*

Recommendations

Seven main recommendations are proposed for the Columbia Street Heritage Revitalization Strategy:

1. Include all *significant* and *contributory* heritage buildings in New Westminster's Community Heritage Register.
2. Designate the 400 to 800 blocks of Columbia Street as a Heritage Conservation Area.
3. Encourage heritage designation with the use of regulatory and financial incentives.
4. Encourage heritage restorations and adaptive reuses of buildings with the use of regulatory and financial incentives.

5. Ensure the protection of heritage buildings with the use of heritage controls.
6. Use design guidelines for redevelopment sites and buildings considered heritage revitalization opportunities.
7. Monitor the effectiveness of the heritage revitalization strategy over time.

Include all *Significant* and *Contributory* Heritage Buildings in New Westminster's Community Heritage Register

It is recommended that the City of New Westminster Planning Department create a Community Heritage Register. The first step will be to develop classification criteria. The Community Heritage Register should be used in place of the *New Westminster Heritage Resource Inventory*. As discussed in this thesis, the benefit of using classification criteria enables a local government to define classes and identify the relative merits of buildings. This approach allows for the formulation of heritage policies to be made specific to the class of the building. It is recommended that all heritage buildings classified as *significant* and *contributory* be included in the Community Heritage Register.

Designate the 400 to 800 Blocks of Columbia Street as a Heritage Conservation Area

Applying the conceptual framework revealed that Columbia Street is a sensitive historic precinct, in need of specific policies and regulations to protect several heritage buildings. The precinct has 49 buildings and 3 vacant sites. Ten of these properties have been classified as *significant* heritage buildings, 19 have been classified as *contributory* heritage buildings. The majority of the heritage buildings have been classified as “heritage revitalization opportunities”. 20 of the sites can be considered “redevelopment opportunities”.

The Municipal Act states that when creating a heritage conservation area, all important heritage buildings within the permit area be listed in a schedule of properties. It is recommended that the 10 *significant* heritage buildings and the 19 *contributory* heritage buildings be listed in the Heritage Conservation Area Schedule. The City of New Westminster is currently updating its Official Community Plan. It is recommended that the Columbia Street Heritage Conservation Area be included in the Official Community Plan update.

It is also recommended that the Columbia Street Heritage Conservation Area include policies which will encourage a broad range of commercial and residential uses that promote diversity and day-long activity. In particular, commercial uses should promote visual interest at street level.

The Columbia Street Heritage Conservation Area should include a residential policy which encourages market and non-market housing to be built in under-utilized, upper storey space. An analysis of the revitalization opportunities revealed that approximately 160 residential units could be developed by converting the upper storeys of some Columbia Street historic buildings.

The Heritage Conservation Area should also include design guidelines for both infill developments and restorations. The design guidelines should build on the work already undertaken by the Heritage Area Revitalization Program (H.A.R.P.). As stated in Chapter IV, the H.A.R.P. guidelines covered the 400 to 700 blocks of Columbia Street. It is recommended that guidelines also be developed for the 800 block of Columbia Street. The design guidelines should also be expanded to include street beautification and gateway features, such as ideas for heritage murals, special paving materials, such as cobblestones, interpretative signage and festive street banners.

The Columbia Street Heritage Conservation Area should also include a policy on restricting demolitions for *significant* and *contributory* heritage buildings by encouraging the use of regulatory and financial incentives.

Lastly, a policy which outlines the evaluation process for the effectiveness of Columbia Street Heritage Conservation Area should be included. The policy should state a time period for public review. Discussed below are the details of these policies.

Encourage Heritage Designation With the Use of Regulatory and Financial Incentives

Even with the powers under the Municipal Act, heritage designation remains the only tool that will protect a heritage property in the long term. It is recommended that heritage designations be encouraged. A proactive approach to voluntary designations is to allow only designated buildings to be eligible for certain regulatory and financial incentives.

Encourage Heritage Restorations and Adaptive Reuses of Buildings With the Use of Regulatory and Financial Incentives

It is recommended that the City of New Westminster implement a package of regulatory and financial incentives. The incentives for consideration are outlined below.

Bonus Residential

To encourage residential conversions of under-utilized upper storeys, amendments to the C-4 Central Business District Zone is recommended. The C-4 zone should be amended, and the following considerations should be noted:

- the maximum density in the Downtown will remain at 5.2 FSR;
- the maximum commercial density in the Downtown will remain at 5.2 FSR;
- the maximum overall residential density in the Downtown will remain at 4.0 FSR;
- the residential density will no longer be tied to site size;
- the units per acre residential density will be deleted; and
- the residential density will be calculated solely as FSR.

This residential incentive will apply to both designated and non-designated *significant* and *contributory* buildings. This incentive is necessary since a residential base along Columbia Street is needed to provide a permanent consumer base for local businesses.

