VANCOUVER'S RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINE PROCESS:
A CASE STUDY
by
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B.A. University of Manitoba, 1975

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We accept this thesis as conforming
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VANCOUVER'S RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES PROCESS:
A CASE STUDY

This study examines the application of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval process. The guidelines are a phenomenon of the '70's, having emerged because of a failure of many projects to meet various user needs and expectations concerning residential lifestyle, particularly in higher density projects. The Planning Department of the City of Vancouver has embraced the use of design guidelines as a means to provide architects and developers with direction and encouragement for producing designs which will meet user needs and make positive contributions to surrounding neighbourhoods.

It was hypothesized that although the majority of design guidelines are intended to be generative, their use for evaluative purposes in terms of the planning departments review of projects has created an impression amongst members of the above mentioned professions that the guidelines are being applied in a regulatory manner. It was further hypothesized that the current discretionary zoning system may in practice be as inflexible as the highly regulatory traditional zoning system it was intended to replace.

The hypotheses were tested through a case study of the use of design guidelines in Vancouver's Development Approval process.
A verbal and graphic comparative analysis between traditional and discretionary zoning systems was made. In addition these two development control procedures were examined in relation to the relevant literature concerning administrative discretionary authority. The hypotheses were further tested through personal interviews with several architects in private practice and members of the City of Vancouver's Planning Department.

The study revealed that by and large, the majority of architects did not feel that the design guidelines were used in a regulatory manner. In this sense the hypothesis was disproved. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that several architects pointed to isolated cases whereby the guidelines were applied in a regulatory fashion. The problem lay not so much with the guidelines themselves, but rather with their application by what was perceived as incompetent, inflexible administrators. In this regard the first hypothesis was given minor support.

The second hypothesis was disproved through all of the research methods mentioned above. Again, however, isolated examples of inflexible attitudes on the part of poorly trained administrators were cited by some architects as being detrimental to the flexibility of the discretionary zoning system. The study showed that the continued use of both design guidelines and the discretionary zoning system was supported by the representative sampling of architects and planners.

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CHAPTER I

The Problem

The emergence in the 70's of design guidelines for housing was a response to a situation in which various user needs, values, and expectations concerning residential lifestyle particularly in medium and higher density accommodation were not being properly satisfied. Design guidelines identify what those important user concerns are and then suggest possible design solutions and built form arrangements which will contribute to the creation of a comfortable housing environment. In most cases the guidelines consist of interpretive statements based on research studies of the needs of similar groups to the one expected to inhabit the architect's and developer's particular project. Oscar Newman states that;

Design guidelines are statements about the organization and positioning of activity areas and their linkage with one another. Guidelines are intended to provide an indication of the generic rather than the specific physical form appropriate to the needs of different human activities. Primarily, design guidelines form programmatic objectives for architects and planners to follow in developing their designs for building and developments. They are also intended as a means for clearly ranking alternatives. They may be used as a comparative model, providing evaluative criteria for assessing the quality of different proposals in meeting the programmatic needs of different client groups.

"A guideline must take a positive form, of what to do in a situation to avoid a problem. This advice must be stated in a way that will suggest a solution to the problem faced on site. A guideline is a suggestion - a push in the right direction. The guideline must therefore be generative - it must help generate a unique solution."
Design guidelines have also emerged to provide greater overall coordination in developing projects which relate well to their immediate neighbourhoods. Very often planners have concentrated their interest on issues of land use, density, transportation, social policy and housing while architects have not looked beyond the boundaries of a project site. As a result, the design of neighbourhoods has been rather haphazard and in many cases visually and functionally displeasing. The design guidelines are in essence a product of a renewed interest in urban design which began in the sixties.

While much thought, discussion and documented research has formed the foundation for the content of design guidelines for housing, the methods by which those same guidelines are used have not received an equal amount of attention. To date there have been few attempts to recognize the various forms of guidelines and the process by which they are applied so as to clarify their proper intent and use. This state of affairs stems in part from the fact that the whole subject of design guidelines is an emerging field and one which has had little analysis from a process point of view. Because the process of using guidelines remains unclear, and is complicated by each additional set of guidelines that is introduced to the housing scene, there is substantial confusion and misunderstanding amongst architects, developers and planners. This problem is especially acute in the Lower Mainland area of British Columbia which has recently experienced a proliferation of design guidelines for housing that have been produced primarily by municipal planning departments but also by provincial and federal agencies.
It is true that the inherent subjective and interpretive nature of many of the guidelines to a large extent dictates a process that is similarly subjective and interpretive. However, the confusion that surrounds the process has undoubtedly undermined the credibility of the guidelines themselves. As a result a prevailing attitude amongst many architects and developers in the Lower Mainland is that most of the guidelines are perceived to be highly regulatory in nature and serve to inhibit design rather than stimulate innovative alternatives.

**Hypothesis**

Providing opportunities to develop design and planning solutions for housing projects that will meet a variety of user needs and make a positive contribution to their surrounding neighbourhood is the rationale behind municipal, provincial and federal government sponsorship and publication of design guidelines. However, the guidelines also provide various evaluative criteria which allow planning departments to assess the overall quality of various housing proposals. It is hypothesized that although the majority of design guidelines are intended to be generative, their use for evaluative purposes in terms of the planning departments review of projects has created an impression amongst several participants involved in the housing design process, notably architects and developers, that the guidelines are being applied in a regulatory manner.

The discretionary zoning system and its accompanying guidelines were instituted in part to correct the undesirable housing conditions created by the excessively regulatory traditional zoning system. In addition it was felt by both public and private parties that with the greater flexibility supposedly
built into the discretionary approach, more creative and higher quality solutions to various housing problems could be achieved. It is further hypothesized that this rationale may in fact be in error. This is to say that discretionary zoning may not be realizing its intention and is not perceived, especially by developers and architects, to be any more flexible than traditional zoning.

These hypotheses will be tested through a case study of the use of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process. A comparison is made between two forms of development control - the traditional zoning system which preceded the introduction of design guidelines and the discretionary zoning system which facilitates application of design guidelines in the development approval process. In addition these development control procedures are also discussed in relation to the relevant literature concerning administrative discretionary authority.

The hypotheses are further tested through personal interviews with several architects in private practice in Vancouver and members of the City of Vancouver's Planning Department. The architects chosen for the interviews fell into the following three categories:

1. Architects who had had developments rejected by the Vancouver Planning Department in the last 12 months for failure to meet the intent and spirit of design guidelines.

2. Architects who have had substantial involvement in the research and development of design guidelines.

3. Architects who are currently very active in the design of housing in the West End area of Vancouver.
All of the architects interviewed have had extensive involvement in housing design in the City of Vancouver and several were in attendance at a workshop on design guidelines held at The City of Vancouver Planning Department in the Summer of 1977. The planners who were interviewed are employed by the Vancouver Planning Department and are actively involved in the review of housing designs under the Development Permit Approval Process.

Each respondent was asked a series of questions which required them to evaluate design guidelines in principle, the affects of guidelines on design freedom and the built environment and to respond to a number of inquiries on the use of guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process. These questions are outlined along with the responses in Chapter VI.

Organization

This introductory chapter has explained the purpose of design guidelines and the rationale for their development. The hypothesis and research methodology for this study were also briefly outlined.

Chapter II discusses the development of design guidelines in terms of their historical precedents. These include man-environment studies, health and safety standards and aesthetic theories and regulations.

Chapter III examines the intended use of design guidelines in the housing design process. The guidelines are separated into three categories (generative, regulatory and evaluative) based on their format and the process by which they are used. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the types of user needs and aesthetic/urban design considerations.
common to all the guidelines as well as the methods by which the guidelines try to satisfy these concerns.

Chapter IV describes in detail the design guidelines for housing that have been produced by the private development sector. The content of these particular design guidelines is examined as is the process by which they are utilized. Comparisons between the private market and government guidelines are made wherever they serve to point out significant similarities and differences.

Chapter V presents an examination of design guidelines through a case study of the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process. In addition to a discussion of this process, this chapter provides a comparative analysis of two development control systems - traditional vs. discretionary zoning. Finally the chapter concludes with a discussion of the two systems in light of the literature on administrative discretion.

Chapter VI presents the findings obtained through personal interviews with several architects and planners who have had extensive involvement in the housing development process. The architects and planners were separated into four categories previously described and asked a series of questions in three general areas (also described earlier). All of the responses are presented as well as some observations and conclusions.

Chapter VII presents an evaluation of the hypotheses in terms of all the relevant information collected. In addition the concept of design guidelines in principle is evaluated in terms of the findings of this study and some recommendations are made for their future use. Finally, the importance of the study to
the practice of community and regional planning is discussed and some recommendations for further research are outlined.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to an analysis of design guidelines that apply to housing whether it is the single-family, medium density (townhouses, low-rise apartments) or high density, multiple story form. Design guidelines directed towards institutional, commercial or historical buildings and areas will not be discussed.

It is the process by which design guidelines are utilized that is the main concern of this study. It is not the intention of the author to present an in depth evaluation of any particular principle or principles contained in any of the design guidelines. The process is examined primarily in terms of the roles played by architects, and city planners. The developers role is limited to a discussion of the development of their own design guidelines as well as their attitudes to various government guidelines. It was recognized early on in this study that it is the architect representing the developer who has the most familiarity with the City of Vancouver's design guideline process as it relates to the schematic design development of a given project. The input of users and various user involvement techniques is significant and is certainly worthy of further study. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow for a detailed analysis of this topic.

The nature of the study is of course defined by the methods used to gather data and information. These include a series of personal interviews, a verbal and graphic comparison of the traditional and discretionary zoning systems and an examination of
the legal literature on administrative discretion. In order to maintain confidentiality, all opinions, answers, etc., regarding the use of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process resulting from the method of inquiry were disassociated from all personal identities.

Summary

Design Guidelines are a phenomenon of the 70's having emerged because of a failure of many housing projects to meet various user needs, values and expectations concerning residential lifestyle. Furthermore the guidelines have also been developed to provide architects, developers and planners with some direction for designs which will make a positive contribution to the surrounding neighbourhood.

The process by which design guidelines are applied is characterized by confusion and a lack of direction. It is hypothesized that although the majority of design guidelines are intended to be generative, their use for evaluative purposes in terms of the planning departments review of projects has created an impression amongst certain parties involved in the housing design process, notably architects and developers, that the guidelines are being applied in a regulatory manner. It has been further hypothesized that the current discretionary zoning system may in practice be as inflexible as the highly regulatory traditional zoning system it was intended to replace. These hypotheses will be tested through a case study of the use of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process.
CHAPTER I

Footnotes


CHAPTER II

Introduction

In order to more fully understand the design guideline concept it is useful to review the historical precedents which led to their development. Three historical themes can be identified as preludes to the current design guidelines. They are a) research and experiments into man-environment relationships, b) the development of health and safety standards for housing and c) the aesthetic theories, experiments and regulations for housing. It can be shown, particularly in the case of the latter two themes, that while these initial attempts to improve and guide the development of housing were certainly desirable and welcomed, they were both insufficient and often superficial, creating a void which the current design guidelines had to fill.

Man-Environment Studies

Man-Environment studies which are often referred to as the human ecology movement provide many of the research methodologies that are at the foundation of design guidelines. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines ecology as follows:

1. A branch of science concerned with the inter-relationship of organisms and their environment.

2. The totality or patterns of relations between organisms and their environment.

The definition of human ecology is "A branch of sociology that studies the relationship between a human community and its environments."¹

Man-environment studies have emerged from France, the United States and Britain. In the early part of the twentieth century researchers such as Vidal de la Blache (France), Robert Park (United States) and Sir Patrick Geddes (Britain) carried out
empirical studies of the relationship between man and his rural and urban environments. One particular methodology used in these studies was an inductive approach utilizing fieldwork in which the observer discovers the meaning of a place by being immersed in it.

Another contributor to the human ecology movement was Ebenezer Howard, an inventive English court stenographer. Howard's contribution was the Garden City, a town plan concept based on a physical and lifestyle urban-rural synthesis. Howard felt that the integration of urban and rural patterns would vitalize urban living by providing nearby open green space and at the same time would facilitate an intellectual and social improvement of rural life because of the proximity to the city center.²

The studies of the founders of the human ecology movement identified a number of principles concerning man-environment relationships from which various design guideline recommendations have been derived. Furthermore the research methodologies employed by the human ecologists are the forerunners of studies carried out in the sixties which dealt with topics such as high density effects on human behaviour, suburban and new town lifestyle, the social aspects of architecture, privacy and personal space and user satisfaction in multiple housing design. Instrumental in these studies were people such as Herbert Gans, Jane Jacobs, William Michelson, Christopher Alexander, Claire Cooper and Carl Norcross. It is this body of research which provides the validity for several design guideline concepts.

Health and Safety Standards

The development of health and safety standards for housing began at the turn of the century when the urban social reform
movement in the United States and Canada tried to achieve better housing conditions for the working class in the industrial cities of North America. The movement was initiated and supported not as might be expected by radical or labour elements but rather by the business and professional elite of the period. Capitalist-philanthropists such as Pullman, Carnegie, Mellon and Kellogg were some of the driving forces behind the attempts at housing reform. One writer has explained their motives in terms of greed and economics:

Housing and public health were business propositions. Each death from typhoid had a deterrent influence upon the sales of every merchant. Manufacturers would refuse to locate in certain cities because of housing conditions. Substandard housing, faulty water and sewerage facilities and air pollution were all a species of indirect taxation upon business interests, not only as tax-payers but in their effect upon output. Physicians, sanitarians and social workers agreed that the influence of the worker's home environment extended to the factory, reducing the efficiency of the labor force.¹

Municipal departments of health and sanitation were set up in every city in North America to initiate improvements in housing conditions. These departments began to issue regulations, standards and codes which dealt with air and light requirements, fire protection, sewage services and the occupancy of buildings. In addition, the laws of nuisance, restrictive covenants, easements, building setbacks and zoning by-laws were further devices created for regulating health and safety standards. "The need for bureaucratic rationalization to achieve housing reform was crucial enough to effectively suppress the traditional business creed that idealized entrepreneurial autonomy and favoured private rather than public decision making."²

Aesthetic Regulations

Following the enactment of health standards and by laws
regulations which concerned the aesthetics of housing were
developed. The architectural control ordinance had been used by
many communities to regulate the appearance of their residential
areas. In 1938, The Planners Journal defined this form of con-
trol to mean "regulation of the appearance of private as well
as public buildings and structures at all stages of design, con-
struction, maintenance, demolition, and replacement in accord
with a preconceived and flexible three dimensional civic pattern
based on comprehensive city planning and zoning, in which all
exteriors are harmonized as to materials, colors, styles, tex-
tures, silhouettes, and scales with the general scheme of civic
design."  

Thus the objective of the architectural ordinance is to
ensure that buildings are not either excessively uniform or dis-
similar and that the scale design, and exterior appearances are
of high quality. This type of ordinance is usually administered
through the office of the municipal building inspector or through
a special provision in the local zoning by-laws which gives
the municipality the legal power to create an Architectural Board
of Review. Vancouver's Urban Design Panel is an example of such
a board. The duties, powers, terms of reference, etc. of each
board may vary to some degree and are normally outlined in a
special section of the various municipal ordinances.

Two other forms of aesthetic control in residential areas
are the "look-alike" and "no look-alike" regulations. Several
municipal zoning by-laws contain specific regulations which
arbitrarily control the external appearance of newly constructed
or remodeled residential buildings. The "look-alike" regulation
is intended to maintain a degree of architectural consistency in
residential design for a given neighbourhood. It is often applied in affluent residential areas where a special house style is indigenous or favoured (i.e. California Ranch, Georgian, West Coast Cedar, etc.). The "no look-alike" regulations are the result of public reaction to the monotonous rows of identical houses which had begun to characterize the North American subdivision since the Second World War. This ordinance requires that the builder must produce variations in the design and external appearance of his houses within a given development. For example no two houses in a succession of perhaps five would be permitted to look-alike, nor like any on the opposition side of the street. The look-alike and no look-alike regulations have been adopted by several private developers in the Vancouver area in the preparation of their design guidelines directed at builders of single-family and zero-lot-line projects.

Lane use contracts between a municipality and a private developer are another means of ensuring the aesthetic quality of residential areas. The contract typically lists architectural controls in the form of scale and type of housing, building materials, setbacks, landscaping and some principles of the "look-alike) regulations to which the developer is bound.

Special zoning ordinances have been applied to certain residential areas containing concentrations of architecturally or historically significant structures. Architectural and historic preservation has been justified on the basis of its aesthetic contribution to the city including such factors as preserving the nations cultural heritage, the need for variety and diversity in the city and the economic benefits of increased tourist revenue. Housing which is located within a special amenity area
may also be protected by a zoning ordinance or other special legislation. The laws protecting residential areas of architectural, historical or amenity significance usually state that the houses cannot be torn down or altered without special permission. In addition encroachment on the existing housing by new residential construction which is inconsistent in terms of scale and style is prohibited. Controls over billboards and other types of signs in residential areas are another common aesthetic regulation. Sign controls are actually amongst the first attempts to regulate land use based on aesthetic principles.

7

The previous sections have attempted to show how Man-Environment studies laid the research foundation for design guidelines. While health and aesthetic standards contributed improvements they were not panaceas. With the increased construction of multiple-housing projects in the 60's and 70's it became apparent to many planners, architects and environmental psychologists that resident needs for privacy, territoriality and sense of identity were being neglected. This state of affairs resulted in many cases from totally inadequate public and private housing schemes that were created by narrow minded bureaucrats, insensitive or status seeking architects and greedy developers. For example in 1957 a senior government official and member of the Board of Directors of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation wrote the President of the Corporation: "I feel that the construction of any particular public housing project should be based on economic and urban development consideration primarily and that the needs of individual tenants should be secondary... It seems to me that public housing projects should also be at a minimum standard as far as accommodation is concerned. In other
words they should improve the community but only provide a bare minimum of housing for the occupants. Similarly in 1962, an internal paper circulating through CMHC stated; "It is not suggested that a residual character for new public housing may be found in building into it a structural obsolescence. There may be, however, merit in creating some measure of functional and social obsolescence; i.e. to incorporate in the concept of public housing design a number of traits making it less socially desirable." The Corporation memo suggested several ways of making a project less desirable including higher densities, limitations on number of bedrooms for families as well as room sizes, no frills appliances, unfinished cement partitions, unfashionable windows, uniform colours, inconvenient relationships of units to parking and garbage areas and less valuable sites for the projects.

Architect Robert Goodman states that the prevailing attitude towards public housing in the United States was that it was low cost housing and therefore required a multitude of government design guideline regulations to make sure the project building looked that way. "After all reasoned the real-estate interests, if the poor were living in better conditions than those who were supposed to be better off, what would happen to poor peoples incentive to work hard so they could "live better."

As for the architectural profession, Goodman reasoned; "With architects rewards determined by whether or not their work appears in visual media such as books, magazines and museums, there is a stronger incentive for them to focus on visual aspects of building design then, for example, to consider how comfortable the buildings are for those people who use them....Architecture becomes a look at experience rather than a "live in" one. In giving each other
prizes for each other's buildings we don't bother to ask the occupants of the buildings being considered."^10

Summary

The research origins of design guidelines can be found in several man-environment studies particularly in the work of Vidal de la Blache, Robert Park, Sir Patrick Geddes, Ebenezer Howard and more recent efforts by people such as Herbert Gans, Jane Jacobs, Christopher Alexander and Claire Cooper.

