

CAN GENTRIFICATION BE STOPPED?:
A CASE STUDY OF GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND, VANCOUVER

by

Cory Gregory Dobson

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ABSTRACT

With nearly four decades of academic focus on the issue of gentrification behind us, little progress seems to have been achieved in controlling the negative externalities of the process. While admittedly a complex configuration of costs and benefits, the continued march of gentrification throughout post-industrial cities has left the painful consequences of displacement not only unchecked, but often embraced and encouraged by governments and the private sector as the engine of urban renewal and regeneration, and a solution to decaying centres in search of livability.

By prioritizing the beneficial aspects of gentrification, often only to the benefit of those able to afford the costly new landscapes, inner-city transformation has intensified the problematic realities of social conflict and housing affordability within our cities. With this seemingly unstoppable momentum of gentrification and its transformation of neighbourhoods into exclusive enclaves for the white-collar work force well underway, the question this thesis attempts to answer is: can gentrification be stopped?

Historical examples have shown us that with sufficient public consensus around issues of non-market housing provision, gains in affordability can be achieved. However, in today's political context it seems ideologically unlikely that the level of public support required for such successes will be repeated. Instead, this research explores the potential for possible policy intervention by identifying and seeking to understand where the advance of gentrification in Vancouver has been surprisingly delayed, or diverted, and why? With Grandview-Woodland in East Vancouver as a case study the thesis uncovers the bases for alternative policy options for communities confronting neighbourhood change as a result of gentrification.

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1

INTRODUCTION

“Gentrification has become not a sideshow in the city, but a major component of the urban imaginary” (Ley 2003: 2527).

While historically confined to the centres of the largest global cities, gentrification has begun infiltrating areas of the world that previously would have seemed out of reach a short time ago. Not only has it extended beyond the political boundaries of the West (Islam 2005) and further down the urban hierarchy (Dutton 2005), but recently authors have highlighted how gentrification has now proceeded outside the borders of the city itself, transforming rural regions far beyond the city's limits (Atkinson & Bridge 2005). With such a widespread influence it is little wonder that gentrification has become a cornerstone of urban research over the past four decades, serving as a central platform of debate and contemplation for a wide range of issues affecting the postindustrial city.

It is this rapid and expansive reach of contemporary gentrification, increasingly rolled out across the globe in reference to successful examples elsewhere, that has led Neil Smith (2002) to identify the process as ‘gentrification generalized’. Inextricably tied up in processes of globalization, shifts in the local economy, and the new international division of labour (Hamnett 2003), urban landscapes are constantly being reworked in the image

of the new middle class (Ley 1996) with the primary goal and justification of attracting the supposedly fluid creative workers in this new economy. These new values and the momentum they have carried in the transformation of society have drastically reshaped the demographic maps of our cities and placed unforeseen pressures on the most affordable and dilapidated inner city communities of a generation ago.

Its success in creating economic growth, neighbourhood 'improvements' and a more livable environment has moved gentrification beyond the fringe process that it began as and into the position where it is now being intentionally executed unabashedly as a policy tool by municipal governments around the globe within the framework of neoliberalism (Lees 2000; Slater 2004a). While there are certainly differing ways in which the policies of neoliberalism get rolled out from country to country, one thing that seems an underlying reality of this new framework is that the traditional safety nets of the welfare state are being unquestioningly rolled back as the new ideology of market freedom has begun to dominate politics in the West. Of particular interest to this thesis is the evolution of housing provision within this new political landscape and the coexisting process of widespread gentrification on the one hand and the removal of state funding to non-market housing units on the other.

As this process began to unfold the 'marketization' of housing became the relied upon method of provision where "a housing industry and a housing system geared to meet the needs and preferences of those willing and able to pay the most" took over (Marcuse 2004:1). Within this scenario, worldwide actors in the economy began playing a pronounced role, impacting not only the supply side of the housing equation by extending their capital into far off landscapes for development, but also on the demand side, through speculative purchases that searched the globe for the most profitable real estate returns.

Under this lucrative market of housing provision, real estate development has become a centerpiece of the city's productive economy, and has often been embraced as an end within itself (Smith 2002). Under this guise, the process is transforming urban landscapes across the globe into large scale sites of privatization and market freedom, converting cities everywhere under the similar flag of neoliberal ideology and capital flows. To growth-oriented politicians and urban planners gentrification and its associated policies have been celebrated as engines of "economic development; neighbourhood improvement; a better quality of life; improved housing; more opportunities for employment; stabilization of the tax base; rejuvenation of neighbourhoods; and revitalization of the city" (Wiewel & Nyden 1991: 10).