A few of the *significant* and *contributory* heritage buildings have densities which exceed the existing FSR of 5.2. In these cases, utilize Heritage Revitalization Agreements to encourage the restorations of these buildings.

Parking Relaxation

Several of the *significant* and *contributory* buildings would be considered a change of use from commercial to residential if a conversion is undertaken. Another incentive to designate will be that designated heritage buildings only will be eligible for a parking relaxation. The relaxation will include a reduced payment-in-lieu amount, or a lower parking per residential unit standard.

Transfer of Density Rights

It is recommended that the Planning Department implement a program of transferring density rights between properties. Only designated heritage buildings will be entitled to this incentive. Designated *significant* and *contributory* buildings will act as “density donors”. Recipient properties will be those within the Columbia Street heritage conservation area. The benefit of restricting the area for recipient sites is that the Planning Department will retain control of the overall mass of the conservation area.

Property Tax Abatements

Another incentive only for designated heritage buildings will be property tax abatement. It is recommended that property owners of designated buildings be entitled to withhold property taxes for a maximum of ten years, if sympathetic restoration work is undertaken.

Ensure the Protection of Heritage Buildings With the Use of Heritage Controls

Another power under the Municipal Act allows local governments to withhold a demolition permit. An additional power is that local governments can involuntarily designate a property. The City of New Westminster should involuntarily designate heritage buildings classified as *significant* if these buildings are threatened by demolition. This will ensure their long term protection.

Use Design Guidelines for Redevelopment Sites and Buildings Considered Heritage Revitalization Opportunities

It is recommended that design guidelines be developed specifically for the redevelopment sites identified in Chapter V. To improve the overall streetscape and visual interest of the precinct, design considerations should incorporate “gateway features”. These design features, such as the use of street

banners, will be used when evaluating proposals for the properties identified as “gateway sites”.

Monitor the Effectiveness of the Heritage Revitalization Strategy Over Time

The fifth component of the conceptual framework suggested that a heritage revitalization strategy evaluate several objectives, such as:

- Will the strategy result in higher quality heritage restorations?;
- Will the strategy generate market opportunities?;
- Will the strategy add vitality to the street?; and
- Will the strategy result in more sympathetic infill developments.

It is recommended that the Planning Department monitor the effectiveness of the heritage revitalization strategy by conducting a cost benefit analysis which incorporates these questions. It is also recommended that the evaluation be undertaken on an annual basis.

CONSIDERATIONS OF THESIS RESEARCH TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This thesis has examined the role of heritage revitalization in the downtown revitalization process. As stated throughout this thesis, heritage revitalization is not a panacea for comprehensive downtown revitalization. Downtown revitalization is a multi-faceted approach of marketing, economic diversification, organization and heritage conservation. Heritage conservation is a key component of this approach. As asked previously in this thesis, since there is a great deal of empirical data regarding the benefits of heritage revitalization, why would this research question be considered topical? One of the thesis questions asked:

Does the Provincial Heritage Conservation Statute Amendment Act, 1994 provide local governments in British Columbia with the necessary tools to respond to the unique circumstances of heritage revitalization?

This thesis suggests that the heritage legislation will play a catalyst role in downtown revitalization through British Columbia. The powers under the heritage legislation will enable all municipalities in British Columbia to manage their heritage resources more effectively by developing regulations suited to their unique circumstances. By enabling municipalities to play a more proactive role, an objective of the heritage legislation will be that

municipalities will utilize these powers to revitalize depressed, historic downtowns.

Planners working in the field of downtown revitalization are fortunate since there is a good deal of research data available, with useful examples of policies, incentives and regulations. British Columbia municipalities can build on the successes of other areas. This thesis recommends that in order for revitalization strategies to have measurable, effective results, planners need to understand the economic and financial relationships between heritage conservation, regulations and incentives. By understanding these relationships, planners can ensure that policies and regulations are working in congruence with desired goals of heritage revitalization.

Downtown heritage revitalization is a complex process, dependent on the cooperation between property owners, merchants, heritage advocates and the municipality. Neighbourhood planners are best trained to work with the business community and a business improvement association, and through a cooperative, planning process, help formulate heritage revitalization policies and devise zoning bylaws that reflect the downtown's priorities of economic renewal.

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APPENDIX A

SECTION 7C

(C-4) CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

- 1) The provisions of this section shall apply to lands and premises situated within the (C-4) Central Business Districts as defined, designated, delineated and described in this Bylaw.