Historical precedents such as health and safety standards and aesthetic theories and regulations did much to improve housing conditions but were hardly panaceas since they did not address several concerns for liveability such as privacy, identity and territoriality. Furthermore they did not deal very extensively with how buildings should relate to each other in an urban design sense. Thus the introduction of design guidelines is intended to fill these gaps.
CHAPTER II

Footnotes


4. Ibid., p. 31 - 32


7. Ibid., p. 50 - 51

8. Dennis, Michael, Fish, Susan, Programs in Search of a Policy: Low Income Housing in Canada (Hakkert Publisher's, Toronto, 1972), p. 174-5


10. Ibid., p. 116, 120
CHAPTER III

An initial step towards clarifying the intent of design guidelines for housing is to recognize that it is possible to identify three different categories which define the themes and proposed use of the various guidelines. For the purposes of this study design guidelines will be separated into categories which are either generative, regulatory or evaluative.

Indeed, much of the confusion surrounding the use of design guidelines results in part from a failure to recognize these distinctions both in the preparation and application of the guidelines. Currently there are several guidelines which are composites of two or three different forms. Consequently, a design guideline may be used in a different manner from that for which it was intended.

The Generative Type

The generative design guideline functions as a methodological tool for the designer to assist in generating a design for a particular project. It seeks to identify incongruences between a physical environment and human behaviour and then proposes design and planning recommendations which if followed, will help improve the relationships between the two elements. While generative guidelines specify recommendations to various problem situations, they are nevertheless sufficiently general and abstract to allow the designer to produce creative solutions and to adapt the intent of the guidelines to his site and unique set of circumstances.

The basis for many of the generative guidelines is Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language. It evolved from an attempt to rationalize design. It is the creation of Alexander and his team of associates at the Center for Environmental Structures,
Berkely, California and it represents a rather bold extension of his 1964 publication of *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*.

The Patterns

The American Heritage Dictionary lists one meaning of pattern as, "A plan, diagram, or model to be followed in making things."¹ This meaning is essentially at the root of patterns as Alexander defines them. The pattern is "any general planning principle, which states a clear problem that may occur repeatedly in the environment, states the range of contexts in which this problem will occur and gives the general features required by all buildings or plans which solve this problem. In this sense we may regard a pattern as an empirically grounded imperative which outlines the preconditions for healthy individual and social life in a community."² The individual pattern consists of the following parts:

### If Statement

Each pattern begins with a context or "if" statement that defines precisely the situation where the pattern applies.

### Problem Section

Supplies supportive empirical information for the pattern, evidence for its validity and the range of different ways the pattern can be manifested in a building. This is the longest section of the pattern.
Then Statement

Defines one or more spatial relationships necessary to solve the problem present under the "if" conditions.

Pattern Language Relationship

Ties the pattern to all the smaller patterns in the language which are needed to complete the pattern and fill it out.¹

Unlike planning and performance standards incorporated in design guidelines of the most highly regulatory forms, the patterns provide images which are used to generate design rather than limit or inhibit it. Montgomery states that the pattern "is a physical configuration, a spatially defined image not a verbal or quantitative performance standard; and it usually requires both verbal and graphic indications to define it."⁵

The Pattern Language

The environmental pattern language is a system which coordinates the patterns with one another. It makes certain that the solutions to various projects are properly related. "The language has evolved for no pattern can be seen as an isolated entity. Each pattern can exist in the world only to the extent that it is supported by other patterns: The larger patterns in which it is embedded, the patterns of the same size that surround it, and the smaller patterns which are embedded in it."⁶

In the design process, pattern language may be used in three different fashions. One approach is when a designer uses a pattern language to create his or her own space. A second
approach is when a designer and a small group of individuals (say 8-20) make collective decisions about parts of their environment and then create a space. Finally, the third method in which pattern language is used is when the designer creates a space or form for an anonymous client. The designer is essentially acting as a surrogate for those people who have not yet been identified.

While most generative types of design guidelines that are currently used in the Vancouver area reflect the pattern language concepts to some degree they vary considerably in the extent to which they adhere to Alexander's pattern format. Some of the guidelines contain the "if" and "then" statements identifying a particular context in which a problem occurs and some possible solutions but may neglect to include a "problem section" elaborating on the "misfit" by offering supportive empirical research. (see appendix I) Others in checklist format provide questions which enquire whether a particular "if" set of conditions exist and then proceed to recommend design solutions. (see appendix II) Still other types of guidelines state design suggestions and principles that seek to avoid the occurrence of problems that are alluded but not necessarily spelled out. (see appendix III) Almost all guidelines of the generative form contain both verbal and graphic descriptions of desirable and sometimes undesirable built form - human activity relationships which are characteristic of the pattern language format.

The Regulatory Type

While guidelines are rarely mutually exclusive in form there are nevertheless a few that can be isolated as quite regulatory in nature. In guidelines of this type there are few
explanations of how rules and recommendations were arrived at. In addition, many of the concepts and principles seem to be based on rather arbitrary theories of design. These design guidelines are frequently criticized by developers, architects and planners for their excessively rigid space and building form requirements and for their stifling effect on the creativity of the designer, resulting in rather mundane standardized projects. For example, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Site Planning Handbook states under "Yard dimensions for the outdoor living area - horizontal multiple housing: An outdoor living area which is adjacent to a living room window or any alternative room listed in paragraph K3 shall have a minimum yard depth of 35 feet. No project walkway shall be located within 30 feet of the window and this 30 feet shall be regarded as the minimum privacy zone." There are no elaborations offered as to how and why the various dimensions were decided upon or on the theory behind what constitutes a privacy zone. (see appendix IV)

When it comes to the more objective principles for standards, building codes and zoning by-laws there is substantial recognition by all parties in the housing development process that regulations based on health and safety factors are necessary and that a project will have to meet these requirements. However, the level of agreement decreases when dealing with regulatory guidelines that are a combination of interpretive design principles and required design solutions. In such cases the regulatory guideline becomes a contradiction in terms.

The Evaluative Type

The term Evaluative guidelines refers to their use within the development approval process rather than their specific
content. Clear cut regulatory guidelines may be correctly used for evaluative purposes by planning departments. However, generative, interpretive design guidelines cause considerable difficulty when they are utilized in an evaluative sense. Guidelines intended to help generate innovative solutions are, to a large degree, interpretive and present decision-making problems that will be addressed in the case study.

As will be shown in this study, many of the problems concerning the use of design guidelines result from the fact that they are rarely mutually exclusive in type and are frequently composites of two or even three of the categories discussed in this chapter.

Regardless of the type of design guidelines or whether it is a composite or not there are nevertheless some concerns common to all guidelines. These concerns fall into two general categories, those based on behavioural user needs and those based on aesthetic/urban design considerations. Behavioural user needs identify some basic requirements for privacy, territoriality, identity and sense of community in a multiple housing project. The aesthetic/urban design concerns try to inspire architectural beauty in housing design and suggest various ways of harmonizing a housing project in terms of scale, materials and design with its immediate surroundings. The terms aesthetics and urban design are synthesized for beauty, as one author has stated, is the essence of urban design.

In order to facilitate a clearer understanding of the content of design guidelines several user needs and aesthetic/urban design considerations will be examined in this chapter.
Behavioural User Needs

The specific kinds of needs that will be addressed include territoriality, identity, privacy, amenities, sense of community and the creation of safe environments. The identification and articulation of these needs evolved from both the studies of the human ecology movement as well as the user satisfaction research conducted in the sixties and early seventies.

Territoriality

Traditionally in the architectural profession, territoriality has been expressed as the desire to design for a sense of place - the instilling of feelings of belonging and identity. A description of territory which is well suited to the approach expressed in most design guidelines is the one offered by Psychologist Robert Sommer: "Territory is an area controlled by an individual, family, or other face-to-face collectivity....The emphasis is on physical possession, actual or potential as well as defence....(which in humans) relies more on symbols such as name plates, fences and personal possessions than physical combat or aggressive displays.

In the residential world territoriality may be viewed as the instinctive urge to have private territory upon which one can imprint his personality and express himself as he chooses by means of personal possessions. These expressions are reflected in the ways people plant their gardens, paint their front doors, choose their fences and utilize their open spaces. One particular design guideline currently used for multi-family housing developments in Vancouver states that:

At higher densities clarity of perception of what is "mine" or "ours" or "theirs", and who these groups are in relation to the individual, is vital to housing
satisfaction....When spheres of control are clearly defined territorial responsibilities become more evident. This clarity of boundaries and territories contributes to resident responsibility in the upkeep and surveillance of their respective environments. This is critical at the interface of private territory and semi-public/public territories.11

Privacy

The measure of personal privacy in North American residential lifestyle has traditionally been the single family house. This is easily understood since the single family building form has been the most popular and sought after residence for at least two centuries. However, in our present situation of rapidly rising land and building costs this highly desired form is now unaffordable to an increasing percentage of households. As a result numerous multiple or compact housing developments have been produced as viable economic alternatives. Yet in most cases the buyer purchases the condominium or townhouse with the same expectation of privacy as is associated with a single-family lifestyle and discovers quite soon that the higher density housing project falls far short of initial expectations. The resident experiences the irritations and frustrations of surveillance of personal activities by neighbours, blocked views, poor sound insulation and unclear definitions of private vs. public open spaces all contributing to a feeling of lack of privacy.

Architect Ron Walkey has stated that in all housing situations privacy is achieved through some combination of the following three components:

a) Separation through distance
b) Separation through architecture or technology
c) Separation by social custom

In single family areas the separation through distance has been achieved by setbacks from public roads, sidewalks and from other
houses. Privacy through architecture and technology is achieved through the use of steps, porches and doors which provide entrance transitions. Separation by social custom is accomplished by general public acceptance and respect for the uses and maintenance of the yard space around the house - the back yard is more private and personal, the front yard acts as a transition between the public street and the house.\textsuperscript{12} Given these design features it is perhaps easier to understand why privacy is not easily achieved in higher density residential developments. First, separation through distance may be minimal when houses are stacked, adjoining, or overlooking each other in close proximity. Furthermore project walkways and public streets are often located at uncomfortable distances from the units. Secondly, privacy through architecture and technology may be non-existent if steps are absent and porches and entranceways are ill-defined. Finally, as for social custom separation, open space in multiple housing projects is very often almost entirely dedicated to the semi-public realm. Walkey states that:

\begin{quote}
The majority of outside space is merely decorative - setting an image to the public world. Balconies and private gardens are minimal and usually are under the control of the collective opinion of the neighbours in the cluster. Often the maintenance and the type of use of outdoor space is regulated by management firms or by restrictive covenant, set down by the original owner. This is one of the new concepts in living which is totally unfamiliar to residents accustomed to single-family neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

In response to the problems of privacy in multiple housing projects several design guidelines recommend clear separations of the land into those areas which are private, semi-public and public. To approximate the lifestyle of the single family home it is suggested that most of the land should be dedicated for private areas which are clearly delineated in territorial terms.
The social custom of front and back yards for each unit is a principle most medium density guidelines have embraced. Careful attention to entrances as points of transition is recommended as is planting of hedges and the use of fencing to define visually and acoustically private and public areas. Oblique siting, extended walls, the positioning of windows and balconies and level changes are some suggested ways of ensuring privacy through architecture and technology.

The lack of internal privacy of the units because of poorly constructed and sound-insulated party walls is a frequent complaint of townhouse and compact housing residents. Internal privacy may also mean privacy from members of one's own family within the individual unit. According to A. F. Westin, privacy functions to protect one's needs for personal autonomy, to provide for emotional release, to offer the opportunity for self-evaluation and to offer limited and protected communication. The types of privacy that Westin claims will satisfy these functions include solitude, intimacy, anonymity and reserve. Many design guidelines offer suggestions for meeting these most personal needs for privacy by recommending undesignated extra rooms, special areas such as nooks and crannies for activities including reading and quiet contemplation, isolation of certain spaces from sight, noise and smells and the zoning of activity spaces so that sound compatible areas adjoin, and noise generating areas are separated from quiet areas.

**Sense of Community**

While design guidelines offer suggestions and recommendations which attempt to provide for territorial and privacy needs they also list methods whereby interaction with neighbours can occur
and a sense of community can be developed. Several design guidelines indicate that there should be opportunities within a site for neighbourly interaction but few maintain a deterministic view that such spaces will necessarily result in this behaviour. As Herbert Gans has suggested, "Propinquity - in a physical sense - does not lead to friendship formation among neighbours unless there is also some homogeniety of values."\(^{15}\)

Nevertheless there are certainly potential areas of interaction and these are likely to be in childrens areas, laundry and work areas, a landscaped site, activity centers, meeting rooms and project walkways. Claire Cooper states "the key in terms of design to foster relaxed meetings between people seems to be the provision of some form of semi-private space in which a small number of people see each other fairly frequently. This might comprise a back or front yard or front porch flanked by others; a staircase or access corridor shared by a small number of families. Where there is an abrupt break between the totally private space of the house or apartment, and the totally public space of a long anonymous corridor or sidewalk, people immediately put on a public face and it seems less easy for them to make contact with others."\(^{16}\)

Common parking areas, and the arrangement of units in small clusters around an open space or cul de sac are a few of the guidelines offered to facilitate contacts and a sense of community through design. The area of greatest difficulty for the designer is in trying to find an appropriate balance between the needs for privacy and territoriality and the need for social contact. A few guidelines have recognized and have attempted to deal directly
with this dilemma. For example the City of Vancouver's Guidelines for Multi-Family Housing state that "Given that most neighbouring will occur with neighbours close-by the configuration of units should allow only a limited number of opportunities for interaction (i.e. short corridors or walkways with a small number of units off it tends to allow residents more choice in whether or not they want to interact with their neighbours."¹⁷

"The level of interaction within a given project is to some extent dictated by the social mix of the residents which may in turn be a function of unit types and sizes. Family units suitable for small children are most likely to produce interactions far more intense than a project which includes singles and childless couples."¹⁸

While design guidelines may or may not address the question of social mix in terms of family structure and age differences most avoid dealing with the politically and socially sensitive question of residential mix in terms of different socioeconomic classes of people. The interested reader may wish to pursue this topic further and is advised that there is a substantial body of literature which has approached the question from several different perspectives. Herbert Gans and William Michelson are two possible sources for a good introduction.

Amenities

Amenities refer primarily to public and semi-public open space which may be utilized for recreation, sports and play activities and to the equipment provided to carry out such activities (i.e. playground equipment - swings, slides, sandboxes, etc., tennis courts, swimming pools, baseball diamonds, basketball courts and indoor facilities). The amenity areas can be categorized
into those which are most suitable for pre-school, school, teenage and adult activities. Open space can also refer to passive landscaped areas which provide desirable natural settings for residents and which can also provide noise or visual screens. These areas may include walkways, benches, lakes etc. All of these features contribute to the liveability of multiple housing projects and are important considerations that determine residents' perception of density in such developments.

Every design guideline currently being used in the Vancouver area contains recommendations on either the preservation or use of open space and recreational areas in compact and multi-family housing projects. While similar recommendations can be found in the literature and standards of the aesthetics movement, current design guidelines have attempted to deal with the special problems of designing play spaces for various child age groups as well as how the amenity needs of adults and children can be made both separate and compatible. Whereas the language of aesthetics may state that there should be designated open spaces where children can play, the research behind current guidelines indicates that "children tend to play anywhere and everywhere, and not just in designated play spaces."  

A "Safe" Environment

Most of the design guidelines attempt to deal with the objective of providing residential projects which are safe places to live in the sense that they are free from crime. The guidelines can embrace two overlapping strategies for crime control. The first called target hardening advocates the use of locks, alarms, intercom systems and other technological innovations in order to directly reduce the vulnerability of potential crime targets. The second strategy stems directly from Oscar Newman's
concept of "Defensible Space" which approaches crime control indirectly through the impact of building and landscape design on social organization and behaviour. Newman suggests that multiple family dwellings might be designed so as to enhance feelings of territoriality and proprietorship and a sense of "community" among building residents.  

In outlining mechanisms for creating boundaries which specify a hierarchy of increasingly private zones - from public street to private apartment, Newman identifies those boundary definers that are either real or symbolic barriers. Real barriers include 'U' shaped buildings, high walls, fences, locked gates and doors while symbolic barriers may be open gateways, light standards, a short run of steps, planting and changes in the texture of the walking surface. Both serve a common purpose: to inform that one is passing from a space which is public where ones presence is not questioned through a barrier to a space which is private and where ones presence requires justification. Newman states that "by employing a combination of symbolic barriers it is possible to indicate that one is crossing a series of boundaries in the transition from public access paths and spaces to sequentially more private areas without employing literal barriers to define the spaces along the route." Several design guidelines suggest the creation of symbolic barriers in the form of surveillance opportunities of public and semi-public private open space, clearly identified entrances through changes in materials, grade separations and territorial markers (i.e. mailboxes, address numbers, decorations, etc.), well lit project walkways and symbolically defined separations of public, semi-public and private spaces.
Aesthetic/Urban Design

The aesthetic considerations which are expressed in most design guidelines discuss choice of building materials, siting, views, landscaping, open space relationships and the massing and articulation of the built form. It is generally recommended that the building be designed to avoid a monotonous or institutional appearance. Almost all guidelines express the desire to preserve natural amenities such as a ravine, a stand of trees or any other significant topographical features and to create such features where possible in the design of a housing project.

Siting the project to take maximum advantage of potential views is a principle frequently advocated in design guidelines. Detailed aspects such as screening parking and garbage areas with fences or landscape material and the placement and design of project walkways and open spaces are some other aesthetic concerns that may be found in most of the guidelines.

The urban design principles expressed in design guidelines try to ensure that sufficient consideration will be given to the relationship of a housing project to its immediate surroundings. For example the Greater Vancouver Regional Districts Compact Housing Checklist states that a new project should harmonize in size and scale as well as environmentally, socially and economically with its immediate surroundings. The Checklist identifies the following criteria for achieving harmony:

- Height, volume and number of buildings should complement those on adjacent sites.
- Lights, poles and paths should harmonize with existing ones.
- Location and siting should be designed to avoid blocking sunlight onto adjacent sites.
- Physical shapes and exterior finishes should be made to blend in with surroundings.
- The project should not increase the possibility
Several guidelines address the problem of preserving views and sunlight both for the individual units within the project and for surrounding developments. The Kitsilano Design Guidelines suggest that "the apartment building should be located on the site to take maximum advantage of sun, views, existing trees and landscaping, etc. and minimize noise problems, overshadowing, view blockage, etc.".

Proximity to neighbourhood services and amenities is another important set of urban design considerations. The distance of housing projects to schools, shops, social and medical services as well as community clubs and playgrounds are some of the criteria for good site selection listed in many design guidelines.

Functional aspects of a multiple-housing project including the design, use and maintenance of communal laundry facilities, garbage disposal, parking areas, circulation routes, meeting rooms, storage areas as well as the creation of a hazard-free environment are recommendations that may also be found in several design guidelines.

Summary

Three categories of design guidelines have been identified in this chapter. They include generative guidelines which are intended to help generate design solutions that will address incongruences between a physical environment and human behaviour, regulatory guidelines that may include rather specific and rigid requirements putting them in the category of standards rather
than guidelines and evaluative guidelines which operate as sets of criteria by which to judge the quality of project design.