One glaring side effect of this market success of the gentrified landscape has been the extreme pressures that have been placed on the final bastions of affordability within our cities. Within this environment of speculative investing housing affordability has been squeezed tighter and tighter creating the scenario where "we are [now] on the defensive on housing worldwide" (Marcuse 2004: 1). Global cities have been particularly vulnerable during this transition as the peaks and valleys of the property booms and busts are extreme with such high levels of foreign involvement in local property markets (Hamnett 2003). As a result the situation in many global cities has seen increasingly high levels of risk and uncertainty in the housing market with property speculation occurring at a much more frenzied pace as the prospect of a bubble bursting creates a sense of urgency within many investors. This uncertainty has led to large amounts of property 'flipping' and turnover as investors seek quick profits from their investments; turning house and home into another tradable equity. It is these destructive pressures and their associated conflict and displacement that led Atkinson (2004) to conclude, through a detailed study of the academic literature, that gentrification had largely negative impacts

on many neighbourhoods, despite its energetic embrace by local governments and investors.

seeking to stop gentrification

The need to address the advance of the destructive elements of gentrification is striking and multifaceted as the traditional role of the inner city as a centre of affordability is evaporating. No longer able to house those individuals unable to pay the exorbitant rates being sought by new developments, individuals displaced from the inner city are increasingly forced to look further and further out in the urban region for suitable housing. Beyond the socially detrimental realities of displacement, some planners and policy makers have highlighted the economic problems of such a system, while calling on a control in the advance of gentrification through an effort to “ensure that the economy has access to [a] full range of skills required to realize its potential” (Gray 2001:7). The economy of the postindustrial city relies on a range of service employment, with the majority of these occupations being at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. As the wave of gentrification remakes the landscape of the inner city there is an increasing ‘spatial mismatch’ between the housing available and the occupations that are needed for the healthy functioning of the city’s economy. Therefore, once affordability has been displaced from the city, a number of issues begin to affect the region’s overall health, as the requisite labour needed is increasingly expected to endure environmentally problematic commutes, from suburban locations poorly serviced by transit.

But while the pressures associated with the advance of gentrification have impacted the everyday discussions and lives of the middle class in many advanced postindustrial cities, the results have been unsurprisingly more dire at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum where the fears and realities of homelessness have spread to a larger and more diverse population as the safety nets of the old economy have dissolved (Hulchanski &

Shapcott, 2004; Layton, 2000; CMHC, 2005). As poorer residents are displaced from their traditional inner city housing another troubling factor arises as the type of housing units found in the inner city are often unavailable in the more homogenous landscapes of the suburb. So while real estate prices may be more affordable on the outskirts of the region, the loss of city's single room occupancy (SRO) units are unlikely to be replaced outside of the inner city and as a result has contributed to the noticeable increase in the homeless population on the city's streets.

While the momentum that large-scale gentrification has gained under the tenets of neoliberalism is sizable, it is important to stress that gentrification is not an inevitable, natural process. Even in cities where gentrification seems unstoppable, Hamnett (2003) has highlighted how certain scenarios or circumstances could be imagined that would place a limit on the process of gentrification. For as Rose (1996) has exhibited, "contrary to the predictions of 'rent gap' and 'stage' theories of gentrification, it is not inevitable, even in advanced tertiary cities, that all neighbourhoods where a 'beachhead' of 'first wave gentrifiers' is established will ultimately be caught up in an irreversible dynamic largely driven by major real estate interests and leading to their transformation into homogeneous Yuppie preserves" (153). While clearly there are conditions that favour the spread of gentrification, then it must also follow that there are also conditions or factors in communities that have the potential to limit, slow, or stop gentrification altogether. It is these factors that this thesis intends to explore by looking at cases of absent or stalled gentrification in the Canadian city of Vancouver. This connection between the lack of affordable housing in the city and the pressures of change inherent in the process of gentrification is too seldom made, and it is this link that this thesis looks to explore more fully. More specifically then, the question that this project seeks to address is, can gentrification be stopped, re-directed or stalled, as a method of retaining a level of affordability within the inner neighbourhoods of the postindustrial city?