- 2) Permitted Uses

It shall be unlawful to alter, repair, erect, construct, locate, maintain or reconstruct, or cause to be altered, repaired, erected, constructed, located, maintained or reconstructed any building or to occupy or use any building or land within the boundaries of the district referred to, defined, designated or described in this Bylaw as a (C-4) Central Business District, save and except for any of the following uses or combination of uses, namely:

- a) One-family dwellings
- b) Two-family dwellings
- c) Row house, terrace or townhouse
- d) Apartment building and multiple dwelling
- e) Lodging and boarding houses
- f) Banks
- g) Office buildings containing business and professional offices
- h) Cafes and restaurants (excluding drive-in restaurants)
- i) Personal service establishments including barber shops, beauty parlours, dry cleaning shops (automatic self-service only), dry cleaning establishments, electrical appliance repair shops, optical or watch repair shops, florist shops, launderettes (automatic self-service only), shoe repair shops, tailor or dressmaker shops
- j) Retail stores
- k) Home occupations
- l) Wholesaling
- m) Parking, including off-street parking
- n) Clubs and lodges
- o) Commercial schools

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

- p) Health service centres
 - q) Hotels and motor hotels
 - r) Public assembly and entertainment uses including auditoriums, bowling alleys, catering establishments, dance halls, gymnasiums, meeting halls, night clubs, swimming pools, theatres (excluding drive-in theatres), libraries, art galleries, museums and parks
 - s) Studios
 - t) Taxi offices
 - u) Printing, publishing and bookbinding, blue printing and photostating, lithographing, engraving, stereotyping and other reproduction processes
 - v) Public transportation depots
 - w) Retail sales of automobiles, parts and accessories and servicing of automobiles provided such uses are fully enclosed in a building and no uses related to these functions are performed on open sites
 - x) Government institutions including educational and judicial facilities
 - y) Public utilities
 - z) Cottage breweries
 - aa) Auction houses, including the storage and sale of goods permitted within this district, provided that such uses are fully enclosed within a building and no uses relating to these functions are performed on open sites
 - bb) Marinas
 - cc) Funeral Parlours
 - dd) Congregate housing
 - ee) Day Care in a Non-Residential Building
 - ff) Clothing and Garment Manufacturing Shops
 - gg) Jewellery Manufacturing Shops
- 3) Front Yard
No front yard shall be required.
- 4) Rear Yard
No rear yard shall be required.
- 5) Side Yard
No side yard shall be required.

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

6) Density: Non-Residential Use

- a) Within the area outlined on Supplementary Plan No. 1, attached to this Section and forming part of this Bylaw, floor space ratio on any site shall not exceed a factor of 5.2 provided further that the floor space ratio of all those portions of a building or buildings used for residential purposes shall not exceed that ratio specified in Subsection (7) of this Section.
- b) Within the area outlined on Supplementary Plan No. 2 attached to this Section and forming part of this Bylaw, the total floor space ratio on any site used for non-residential purposes shall not exceed a factor of 1.0, provided that the density for sites used for residential purposes shall not exceed that ratio specified in Subsection (7).

7) Density

- a) For the purposes of this Section, the density of sites used for residential purposes may, at the option of the applicant for a building permit, be measured either by floor space ratio or housing units per acre.
- b) The maximum density permitted for the first 9000 square feet of site area shall be either:

- i) floor space ratio: 1.2; or
- ii) housing units per acre: 60;

and for each 100 square feet of site area in excess of 9000 square feet shall be increased by a factor equal to either:

- i) floor space ratio: .015; or
- ii) housing units per acre: .75

to the following maximums:

- i) floor space ratio 3.0; or
- ii) housing units per acre 150.

- c) Where density is calculated on the basis of ii) above, the maximum density shall not exceed a floor space ratio of 4.0.

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

7A) Width of Building

Where the height of a residential building exceeds 40 feet, the maximum horizontal measurement of the building above such prescribed height, measured parallel to a site boundary, shall not exceed 15 percent of the total length of the perimeter of the site. Where more than one residential building occupies a site or there is more than one shaft to a building, any of which exceed 40 feet in height, the total maximum horizontal measurement of the buildings or shafts shall not exceed the maximum measurement allowed if one building with one shaft occupied the site.

8) Site Coverage

a) Residential Uses

- i) The site coverage of a building or portion of a building used for residential purposes shall not exceed sixty percent (60%) of the site area for the first forty feet of height. Thereafter, for every two feet by which the height of a building exceeds forty feet, the maximum site coverage, expressed for the purposes of this subsection as the ratio of the horizontal cross sectional area of the building to the site area, at each two foot level shall be decreased by one percent (1%) provided that the maximum permitted site coverage need not be less than forty percent (40%) of the site area.
- ii) Where a site contains more than one residential building, the site coverage as determined in clause i) above shall be measured as the aggregate coverage at each level.
- iii) The site coverage may exceed the maximum in clause i) above provided that the height of that portion of the building or structure in excess of such maximum does not exceed an elevation of 16.0 feet Geodetic Survey of Canada and the roof of that portion is suitably landscaped as usable open space.

b) Other Uses

There are no site coverage limitations for other uses.