Regardless of type, there are some concerns which are common to all design guidelines. These include user needs for territoriality, identity, privacy, amenities, sense of community and the creation of safe environments and aesthetic/urban design considerations which deal with siting, views, materials, landscaping, open space, massing and articulation of built form and the relationship of a project to its immediate environment.

This chapter has endeavoured to explain the intended use of design guidelines in the housing development process by discussing both the content and format of the various types of guidelines.
CHAPTER III

Footnotes


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.


6. Ibid., p. 53


9. Lipman, Alan, Territoriality: "A Useful Architectural Concept?"


11. McAfee, Ann, *Guidelines For Multi-Family Housing*, (City Planning Department, Vancouver, 1977), p. 6


13. Ibid., p. 36


16. Cooper, Claire, "Resident Attitudes Towards the Environment at St. Francis Square, San Francisco: A Summary of the Initial Findings." July, 1970 (Center For Planning and Development Research at the University of California at Berkeley)


18. Ibid., p. 32


23. *Kitsilano Design Guidelines* (City Planning Department, Vancouver, 1977), p. 20
CHAPTER IV

Introduction

This chapter analyzes several design guidelines that have recently been developed by the private market sector in the Lower Mainland. The philosophy behind these guidelines, their content and the approval process associated with their use is described, assessed and contrasted with Government guidelines.

Much of the information contained in this chapter is based on a survey of four major land developers in the Vancouver area. The developers were chosen on the basis of their extensive involvements in housing in the Lower Mainland as well as in other parts of Canada and because of their use and support for design guidelines. The four development companies are Block Bros. Contractors Ltd., Carma Developers Ltd., Genstar Development Company and NuWest Development Corporation Ltd. Although the Genstar Development Company does not have a standardized design guideline booklet for their housing developments they do exercise project specific design controls. The survey data is presented in detail in appendix V.

The Private Market Design Guidelines

In recent years several large land development companies in the Vancouver area have produced their own version of design guidelines for housing. These guidelines are directed at the builders who purchase one or more lots from the development company for the purpose of constructing a single family house within a standard or zero lot line subdivision. The private development companies are concerned with the quality of the product the builders construct for very often the builders are shareholders in the development companies.
Private market design guidelines were produced initially to protect lot purchasers from design errors on adjacent lots that could lower property and resale values on their home. This principle remains as part of the philosophy behind developer generated guidelines but their use is also justified on the basis of better marketability of the units and for producing entire neighbourhoods which have high standards of aesthetics and liveability. For example, the preamble to Carma Developers Ltd. Design Guidelines states:

The success of a housing development project is directly related to the buying public's acceptance of the product. In a large part, that acceptance is based upon the "look" of a project; the first impression is often the lasting impression. Creation of a pleasant environment for family living is the principle purpose of instituting development guidelines in any subdivision. The visual appearance and physical placement of individual houses and corresponding inter-relationships of adjacent groups of houses are of utmost importance in achieving this environment. Application of the best design principles within a subdivision benefits all - initially the builder because of improved marketability and subsequently the owner because of better liveability and appreciation of real estate values.¹

On the other hand the use of design guidelines is not perceived by developers to significantly increase the cost of producing housing. A company spokesman for Block Bros. Contractors Ltd. stated that, "Design guidelines increase the costs of developing housing units but only by a minimal amount (i.e. $1,000 extra for cedar shake roof and $1,200 for higher quality landscaping)."² 

"NuWest Development Corporation's spokesman thought design guidelines prevent a builder from using cheaper readily available material that is aesthetically displeasing rather than higher quality materials that may not cost very much more."³ "Genstar's spokesman believes that design guidelines increase the cost of producing housing but added that this was reflected in a higher
sale price for the finished product (i.e. house and lot). The costs of producing the guidelines themselves is not seen to be a significant factor at all (in terms of time, effort and publication - approximately $400.00 - $500.00).

Private market design guidelines are typically concerned with house types, building and lot grades, siting and setbacks, landscaping, exterior materials, finishes and colours and in some cases minimum standards for dwelling sizes. Creating a variety of house types is a principle related to the "look-alike" and "no look-alike" subdivision controls discussed in Chapter II. The controls essentially seek to provide aesthetic interest in subdivision design by preventing developments which are either excessively uniform or too diverse. For example, Block Bros. Contractors Design Guidelines state, "Since it is the intention to create an imaginative high quality residential development, the "look-alike" appearance shall be avoided throughout the project. However, while diversity is advocated it is also expected that the builder will give consideration to the height and massing relationships of the houses within the subdivision." In other words compatibility in scale is desirable while excessive contrast is not.

Guidelines for grading and siting include recommendations on allowable slopes for yards and driveways, letting the design of the house follow the contour of lot, preventing excessive site filling and the use of retaining structures unless properly treated architecturally, preserving natural landscape features and minimizing height differences through front and side yard setbacks. Guidelines on exterior finishes list acceptable siding and roof materials and colours as well as regulations on more
detailed features such as garage doors, windows and garbage areas. In the Lower Mainland, private market as well as a number of government generated guidelines have favoured cedar siding and roofing and also the use of "earthy" colours (i.e. various tones of browns, greens and greys). The development companies vary in their degree of regulation of materials. Whereas Block Bros. Contractors Ltd. has generally refused to allow stucco, masonry, concrete block and aluminum siding in some of their developments, other companies such as the NuWest Development Corporation will allow the above mentioned materials to be used so long as the houses are compatible with adjacent houses in terms of scale, colour and trim. The "look-alike" and "no look-alike" principles are quite clearly expressed in Carma Developers Guidelines on exterior finishes: "To further enhance the total development concept in subdivisions small groups of houses are to have similar exterior finishing materials and complementary colour schemes. Groups of two or three adjacent houses will be given the same roof colour. However, groups with the same basic material finish must be separated from any other similar group by at least two houses having a different basic finish."6

A few private market design guidelines are to a degree site specific in the sense that they attempt to respond to the unique features of a given site by stating recommendations concerning the preservation of significant views or natural landscape elements. For example Block Bros. Contractors Design Guidelines for Single Family Houses in Vancouver's Locarno Subdivision state:

The main assets of this development are the view of the North Shore, the mountains, the inlet and parts of the downtown area. In design and configuration of the dwellings, particular attention shall be given to maintain as much of this view as possible....it is required that
all dwellings maintain a low structural characteristic towards the south (uphill). Multi-level flat roofs or a combination of flat and sloped roof areas, possibly with skylights are considered a good solution. Also, to preserve the view as much as possible, the buildings shall be fitted into a 'building height envelope'.

Generally, private market design guidelines have avoided dealing with interior arrangements of the units and are restricted to exterior elevations and siting. In contrast to most government guidelines there is a total absence of discussion of the psychological and sociological aspects of privacy, identity, territoriality, open space, etc. This of course can be explained to a large degree by the fact that most of the design guidelines address themselves to single family subdivisions which for the most part offer adequate provisions for these basic liveability needs.

Private market design guidelines are fairly regulatory in the sense that many of the recommendations are not subject to any degree of interpretation and may be more correctly labelled as standards. While some of the guidelines allow some degree of interpretation, this is only within rather tightly prescribed parameters. However, since the design guidelines only deal with certain aspects of housing aesthetics they are not perceived by any of the developers interviewed to be regulatory in that they inhibit creative housing design or produce monotonous standardized subdivisions. For example, a representative from Block Bros. Contractors Ltd. stated: "In so far as our guidelines relate to siting, landscaping, and exterior finishes, we feel there is substantial flexibility within the guidelines to produce very creative designs. This is evident in our Locarno Subdivision." The success of housing projects is judged by the developers in terms of marketability and acceptability and there is little need seen for engaging in seemingly redundant debates on how the neighbor-
hoods should function as social spaces.

There are no land development companies in the Lower Mainland which have produced a generalized set of design guidelines for multi-family developments. With this form of housing, the design process works as follows: (1) The development company may purchase the project with architectural plans complete. (2) If the development company prepares an original concept then they would first determine the market for the project and a general concept is then developed within municipal guidelines. The general concept is then presented to an architect and the final design evolves out of a series of presentations by the architect and subsequent revisions by the developer. Since the developers consider every project to be more or less unique they do not have a standard set of design guidelines which they give to the architect at the initial design stage of a project. Various developers have in fact drawn up design guidelines for multi-family housing which are project specific and which are subsequently adopted into the land use contract that may be required with the municipality.

The Approval Process

The approval process related to the use of the private market design guidelines in the Lower Mainland follows this sequence. The builder is requested by the land development company to proceed in a two-step manner; the first step is a preliminary consultation with the land developers or their consultant planning/engineering firm to ensure that costly time-consuming alterations will not be necessary at the final approval stage. In some cases the land developer requests that the builder submit sketch plans
which will assist the development company in granting an approval in principle. The second step involves the submission of final drawings for formal approval by the company's architectural review committee or design panel. The committee or panel usually consists of two or three people; the company's project and district managers and a consultant planner. Generally, two or three sets of drawings are requested which indicate the site plan, exterior elevations, floor plans and cross sections of the units. In addition it is requested that the plans show existing features on the lot, proposed setbacks, lot and building grades, driveway locations and colour scheme information. Approval time is very rapid, usually within one or two days although larger projects require correspondingly more time. Any subsequent revisions require approval by the architectural committee.

Follow-up site inspections ensure that the builder has complied with the intent of the design guidelines and checks are made to monitor the siting of the houses and the materials used in the exterior finishes. All of the development companies have provisions for recovering the costs of correcting any deficiencies or unacceptable diversions from the design guidelines. The NuWest Development Corporation, for example, requires the builder to post a $500.00 performance bond which is non-refundable should the builder fail to comply with the guidelines.

It is important to note that there is no connection between the approval process related to the builder and the developer and the process of securing a municipal building permit. The design guidelines are made available to builders and their designers at the time a lot or lots are purchased. All of the land develop-
Development Approval Process Related to Design Guidelines

(Between Builder and Land Development Company)

1. Preliminary Consultation with Land Developer - submission of sketch plans - Builder conveys basic information on style, colour, etc. in order to make sure significant alterations to final plans will not be required. Approval in principle.

2. Submission of Final Drawings & Forms indicating site plan, exterior elevations, cross sections, setbacks, lot and building grades, driveway locations, and colour scheme information, for review by the Architectural Committee of the Development Company.

3. Formal Approval of Plans by Land Development Company


5. Builder upon receiving a Building Permit proceeds with Construction - May be monitored both during and after construction by Architectural Committee.

6. Revisions requested by Development Company's Architectural Committee - or - Subsequent Changes to Plans by Builder must be resubmitted to the Architectural Committee

Figure 1
ment companies that use guidelines request that drawings be submitted to the company for review prior to application for a building permit.

Most of the developers interviewed felt that their design guidelines had little if any effects on the municipality's development approval process in terms of either speeding it up or slowing it down. "One developer did mention that since municipalities are very much in favour of design guidelines, their use is seen as a way of avoiding costly time consuming debates by municipal planners and urban design panels on the merits of the project's design."9

Other than government guidelines necessary for development approval through Land Use Contracts or normal building permit procedures all the developers interviewed stated that they did not use any government generated guidelines in the process of developing single family housing projects. A representative for Carma Developers Ltd. stated that, "At the present time our company does not use any government guidelines although subdivisions are normally developed to conform to C.M.H.C. requirements and naturally the municipal guidelines pertaining to each subdivision are of utmost importance."10 Genstar Development Company's spokesman stated that they did not use any design guidelines but they believed that "government can best achieve its objectives by encouraging industry to use design guidelines (government guidelines). Note that I say "use" and not "compel".

Summary

For comparison with the information in Chapter V, this
chapter has described the content and philosophy behind the design guidelines that have been prepared by several major land developers in the Lower Mainland. The motivation for the design guidelines is primarily sales and profit oriented as opposed to government guidelines which are intended to ensure various user needs for liveability are met in the design of higher density housing projects and that the developments will relate well to their immediate environments. In addition, the design guideline approval process between builders and developers was described.
CHAPTER IV

Footnotes


2. From Survey of Four Developers - see Appendix V, p. 136

3. Ibid., p. 137

4. Ibid., p. 137


9. Ibid., p. 138


11. Ibid., p. 141
CHAPTER V

THE APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES WITHIN A DEVELOPMENT
CONTROL SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF DESIGN GUIDE-
LINES IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REVIEW
PROCESS.

Introduction

The previous chapters have provided background information for the development of this thesis. The historical precedents which provided the research basis for design guidelines were discussed as were some explanations of the need for guidelines. In addition three major categories of design guidelines were identified in an attempt to clarify their intended use within the development process. The content of design guidelines was discussed as it will to a large extent dictate the process by which they are utilized. Finally, Chapter IV dealt with the content and process of private market guidelines and provides a body of information for comparison with some of the findings that follow.

The remainder of the thesis presents a detailed description and analysis of the use of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's discretionary Development Permit Approval Process. The hypotheses concerning the regulatory use of design guidelines are tested against the information obtained in Chapters V and VI.

Case Study Objectives

The case study objectives are:

1. To test the hypotheses

2. To evaluate through the case study the usefulness of design guidelines within Vancouver's Development Approval Process.
3. To identify any structural and/or procedural changes to improve the applications and effectiveness of design guidelines in the development approval process.

Case Study

The case study is divided into three chapters. Chapter V includes three major sections which deal with the following:
(a) a comparison of the traditional development control system and the discretionary system with which the guidelines are associated. Written and graphic analysis is presented in order to test the validity of the hypotheses in comparison with a system known to be regulatory in nature. (b) a description of the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process. This description is provided to further clarify the context within which design guidelines operate as well as the methods by which discretionary authority is applied by the various panels, committees and individuals which constitute the process. (c) a discussion and analysis of the traditional and discretionary development control systems in light of the relevant literature on discretionary authority. The hypotheses are also tested in regards to the information presented in this section.

Chapter VI consists of the opinions and attitudes obtained through several interviews with various architects and planners who have had extensive involvement in housing development in the City of Vancouver. The hypotheses is further tested against the responses derived from these interviews.

The final chapter consists of an evaluation of the validity of the hypotheses, an evaluation of design guidelines in principle and some possible recommendations for their future use, some suggestions for further research and the relevance of this study to urban planning.
Zoning Systems in Vancouver

Since 1974 there have been several amendments to the City of Vancouver's Zoning and Development By-Law which have resulted in a more "discretionary" approach in certain areas of the city. The amendments were introduced because many members of both the planning department and the architectural profession felt the old Zoning District Schedules were excessively regulatory resulting in mundane standardized designs that in many cases did not respond to either user needs or the immediate environment.

The Official Development Plan By-Law for the West End states: "The well-being of the people in the West End's concentration of residential accommodation require more than the customary regulatory mechanisms in order that the buildings, the open spaces, the streets, the transportation systems and other components of the urban scene can be arranged appropriately for the general benefit of all." Similarly, the Kitsilano Design Guidelines state: "Many of the zoning changes have resulted in more of a discretionary approach to zoning....An important basis for evaluating any proposal will be determining its impact on surrounding development. The new zoning schedules provide the necessary flexibility so that a building can relate to specific sites and environmental conditions."  

Traditional vs. Discretionary Zoning

Traditional Zoning - The traditional zoning district schedules for medium and high density residential development in force in the West End and Kitsilano areas prior to 1974 and which are still applicable to several other parts of the city placed precise legal restrictions on building. This type of zoning provides mathematical formulae and building envelopes into which a
building must be fitted. This in turn places significant restrictions on the design possibilities available. The schedules consist of a set of rules which regulate the height and length of buildings, front yard and containing angles, rear yards and setbacks from lanes and the daylight obstruction angles. (See appendix VI)

The effect of zoning schedules such as RM3 Multiple Dwelling District (Medium Density) was to create the three storey (35-40' high) apartment building form which can be seen in many areas of Vancouver. Almost all of these buildings have double loaded corridor arrangements and are set back from the front, side and rear boundary lines of the property according to the minimum allowable distances stated in the zoning schedule. In the West End the higher density zoning permitted taller but no less monotonous schemes. What emerged in this area throughout the sixties and early seventies were a series of high-rise box-like structures similarly setback from the boundaries of their sites and offering little articulation in the overall design. The excessive zoning regulations combined with what was economically feasible for a developer to build lead to a continuous repetition of the same building form particularly in the RM3 areas.

Although traditional zoning is characterized by clearly stated rules easily interpretable by all parties in the development process it was eventually realized that the product of such a process was unsatisfactory. Most of the buildings did not make a positive contribution or impact on the surrounding neighbourhood, nor did they properly meet user needs for features such as useable balconies and open spaces. Furthermore traditional zoning regulations are quantitative in nature and neglect
to deal qualitatively with building design. As a result institutional, poorly articulated building forms which meet minimum quantitative criteria are sanctioned.

Discretionary Zoning - The 1974 Official Development Plan By-laws for the West End and Downtown Districts explain that "the intention of these By-laws and the accompanying guidelines is to ensure that all buildings and developments meet the highest standards of design and amenity for the benefit of all users of the area and to provide flexibility and creativity in the preparation of development proposals." The discretionary Official Development Plan By-laws and the accompanying planning policies and design guidelines replaced the traditional district schedules in the Downtown and West End areas. In False Creek and the Fairview Slopes, industrial and commercial zoning was replaced by the False Creek Official Development Plan (policies and design guidelines) and the discretionary FM-1 Fairview Multiple Dwelling District zoning schedule respectively. In addition new special discretionary schedules were created in Kitsilano for apartment and commercial developments.

There are three instruments which form the basis for the discretionary zoning system. These are 1) The Official Development Plan By-law, 2) Planning Policies and 3) The Design Guidelines.

1. The Official Development Plan By-law

The Official Development Plan By-laws provide the general parameters for a development such as use, density, height, parking and loading and social and recreational amenities and facilities. They also include statements outlining basic planning objectives. For example the West End Official Development Plan
By-law states:

The intent is to ensure that:

(i) high standards of design and development are maintained throughout the West End; and,

(ii) that the general environment of the West End is maintained as an attractive place in which to live or to visit.

A distinction is drawn in Official Development Plan By-laws between regulations and interpretive requirements as follows:

(i) regulations are set out for land use and the maximum standards for building density in terms of floor space ratio and the minimum requirements for parking and loading.

(ii) interpretative requirements are set out with respect to the permitted height of buildings, the maximum residential density in terms of dwelling units per acre and social and recreational amenities and facilities.

In the design and/or approval of individual developments variations are permitted in the interpretative requirements.

It is further stated in all the Official Development Plan By-laws that "A significant degree of flexibility is given to architects and others in the preparation of development proposals. A significant degree of discretionary authority is also given to those charged with interpretation of the policies and regulations."

Planning Policies

The Planning Policies enable those concerned with development proposals to be aware of the general objectives of the city for various areas. In addition to general goal statements advocating the enhancement or preservation of desirable community features the policies may also deal more specifically with objectives for growth, land use and density, movement, parks
and open spaces, traffic and transportation, community services and social mix. The Planning Policies are for reference only and do not form part of the Zoning By-law or Official Development Plan. However, the various decision-making bodies described later are guided by planning policy statements in interpreting the Official Development Plan or the design guidelines.