ESTABLISHING A GEOGRAPHY OF GENTRIFICATION

After the now 40 years of gentrification research, one point that receives little debate is the acknowledgement that, despite other interpretations of the process, there is a certain geography to gentrification and it is thereby deeply affected by local context (Ley 1996; Lees 2000; Smith 2002; Shaw 2005). Different cities face different realities, histories, environments, and as a result experience different outcomes of similar global trends. Rust belt cities, for example, whose experience of the latter quarter of the 20th century involved massive disinvestment and removal of traditional economy with little replacement of the previous vitality of its industrial heyday, need to address gentrification differently from the cities at the forefront of the postindustrial economy. Cities like San Francisco and London have seen inner city transformation decidedly different from that of Detroit or Liverpool. As a result, messages from studies of one type of city should not be applied directly to the other type, and neither should policy lessons from one city be uncritically applied to the next (Kennedy & Leonard 2001). This thesis looks to explore possibilities in the former type of cities which are closer to the experience of Vancouver, where an extremely hot housing market exists together with a nearly complete transition of the functional base of the economy to postindustrial status and a desirable amenity package within the inner city. So pervasive has gentrification been in restructuring and reworking the Vancouver landscape that “in Vancouver’s real estate circles, the question is no longer which neighbourhood will take off next (answer: they all have)” (Poole 2007: 81). Yet despite this, even in an overheated real estate market such as this, it appears as though there may be some unexpected holes in the map of gentrification in Vancouver and it is the particularities of these holes that this thesis seeks to explore as possible methods of restricting the advance of gentrification.

This study begins with a brief contextual background into the progression of gentrification in Vancouver, by looking at the transformations and histories that have reshaped the present day landscapes of its inner city. From this starting point, the thesis moves onto study stalled or absent gentrification by first exploring samples from the literature of resisted and absent cases of gentrification in Chapter 2, before outlining the geography of gentrification in Vancouver by utilizing previously proven methods of mapping in Chapter 3. Following from the mapping, a series of correlations will be explored to compare the mapping of gentrification in Vancouver to expectations in the literature. Once the outer bounds of the study have been established, the thesis will then move to explore two particular communities in Vancouver that have experienced divergent yet related trajectories of absent or stalled gentrification.

vancouver's early gentrification

The city of Vancouver is comparatively young. The transition of its economy has been constant and swift, moving from an 'untouched' native wilderness through to a nearly complete postindustrial city in the course of little more than one hundred years. While transition in this young city has been constant, its story of gentrification in many ways originated in the 1960s as the views and ideals of the modernist project came under increasing scrutiny (Ley 1996; Caulfield 1994). As the utopian vision so central to the modernist project began to falter the citizenry of Canadian cities began to search for alternatives to the inhumane and stifling modern environment, and through protest and election began to create the changes they desired (Ley 1996). Playing a central role in repositioning the common ideology of city building was the counter-cultural youth movement as they formed the new avant-garde and repositioned the values of the new middle class of the new economy from suburban to inner city environments (Ley 1996).

The presence of this youth movement began to formulate and embody certain values

and ideologies that began to permeate through the larger society and contributed to the election of Pierre Trudeau in 1968, thereby signaling a shift in the values increasingly held by urbane Canadians and becoming central to the understanding of early gentrification in the Canadian city (Ley 1996; Caulfield 1994). The principles guiding these transitions were rooted in humanitarian attitudes towards environmentalism, civil rights, the War in Vietnam, the international student movement, and the arrival of the counter-culture, all of which provided a sharp critique of the post-war society in the West (Ley 1996).

Tied up in this ideological shift in Vancouver was the adoption and promotion of the ideals of livability as a central component of the postindustrial urban ideology (Ley 1980). Landscapes of the old and noxious industrial era were erased from the inner city with little thought or hesitation as a complete reworking and revaluing of urban landscapes in Vancouver was underway. As the economy of the city continued its trajectory towards these clean occupations, the landscapes of the inner city were increasingly made 'livable' through the promotion and pursuit of 'quality of life', thereby adding substantial attractions and amenities to the Canadian city in line with the aesthetic eye of the gentrifier (Ley 1996). With access to the city's major parks, beaches, marinas, and the lively cultural and retail activity of the downtown area, coupled with the authentic sense of place contained within many of the historically charming inner city neighbourhoods, a large amenity package was on offer within the inner city that was proved attractive to this new middle class (Ley 1981).