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

9) Height

The height of any building shall not exceed the designated height for the area in which it is situated, as defined and delineated in Supplementary Plan No. 3, attached to this Section and forming part of this Bylaw, except for those buildings fronting on Columbia Street between Fourth Street and Eighth Street, in which case no building shall exceed three storeys in height for the first 50 feet back from the property line along Columbia Street.

10) Usable Open Space

For apartments, row houses, terraces and townhouses, usable open space shall be provided of not less than ten (10%) percent of the gross residential floor area and in any event, not less than twenty-five (25%) percent of the site area.

11) Light, Air and Privacy

Apartments, row houses, terraces and townhouses shall have light, air and privacy for all dwelling units, bachelor units and housekeeping units to at least the average level currently in the City.

12) Outside Uses

Permitted uses set out in this Section may be carried on outside a building to the extent that this is consistent with the achievement of the objectives of the Official Community Plan.

13) Rooftops

All rooftops shall be constructed so as to present an attractive appearance in the manner contemplated by the Official Community Plan.

14) Shelters

All retail and personal service uses shall maintain along the full length of the street frontage of their buildings rain shelters of not less than six feet in width in the form of a canopy or an indented arcade and wherever these uses are on adjoining properties, the rain shelter shall be uninterrupted from property to property.

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

amount equal to the number of off-street parking spaces specified by Appendix III and subject to the following conditions:

- (i) said parking credit shall be used only once to offset the requirements of this Bylaw;
- (ii) all parking credits shall be extinguished upon the demolition of the existing Front Street parking ramp;
- (iii) the parking credits for 425-435 Columbia Street and 615-625 Columbia Street shall be deemed to have been used;
- (iv) the parking credits may not be transferred from property to property.

16) Off-Street Loading

Off-street loading shall be provided and maintained as required by and in accordance with the provisions of Section 8C of this Bylaw, except that the requirements of Section 8C shall not apply to sites fronting:

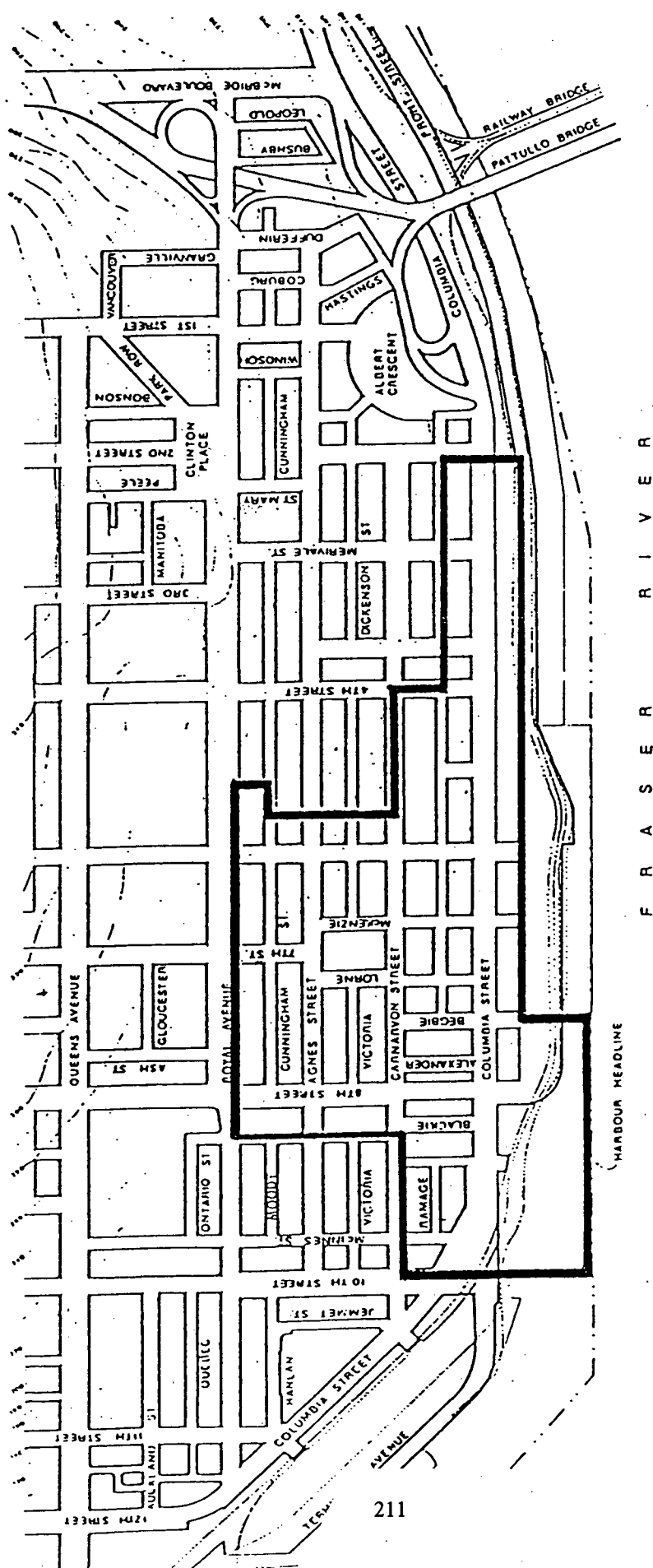
- a) Columbia Street between Fourth and Eighth Streets;
- b) The north side of Agnes Street from Seventh Street easterly for 198 feet;
- c) the south side of Carnarvon Street between Begbie Street and Lorne Street.