**The Design Guidelines (Area Specific)**

The design guidelines do not form an integral part of the Downtown and West End Official Development Plan By-laws or the special Zoning Districts for Kitsilano but they are a part of the False Creek Official Development Plan By-law. Since the development of entire neighbourhoods is being created in False Creek where none existed before and because the project is being designed by different groups of architects over a staged period the design guidelines are considered to be an essential element in providing qualitative design control and coordination. In the case of the False Creek Official Development Plan By-law a distinction is made between three forms of policies and regulations which require the following interpretations:

1. mandatory requirements for area development plans and/or development permit applications and for which no discretionary interpretation is possible.

2. area specific requirements that may be interpreted for development areas within the False Creek Basin.

3. general overall guidelines which provide qualitative guidance as to the required form of development through design interpretation, but which do not require literal interpretation for each individual area.

"In the Downtown, West End and Kitsilano Districts the design guidelines replaced the yard requirements, light angle controls and daylight obstruction angle requirements associated with regulatory Zoning District Schedules. However, it is intended
## Area Specific Design Guidelines Used in the City of Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Guideline</th>
<th>Originating Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Design Guidelines</td>
<td>City of Vancouver</td>
<td>Sept/75</td>
<td>1. Open Space - at, above and below grade.</td>
<td>D.D. (Downtown District)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Department</td>
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<td>2. Social and Cultural Amenities - preservation and conservation, mixed uses.</td>
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<td>3. Views</td>
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<td>4. Environmental - sun and shade, wind and calm, introduction of nature.</td>
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<td>5. Physical Design - architectural, bulk and height, relationship to immediate area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| False Creek Design Guidelines | Thompson, Berwick &amp; Pratt Architects, Engineers &amp; Planners | Nov/74 | 1. Site Planning - noise, pedestrian-vehicular traffic, views, grades, privacy, yards. | F.C.C.D.D. (False Creek Comprehensive Development District) |
|                              |                                                             |        | 2. Residential Use - bldg. and dwelling types, sun and shadows, balconies, views, entrances and corridors. | Design Guidelines incorporated into the Official Development Plan By-Law (4812) |
|                              |                                                             |        | 3. Industrial Use - relation to habitation.                                      |                               |
|                              |                                                             |        | 4. Commercial Use - location and design.                                         |                               |
|                              |                                                             |        | 5. Circulation &amp; Parking - design and site plan.                                  |                               |
|                              |                                                             |        | 6. Open Space - hierarchy, connectors.                                            |                               |
|                              |                                                             |        | 7. Water's Edge - variety, irregular.                                             |                               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Guidelines</th>
<th>Originating Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>District</th>
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that guidelines should go further than this insofar as they represent a quality control upon which to base design decisions and judgements. The guidelines prescribe the general criteria for new development and form the basis for the preparation of, and approval of development proposals. Various municipal staff and several official civic boards and panels may in their discretion, refuse or require modification to a Development Permit Application proposal for failure to meet the standards of the guidelines in whole or in part."

Design Guidelines (General)

In addition the area specific guidelines that are used in Vancouver there are several general design guidelines that can be utilized for both the design and evaluation of housing projects to be located anywhere in the city. These guidelines include:

1. A Qualitative Checklist for Compact Housing (Greater Vancouver Regional District Planning Department).
2. Guidelines for Multi-Family Housing, Needs, Principles and Recommendations for Medium and High Density Housing for Families with Children (City of Vancouver Planning Department).
3. The Site Planning Handbook (Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation).

As is evident, these guidelines have been generated by all government levels; municipal, regional, provincial and federal.

The Development Permit Approval Process

The Development Permit Approval Process defines those groups and committees who interpret design guidelines in the review of development proposals and the rights of discretionary authority associated with that review.

A development permit application for a housing project in
### GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES USED IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Guideline</th>
<th>Originating Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Qualitative Checklist for Compact Housing</td>
<td>Greater Vancouver Regional District - Planning Department</td>
<td>Feb/75</td>
<td>1. The Surroundings project harmony, housing types, open space, pedestrian-vehicular movement, facilities, landscaping. 2. House Territory - privacy, identity, play space, parking, roadways and walkways, sun and weather protection. 3. In the House Unit adaptability, variety, convenience, comfort, audio and visual privacy, roof spaces, materials, views, storage, circulation.</td>
<td>Housing Demonstration Projects - Greater Vancouver Regional District.</td>
</tr>
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Table II
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Guideline</th>
<th>Originating Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Planning Handbook</td>
<td>Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1. Community Planning</td>
<td>Proposals for housing submitted for financing under the National Housing Act - anywhere in Canada</td>
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<td>2. Pedestrian-Vehicular Movement</td>
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<td>3. Project Design</td>
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<td>4. Location</td>
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<td>5. Parking, Driveways and Walkways</td>
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<td>6. Open Space and Landscaping</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Project Amenity Areas and Yard Dimensions - detached and conventional multiple housing, horizontal multiple, apartments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Family Housing - Planning Guidelines</td>
<td>Department of Housing - Province of British Columbia</td>
<td>Aug/75</td>
<td>1. Design Factors in Housing Clusters</td>
<td>Proposal Call Housing Program - Province of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thompson, Berwick &amp; Pratt Architects, Engineers &amp; Planners</td>
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<td>2. Small Open Space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provincial</td>
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<td>3. Recreation Space</td>
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<td>4. Private Units</td>
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<td>5. Management</td>
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<td>6. Noise Control</td>
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<td>7. Building Types</td>
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Table II, con't.
A GRAPHIC COMPARISON OF BUILDINGS DEVELOPED UNDER TRADITIONAL AND DISCRETIONARY ZONING SYSTEMS IN:
KITSILANO
THE WEST END
FAIRVIEW SLOPES
Features:

1. Height of building shall not exceed 35-40 feet.
2. Setback from sidewalk - 20 ft.
4. Sideyards - 7 ft.
5. Double loaded corridor arrangement.
6. Linear open space - lacks privacy and useability.
7. Standardized building design

TRADITIONAL ZONING

KITSILANO

Figure 2
Features:

1. Building at 45 degree angel to take advantage of sun and view.

2. Height and setbacks at the discretion of the Director of Planning. Relaxations to achieve better overall urban design.

3. Useable open spaces.

4. Significant building articulation and imaginative design.

5. A positive contribution to the immediate neighbourhood.

DISCRETIONARY ZONING
KITSILANO

Figure 3
Features:

1. Prescribed height regulations.
2. Setbacks from sidewalk - not less than 15 ft.
3. Sideyards - 7, 10 or 15 ft. according to height.
4. Double loaded corridor arrangement.
5. Standardized building design. (Boxy, lacks individuality in units)

TRADITIONAL ZONING

WEST END

Figure 4
Features:

1. Height of building - interpretative requirement.

2. Setbacks and sideyards - interpretative with respect to design guidelines.

3. Imaginative design and building articulation.

4. Improved social and physical amenities.

5. Positive relation to site and surrounding neighbourhood.

DISCRETIONARY ZONING

WEST END

Figure 5
Features:

1. Previous zoning - CRM 2 & CRM 3 (Commercial/ Multiple Dwelling District).

2. Height of building - not to exceed two storeys plus a cellar or one storey plus a basement.

3. Front yards - not less than twenty-four feet.

4. Side yards - not less than 10 percent of the width of the site on each side of the building; provided that the maximum width of such side yard not exceed five feet.

5. Rear yards - not be less than thirty-five feet.


7. Buildings not sensitive to topography or views.

8. Previous zoning deleted in favour of a modified CRM schedule based on planning policies and design guidelines.

TRADITIONAL ZONING  -  FAIRVIEW SLOPES

Figure 6
Features:

1. Height calculated from average building grades - not to exceed 35 ft. However there are several exceptions, i.e. sun decks, roof gardens & architectural appurtenances - at discretion of Director of Planning.

2. Setbacks and sideyards not regulated in most cases.

3. High degree of building articulation.

4. Courtyard schemes.

5. Positive relation of buildings to sites - views, topography and to neighbouring building.

DISCRETIONARY ZONING

FAIRVIEW SLOPES

Figure 7
the City of Vancouver is filed at the Department of Permits and Licenses accompanied by three to six sets of plans depending on where the project will be built. This application is usually filed by the architect on behalf of his client although the developer himself, agents, contractors, engineers or owners can also file the application.

The information required for a completed development permit application includes scale drawings showing the site plan, elevation, floor and roof plans. The plans must also detail yard sizes and setbacks, size and location of off-street parking and loading spaces, access routes, landscape and grading information, building heights, uses, floor layouts, mechanical systems and the physical relationships to other developments. In addition to these drawings and a legal description of the lot the applicant must provide detailed calculation of the floor space ratio.

The applicant is advised that information on the following concerns would particularly apply to major development proposals and as applicable should be provided at the time of application:

1. An analysis of the effect of the proposed building on adjoining properties and streets in terms of sun, shade, shadow, wind changes and view corridors.
2. An architectural model to demonstrate the massing and appearance of the proposed development.
3. A statement of existing uses for any building being demolished or any change of use proposed.
4. A schedule of the size, and anticipated occupancy of all proposed dwelling units.
5. The maximum or minimum (as applicable) number of parking spaces ALLOWED.
6. Representation by photograph or drawing of the relationship of the proposed development to the surrounding buildings and environment.

Although it is not an official requirement the applicant is encouraged to submit a written statement amplifying the drawings and also explaining the applicant's reconciliation of the proposed
development with the applicable Official Development Plan By-law, Planning Policies and Design guidelines. This recommendation applies to Vancouver's Central Area (Downtown, West End, False Creek, Gastown, Chinatown and Central Broadway Districts) Development Approval Process.

The original application is referred by the Department of Permits and Licenses to the Development Permit Group where it is assigned to a particular Plan Checker. Copies of the application and plans are circulated to Planning Department Study Area Groups, Area Planners, Citizens Groups (if applicable) and the Engineering, Building and Social Planning Departments. The Plan Checker in processing the application may undertake a site visit, check the history (i.e. previous uses, relevant legal decisions regarding the site), the site and proposed development, carry out discussions with the applicant and confer with the other divisions and departments. The plan checker also obtains the advice of and makes recommendations to various panels, groups and committees which are all entitled to evaluate the project in terms of its compliance with the relevant plans, policies and design guidelines and are given varying degrees of discretionary authority for carrying out such a review.

If at this time the development permit submission has major problems a meeting is set up by the plan checker with the architect and the appropriate staff from the Planning Department and if necessary from the Engineering of Social Planning department as well. The concerns about the project are discussed and the applicant usually responds by making the necessary design changes if they believe that they will result in development approval. Upon receiving comments, revised drawings or no changes from the
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT GROUP

A COPY OF APPLICATION CIRCULATED TO:
- Planning Dept study area groups
- Area planning
- Various citizens' groups
- Engineering dept.
- Building dept.

LOCAL AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE ON CERTAIN ITEMS

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FILED IN DEPT. OF PERMITS AND LICENCES & RECORDED IN REGISTRY

ONE & TWO FAMILY OUTRIGHT USE APPLICATIONS ARE PROCESSED BY THE PERMITS AND LICENCES DEPARTMENT

APPLICATION REFERRED TO D.P. GROUP AND A PLAN CHECKER

URBAN DESIGN PANEL ADVISE ON CERTAIN ITEMS FOR LATER CONSIDERATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

PLAN CHECKER PROCESSES APPLICATION:
- site visit, check history, discussion with applicant, liaison with other divisions & departments and formulating a recommendation to the development permit advisory group

CONDITIONAL USE ITEMS

APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO D.P. BOARD ADVISORY PANEL WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

DIRECTORS DECISION CONVEYED TO APPLICANT IF "PRIOR TO" CONDITIONS TO BE MET

PERMIT:
--- APPROVED, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS,
--- REFUSED WITH REASONS

REFUSED - If application is clearly in violation of application requirements i.e. insufficient drawings and information

OUTRIGHT USES AND USES REQUIRING THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

PERMIT: ISSUED OR REFUSED WITH REASONS AFTER BEING CHECKED BY DEVELOPMENT PERMITS GROUP

Figure 8
applicant the project is further processed. It should be noted
that the architect is under no formal obligation to attend such
preliminary discussions. The following is a description of the
roles, functions and responsibilities of these bodies. They
have been organized into two groups; those that act in an advisory
capacity only and those that may be classified as decision making.

Advisory

The Development Permit Advisory Panel - (Central Area) - The
function of the Advisory Panel is to act in an advisory capacity
to the Development Permit Board with respect to Development Per­
mit Applications which are required to be submitted to the Board.
The Advisory Panel attends and participates in all meetings of
the Board. The Panel consists of six persons appointed by City
Council: Two on the advice of the development industry, two
on the advice of the development professions and two
from the general public. The initial term of office for one
member of each of the three groups is one year, the other member
serves for two years.

The Urban Design Panel - The duties of the Panel are to advise
Council, the Director of Planning, or the Development Permit
Board from time to time on the Urban Design of any proposed de­
development or any substantial changes to any previously approved
development after a development permit has been issued. In
addition, the Panel may advise the City Council or any of its
boards on any matter where urban design is involved. For the
purpose of the By-law, "urban design" includes the design
and interrelationship of all physical components of the city.
The Panel's review also includes all civic works such as bridges,
roadworks, parks, beautification projects, transit systems, civic
buildings, and design competitions prior to both the issuance of competition requirements and the subsequent awarding of contracts. It also gives impartial professional advice directly at the appropriate level and at the appropriate time on any proposal or policy affecting the community's physical environment. The panel assists the Planning Department and Council in the formulation of design policy and criteria.

The Urban Design Panel is composed of not less than eight members two of whom are the Director of Planning or his representative and the City Building Inspector. The other six are appointed by Council:

(a) three members of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia.
(b) one member of the Association of Professional Engineers of the Province of British Columbia.
(c) a landscape architect.
(d) the Chairman of the Vancouver City Planning Commission or an alternate named by him.

All members of the Urban Design Panel other than the Civic officials hold office for two years subject to removal or replacement, at the discretion of Council.

The Urban Design Group - The Urban Design Group is part of the Special Services Division of the City of Vancouver's Planning Department. It was formed in 1976 as an in-house consulting group and placed under the direction of an urban designer. The three planners and urban designer who compose the group all have had formal training in architecture. The Urban Design Group's work program for 1977 included:

1. Design Consulting
   - assistance with local area planning and design guidelines.
   - design of beautification projects and park improvements.
- advice to temporary zoning consultant

- participation in or advice on special tasks in Department (e.g. Family Housing Guidelines: Major Streets Task Force; Children's Hospital Liaison)

2. Urban Design Panel secretaryship

3. Development permit review

4. Urban design policy work.12

Study Area Groups - Within the City of Vancouver Planning Department task forces of planners are occasionally set up to develop goals and formulate plans and policies for various special character areas of the city. The task forces sometime include representatives from other appropriate departments such as Engineering and Social Planning. Recent examples of such task forces have been the Downtown Study Team, the Chinatown Planning Group and the Kingsway Task force. In devising overall strategies and guidelines for future development these teams have advisory input into the review of projects proposed for their particular area.

Area Planners - Under the Federally assisted Neighbourhood Improvement Program various areas of Vancouver have been designated for assistance to carry out physical and social improvements. An area planner is assigned to the community in order to organize citizen participation, identify needs and objectives, determine the allocation of financial resources for the projects and to develop a plan for the community. An area planner also reviews and comments on any development proposed for the designated area for which he is responsible.

Decision - Making Bodies

The Development Permit Board - (Central Area) - The duties and
functions of the Board are to receive and approve or refuse such Development Permit applications as may by by-law be prescribed to be brought before the Board. The Development Permit Board may relax any provision of the Zoning and Development By-law. In granting any relaxation the Board is required to have regard to the intent of the By-law, the regulations and policies of any Official Development Plan and such other policies as Council may from time to time determine, including design guidelines. The Board consists of the following persons: The Director of Planning, the Director of Social Planning and the City Engineer. The Chairman is the Director of Planning. In considering applications the Board hears the applicant as well as any other person interested in the application, and before rendering its decision consults with and receives any submissions of the Advisory Panel. All decisions of the Board are delivered in public unless the Board for good and sufficient cause otherwise directs, and the Board must state the reason for its decision.

The Director of Planning - In dealing with application for development permits the Director of Planning may in every case and in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning and Development By-law grant such permits either unconditionally, or subject to conditions, including a limitation in time, or may refuse such permits. The Director of Planning may exercise his discretionary power with regard to the following provisions of the Zoning and Development By-law:

The Director of Planning may relax the provision of the By-law where due to conditions peculiar either to the site or to the proposed development, literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship in any of the following cases:
a) alterations or additions to existing buildings.
b) erection of more than one principle building on one site or structural alterations to two or more principal buildings existing on the same site.
c) required setbacks to off-street parking areas.
d) required screening on the boundary of a parking area.
e) minimum parking or loading requirements.
f) exterior balconies (See appendix VII)

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Zoning and Development By-law or any other By-law and unless he receives a notice of objection from any member of the Development Permit Board, the Director of Planning may in his discretion approve or disapprove applications for development permits relevant to buildings or uses for which the consent of the Development Permit Board would otherwise be required. In the exercise of such discretion the Director of Planning may in every case grant such development permits either unconditionally or subject to conditions including a limitation in time, or he may refuse such permits. The Director of Planning may not exercise such discretion where in his opinion:

(i) The development would have a significant effect on the existing immediate environment.

(ii) the development would create traffic implications that could affect the general environment.

(iii) the height or density of any proposed building would not be in keeping with the general building heights or density in the immediate environment.

(iv) there may be possible significant buildings of heritage merit on the site or in the surrounding area that may be adversely affected by the development.

(v) the design is not of an acceptable standard and may adversely affect public amenity; in this regard the Director of Planning may request advice from the Urban Design Panel.

(vi) the development is such that special public amenities could be considered for density bonus or other special advantages.
Before a development permit application is considered by the Development Permit Board, the Development Permit Advisory Panel and the Director of Planning and Plan Checker considers the plans, information and comments from other divisions and departments and makes a recommendation to the Development Permit Advisory Group. This group consists of representatives from the various city departments including Planning, Building, Engineering, Health and Social Planning. The application falls into one of two groups - either an outright use or a conditional use.

**OUTRIGHT USE:**

(Outside Central Area - False Creek, Fairview, parts of Kitsilano)

These are permitted uses provided the development complies with the provisions of the Zoning and Development By-law.

eg. a house in a RS-1 district

an apartment in a RM-3 zone

(if the project satisfies the setbacks - front, back and side- and height, etc.)

**CONDITIONAL USE:**

Central Area (Discretionary Zone)

These uses may be permitted subject to the regulations, and any other policies, design guidelines or conditions imposed by the Director of Planning or Development Permit Board.

eg. FM-1 development in Fairview Slopes, West End, Downtown False Creek.

If the project is a conditional use, the recommendation of the Development Permit Advisory Group is submitted to the Development Permit Board and its Component Advisory Panel (outlined earlier). The Board's recommendations are considered by the Director of Planning and the permit is either approved, issued subject to conditions or refused with reasons. In the case of outright uses and uses requiring the discretion of the Director of Planning, the permit is issued or refused with reasons after being checked by the Development Permit Advisory Group.
The Planning Department also operates a Preliminary Development Approval Process in the Central Area. This process is recommended when the development proposal may be especially complicated or may have a special impact on the area. It is also recommended for the applicant who might desire discussion and reaction before preparing completed drawings and information. However, the preliminary process requires substantially the same amount of drawings and information though they may be less detailed, and the application can take as long or even longer to process than a completed application.