expanding the gentry: the 'successes' of the livable landscape

But gentrification is not a stagnant process. It is a dynamic, fluid process that continually evolves as the city shifts. As liberal humanist ideals of the counter-culture were replaced by neoliberal discourse in Canadian society, a substantial shift occurred in gentrification,

as definitions of house, home and neighbourhood shifted away from those of the 1960s and 1970s. Propped up upon revenue shortfalls, a growing public deficit and fears of economic collapse and falling behind in the global economy, a continual push towards achieving 'world-class city' status began in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s within the general context of global restructuring, where all three levels of government engaged in advancing neoliberal policies of privatization, deregulation, and global integration throughout the landscape of Vancouver, and the wider Canadian society (Mitchell 1996). Increasingly seen as an investment first, instead of a home, the speculative residential real estate market further complicated the difficulties of gentrification as the push to renovate and redevelop for profit led to higher prices, matched by increasing demand and further speculation in one "the world's most desirable place to live" (CNN 2005) .

This international recognition in travel magazines and urban planning citations of Vancouver as 'the greatest place to live' the 'most livable city' and the like gave the tenets of livability a hegemonic hold on urban development as a number of cities around the globe began utilizing Vancouver as a model to follow as the most efficient way of city building in the new economy. The extraordinary success of the livable city proved very lucrative for developers despite their initial hesitation towards investment in inner city residential development. These high amenity landscapes have become so popular, that the market of gentrifiers has expanded exponentially since the 1970s creating a mass of individuals interested and desiring the lifestyle on offer within the inner city. Evolving from a homogenous group, of one or two subcultures, 'the gentrifier' has expanded to encompass portions of nearly every segment of the population; from young families to empty nesters and all points in between (Ley 1996). This newfound demand has driven forces of gentrification through market led development, producing monumental transformation in the landscape of Vancouver in recent decades.

Vancouver's planning success has been recently celebrated in John Punter's (2003) book *The Vancouver Achievement*, providing further fuel for the city boosters, politicians, and the ideology rooted in the Vancouver way of building. But running parallel to this celebratory discourse surrounding the successes of *the* livable city, has been a crisis in housing affordability, which has dramatically increased the presence and visibility of homelessness, while placing many Vancouver families under extreme economic stress. It is here that the inextricable link of gentrification and the housing crisis of affordability must be emphasized. The successes of livability and gentrification in Vancouver have created this scenario, where those who own property enjoy extraordinary profits and amenity, while those outside of the ownership context face extreme housing pressures, and a constant threat of eviction through redevelopment. As Ley (1980) has shown, even the earliest attempts of combining livability and affordability in Vancouver were troubled making their incompatibility clear even in the earliest initiatives of reform era governments. Without market interventions to mediate the extreme successes of the 'livable' environment, affordability in the gentrified city is unlikely to materialize.

While the pressures of affordability have long defined housing discourse in Vancouver, it appears as though the story is likely only to get worse, as the release valves of brownfield sites are in the final stages of build-out. In the 1980s when the early pressures of the success of gentrification were being felt in the city's housing market, a rental housing crisis had taken hold of the city with a vacancy rate of nearly 0% (City housing planner). At the time, the major challenge facing the city was that as developers looked to accommodate demand, they did so in regions of the city already zoned for the more profitable higher density lands. With apartment buildings naturally falling within these zoning boundaries the city's rental stock came under stress as developers sought to convert these rental apartments to condominiums where higher paying demand

could be accommodated. In response to this trend, the City continued to open up alternative development options by rezoning desolate industrial and rail-yard lands of the downtown peninsula following the success of similar conversion on the south shore of False Creek in the 1970s. These zoning changes greatly reduced the pressures on conversion, with nearly no loss of apartment buildings up until the end of the 1990s.