SECTION 7C (cont'd)

15) Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking for automobiles shall be provided and maintained as a customary incidental accessory use to every building and use of a site as required by and in accordance with the provisions of Section 8B of this Bylaw except that:

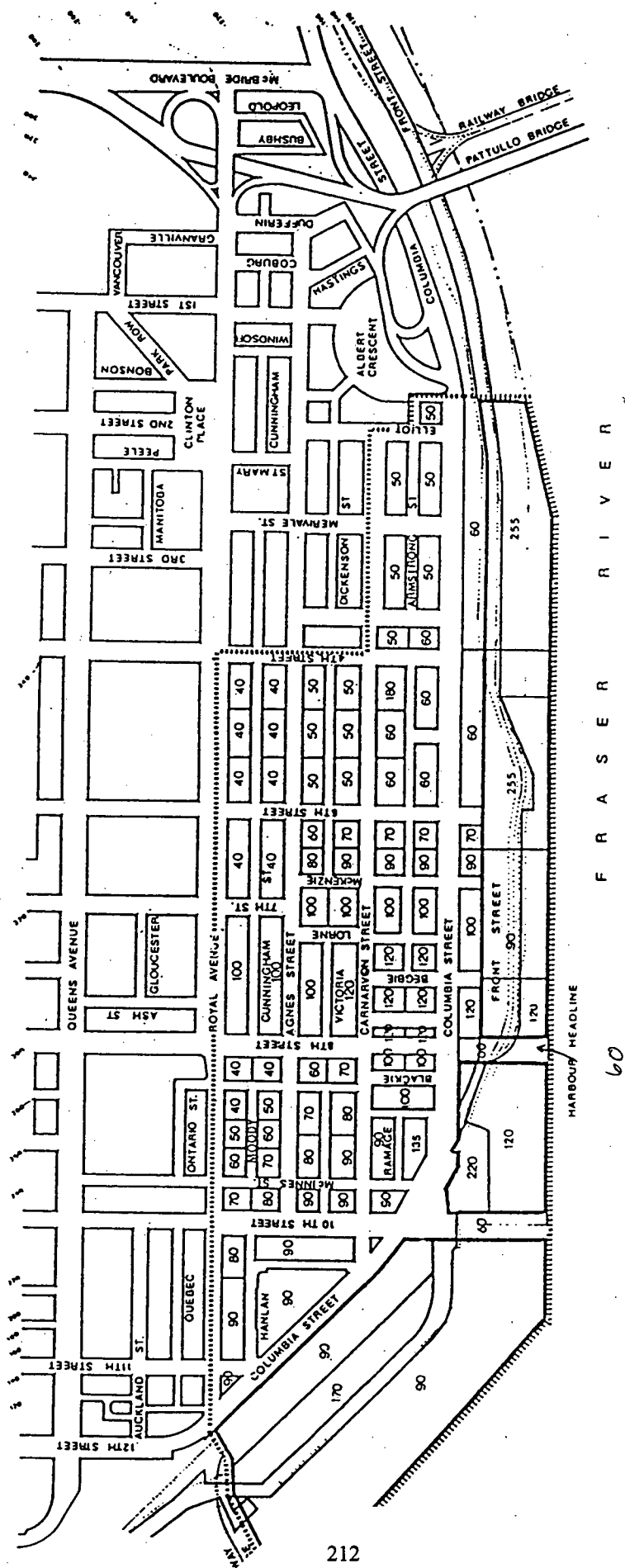
- a) the requirements of Subsection 3) of Section 8B shall not apply, but rather:
 - i) for residential purposes, 1.5 parking spaces shall be provided for each dwelling unit, bachelor unit or housekeeping unit; and
 - ii) for all other uses, 1.4 parking spaces shall be provided for each 1000 sq. ft. of gross floor area of a building.
 - iii) for congregate housing in areas described and delineated in Supplementary Plan No. 4 attached to this Section and forming part of this Bylaw the following off-street parking spaces shall be provided:
 - (i) one parking space for each five bachelor units or portion thereof;
 - (ii) two parking spaces for each five one-bedroom units or portion thereof.
- b) the requirements of clause f) and g) of Subsection 5) and all of Subsection 7) of Section 8B shall not apply, but rather:
 - i) parking areas shall be effectively screened from view from the street, except at points of entry and exit, by screening or landscaped visual barriers to a height of not less than six feet;
 - ii) whenever any storey or portion of a parking structure extends above the height datum or the finished grade, such storey or portion of a parking structure shall be set back not less than five feet from any building line or property line bounded by a street or lane.
- c) those properties that have contributed to the capital cost of the Front Street Parking Ramp are exempted from the off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Bylaw by an