**Discretionary Authority**

The concept of discretionary authority is fundamental to the operation of the Official Development Plan By-law zoning system and its accompanying planning policies and design guidelines. In all four Official Development Plan By-laws for the Central Area of Vancouver it is stated that, "A significant degree of flexibility is given to architects and others in the preparation of development proposals. A significant degree of discretionary authority is also given to those charged with the interpretation of the policies and regulations."\(^{15}\) With regard to the design guidelines it is further stated that, "the guidelines represent a quality control upon which to base design decisions and judgements. The guidelines prescribe the general criteria for the preparation and approval of development proposals. Various municipal staff and several official civic boards and panels including the Director of Planning, the Development Permit Board, and the Urban Design Panel may in their discretion refuse or require modification to a Development Permit application for failure to meet the standards of the guidelines in whole or in
It is necessary in order to fully comprehend how design guidelines function within Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process to obtain a clearer perception of the discretionary authority concept. Kenneth Culp Davis states that discretion is present in any situation in which "the effective limits on an official's power leave him free to make a choice among possible courses of action." Edwin Pollick identifies discretion to be "an acceptable latitude of judgement based on professional experience and common sense in the solution of a controversy." A general definition of discretion in the legal sense follows this approach: "Discretion is the latitude of decision within which a court or judge decides questions arising in a particular case not expressly controlled by fixed rules of law according to the circumstances and according to the judgement of the court or judge." From an administrative standpoint, discretion may mean "an individualized application of administrative judgement which allows a variable response and solution to problems evolving from changing conditions."

A number of legal scholars have argued that discretionary authority has become essential to problem solving and decision-making in an increasingly complex society. "The discretion available to the administrative process has been a determinative element in granting flexibility required for the solution of technical issues of this industrial era. Presently the interdependence of modern society demands still newer techniques and a more rapid solutions to problems of magnitude emanating from a complex culture....Flexibility is a requirement of the essence to practical and meaningful regulation demanded of modern govern-
ment. Discretion plays a vital role in such adaptability."

Applying these interpretations to Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process in the Central Area and parts of Kitsilano, it can be seen that administrative authority has been enlarged based on more flexible and discretionary means of development review. In an era of greater realization of user requirements in building design as well as increased sensitivity to urban design it became apparent that the development approval process had to be freed from the undue legalism of rigid zoning by-laws in order to provide freedom to adopt the flexibility necessary for the solution of human and technical issues in a period of increasingly complex building procedures. Furthermore, the discretion that is now available to Planning Administrators allows for variable responses and solutions to problems emanating from the different conditions of each building site in the City of Vancouver.

Nonet states that "the narrower the discretion officials enjoy in the implementation of policy, the fewer are the opportunities for interested parties to challenge and influence existing policies." However, with the substantial amount of discretion in Vancouver's revised Development Permit Review procedures one may anticipate greater opportunities for dialogue and debate between the applicant and the administrator. With greater opportunities for all interested parties to challenge, discuss their concerns and formulate policies there are theoretically increased possibilities for the development of buildings which are satisfactory to everyone involved in the housing development process. In addition one may expect the eventual achievement of more effective building solutions over those that
resulted from the very defined and limiting by-law regulations where there were no opportunities for user involvement.

Fundamental to the concept of discretionary authority is that when it is accorded to an administrative agency it must have guidelines and procedural safeguards."23 This explains the role of design guidelines in the City of Vancouver's discretionary Development Approval Process.

Davis argues that "rather than guidelines or procedural safeguards, it is administrative rule-making which is the key to the proper confinement and control of discretion. He insists that agencies through rule making can often move from vague or absent statutory standards and then as experience and understanding develop, to guiding principles and finally when the subject matter permits to precise and detailed rules."24 Concomitantly with his proposal for enlarged rule-making, Davis urged openness as a means for structuring discretionary power. He saw openness as a natural enemy of arbitrariness and called for open plans, open policy statements and open findings and reasons in situations warranting informal discretionary action as well as in more formal realms of decision-making."25 Davis believes that "proper structuring of discretion like the U.S. constitutional principle of checks and balances could pluralize planning while at the same time facilitate control over the boundaries of power."26

Before debating this rule making foundation for discretionary authority it must be pointed out that the design guidelines that are currently used in the City of Vancouver do not represent a set of steadfast rules upon which discretionary authority is derived but rather a set of guiding principles representative of
a consensus of those conversant with aesthetic, urban design and liveability criteria for housing design.

Rule making of course will not eliminate discretion. Wexler states that in law, legal rules do not eliminate the discretion of the judge who makes a legal decision. "If the men who make legal decisions do not make them on the basis of rules then we are afraid that they can only make them as our fantasy tyrants do, on the basis of evil and dishonest motives, biases, mad personal quirks and sheer perversity. We are not confident that men can exercise intelligent and honest personal discretion, and therefore we see no way to make the subjective discretionary reality of decision making acceptable to the people it governs." This fear is evident in many of the responses of one particular group of architects that was interviewed for the purposes of this study. (See following chapter - Category I)

Wexler argues that society clings to the myth of objectivity associated with decisions based on rules while we dismiss discretionary authority as subjective and whimsical. "Because we insist on pretending that we use rules where we do not and cannot, we have not begun to formulate intelligent guidelines for discretionary decision-making, we have not articulated the policies behind our laws nor have we seen or come to grapple with the inconsistencies in those policies or the consequences of them. Because we insist that the men who make decisions are only applying rules, we have not addressed the question how to pick the proper men to administer discretionary guidelines or how to train them to do so. And most important, because we attempt to force what is in fact discretionary decision making into institutions which assume that decisions are based on rules we have not devised
institutions to make subjective, discretionary decision making an honest process, responsive to the tasks it faces and responsible to the people affected by it."\textsuperscript{28}

Viewed in light of Wexler's comments it can be argued that the City of Vancouver's Discretionary Development Approval Process is an exception since institutional arrangements such as traditional zoning which was based on rigidly adhered to rules was replaced with discretionary decision making based on Official Development Plan By-laws. Planning Policies and Design Guidelines which evolved out of considerable academic and professional research, thought and debate. The process further acknowledges that the people administering discretionary guidelines are not simply applying rules but rather have been given a "significant degree of discretionary authority to interpret plans, policies and guidelines in the review of development proposals."

Rules are perceived by many people to possess several advantages over discretionary decision making and guidelines. However, upon closer examination these advantages may be illusory. One argument that is put forth in favour of rules is that they help avoid the injustices of special treatment. Yet does this properly allay fears of biased or dishonest officials, and inconsistent and unfair applications of the rules? If "rules are meant to be broken" discretion is not eliminated nor is special treatment (fair or unfair). As Wexler points out "discretionary decision-making must be even-handed, consistent, non-arbitrary and should lack bias in order to work properly."\textsuperscript{29} Of course there may be occasional abuses of discretionary authority just as there are abuses of rules. Yet the key difference between the two is that the discretionary system is both more open and more
challengeable.

Rules are often justified on the basis of depersonalizing authority thereby eliminating discriminatory special treatment. Yet the opposite end of the scale is that "personal and visible power and leadership decline supplanted by impersonal, anonymous and automatic mechanisms of control and coordination. In area after area of both public and private life, no single identifiable office or individual commands either the knowledge or the authority to make decisions. A search for the responsible party leads through an endless maze of committees, bureaus, offices and anonymous bodies." The maze of committees and panels in the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process have been outlined in this chapter and the expressions of dissatisfaction with all the depersonalized, anonymous atmosphere at Vancouver's Planning Department are elaborated in the following chapter. It can be argued that the Discretionary Zoning system will not provide greater personalization over the former traditional zoning process unless the architect/developer takes the initiative to meet with those who make the recommendations to the official approving bodies. Nevertheless, the discretionary process the architect is given is a substantially higher degree of design freedom than is the case in traditional zoning. In the Traditional Zoning System the architect must submit a development permit application with little if any previous dialogue to an anonymous staff committee that evaluates the proposal according to very rigid rules and regulations. While the architect must still follow the same official development approval procedures under the discretionary system there are theoretically greater opportunities for personalized dialogue at the initial stages.
Another supposed advantage that a rule has over discretion is that "when a rule works to eliminate discretion it determines the solution to a problem in advance." Yet the solution according to a rule may be of poor quality if the rule itself is unresponsive or insensitive to the concerns the rule was intended to improve. In Vancouver previous zoning by-laws regulated the land use, height and density of buildings but did not deal with their architectural design nor how they related to their immediate environment. Thus, the stability and order one may have associated with rules is really illusory if both the architects and planners believed the end product was unsatisfactory from aesthetic, urban design and liveability standpoints. If stability, order and successful solutions are to be found it can be argued that they are to be found in the discretionary process and not in rules.

**Summary**

A comparison between traditional zoning and development control which preceded the introduction of design guidelines and the discretionary zoning system of which the guidelines are an essential component revealed that the latter has a significantly lesser degree of specific design regulation. The discretionary system allows for substantial interpretation, flexibility and creativity whereas traditional zoning consists of rigid rules which are subject to little interpretation and which significantly hinder design possibilities.

The City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process was examined in recognition that design guidelines represent a small part of a much larger process. The advisory and decision-making
groups, panels and committees which have varying degrees of
discretionary authority were discussed.

The chapter concluded with an analysis of the relevant
literature on Administrative Discretionary Authority. The
literature suggests that discretion has become essential to
achieve the flexibility needed to solve the increasingly complex
problems of the current technological age. On closer examination
many of the supposed advantages of rules over discretion may
in practice be quite illusory.
CHAPTER V

Footnotes

1. By-Law No. 4891, "West End Official Development Plans By-Law" (a part of the City of Vancouver Zoning and Development By-Law, Vancouver, B.C., August, 1975), p. 423

2. Kitsilano Design Guidelines Apartment Areas (RM3-B and RM3-A1, Commercial Areas (C-2B), City of Vancouver Planning Department, July 12, 1977), p. 1


4. By-Law No. 4891, p. 423

5. Ibid, p. 423


8. Development Permit Applications Central Area, (City of Vancouver Planning Department, February, 1976), brochure

9. Zoning Department. City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1976


15. By-Law No. 4891, p. 423

16. Downtown Guidelines, p. 1


19. Ibid., p. 2

20. Ibid., pp. 2-3

21. Ibid., p. 21


25. Ibid., p. 51

26. Ibid., p. 61


28. Ibid., p. 8-9

29. Ibid., p. 66

30. Ibid., p. 82-83

31. Ibid., p. 74
CHAPTER VI

Interviews with Architects and Planners

This chapter describes personal interviews conducted with various architects and planners directly involved with or affected by design guidelines and the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process. All of the architects interviewed have had extensive involvement in housing design in the City of Vancouver. Since the number of architects with this kind of experience comprise a surprisingly small segment of the profession it is felt that the representative sampling presented in this chapter is quite comprehensive. Many of the architects that were interviewed were also chosen because they had been in attendance at a workshop on design guidelines that was held at the City of Vancouver Planning Department in the Summer of 1977. The planners who were interviewed are employed by the Vancouver Planning Department and are actively involved in the review of housing designs in the West End and Fairview Slope areas of the city. In addition one of the planners was the former secretary to the urban design panel.

In order to obtain a reasonably good cross-section of opinions and responses four basic categories of respondents were decided upon. These included:

Category I - Architects who had had developments rejected or returned for extensive design revisions in the last twelve months for a failure to meet the intent and spirit of the relevant design guidelines.

Category II - Architects who have had substantial involvement in the research and development of design guidelines.
Category III - Architects who are currently very active in the design of housing in the West End residential area of Vancouver.

Category IV - Three Planners representing the views of the City of Vancouver Planning Department.

Each of the three respondents in the four categories was asked a standard series of questions under three general heading. The letters of the alphabet are used to identify the respective respondent.

**Design Guidelines: In Principle**

In the first question the respondents were asked whether they were in favour of design guidelines in principle and to state their reasons.

**Category I** - (Rejected Architects)

A. "Design guidelines are set up by highly idealistic people who don't understand the implication of the guidelines on the fact. The guidelines provide such high standards that they negate most of the possibilities. You cannot provide the ideals within the economic framework that we have. With land prices fixed by the amount of square footage you can build on it, the net result is that the original ideal of sunshine, views and open space is totally contradictory. You can't build to those densities without building very expensive units."

B. "Guidelines per se are reasonable if they are well thought out and flexible. The danger occurs when the guideline is used by an bureaucracy for it then becomes rules and regulations."

C. "Guidelines are really unnecessary and exist essentially for those individuals in planning departments who are removed from and basically do not understand the design process."

**Category II** - (Research Architects)

A. Indicated that he was in favour of design guidelines in principle but cautioned that "the set of guidelines you put in the hands of the architect to generate a scheme cannot be the same thing as the guidelines that are used to regulate land development or evaluate what the architect has done."
B. Responded that he was in favour of guidelines purely for communication purposes. "To communicate that one group or a number of groups in society have concerns regarding a specific area or site in the city. If I'm building a building on any street in Vancouver I have to take into account what has gone on before, the natural environment, sunlight and all kinds of things and very often while you or I might be capable of doing so others may not take into account the concerns of neighbours. The design guidelines communicate these concerns to builders, architects and developers."

C. Responded that he was in favour of design guidelines in principle with the stipulation that they should be site specific and evolving out of a consultative process between the architect and municipal planner.

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. Indicated that he was in favour of design guidelines in principle. "They are really a collection of motherhood statements and are in most cases too general to be restrictive. They're a guidance to get you through the process to a successful conclusion. Guidelines are a foundation for design - building upon this foundation requires dialogue, ie. you must talk about them at the beginning to understand what everyone thinks the guidelines mean."

B. "If you define design guidelines as another set of criteria they could be if handled properly a good thing. Gee it would be great to be able to design without any restrictions but I suppose what design is all about is responding to criteria and guidelines. The concept is a good thing but what in theory is a good thing becomes in practice a problem....Guidelines make it easier for decision-making when you're trying to establish a standard. I guess there had to be a problem to begin with. There wouldn't be design guidelines unless people felt the design they were seeing or the design they were anticipating was going to be detrimental in some way."

C. Believed the idea of design guidelines was okay and felt that it was probably better to have guidelines as opposed to specific zoning envelopes or empirical formulas for doing architectural design.

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "Most guidelines reflect basic design philosophies so its hard to argue with them since there is basic agreement as to what those philosophies should be. What does seem to be a problem is whether our current guidelines are specific enough to achieve certain environmental and urban design objectives."

B. "Guidelines are a safeguard against bad design. While it is true that good architects are not depending on them they are still necessary because there are good and bad architects just as there are good and bad doctors or lawyers."
C. "Compared to traditional zoning I would say that guidelines and discretionary or incentive zoning represent a substantial improvement in the building development process. I feel that buildings developed under our current system relate much better overall to their surrounding neighbourhoods."

The second question consisted of three parts and asked the respondents whether they believed there was an educational value in design guidelines for i) students of architecture and planning, ii) practicing architects. Part iii) asked the respondents if they felt the City of Vancouver Planning Department should educate architects and developers to the city's concerns for housing through the use of tools such as design guidelines.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

A. (i) "The design guidelines are useful to a student as an exercise of ideals around theoretical constructs but they are useless in the real world." (ii) "No." (iii) "Definitely not. The planning department operates on the basis of misguided ideals and they are stopping me from what I want to do. When the architect uses his seal the public should expect to be protected. It is an indication of his professional abilities and expertise."

B. This respondent believed that it was useful for architects to have a set of guidelines as a mental checklist and for students to introduce them to important design concerns in housing but did not support the idea that it was the responsibility of the planning department to be the educator of architects and developers.

C. (i) "The design guidelines instruct the student in the rules of the game - the game is how you go about getting a development through the city hall bureaucracy." This respondent answered negatively to parts (ii) and (iii) of this question.

Category II - (Research Architects)

A. This respondent believes there is a strong educational component in guidelines for students and practitioners but also believed it was applicable for developers, mortgagors, financiers and users. (iii) Indicated he was supportive of the planning departments role of educator and stated that "a planner's only role may be as an educator."

B. "Education requires communication and the guidelines are pieces of information, pieces of our culture being communicated to other people. Someone has to be doing the educating. Architects (students and practitioners) are just one group that needs to be educated in the whole question. As it turns out
in Vancouver, the planning department probably best serves this purpose."

C. Responded in the affirmative to parts (i) and (ii) and believed all these associated with housing should have a copy of Alexander's Pattern Language. "The architect has to be jarred away from his client getting, bookkeeping and administrative roles back into what architecture is all about." The respondent preferred that the education should be self-directed or through the professional institute.

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. The respondent answered affirmatively to parts (i) and (ii). "Guidelines are what our training is all about and maybe we should have learned it but it's like anything else - you soon forget and you need to be reminded. To me it's a good checklist, i.e. have you thought about these things, can you produce a design which better responds to these concerns. I view them as a design tool - a reminder to what you should be thinking about. (iii) The city has rightly or wrongly tried to list a set of priorities for each particular zone but their tools for education are in many ways too broad to be effective. Education is fine so long as there is a two-way dialogue between the planning department and ourselves."

B. "There is a definite educational value...that's why I'm in favour of them. They should be used as a tool for education and as far as I'm concerned there is nobody that is above that. The people that object to the guidelines are the people that feel they've been held back by the guidelines. It's not true. Their best value is their education value. Once a guy comes up with his idea all the negotiation doesn't change the building that much. In fact the best time to get input is at this stage. The city has more impact through the guidelines than in all the panels, committees, public meetings and on and on and on. The city can get in before the architect has done anything on the project and this is the best time to make their pitch. After that it is up to the architect to interpret the guidelines and communicate his idea to the city. It's the function of each group in the process to communicate to all the other groups what their concerns, desires and values are and therefore not only should planning departments issue guidelines about what their concerns are but architects should issue their own guidelines about their concerns to the planning departments."

C. "Guidelines are useful as a file of information for students, young architects or old architects too set in their way." The respondent was not in favour of the planning department's role as the educator.

Category IV - (Planners)

All three respondents saw an educational component in design guidelines for both students and practitioners. With regard
to whether they thought the planning department should be the educator, all respondents answered in the affirmative although two of the respondents preferred to think of the planning department as a communicator of ideas and policies rather than an educator of architects and developers.

The third question asked the respondents to identify those aspects of design guidelines to which they objected.

**Category I - (Rejected Architects)**

A. "What we need and what we have are totally contradictory. We need a set of minimums not maximums."

B. "There are too many personal, whimsical judgements both within the guidelines and in their application. Everything becomes a judgement call. Who defines what constitutes privacy for example?"

C. "I am not in favour of guidelines altogether. The guidelines are a set of attitudes, beliefs and ideals and may bare little relation to an individual project."

**Category II - (Research Architects)**

A. "Most design guidelines available cannot be used in a generic sense. They are not explicit enough and they are no planning paradigm for marketing a good environment."

B. "The bigger problem than the guidelines themselves is the lack of continuity in the review process. We have to work exceptionally hard to get projects completed and it doesn't do us one bit of good to have the person we're dealing with taking every Friday or Monday off and providing inconsistent planning department replies."