As it stand today, Concord Pacific is constructing the final buildings on the remaining sites of their 20 year development project of a multi-phased planned community on the former Expo 86 lands that has greatly altered Vancouver's skyline and added roughly 9,000 units of housing on the north shore of False Creek (Concord 2007), the Coal Harbour community adjacent to Stanley Park is all but complete, while the foundations are being poured for the upcoming Olympic Village on the South East shore of False Creek, which is being marketed as "Vancouver's last waterfront community". It is becoming clear that the conversion pressures which plagued the city in the 1980s are resurfacing as a number of rental apartments have once again begun to meet the fate of conversion. One recent example is the repackaged and heavily marketed conversion at 1010 Howe Street in downtown Vancouver, where 130 apartment units were removed from the rental market and converted to stratified ownership (Osler 2006). While conversion is not the only threat to housing affordability in the city it does highlight a visible presence of continued gentrification.

While an innovative and visionary experiment, the extraordinary market success of this build-out of the downtown peninsula in Vancouver is beginning to come under increasing criticism for its failure of creating community. Its largely market driven program is seen as catering to the needs of the aging and the wealthy and has led some critics to claim that the result has been the creation of an anti-urban resort town, focused on the desires and whims of the international investment community, with little concern

about the need to create a functioning city (Boddy 2006). While certainly in some aspects a victim of its own success, it appears as though the present day gentrification that is unfolding on the streets of downtown Vancouver has in many ways moved far beyond the emancipatory goals of the early gentrifiers (Lees 2000). Unsympathetic to these criticisms, the now former co-director of planning Larry Beasley shrugged off suggestions that the City has simply built gated communities in the sky based on the suburban ideals of 'predictability, cleanliness and lack of architectural character' claiming that this was a key to the motor to the success which made the landscapes of Vancouver's downtown residential district attractive to those who grew up on the urban fringes (Boddy 2006).

It cannot be argued that the tenets of livability, rooted in the political transitions of the 1960s and carried through to today's Vancouver has been anything but a market success. But it appears as though the present situation, which sees a coexistence of an affordability crisis on one hand and an unquestioned success of marketing the inner city on the other, demands a rethinking around our unquestioned commitment to the tenets of livability by urban design. Municipal policy must move beyond this mantra if it is to correct the imbalance it has created between market demand and the lack of affordability that is plaguing so many of Vancouver's families through the widespread gentrification of the entire inner city. With the recent departure of the City's two co-directors of planning and the replacement with a new director the opportunity to move beyond the long running "Livable First" discourse was taken up. Unfortunately it appears as though it may have come simply in the form of a rebranding of the City's gentrification goals under the environmentally chic buzzword of EcoDensity.

ecodensity: painting a 'green face' on gentrification?

Unknowingly optimistic about the potential of this new direction, I attended a recent presentation given by the new director, Brent Toderian (2007). Happy to see the City reassessing its current situation, the director presented his office's new direction by outlining the goals and objectives of the seemingly popular EcoDensity plan. The new objectives were set out as follows, with the order being highlighted as carrying significant weight: sustainable; livable; affordable. While it was refreshing to see a broadening and reworking of "Livable First" the continuing prioritization of livability by design over affordability in a market with such a severe affordability crisis was somewhat disappointing. While the order, and the perception that we need to hang on to our 'key to global recognition' at the expense of affordability was troubling, it was a relief to see the presence of affordability in the presentation none the less. Unfortunately it appears as though it is simply a marketing tool; a way of gaining widespread acceptance in a city where conversations around housing often begin and end with the topic of affordability. In a phone interview, conducted by a journalist in a local newspaper, Toderian placed a disclaimer on this goal of affordability: "I've said that no one should expect prices to go down or even stabilize the day after council approves the EcoDensity charter, for example. What we're really trying to do is position the City well for long-term affordability through an increase in the supply over time, through more affordable relationships and patterns" (Smith 2007: 40).

Discussing the motivation behind the City's use of EcoDensity as a driver for affordability, Vancouver mayor Sam Sullivan relied upon the economic understandings of supply and demand to claim that EcoDensity, simply through densification contained potential to drive prices down in the city as "the price of anything is related to supply and demand, and if we can dramatically increase the supply of housing, we will have downward pressure on the price" (Sullivan quoted by Rockel 2006: 53). Yet despite

these optimistic proclamations, evidence on the ground in Vancouver tends to suggest a more nuanced reading is required than ~~this free market~~ solution to affordability. The city has seen a drastic increase in housing stock in recent years with nearly 25,000 dwellings added in the five year period between 2001 and 2006, and yet despite these increases in supply, the average dwelling value over the same period has increased by roughly 70%¹ (Census 2001; 2006). So instead of providing relief to pressures through an increase in stock, it appears as though prices have continued to rise as developers have been given more and more incentive to invest in the construction of luxury suites, with little market focus on affordable alternatives to this lucrative market.