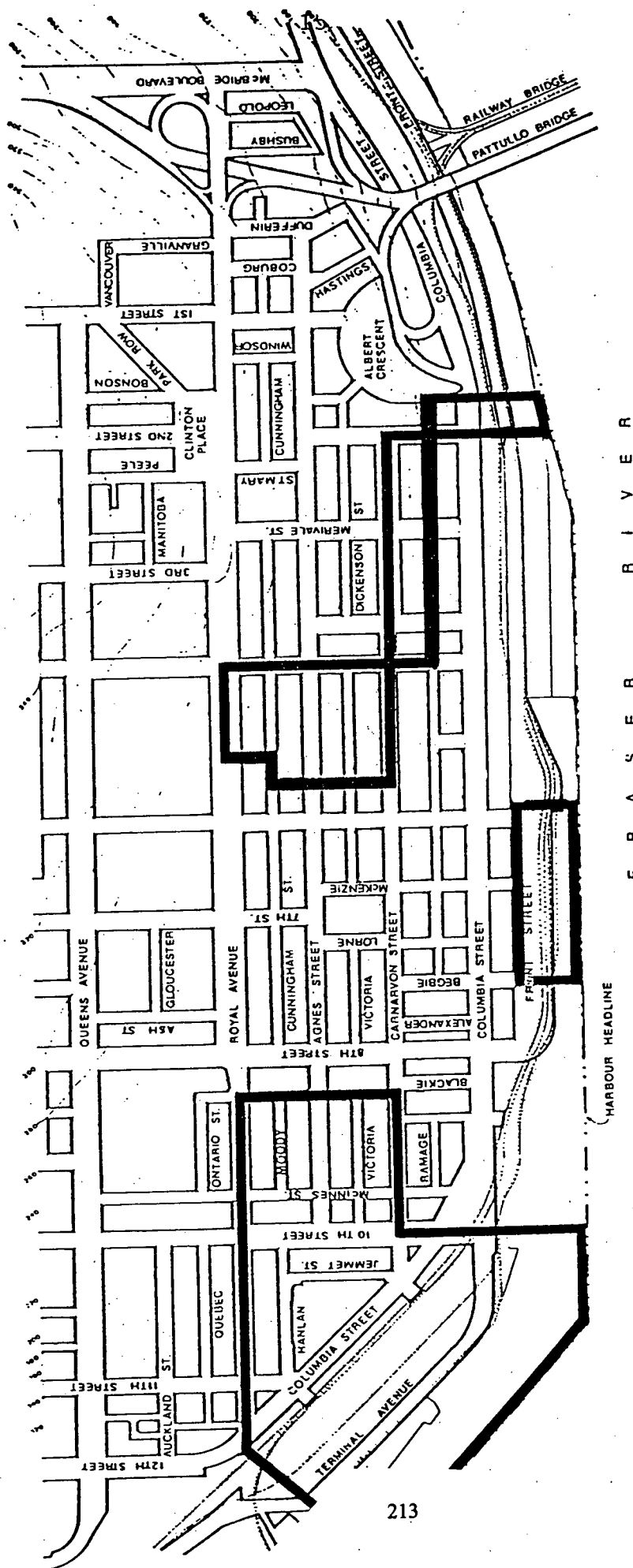
ZONING BY-LAW
SUPPLEMENTARY PLAN NO. 1
AREA WITHIN WHICH A MAXIMUM FLOOR SPACE
RATIO OF 5:2 IS PERMITTED.