C. "The bureaucrats who administer the guidelines are not necessarily conversant with the design process nor do they always follow the interpretive spirit of the guidelines themselves."

**Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)**

A. "Different individuals will put different weight on the content of the guidelines when reviewing projects. I really get annoyed when they let something through in a discretionary zone that isn't up to snuff."

B. "In some cases guidelines are very limiting; ie. you have to do this and you have to do that. Guidelines must be intent statements rather than rules."
C. "The intent of the guidelines springs from the right ideas and motives but I don't know that it is achievable. It tends to become one more set of gauges for measuring quality and if you try to regulate quality you can't do it. The whole aesthetic realm of architecture and planning is so difficult to regulate."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "To date the guidelines address some physical and social concerns but fail to a large extent in terms of relating each project to its neighbourhood. In the West End for example, the character area guidelines should be further developed and every project considered must make a positive contribution to the West End neighbourhood."

B. "We would like to be as consistent as possible in the use of design guidelines which are interpretive statements. Most of our problems occur when there is inconsistency."

C. This respondent felt there were too many guidelines with insufficient direction on how they relate to each other as well as how they should be used.

Design Guidelines and Architectural Practice

The fourth question asked the respondents whether they felt it was possible to achieve a successful combination of sociological principles as expressed in conceptual design guidelines with the architectural task of creating a building form.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

A. "Beautiful buildings and environments are not the result of sociological design guidelines but rather, money. From a social standpoint anyone can see it is much more desirable and much easier to design at twenty-three units per acre than forty-five but it is very expensive to be able to do this."

B. "Any sociological study is biased to a degree by the person who produced it. It is a collection of his values and attitudes. Sociological studies and design guidelines in order to operate successfully in design must be in a permanent state of change - the studies of a year ago are already obsolete."

C. This respondent did not support or see the need for sociological input into the design process.

Category II - (Research Architects)

A. "Ultimately those who design must be aware of parts of the environment. The question is how they become more aware. Some individuals put as much effort into not becoming aware
as they could in becoming aware."

B. "One hundred years ago we moved away from a more natural means of putting buildings up. We moved into a whole new realm of building, planning and design where buildings became so specialized, so complex - high-rise buildings, large buildings that the owner couldn't build it himself - he had to hire an architect, who in turn hired engineers for acoustics and all kinds of things. The whole process of putting up a building was removed from the individual's ability and as a result a large portion of society totally forgot how to do this - in other words, the cultural, almost instinctual ways of building shelter - you still see it in African where the same form keeps coming out using the same materials - they know what to do. In Greek villages you see very complicated variations of the same idea. Egyptian houses built - everyone knows how to build a doorway or the steps or the lintel over the door should be like this when they build a house; they don't need someone else to draw them some plans. We've forgotten that whole thing and have gotten into the game of very super complex buildings. What's going on with guidelines is purely an education process bringing us back to the point where these things are more culturally in us so as an architect we are taking these things into consideration. I think guidelines are helping in this area."

C. "Architects have tended to care more about form, image and siting than liveability concerns. Design tools such as Alexander's Pattern Language help the architect account for these concerns without compromising to any great extent on the overall form."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. Respondent 'A' believes the process is possible but that in the consideration of various possibilities it is sometimes hard to convince the developer and all the trades that work with him your concepts and objectives. "It's hard to change certain images - we've been building little boxes in traditional zones for a long time now."

B. "We feel that the definition of architecture is an envelope for human activity and that human activity or the behavioural setting which is made up of an individual activity environment is what defines and generates architectural form - so the form is the result of satisfying the activity patterns and values of people. We are not form conscious from the point of view of trying to create a particular form and putting the function within it. The problem has been we've satisfied the behavioural questions, the user desires and the form I don't like but the project is very successful."

C. "I believe the creative genius of the individual surpasses any team approach using sociologists, psychologists or what have you - the more people involved in the process the more it becomes a team approach. The only way I would support the concept is when the program is so complex that it re-
quires more disciplines than one individual is capable of possessing. My experience is that most team solutions do not exceed single solutions in terms of quality."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "We have poor quality architecture and we have overbuilt. Guidelines communicate a philosophy which will help everyone produce better building forms from a user and environmental point of view."

B. "Guidelines help convey to the architect that form in addition to meeting certain aesthetic criteria must also account for privacy, views, open space, and other concerns which contribute to the liveability of the housing. The guidelines will allow certain tradeoffs to be made in achieving the final form."

C. "Any architect creating a form should consider privacy, territoriality, open space, and other liveability concerns. These are the things that are really the basis of any design. Afterall, what is the building for - its really for human occupancy and human activity. The guidelines identify fundamental design principles."

In question five the respondents were asked whether they felt guidelines in any way hindered the creativity of the architect.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

A. "If you were to sit down and design a car that would be available to everyone in the world it would not be a cadillac. It would be a Honda. The people writing these guidelines are telling us to design cadillacs infering that we don't know how to design cadillacs, that we don't have the ability to design them. But were building Hondas because this is what feasible economically and this is what the planning department fails to understand."

B. "There is not one thing in these guidelines that a good sensitive or even an average sensitive architect doesn't think about. He's been trained to ask the same kinds of questions that are asked for example in the G.V.R.D. Checklist."

C. "If guidelines have been set up to prevent poor architecture is this really fair to those individuals who are creative, responsible and competent. I prefer to think the profession and the marketplace weed out incompetence. Why crucify an entire profession because of the inability of a few."

Category II - (Research Architects)

A. "People who are really sensitive don't require guidelines but they are perhaps necessary to prevent the worst cases of archi-
tecture. The really important question is whether you can legislate goodness. You can't do it. What is it?"

B. "I've sat on the Development Permit Board and haven't yet seen a single project that has come in where all the guidelines and elements not even in the guidelines have been considered by even the best architect. I think there is too much emphasis placed on the elitism of the architect knowing it all and putting it all together. I haven't yet seen a project that couldn't be improved. We should at least have a set of guidelines to act as a checklist to make sure we are thinking about the right things. If the architect can grasp what others are saying and synthesize it into the other things he's doing on the site you end up with a better building."

C. "Those who claim limits on creativity have a false confidence. They are assuming one is able to retain experiences and knowledge about needs within themselves - concerns that are gathered over the years - but it is questionable whether it is always possible to pull them all together into one solution."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. "The guidelines are too general to be restrictive. Creativity is often more dependent on what the client wants, what type of zoning you have and the individual ability of the architect than on any set of design guidelines."

B. "We have tried to look at guidelines in a positive manner and not in a limiting way. There are times when you get extremely frustrated especially when you feel you are complying with the intent of the guidelines. That's the key thing, the intent, not the actual guidelines. The negative is if they're taken hard and fast and if they are unable to interpret, if the planning administrator doesn't realize the intent and is just following by the book, it can drive you up the wall. A guideline that says you have so many feet distance from a living room window is really saying that you've got to have light and air in the room, you have to have privacy, inter-relationships between interior and exterior - that's the intent, whether it is forty-nine or fifty-two feet doesn't mean anything. I think there is a group of architects who design as well or even better without the guidelines but that is a select group. A lot of buildings are not designed by architects and thats part of the problem. There are people really incompetent from a design point of view."

C. "Guidelines are unnecessary to competent architects and quite often get in the way of the design process. If an architect in the creative process is responding to a site and a specific program he is going to be very sensitive to the same kinds of things the guidelines are trying to achieve."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "Guidelines are not steadfast rules. In fact on a number of
occasions we can get a solution that is fairly contradictory to the guidelines but can still turn out to be a pretty good design. As planners we cannot dictate the ideal solutions to the architects."

B. "Guidelines provide us with a set of criteria to evaluate individual projects. Within that set of criteria every opportunity is given to the architect to meet the objectives as creatively as possible."

C. "The good architects probably don't need the guidelines—they are creative and sensitive. I don't believe guidelines hinder creativity—what they try to do is to get the architect thinking about site planning and urban design, how to protect the liveability of neighbouring buildings, preventing blockage of views, etc. Too often the architect does not look any further than his own particular site and what his client wants."

The sixth question asked the respondents to state whether they felt design guidelines have encouraged good architecture from the design profession.

**Category I** - (Rejected Architects)

The three respondents in this category did not feel that the guidelines encouraged good architecture from the profession. One respondent thought that design guidelines encouraged safe, standardized architecture but not necessarily good architecture.

**Category II** - (Research Architects)

Two of the respondents in this category believe that guidelines do encourage good architecture from the design profession. One respondent felt that the question of creating better design is totally independent of the development control process. "Better design cannot be dealt with in the public sphere. Most guidelines are not explicit enough to deal with parts of the environment at a level necessary for generating design."

**Category III** - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

Two of the respondents in Category III supported the idea that guidelines encourage good architecture from the design profession.
One respondent stated that "good buildings and good communities were being produced long before the emergence of the guidelines. The quality of life and the quality of housing in a community is not just a factor of the guidelines. There are many other considerations."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "Guidelines provide us with a set of principles to judge an individual development permit application and we can tell quite easily whether the architect has given us a box or a good design. If there are elements of both, the guidelines still provide a basis for discussion. I don't believe that the guidelines are sufficiently specific to allow any architect to design a good building."

B. "Development Permits that have been rejected for a failure to meet the intent of the guidelines come back with what is usually a much better project."

C. "Guidelines are not mandatory but the architects who are trying to meet as many of the guidelines as is possible have submitted on several occasions, some super schemes."

The seventh question asked the respondents whether they felt design guidelines operate as a set of standards, defining solutions and thereby resulting in mundane architecture.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

A. "yes, they do operate as standards. To give you an example a project that was being developed with Federal Government assistance was recently turned down due to a failure to comply with C.M.H.C. design guidelines. The architect and developers secured other means of financing and the project recently received a housing design award. Does this answer your question?"

B. "If its too costly and impractical to fight a unique project through the process then invariably one resorts back to basic compliance with the minimums stated in the guidelines. These minimums lead to minimum mundane designs."

C. "Guidelines do not represent a positive approach to design. If a stiff inflexible attitude is adopted by the planners then a standardized form usually results."

Category II - (Research Architects)

A. "If the guidelines are applied over and over with relatively similar expectations then they are really standards rather than guidelines."
B. "The guidelines are stimulating creativity because they are forcing people to ask themselves whether they are really satisfying certain items and considerations. In that process I have noticed that they certainly stimulate the mundane solutions to add some quality. I've seen a lot of architects go away disgruntled and come back with a better solution and all of this happened because they've been pressed a little closer to the wall and to their own levels of ability."

C. "If the guidelines are taken positively and given a wide range of interpretation by administrators then the end product will not have to be mundane."

**Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)**

A. "Guidelines, when they become quite specific will then regulate and restrict design possibilities. As they stand guidelines are not by-laws and allow for innovative solutions."

B. "One of the purposes of design guidelines is to establish all those criteria - a lot of them are motherhood issues - user need and aesthetic values. I think the intent is okay given the right attitude the result does not have to be mundane and standardized. The thing you have to understand is that a guideline is not a by-law, there is some room for interpretation and negotiation - it's not a hard and fast rule. There are those people who are better at communicating what they want to do, better at innovation and change. We've tried to take the guidelines one step further and use them as generating something new, something a little different."

C. "While some might argue that guidelines prevent the worst things from happening they don't necessarily create the best architecture either."

**Category IV - (Planners)**

A. "No, not at all. Our reasons for developing design guidelines was to achieve higher quality design and better solutions to design problems over the mediocre boxes that exist in areas like the West End."

B. "The guidelines are for reference and they are quite flexible. We feel the solutions are substantially less mundane since we started using guidelines."

C. "I wouldn't say so. With discretionary zoning there are hardly any restrictions as compared to traditional zoning where you have specified setbacks, sideyards, etc. In discretionary zoning there may not be any height or building envelope restrictions. In traditional zones, the architect works backwards. He is given a fixed envelope and tries to fit his building into it. Then the result is very often mundane. With discretionary zoning and design guidelines we are working on the basis of a different premise - how do you best relate a building to its environment and users?"
Design Guidelines: The Process

The eighth question asked the respondents to evaluate the current use of design guidelines within the City of Vancouver's Development Approval Process.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

A. "The way guidelines are used in Vancouver it is impossible to design a project that complies with all the principles. If we were to give the project to the people in the hall, tell them what the budget is, what the client wants and what the density has to be in order for the project to be an economical proposition they wouldn't be able to conform to their own guidelines."

B. "When guidelines go into print they become inflexible in their application. They can be as irrefutable as the previous zoning requirements especially if they're applied by a person who is not equally qualified or skilled."

C. This respondent stated that he felt design guidelines have unnecessarily delayed and complicated the development approval process.

Category II - (Research Architects)

A. "Guidelines are pieces of information and part of a context. They are distributed by somebody, they are interpreted by somebody, they are evaluated by somebody and they are acted upon by somebody. But they are only a part of the process. In Vancouver's Development Permit process inherently guidelines will be in conflict and a means of resolving that conflict, or coming to some agreement must be developed. The planning department develops some broad encompassing goals and the methods to achieve those goals are suspect. The implementation suffers as the guidelines don't seem to be working. The problem may then be the ways people respond to the guidelines and this can result from the process itself. If the process is perceived to be wrong then the guidelines will be seen this way also. The evaluating is often done at a level that is too far removed from the design process."

B. "One wonders how decisions are made on what are the relevant guidelines. Are all the guidelines necessary for a particular site? Do we need more guidelines? In certain instances the impression received is that someone at city hall has the definitive book of guidelines that have been passed on down through the years and is applying them to every project."

C. "The officials and the guidelines they produce are in many cases too late into the game to be effective and the guide-
lines do not specifically relate well enough to each site which is unique. Another problem is that the people who draw up the guidelines usually don't have a hand in administering them."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. "If we could only get the qualified people from the urban design group, for example, or the director of planning involved from the very beginning we'd be able to save a great deal of time and expense. Why must the unqualified people waste time assessing projects and interpreting the guidelines when the design is eventually evaluated by the people who are qualified."

B. "Once a planning department gets over one guy there's a problem in interpretation. You see they've gotten together and said maybe we should have the guidelines so we can all follow the rules. The guidelines make it easier for decision-making and when you're job depends on it you like to avoid making it. There are times when you get frustrated, especially when you are complying with the intent of the guidelines. If they're taken hard and fast by a planning administrator who is going by the book then it can drive you up the wall. Guidelines can then become dangerous."

C. "Guidelines do not necessarily correct the assessment process becuase one gets incompetence in the interpretation of the guidelines themselves."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "Our guidelines can't be too idealistic - motherhood statements. To us they are minimum standards, to certain developers they are ideals. The guidelines are operating as a safeguard against bad designs. While it is true that guidelines are for reference and do not form a part of by-law regulations it should be understood that they are interpretive but only to a degree. This is to say that guidelines make recommendations on usable open space in a housing development. How you provide for that open space is interpretive but nevertheless, you must provide for it somehow."

B. "The guidelines are needed for those developers who treat the discretionary zones as a heyday with an attitude that I can do anything I want here. With most developers and architects these guidelines are attainable and they are quite flexible. Through the process we are able to sit down with the architect to establish what particular principles are impossible to meet, what principles should be relaxed and what tradeoffs can be made."

C. "Guidelines set certain criteria which development must adhere to in order to meet the City's objectives. However in order for the process to work properly, the guidelines
must be looked at in the context of what policies you have for a particular area. The Official Development Plan By-law sets out some regulatory requirements but the guidelines also have to be related to various planning policies for an area. Every architect should have a working knowledge of this whole process."

The ninth question asked the respondents whether they felt City of Vancouver Planners have been given too much discretionary authority in the evaluative use of guidelines to review project designs.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)

All three respondents in this category believed there is too much discretionary authority given to planners in the review process.

Category II - (Research Architects)

The three respondents in Category II believed that the amount of discretionary authority was necessary to ensure the successful operation of the discretionary zoning system. One respondent stated that there have been occasional abuses of the system by some planners while another respondent stated;

"There are so many checks and balances along the way that any individual's statement or position is minute. Where there is some real effect is when you get the Director of Planning who is not knowledgeable in a certain area or appreciative of a major concern and sees the project from some incomplete basis or has some bias or has a valid alternative idea. You end up forcing the solution for that site to be something acceptable to that person. Discretion is necessary because the city is full of different lots and conditions and you need that discretion. Some person may be unduly penalized because something is happening on the adjacent lot. If all lots and conditions were the same then we'd be pretty certain on what we'd allow."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. This respondent felt there was tremendous potential in discretionary zoning for advancing not just innovative ideas for housing but also the overall quality of housing design.
Respondent A was satisfied with the level of discretion in Vancouver's Development Approval Process.

B. "I prefer discretionary attitudes to following rules hard and fast. In order to prefer discretion you have to be able to communicate and discuss things with people and rationally explain to them why you're doing something. A building designer who's building his own house would rather have a set of rules to build - he'd rather not discuss it - he just wants his permit and may not want discretionary authority."

C. This respondent believed that in certain cases there is too much discretionary authority "especially when arbitrary decisions are made by inflexible, unqualified clerks who don't understand the process."

Category IV? (Planners)

All three respondents in this category believe the amount of discretionary authority allocated to planners is justifiable in order for design guidelines and discretionary zoning to operate properly.

The tenth question asked the respondents whether they believed qualified people were evaluating housing projects designs within The Vancouver City Planning Department. All nine architects interviewed replied that they felt in many cases people who weren't properly qualified were evaluating their projects. The Plan Checker was frequently cited as the member of the Planning Department who has a great deal to do with the evaluation but is the least qualified to perform this task.

A few of the reasons mentioned most often were:

a) The Plan Checker does not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the design and building process.

b) The Plan Checker is not capable of properly interpreting the guidelines.

One of the planners responded that many members of the city staff who are involved with evaluation have been in private practice and have built buildings - "They've been through the
process." This respondent felt the criticisms of plan checkers were unjustified and that the problem may lie in the fact that the plan checker's job specification is not clearly defined. Two of the respondents in Category IV did state that in certain cases the architects may be right in their assessment that they are not being evaluated by equally qualified people.

The eleventh question asked the respondents if they could suggest ways that design guidelines could be improved.

Category I - (Rejected Architects)
Respondents A and C did not offer any suggestions on how guidelines could be improved. Respondent B believes guidelines are a good thing but only if they operate as mental checklists to help a designer under tremendous pressure to get a satisfactory project out. This respondent also stated that guidelines may be okay for the review process so long as the people reviewing a project understand the design process.

Category II - (Research Architects)
A. "Guidelines must be more specific and there should be fewer of them. There should be ten to twelve fundamentally important statements that should be said by the public sector to protect people from themselves. But guidelines must be stated so that there is a great deal of flexibility."

B. "Guidelines have to evolve with additional knowledge, with changing conditions. There has to be an annual complete requestioning so that there is a cyclical process going on. This way you're building on what really is sound, you're fine tuning what is not completely sound but is partially sound and you're rejecting those things that are inapplicable."

C. "The client, user and architect - all three should have a hand in preparing and administering guidelines. This is a tough thing to do because its hard to get the public involved and it can be quite costly."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)
A. "The guidelines must be constructive verbal statements that
are not stifling right of the bat. The important thing is not the guideline so much as the dialogue. Guidelines are necessary to tell you what the dialogue is going to be about. The dialogue is essential to allow us to express our concerns and the client's concerns to the guys in the hall. We haven't published these as a set of guidelines for the people at City Hall but we are going to have that dialogue."

B. "All of the guidelines for housing design could be put together in some unified whole. Every year they are reviewed. Its got to be a process. Guidelines should never be pat if there are going to be new guidelines or if they are going to be withdrawn because its out of date - there is no reason for that guideline anymore. They should be done on a yearly basis not in between though. Ideally, some kind of conference where you would invite representatives from architects, planners, C.M.H.C., from everyone in the process from HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association) to U.D.I. (Urban Development Institute) and have a discussion of the guidelines and have a feedback. I guess the municipality, if they're the government will have the last say but they have an opportunity to hear everyone's input and guidelines could be questioned for their validity. Try to have guidelines rejustified each year. If you couldn't get through all the guidelines once a year then there's too many guidelines. If that task is too difficult - if a guy has to go through the process everytime he does a project, surely the city can do it once a year. Its a way of keeping the number down."

C. "There are too many guidelines (ie. C.M.H.C. vs. the City's). We should have fewer guidelines developed from clearer priorities."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "Our current guidelines are lacking in the environmental aspects, ie. there are too many architectural guidelines when we should have more urban design guidelines. The guidelines should encourage projects which in some way will make a contribution to the surrounding neighbourhood."

B. "Guidelines must be developed to encourage buildings that relate positively to neighbouring buildings as well as the immediate community."

C. "Of all the guidelines some are good, some are bad and some are vague. What we should aim for is some consolidation of the guidelines. There should be a general set of guidelines which are applicable in all situations. Whether its False Creek or Fairview Slopes, certain concerns for liveability are almost the same. We always talk about orientation, sun, views, etc. - these things don't change. What should be identified for each area are guidelines which are peculiar to that particular situation. Each area is different in character. Guidelines should be reviewed whenever necessary and at
least on an annual basis. We don't have this directive from Council. They think that once we have guidelines its fine but I think its wrong because they could be tested and there could be problems. I think the real problem is that there are so many different guidelines architects get confused."

The twelfth and final question asked the respondents to suggest recommendations to improve the operation of the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Review Process.

**Category I - (Rejected Architects)**

A. "The people reviewing the projects should have a minimum of five to ten years training with an architect, contractor or developer before working in planning. They must understand the building process thoroughly."

B. "If a developer builds a lousy building he's going to suffer badly. The market takes care of developers much more stringently than city hall can ever hope to do. The responsibility is forced upon developers by the market and they are quickly finding out that good architects are worth employing. The people at City Hall must get rid of all the misconceptions that are tying up the building process - ridiculous notions that noise will diminish if you build a 25' yard instead of a 20' yard."

C. Respondent C questioned the rights of everyone who sets themselves up as an evaluator in the process without the necessary qualifications which will produce sound evaluations.

**Category II - (Research Architects)**

A. "Some reality must be established in the process. The increased cost and level of energy in the evaluation process may be greater than the cost of increasing the amenity you are trying to control. Then you are already in the diseconomy, all ready at a point where the more you try to increase quality by these regulations the more costly it will be and the greater that cost will be than if you had put it in initially. The process must be simplified and made more explicit. It must be more accessible, more personal and better understood."

B. "I recommended that there be a weekly cycle so that if a project ever came in by Wednesday Noon it would hit the following week cycle and all the meetings at City Hall were set up on that cycle so that every week or two weeks there was a constant repeating of the meetings. Projects would have to go into and get through the cycle and cause the people to complete the agenda for that meeting."

C. "The people producing the design guidelines are not the ones using them to evaluate projects in the review process. I
think there is confusion with regard to the intent of the guidelines as a result and this inevitably slows the process."

Category III - (Architects Active in the West End of Vancouver)

A. "The process must be less secretive. The criteria for evaluating design whether it is guidelines, planning policies, etc. has to be talked about and understood right from the beginning. The secrecy by which all the committees operate is silly and non-productive - its design by correspondence. I don't mind having other people involved but let's get the right people assessing the project at the beginning and not at the end when its too late."

B. "The process must maintain flexibility by having the guidelines, policies, etc. read as intent statements and not as rigid rules. If we are talking about planning departments in general, those who administer must fully understand what the intent means and should not adopt stiff, inflexible attitudes in the review of projects."

C. "The process is too slow for smaller projects and perhaps a two-stage development process may be better. A scheme would be reviewed very quickly - yes, no or modify and preliminary approval would be obtained. Then you sit down and work out the protracted detail together in order to obtain final D.P.A. approval."

Category IV - (Planners)

A. "We need more qualified people particularly in the discretionary zones. The people who make the final decisions are not very design oriented so we get compromises. I think a separate department of architects, urban designers and planners should be set up to handle D.P.A.'s only. This way a project would be followed by the same people from start to finish and would be assessed by qualified people."

B. "Currently up to sixty percent of our time is spent with development permits and we are able to devote less and less time to actual planning. I don't think we can eliminate the review and evaluation by the planner and architect but if well qualified people handle more of the review process, I believe that process will improve and we will have more time to devote to more long range planning."

C. "The process has so many steps. What complicates it further is that you have community involvement. Whereas a normal application may take eight weeks it could be four months. The architect has to work with a neighbourhood group to solve a design problem and this slows the process. There is more citizen involvement in the discretionary zones since notice boards go up and anyone can voice their objections. At the moment there are two ways to file a development application. One way is the complete application and the other is the pre-
liminary form. Whether its a preliminary or complete it takes the same amount of time and when you put in a complete application after submitting a preliminary you double up the time that it takes. The real problem is that departments like Engineering look at a D.P.A. the same way whether its complete or not. I think we have to look into ways of shortening the preliminary process."

Summary of the Interview Responses

Design Guidelines: In Principle

1. Ten of the twelve respondents stated that they were in favour of design guidelines in principle. The two respondents opposed to the guidelines were in Category I.

2. All twelve respondents stated that they believed there was educational value in design guidelines for students of architecture and planning. The specific educational values most frequently cited was greater understanding of design. Ten respondents also believed there was an educational value in design guidelines for practicing architects but two respondents in Category I answered negatively to this question. Eight respondents supported the idea of having the Planning Department educate the architectural profession and developers to their concerns for housing through the design guidelines. The three respondents in Category I were opposed to this idea while one respondent in Category II believed that education should be the architect's own responsibility.

3. It is difficult to synthesize the varied replies that were received in response to this question. However it is apparent that a majority (eight) respondents were critical of Planning Department administrators who occasionally apply the guidelines as if they were hard and fast rules - thereby producing arbitrary and inconsistent decisions. Two respondents objected to guidelines which bare little relation to individual projects; one
respondent felt there were too many guidelines while another thought they should be more urban design oriented. 

Design Guidelines and Architectural Practice

4. Eight of the twelve respondents believed that it was possible to achieve a successful combination of sociological principles as expressed in conceptual design guidelines with the architectural task of creating a building form. A ninth respondent supported sociological input but only when the building program is so complex that it requires more disciplines than one individual is capable of possessing. The three respondents opposed to this concept were in Category I.

5. Eight of the twelve respondents did not believe that design guidelines in any way hindered the creativity of the architect. The reason most often cited was that guidelines are not specific enough to place limits on creativity. Three respondents in Category I and one respondent in Category III believed guidelines restrict an architect to some degree.

6. Seven of the twelve respondents stated that they felt design guidelines have encouraged good architecture. One respondent in Category II felt that the creation of good architecture is totally independent of the development control process including design guidelines. Another respondent in Category III stated that good housing and good communities were a factor of many other considerations besides guidelines. Three respondents in Category I did not feel that design guidelines encourage good architecture from the profession.

7. Seven of the twelve respondents stated that they did not feel design guidelines operate as a set of standards, defining solu-
tions and thereby resulting in mundane architecture. Three respondents in Category I and one respondent in Category III felt guidelines do operate as standards while one respondent in Category II thought guidelines are occasionally applied as standards.

**Design Guidelines: The Process**

8. When asked to evaluate the current use of design guidelines in the City of Vancouver's Development Approval Process a majority of respondents (nine) cited the sometimes inflexible and arbitrary attitudes of planning department personnel who are in charge of interpreting the guidelines when reviewing projects. Two respondents in Category IV thought the guidelines have prevented poor designs from making an appearance in the city.

9. Nine of the twelve respondents did not feel that Planners had been given too much discretionary authority in the evaluative use of guidelines to review project designs. Three respondents in Category I believed that planners had too much discretionary authority.

10. All nine architects interviewed did not believe they were being evaluated by equally qualified people and cited plan checkers and other non-architecturally trained personnel who did not fully understand the design process or who are not capable of interpreting the design guidelines. One of the planners responded that such criticisms were not justified and stated that the problem may lie in the fact that certain jobs in the planning department are not well enough defined.
Two planners were sympathetic in certain cases with the criticisms raised by the architects.

11. Eight respondents suggested ways of improving design guidelines. Three respondents, one each in Categories II, III and IV respectively, stated that guidelines should continue to evolve and change according to an annual review process. Three respondents, again one each from Categories II, III and IV stated that there should be fewer and more specific design guidelines. One respondent in Category II suggested that the client, user and architect should have input into the preparation and administration of the guidelines. Two respondents in Category IV stated that guidelines should have more urban design content.

12. Four of the respondents made suggestions which were directed towards speeding up the Development Permit Approval Process. These included a proposal for a regular weekly cycle of review, revisions to the preliminary review process, more efficient use of planning departments time (ie. having a separate group of architects, planners and urban designers to review the projects). Six respondents suggested that better qualified people must be hired for the review process and two respondents stated that the process must be less secretive and more open.

Conclusions:

A Note on Category I Respondents - The consistently negative responses from the three architects in Category I deserves special attention. In this study the author attempted to present the viewpoints of a valid representative sampling of architects who have been involved with housing and design guidelines in the City of Vancouver. It was felt that such a sample would not be complete
without the views of those architects whose projects had been rejected or sent back for extensive design revisions because of a failure to meet the intention and spirit of the relevant design guidelines. The overwhelmingly negative attitudes that were obtained in these interviews may suggest that these architects feel that it is the design guidelines which are in some way holding them back and preventing them from securing development permits for their projects. In many cases what is in fact holding them back is the poor quality of designs they have submitted to the planning department. This assessment has come from both the planning department as well as a number of private architects interviewed for this study. There may be several reasons for this including an inability to design, pressure from the client-developer or personal motivation. In essence the design guidelines have played an important role in preventing poor quality housing design from being built in Vancouver.

On the basis of the information obtained through the personal interviews that have been outlined in this chapter the following conclusions have been reached:

1) The concept of design guidelines is favourably looked upon by the architectural and planning professions.

2) There is a definite educational value in design guidelines for students and practitioners of architecture and planning. The City of Vancouver Planning Department is generally supported in its role as an educator of architects and developers on the city's concern for housing through information tools such as design guidelines.

3) The single most objectionable aspect of design guide-
lines which is most often mentioned by the architects in the role of the planning department administrators who occasionally apply guidelines in a spirit other than that for which they were intended, ie. As hard and fast rules.

4) Both architects and planners support the idea that it is possible to achieve a successful combination of sociological principles as expressed in conceptual design guidelines, with the architectural task of creating a building form.

5) Both architects and planners do not support the idea that design guidelines hinder the creativity of the architect.

6) There is less conclusive support amongst the architects for the idea that design guidelines have encouraged the profession to produce good architecture. However in a number of interviews several architects and planners stated that they thought the guidelines probably prevent the worst designs from being built.

7) It is not generally believed that design guidelines operate as a set of standards defining solutions and thereby resulting in mundane architecture. However, it is at the same time suggested that members of the planning department poorly trained and unaware of the complexities of the design process attempt to apply interpretive guidelines as a set of standards.

8) Evaluation of the current use of design guidelines typically mentioned the sometimes inflexible and arbitrary attitude of certain Planning Department personnel in charge of interpreting the design guidelines in project review.

9) It is not felt that Planners in the City of Vancouver's Planning Department have been given too much discretionary authority in the evaluative use of design guidelines.
10) A majority of architects do not believe that projects are being evaluated by equally qualified people in the development review process.

11) Design guidelines should evolve and change through annual examination and only the most relevant guidelines should remain.

12) Major improvements to the Development Permit Review Process should include some methods for speeding up the process and having more qualified people in charge of it.
CHAPTER VII

Conclusions

This chapter consists of five parts. The first section outlines several recommendations for the future use of design guidelines based on the information derived from the case study. The second part presents an evaluation of the validity of the hypotheses. The third section evaluates the concept of design guidelines in principle particularly in light of the arguments which are made against them. The fourth part describes the study's relevance to the practice of urban planning while the final part consists of some recommendations for further research.

Findings for the Future Use of Design Guidelines

1. That design guidelines for housing development should continue to be used in the City of Vancouver.

Comments

This finding is based on three factors:

a) the favourable support for guidelines amongst the architects and planners that were interviewed for this study.

b) the continuing existence of many of the concerns for livability and urban design which led to the introduction of design guidelines in the first place, and

c) the essential role that the guidelines play in the City of Vancouver's Discretionary Development Permit Approval System.

2. That all architecture and planning students and practitioners can learn from design guidelines.

Comments

This finding is based on two factors:
a) the belief in the educational value of design guidelines as expressed by the architects and planners interviewed, and

b) the need for a communication device which will allow the City of Vancouver's Planning Department to explain their policies and concerns for housing, to architects, planners and developers.

3. That design guidelines must be applied as intent statements and not as hard and fast rules.

Comments
This finding is based on three factors:

a) the very limited literature that discusses how guidelines should operate,

b) the opinions and attitudes of the architects and planners interviewed for this study, and

c) the role guidelines play in discretionary decision-making.

4. That design guidelines maintain their flexible nature so as not to hinder the creativity of the architect thereby resulting in mundane designs and standardized rules.

Comments
This finding is based on four factors:

a) the discussion on the types and intended use of design guidelines,

b) the comparison between the traditional and discretionary development control systems,

c) the literature on administrative discretion and
d) the interviews of the architects and planners.

5. That Planners in the City of Vancouver's Planning Department
maintain the amount of discretionary authority they have been
granted for the development review process so long as this
authority is applied in a non-arbitrary, consistent and fair fashion.

Comments
This finding is based on three factors:

a) the importance of discretionary decision-making to the
more flexible development control system,
b) the literature and discussion on administrative discretion,
c) the comments received from the personal interviews.

6. That the most qualified people be in charge of the City of Van-
couver's Development Permit Review Process.

Comments
This finding is based on the comments and opinions of the architects
and planners interviewed for the study and on the literature con-
cerning administrative discretion.

7. That design guidelines should evolve and change through
annual examination and only the most relevant guidelines should
remain.

Comments
This finding is based on the information obtained through the
personal interviews.

II Evaluation of the Hypotheses

The hypothesis of the study was that although design guide-
lines are intended to be generative, their use for evaluative
purposes in terms of the administrative review of projects has
created a widely held belief amongst many architects and developers
that they are being used in a regulatory fashion. It was further hypothesized that the discretionary zoning system may not, in fact, be any more flexible than the traditional zoning system it was intended to replace. The validity of the hypotheses will be analyzed on the basis of the following four sources of information contained both in the main body of the thesis and the case study:

1. An identification of three types of design guidelines under generative, regulatory and evaluative categories.

2. A comparison between traditional and discretionary zoning and development control systems.

3. The relevant literature on administrative discretion.

4. A review of the conclusions derived from the personal interviews which are directly relevant to the evaluation of the hypothesis.

1. Categories of Design Guidelines

The majority of design guidelines currently used in the Vancouver area are not highly regulatory in nature. Apart from the notable exception of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Site Planning Handbook, most guidelines are flexible and interpretive, attempting to assist the architect in generating optimal housing developments which satisfy both user needs and urban design considerations. It should be noted that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is currently revising the Site Planning Handbook recognizing that many of its principles are no longer realistic or desirable. It is expected that a much more flexible guide will emerge from the Corporation.

With regard to format, many of the design guidelines used in
Vancouver tend to follow Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language to varying degrees. The generative nature of Alexander's Patterns consequently have a significant effect on the character of the design guidelines. However, there is currently some debate as to whether the Pattern Language is generative and flexible or prescriptive and regulatory. Protzen has stated that "although the Pattern tells you everything that is essential for dealing with a particular problem there is in several cases no opportunities to solve it in an essentially different way."  

However Alexander has argued that the "designer will choose any patterns that are desired, will be able to change their content and format whenever necessary and will maintain the option to develop his or her own patterns."  

Based on the information presented so far, design guidelines when segregated from the process in which they are applied are for the most part not regulatory in nature.

However, since design guidelines are also used in an evaluative manner by planners in the housing development review process it is possible that generative guidelines could be used in a regulatory fashion by a planner who is applying arbitrary personal judgements or who is not conversant with the interpretive nature of the guidelines. The degree to which this practice takes place is assessed in the case study section.

2. Traditional vs. Discretionary Zoning and Development Control

Because design guidelines are only a part of a much larger process (The City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process) an analysis and comparison was made between the traditional zoning and development control which preceeded the introduction of design guidelines and the succeeding discretionary zoning system.
with which the guidelines are currently associated.

The comparison revealed that the new discretionary zoning system is considerably less regulatory than traditional zoning. Whereas traditional zoning consists of highly regulatory, inflexible rules which are subject to very little interpretation, discretionary zoning is based on by-laws, planning policies and design guidelines which allow a substantial degree of interpretation and flexibility. Whereas traditional zoning provides rigid mathematical formulas and building envelopes into which an architect must fit his scheme, discretionary zoning and development control begins with a different premise: How to best design a building to meet user needs and aesthetic/urban design criteria. Apart from maximum standards for building density in terms of floor space ratio and minimum requirements for parking and loading the discretionary zoning system does not dictate rigid mathematical formulae or building envelopes.

With traditional zoning highly regulatory standards for building height and setbacks limit the creative possibilities for the architect and often lead to mundane project designs. Conversely, under discretionary zoning, the architect is given every opportunity to provide a creative building which makes a positive contribution to the surrounding neighbourhood and satisfies the needs of its users.

This comparison has shown that in theory there is a considerably less degree of regulation associated with discretionary zoning and its accompanying design guidelines particularly when contrasted with the traditional form of development control. The hypotheses is not well supported by this comparative analysis.
3. The Literature on Discretionary Authority

The literature on administrative discretion suggests that discretion has become essential for the flexibility necessary to achieve solutions to increasingly complex problems of the current technological age. Undue legalism and rigid rules can no longer provide for more rapid and adaptable responses to ever changing conditions. This provides a rationale for the adoption of discretionary development control over traditional zoning in many parts of Vancouver and gives further support to the idea that the discretionary process is considerably less regulatory and less likely to paralyze creative problem solving. The literature review also revealed that procedural safeguards and "guidelines" are essential to the proper functioning of discretionary decision-making. In short, the information contained in this section gives little support to the hypotheses.

4. A review of the conclusions drawn from the personal interviews and directly relevant to the evaluation of the hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The concept of design guidelines is looked upon favourably by the architectural and planning professions.

2. The Vancouver Planning Department is generally supported in its role as an educator of architects and developers, on the city's concerns for housing through tools such as design guidelines.

3. The objectionable aspect of design guidelines which is most often mentioned by the architects is their application by planning department administrators as hard and fast rules which was not the intention.

5. The idea that design guidelines hinder the creativity of an
architect is not supported by the representative sampling of architects and planners.