F R A S E R R I V E R

HARBOUR HEADLINE

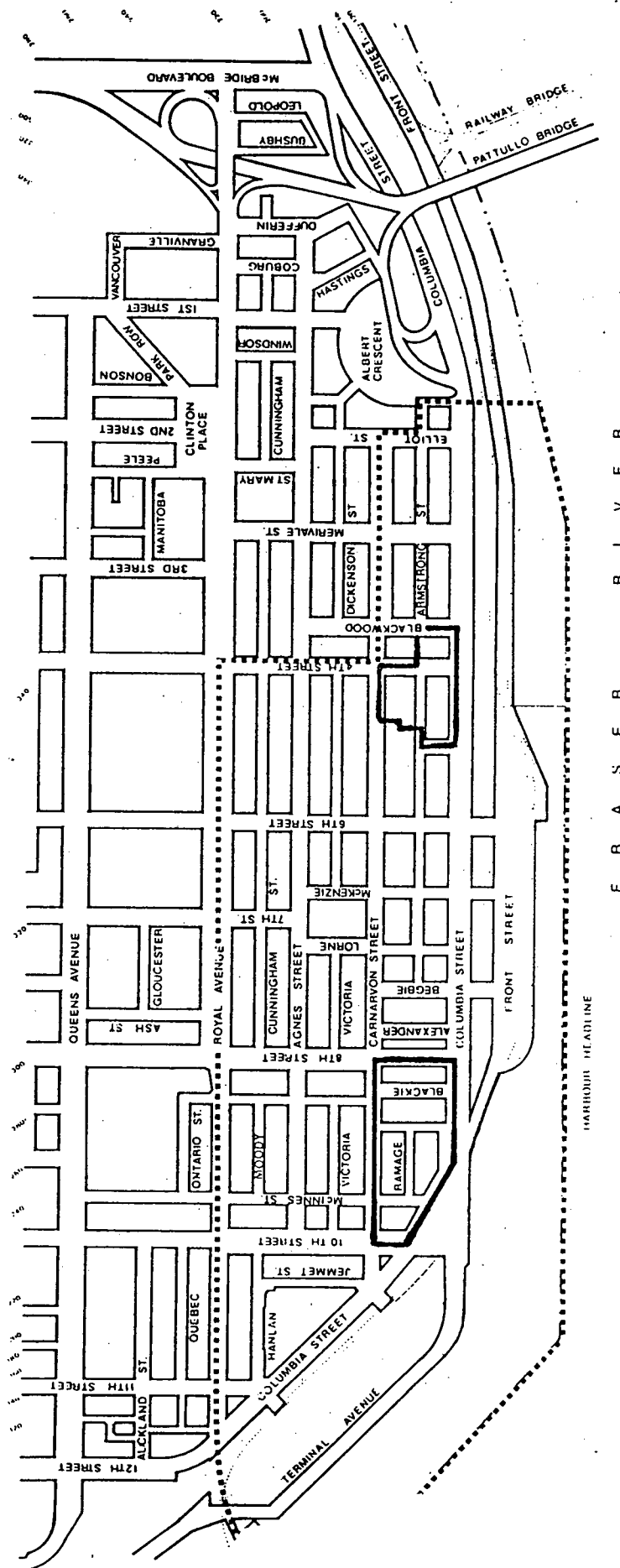


**ZONING BYLAW
SUPPLEMENTARY PLAN NO. 3
MAXIMUM PERMITTED BUILDING
HEIGHT ABOVE AVERAGE GRADE
OF SITE MEASURED IN FEET**



**ZONING BYLAW
SUPPLEMENTARY PLAN NO.2**

**AREAS WITHIN WHICH FLOOR SPACE RATIO
FOR NON RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS SHALL
NOT EXCEED 1.0**



ZONING BY-LAW
SUPPLEMENTARY PLAN No. 4
AREAS WITHIN WHICH
PARKING STANDARDS OF
0.4 SPACES PER CONGREGATE
HOUSING UNIT IS PERMITTED.

APPENDIX B

Table A
C-4 Zone Density Calculation by Units Per Acre

Lot Size	Density	Number of Units
4,356	60 u.p.a.	6
8,712	60 u.p.a.	12
10,000	67.5 u.p.a.	15
12,000	82.5 u.p.a.	22
14,000	97.5 u.p.a.	31
16,000	112.5 u.p.a.	41
18,000	127.5 u.p.a.	52
20,000	142.5 u.p.a.	65
22,000	150 u.p.a.	75

Table B
C-4 Zone Density Calculation by FSR

Lot Size	FSR
4,356	1.20
8,712	1.20
10,000	1.35
12,000	1.65
14,000	1.95
16,000	2.25
18,000	2.55
20,000	2.85
22,000	3.00

APPENDIX C

IDENTIFICATION — Buildings

Address _____ Local Area _____
Roll # _____ Zoning _____

Source/Reference

Historic Name _____
Common Name _____
Original Owner _____
Construction Date _____
Designer _____
Builder _____
Designated _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____ Conservation Area _____

DESCRIPTION

Style/Type _____
Design _____
Construction _____
History _____
Context _____
Alterations _____
Condition _____
References _____

APPENDIX D

Trapp Block - 700 Columbia Street

Construction Budget¹

The assumptions are as follows:

1. Only the upper floors of the building would be renovated, except for a new entry lobby at the Columbia St. level. The existing commercial uses of the lower two floors would remain. The residential use would constitute a "change in use" under City regulations and as such would trigger B.C. Building Code upgrading and Special Development Permit requirements (e.g. design review, parking).
2. The final extent of Building Code upgrading would be determined through a process of thorough site investigation, report preparation, City review and negotiation. No upgrading provisions, except seismic requirements and a new residential lobby, have been made for the portions of the existing building that are to remain as current uses.
3. The conversion project is defined as the following:
 - the building comprises 7 storeys with approximately 51,800 total sq. ft., excluding the three storey addition along the Front St. Side of the property
 - conversion portion would include 5 storeys of residential units at 7400 gross sq. ft. per floor for a total of 37,000 gross residential sq. ft.
 - typical floor would have 9 units for a project total of 45 units
 - units would average 730 sq. ft., all one bedrooms suites
 - efficiency of residential floors would be approximately 90% resulting in 6660 sq. ft. of net residential area per floor for a total of 33,300 net residential sq. ft.
 - a new residential lobby would be provided off Columbia St. and a new elevator/service core would be constructed

¹ Source: *Moving Up, Phase I: Inventory & Needs Assessment Downtown Upper Storey Housing Study, 1996, pages 61 - 64*

4. The separate one storey commercial building immediately to the west is included in the subject property to permit addition of new residential windows on the west wall of the upper storey of the Trapp Block (otherwise not permitted by the Code).
5. The Trapp Block would be defined as a "high rise building" under the B.C. Building Code (NFPA 13, Measure A).
6. No warranties are provided nor implied with the following budgets.

Budget Elements

Architectural Elements:

1. interior partitions, millwork, casework, rated drywall ceilings, finishes	
\$16.35/s.f. x 37,000 s.f. =	\$604,530
2. appliances	
\$2000/unit x 45 =	\$90,000
3. exterior masonry restoration (existing roof to remain)	
\$0.95/s.f. x 8000 s.f. =	\$7,600
4. existing window restoration	
\$2000/floor x 5 =	\$10,000
5. new windows	
30 x \$450 =	\$13,500
6. new entry lobby	
\$50/s.f. x 1000 s.f. =	\$50,000
7. new elevator	
– geared hydraulic	\$75,000
8. selective demolition	
\$0.50/s.f. x 37,000 s.f. =	\$18,500
SUBTOTAL	\$869,130

Structural Elements:

1. seismic upgrading including:	
– new shear walls (concrete core)	
– new concrete floor topping tied to existing masonry walls	
– exterior wall stabilization (steel frame)	
– reinforce foundation connections	
\$11.50/s.f. x 51,800 s.f. =	
SUBTOTAL	\$595,700

Mechanical Elements:

1.	sprinkler system (including some reuse of existing \$1.15/s.f. x 37,000 s.f. =	\$42,500
2.	plumbing to units including: – central gas-fired domestic hot water – fixtures per unit – existing rainwater leader to remain \$900/fixture x 180 fixtures =	\$162,000
3.	venting of units – per unit vented directly to exterior \$150/vent x 90 vents =	\$13,500
4.	corridor venting and smoke exhaust – gas-fired rooftop unit, shafts and grilles	\$12,000
5.	heating – gas-fired boiler for in-slab hot water heating \$3.00/s.f. x 37,000 =	\$111,000
<hr/> SUBTOTAL		<hr/> \$341,000

Electrical Elements

1.	main service upgrade – transformer and switchgear	\$50,000
2.	emergency power – generator and feeders to all floors	\$60,000
3.	fire alarm system – zone wiring, smoke alarms, pull stations, annunciator	\$25,000
4.	equipment power – mechanical fans, elevator, misc.	\$35,000
5.	suite/corridor service – power, lighting (fixtures), telephone, cable \$3.50/s.f. x 37,000 s.f. =	\$129,500
<hr/> SUBTOTAL		<hr/> \$299,500

Soft Costs

1.	consultant/legal fees, construction contingency, permits and licenses, etc. 25%	\$526,333
<hr/> TOTAL CONSTRUCTION BUDGET		<hr/> \$2,631,663

Revenue Potential

The projected revenue of a residential conversion for the Trapp Block are also provided. The assumptions are as follows:

1. A modest standard of finishes, i.e. an "affordable" project in today's market would yield approximately \$140 per square foot. At 33,000 net square feet of the Trapp Block, this would yield potential revenues of \$4,620,000.
2. For comparison, current concrete high rise projects in New Westminster are yielding \$170 per square foot, and wood frame (low rise) projects are yielding \$160 per square foot.
3. Also for comparison purposes, current loft conversion projects in Vancouver, in Yaletown, are yielding a range of revenues, from \$227 to \$302 per square foot, with an average of \$250 per square foot. Most of these units are considered "high end" product including numerous features, amenities and views.