6. It is not felt that design guidelines operate as a set of standards defining solutions and thereby resulting in mundane architecture. Nevertheless, it was suggested by a majority of architects who are unaware of the design process to attempt to apply interpretive guidelines as a set of standards.

7. It is not believed that planners in Vancouver's Planning Department have been given too much discretionary authority in the evaluative use of design guidelines to assess projects submitted for development permits.

Comments & Conclusion

The case study has revealed that based on all of the theoretical comparisons, ie. (the on paper analysis) which included:

a) a discussion of the content and the intended application of the majority of design guidelines

b) a comparison between the traditional and discretionary zoning systems

c) a review of the literative on discretionary authority.

There is insufficient support to attest to the validity of the two hypotheses that were made at the outset of the thesis.

However, it is of primary importance to note that the case study also revealed a basic contradiction between the theoretical application of design guidelines and their application in practice. The hypotheses that the design guidelines are perceived to be regulatory and that the discretionary zoning system was no more flexible than the inflexible traditional zoning system it was intended to replace, was given a high degree of support by the com-
ments obtained in the personal interviews with members of the architectural profession in Vancouver. The inflexible and arbitrary decision-making on the part of ill-trained planners was offered as a frequent complaint concerning the discretionary zoning system. At this point it is important to clarify two aspects:

1) It was not the design guidelines themselves that were perceived to be regulatory in nature. Rather it was the sometimes arbitrary and capricious manner by which the guidelines were being applied by planning department members in the development approval process that was cited.

2) The discretionary zoning system was criticized for being as inflexible on occasion as the traditional zoning system it was intended to replace. However the majority of architects nevertheless believe the new system to be a vast improvement (with regard to flexibility) over the old. The problem once again lay with certain individuals in the planning department who were perceived to be incompetent in participating in the discretionary system.

An inherent difficulty in the overall system is that the amount of discretionary authority held by city planning bodies is not easily quantified. Therefore in attempting to regulate the somewhat nebulous aspects of design and aesthetics the discretionary judgements of the planners will often contradict those of the architects submitting schemes. Discretion must be seen to be an objective decision based on sound principles rather than personal whim in order for the system to succeed. The graphic comparison of buildings developed under the two systems
suggest the improvements gained through the adoption of the discretionary system!

An Evaluation of Design Guidelines in Principle

On the basis of all the information collected it is concluded that design guidelines serve a useful function in encouraging housing developments that will meet a variety of user needs and will relate well to surrounding neighbourhoods.

As outlined in the Category I responses in Chapter V, there still exists a body of opinion which is against design guidelines for the following reasons:

1) the difficulty in establishing aesthetic standards which can be objectively judged.

2) the difficulty in securing competent architects and planners who are capable of passing judgements on the designs of other architects.

3) a belief that the guidelines will encourage regimentation and bureaucratic paralysis of the creative process.

4) arbitrary and rigid interpretations of the guidelines by planning administrators.

However, the flexible, interpretive and generative nature of many of the design guidelines provide the opportunities for architects and planners to work cooperatively in producing projects that not only meet city objectives for housing but also the objectives of the parties in charge of development. Furthermore, the case study has shown that design guidelines do not inhibit the creativity of the architect nor do they encourage mediocrity in architecture. It must also be stated that the guidelines have play-
ed an important role in preventing the worst examples of architecture from being built.

It is concluded that design guidelines have contributed to a higher standard of design without inhibiting the creative process of the architect or encouraging mediocre designs.

**Relevance of the Study to Urban Planning**

It is the broad objective of urban planners to create communities which are useful, attractive, convenient environments for all. With an increasing awareness and sensitivity to user needs for housing design as well as the developing concern for the ways buildings relate to each other in an urban design sense, the design guidelines represent a methodological tool which may help provide the means to all of the above ends.

Private and public development should be coordinated to increase the beauty of North American cities and to reduce the physical and visual chaos by which they are currently characterized. Design guidelines and discretionary development control represent unique attempts at providing an overall development strategy based on sound user needs and aesthetic/urban design principles but which at the same time tries to ensure the maximum flexibility necessary for design freedom and the opportunity to respond quickly to increasingly complex conditions.

In the future planners will continue to be called upon for their assistance in both drafting and applying design guidelines. The quality of the guidelines that are produced as well as the process in which they are used will have significant effects on the physical and social environments of our cities.
Recommendations for Further Research

Further investigation into the impact and effectiveness of design guidelines could be conducted by following various projects through the City of Vancouver's Development Permit Approval Process from preliminary design stages to final presentations cataloging a list of all changes and refinements in accordance with the intent of the design guidelines. In this way the full impact and effect of the guidelines on the design of housing in response to user needs and aesthetic/urban design criteria could be assessed.

It is recognized that users can play an important role in the housing design process. In many cases such involvement has lead to a reduction in arbitrary decision-making on the part of architects and planners and has resulted in building which achieves a greater satisfaction of user needs and desires. The ways and means of involving users in the design and planning process certainly warrant investigation.
CHAPTER VII

Footnotes


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6.1.6 Sense of Identity

C.1.6 SENSE OF IDENTITY

A person's home is where he should feel at liberty to freely express himself through his environment. At low densities this is accomplished by choosing an individual home which reflects the person's needs and tastes, and by altering the dwelling to conform when necessary. At higher densities standardization of units often reduces the opportunity for choice, and rules regulations, and building technologies combine to rule out alterations to suit the individual.

The resident needs addressed are:

1. identifiability of unit
2. changeability of unit to suit needs.

Principle 16:

RECOGNIZABLE DWELLINGS

Organization of dwelling units should create recognizable groupings to encourage areas of commonality, and formation of patterns of association.

16a

Provide some variety within groupings of units, with respect to size, location, etc.

16b

Arrange units to form small, identifiable groups.

16c

Provide groups of units with an amenity that residents can take pride in, improve, and feel responsible for.
In the house unit...

APPENDIX II - A Qualitative Checklist for Compact Housing

Can the occupants enjoy different views from the house unit?

examples:

• A variety of views can enlarge the individual’s sense of space within the compact housing unit:
  - a close view to a private landscaped space
  - a neighbourhood view
  - a view to distant features like mountains, moons, oceans and forests

Is visual privacy possible between the windows of neighbouring units?

examples:

• Side facing windows can be offset.
• Window bays can be used.
• Planting can screen views.
APPENDIX III - Kitsilano Design Guidelines

ii. Roof gardens: Flat roofs should be made accessible and landscaped so that they provide usable open space. Roof gardens can be oriented to the sun, and provide views and privacy.

iv. The building should be located on the site to take maximum advantage of sun, views, existing trees and landscaping, etc. and minimize noise problems, overshadowing, view blockage, etc.
Section K (cont'd.)

2. Privacy zone

Certain yards require an area of privacy either for the outdoor use of the occupants of a particular unit or to provide privacy within the unit from passersby. This area is known as the privacy zone, and it extends across the full width of the dwelling unit. The remainder of the yard and yards where no privacy zone is required may be used for communal pedestrian purposes by the occupants of the project. The yard depth and privacy zone requirements may vary depending upon the form of housing and on the use of the rooms having principal windows overlooking the yard.

3. Outdoor living area

Each dwelling unit in horizontal multiple housing shall have one yard area which serves as an outdoor living area for the occupants. This yard is normally associated with the living room, but to allow flexibility in design the outdoor living area may alternatively be located adjacent to a dining room, family room, finished recreation room, study or den or, a kitchen which is combined with one of the above uses.

4. Yard dimensions for the outdoor living area

An outdoor living area which is adjacent to a living room window or any alternative room listed in paragraph K3 shall have a minimum yard depth of 35 feet. No project walkway shall be located within 30 feet of the window and this 30 feet shall be regarded as the minimum privacy zone.

The minimum yard depth and privacy zone may be reduced to 25'-0" and 17'-6" respectively where:

- the privacy zone is enclosed by a 6 foot high screen, or
APPENDIX V - Developer Interview Responses

1.) The first question tried to determine whether the developers felt their guidelines facilitated easier marketing of the housing developments as well as increased sales (both initially and resale).

**Block Brothers**
The company feels that the use of design guidelines increase marketability and sales (resale for the owner as well).

**Carma Developers**
The spokesman repeated the statement in their design guidelines. "Application of the best design principles within a subdivision benefits all - initially the builder because of improved marketability, and subsequently the owner because of better liveability and appreciation of real estate values."

**Nu-West Development Corporation**
Nu-West feels that their design guidelines most definitely increased marketability and sales (all around).

**Genstar Development Company**
In their opinion the use of design control increased the marketability and sales of the surrounding area.

2.) The second question asked the developers whether the use of their design guidelines increased the costs of developing housing units.

**Block Brothers**
The company believes they have increased the costs of developing housing units by using design guidelines but only by a minimal amount (ie. $1,000 extra for cedar shake roof and $1,200 for higher quality landscaping).
Carma Developers
The company does not have any measure of the cost of using their guidelines but they expect that there would be no increase in the cost of developing any housing units.

Nu-West Development Corporation
Doubted whether the guidelines increased costs of development. The company spokesman did state that their design guidelines prevent a builder from using cheaper, readily available material that is aesthetically displeasing in favour of higher quality materials that may not cost very much more.

Genstar Development Company
"Our controls are primarily directed to density, open space connections, landscaping and external aesthetics which undoubtedly increase the cost of developing housing units, but are reflected to some extent by the sale price of the land."

3.) The third question tried to determine if the developers felt their design guidelines had any affect on the municipality's development approval process (ie. Did they speed it up or slow it down).

Block Brothers
The company feels that their design guidelines have no effect on the development approval process.

Carma Developers
There is little if any effect on the development approval process.

Nu-West Development Corporation
They felt that it depended on the size of the project. The spokesman stated that in several cases design guidelines facilitated a faster development approval process since the municipality was
very much in favour of the principles of the guidelines. Their proper use can therefore be seen as a way of preventing protracted and costly debates by the municipal planners and urban design panels.

**Genstar Development Company**

"They have no effect upon the development approval process since we will not sell a site to a prospective developer until we are satisfied that their design and density is acceptable. Our prospective customers are aware of this and respond accordingly."

4.) The fourth question asked the developers to estimate the costs of producing their guidelines.

**Block Brothers**

They felt that it cost next to nothing. (estimate - $300.00 - $400.00 in time, research and documentation)

**Carma Developers**

"The cost of producing the guidelines are included in our overall planning costs and have not been segregated as a separate item."

**Nu-West Development Corporation**

Approximately $500.00 in time and effort.

**Genstar Development Company**

Not available

5.) The fifth question asked the developers how they evaluated whether the builder had properly complied with the intentions of their design guidelines (ie. design committees, during and after construction monitoring, and what penalties they enacted should the builder not comply).

**Block Brothers**

"Basically the builder operates on the honour system although we periodically run checks of the development to ensure that the units
respect the proper design principles. Upon receiving the design guidelines, the builder is asked to sign his name to the following declaration: "I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the design criteria for (name and subdivision), and I agree to abide by them, otherwise Block Bros. Contractors Ltd. may correct any deficiencies and recover the cost thereof from me."

Carma Developers
The architectural control committee that provides the initial approval of a builder's plans is responsible for monitoring the success of the program. Upon completion of construction onsite inspection is undertaken to ensure that the final unit complies with the initial approval. In all our sales agreements a provision is made for liquidated damages should a builder not conform to the architectural guidelines.

Nu-West Development Corporation
A performance Bond Agreement requires that a refundable bond be deposited as security for the performance of all obligations. The bond is in the amount of $500.00.

Genstar Development Company
Not available.

6.) The sixth question asked the developers about the composition and qualifications of their design panels.

Block Brothers
The company's design panel consists of two or three in house sales or management employees - no training in architecture or planning.

Carma Developers
Carma's architectural control committee consists of the company's District and Project Managers as well as designated member of Aplin and Martin Engineering Ltd.'s Planning Department - one
professional planner.

**Nu-West Development Corporation**

Nu-West's Architectural Committee consists of the Project Manager, an interior decorator and an outside consultant (professional planner).

**Genstar Development Company**

Not available.

7.) The seventh question enquired whether the developers use any government generated design guidelines.

**Block Brothers**

None.

**Carma Developers**

"At the present time our company does not use any government guidelines although subdivisions are normally developed to conform to C.M.H.C. requirements and naturally the municipal guidelines pertaining to each subdivision are of utmost importance.

**Nu-West Development Corporation**

None.

**Genstar Development Company**

None. We believe that government can best achieve its objectives by encouraging industry to use design guidelines (note that I say use and not compel). I also believe that government is not always as effective as industry in ensuring that "Compact Housing" is well designed because the restrictions on the methods of sale of publicly owner properties are more severe than those on the private sector. In other words government has always been obligated to sell land to anyone whereas industry can be selective in its choice of customers according to those who maintain a good record of satisfying design and other requirements.
8.) The eighth question tried to decipher the developers' attitudes on what design guidelines should accomplish in housing developments.

**Block Brothers**
Design guidelines should establish a standard of overall value which cannot be downgraded by any one builder. It is recognized, however, that it is not really realistic for people to build poor quality housing given the lot prices in our subdivisions.

**Carma Developers**
As outlined in our booklet application of the best design principles within a subdivision benefit both the builder and the subsequent homeowner. The visual appearance and physical placement of individual houses and corresponding inter-relationships of adjacent groups of houses are of utmost importance in achieving a pleasant environment.

**Nu-West Development Corporation**
The purpose of design guidelines is to ensure the development of attractive neighbourhoods. Nu-West implements architectural coordination and development guidelines in order to improve the function and appearance of our subdivisions.

**Genstar Development Company**
We are proud of the neighbourhoods we develop and we try to ensure that the town housing and apartments are developed in harmony with single-family development and are of a size, design and location so as to try to foster community involvement and integration. Where over-riding design constraints have been introduced into a neighbourhood, such as continuity of open space or walkways or access thereto, we try to ensure that these constraints are respected.
9.) The ninth and final question asked the developers if they felt there was sufficient flexibility in their guidelines to avoid producing standardized designs.

**Block Brothers**

In so far as our guidelines relate to siting, landscaping and exterior finishes, we feel there is substantial flexibility within the guidelines to produce very creative designs. This is evident in our Locarno Subdivision.

**Carma Developers**

Design and planning guidelines should provide the parameters within which a builder and his architect can develop housing units. We have always taken the position that the design guidelines should not pertain to the interior of the units but only to the exterior elevations and siting of the unit.

**Nu-West Development Corporation**

Our guidelines cover some basic exterior and siting features which we feel contribute to producing attractive neighbourhoods. Within these regulations the builder is allowed significant flexibility to construct a wide variety of housing styles.

**Genstar Development Company**

Our design controls are primarily directed to density, open space connections, landscaping and external aesthetics and therefore do not regulate housing design or interior arrangements.
APPENDIX VI - RM-3 District Schedule

Vertical Angle of Daylight Obstruction:

In the case of buildings of over 35 feet in height (measured from the finished grade at all points around and adjacent to the building) no part thereof shall project above lines extending over the site at right angles from:

1. All points along the ultimate centre line of the street (or streets) in front of the site and inclined at an average angle of 25 degrees to the horizontal.

2. All points along the rear boundary line of the site or the ultimate centre line of the lane where one has been dedicated, and inclined at an average angle of 25 degrees to the horizontal.

3. All points along the interior side boundary (or boundaries) of the site at ground level and inclined at an average angle of 30 degrees to the horizontal.

B. Height and Length:

On any site the height of a building shall not exceed 120 feet, provided, however, that where any portion or portions of a building extend above a height of 35 feet, the maximum length of any such portion or portions combined shall in no case exceed an amount equal to 25 percent of the sum of the average depth of the site and the average width of the site.

For purposes of this subsection, where it is proposed to erect a building in two or more parts (towers), a site may be interpreted as two or more sites as the case may be, provided that the area of each such site created is 25,000 square feet or more, and the parts of the building (towers) are not less than 80 feet apart. The height of a building shall be the vertical distance between the finished grades of the site and a hypothetical surface which is parallel to the finished grades of the site. It shall be assumed that the finished grades within the outer walls of the building are formed by straight lines joining contours on the finished grades at the outer wall of the building. (21/7/64—No. 4119)

C. Front Yard:

A front yard shall be provided having a depth of not less than 20 feet.

D. Side Yards:

1. Side yards shall be provided on each side of the building such that the outer walls of the building be contained within 135 degrees horizontal angles subtended from all points along the side property lines, provided however, in no case shall the side yard be less than 7 feet.

2. In the case of a corner site where the side yard adjoins a flanking street, the above containing angle is not applicable but the side yard shall be 20 percent of the width of the site, provided however, this amount shall be increased by one foot, or fraction thereof, for every 5 feet by which the highest height of the building exceeds 40 feet (measured as in B above) but in no case shall it be less than 10 feet nor need it be more than 20 feet.

E. Rear Yard:

A rear yard shall be provided the minimum depth of which shall be not less than 35 feet, provided however, this amount may be reduced to 25 feet in the following cases:

1. Where the building abutting the rear yard is not more than 30 feet wide nor less than 25 feet from any adjoining site.
(9) (a) The Director of Planning may relax the provision of this By-law where, due to conditions peculiar either to the site or to the proposed development, literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship in any of the following cases: 

(22/3/66 – No. 4234)

(i) Alterations or additions to an existing building which lacks minimum yards required by the appropriate district schedule. Any relaxation in this case shall be with respect to yard requirements only and in no case shall such yard requirements be reduced to less than sixty percent (60%) of the amount specified in the district schedule;

(ii) Erection of more than one principal building on one site or structural alterations or additions to two or more principal buildings existing on the same site and located in a C or M District;

(iii) Erection of more than one principal building on one site or structural alterations or additions to two or more principal buildings existing on the same site where such principal buildings consist of town houses or apartment buildings located within (RS-2), (RT-2) or (RM-1) Dwelling Districts, and (CRM-2) or (CRM-3) Commercial/Multiple Dwelling Districts subject to the arrangement of such principal buildings being satisfactory to the Director of Planning. 

(24/3/70 – No. 4487)

(aa) The Director of Planning may relax the provisions of this By-law relating to:

(i) Required setbacks to off-street parking areas where, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, the landscaping provided or to be provided is adequate to warrant such relaxation, provided in a (C-1) Commercial District or any (R) District, such relaxation shall not permit a landscaped front setback to be less on the side where the site abuts a site in a (C-1) Commercial District or any (R) District than the required front yard of such abutting site, tapering to not less than five feet at the side of the parking area abutting a street, lane or site zoned other than as a (C-1).

(ii) Required screening on the boundary of a parking area, serving a school, park or similar use on a site in excess of two acres, in cases where the distance between such boundary and (R) Districts outside the site of the principal use served by the parking area, is in excess of 250 feet.

(10/11/64 – No. 4139)

(iii) The minimum parking or loading spaces required where, due to conditions peculiar either to the site or to the proposed development, literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship.

(22/3/66 – No. 4234)

(b) The Director of Planning, before granting any relaxation, shall be satisfied that any property owner who is likely to be adversely affected is notified; such notification shall be in the form appropriate to the circumstances. If any property owner so notified shall object, then such relaxation shall not be granted, but the applicant for such relaxation may then exercise his right of appeal to the Board of Variance, at which time the representations of the Director of Planning and of any such property owner shall be heard.