With little clarity in a vision for achieving real affordability in the city, it appears as though EcoDensity is guilty of providing simply another buzzword to guide city development by simply “paint[ing] a green face on the gentrification process” (Lees 2000: 391), utilizing the popular and marketable phrases of livability and environmental sustainability, while tacking on the public’s current concern in Vancouver with issues of affordability.

Eco-density, if attempted on its own, without extensive focus on affordability and the outlined goals of creating diverse and flexible housing stock could quite possibly have the opposite effects. If a wider spread of gentrification and increases in property values is the underlying goal of EcoDensity, then the outcomes are likely to run counter to the projected vision. The question needs to be raised, at what point does livability in the city no longer become about urban design and become all about creating affordability? It appears as though there is a critical need in Vancouver for an engaged debate

¹ This number is an estimate based upon GVRD statistics that saw the average dwelling value rise from \$284,806 in 2001 to \$509,876 in 2006 (BC Stats 2007). These numbers are representative of larger trends in Vancouver while some individuals during casual conversations have cited 100% increases in some areas of the city over 5 years.

surrounding what it means to be 'livable'. As the overheated local housing market and the successes of livability continue to drive entry level housing prices closer and closer to the million dollar mark forcing families further and further out to the urban fringes there is a real need to think more critically about the intricately linked lack of affordability and the success in 'livability' through urban design.

In such an overheated real estate market in one of the world's 'most livable' cities the hope of this thesis is that lessons can be drawn about possibilities of stalling or redirecting gentrification in a city with no shortage of demand. It is from this understanding that this thesis seeks to uncover holes in the map of Vancouver's gentrification, in search of possible policy implications that might help to reduce the negative effect of gentrification. First though, this paper turns to examples in the literature of stalled or resisted gentrification as it has played out on other global landscapes.

“STOP!”: AN EXPLORATION OF PAST SUCCESSES IN CURBING THE TREND OF GENTRIFICATION

STOPPING GENTRIFICATION: SEARCHING FOR METHODS OF RESISTANCE

While the decided consensus of the academic literature surrounding the study of gentrification suggests that the process is overwhelmingly negative (Atkinson 2003), a surprisingly small body of work has actively focused on strategies for resisting, redirecting, or stopping gentrification in the postindustrial city. Of the work that does explore this topic the bulk of the focus lays in the active resistance formed by communities and neighbourhood groups against the influx of gentrification and housing policy.

achieving an organized community front

Of strategic importance to these resistant groups is the role that a well organized community plays in the preservation of affordability in the face of gentrification. In their report, *Dealing with Neighbourhood Change*, Kennedy and Leonard (2001) presented 10 steps that they saw as being crucial for a stronger community dealing with these pressures. Of the ten suggested steps, five are directly related to having an organized community, with the remaining five hinging on having an organized resistance in place².

² The ten steps put forth by the authors as key to healthy communities are as follows: 1) Knowing the Context, 2) Anticipating the Pressure, 3) Getting organized, 4) Developing a unified Vision and Implementation Plan, 5) Implementing Regulatory and Policy Fixes, 6) Maximizing Public Assets for Public Good, 7) Educating Residents about their Legal Rights and Other Options, 8) Improving the Public Education System, 9) Preparing Groups to Negotiate, 10) Creating Forums to Unify the Gentrifying Community

While certainly not reducible to a generalized entity, a number of context specific resistance movements have arisen, embracing differing strategies dependent upon their local situation. Community resistance in New York City's Lower Park Slope has been organized and carried out by the Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), with one of their more innovative strategies coming in the form of the creation of a Displacement Free Zone (DFZ) in 1999 to address the pressures of neighbourhood gentrification and the eviction of low-income and moderate income tenants (Slater 2004). The goal of the organization with the implementation of the DFZ was to "preserve the ethnic and class diversity of the neighbourhood, keep housing stock affordable and residents stable in their homes, and to respect the needs of its long-term residents and senior citizens. It actively aims to discourage anyone from what the FAC calls 'profiteering at the expense of our community'" (Slater 2004, 1206)

Building off of this, a number of groups throughout Central and Northern Brooklyn have adopted strategies to create anti-displacement campaigns to transform neighbourhood political culture and challenge landlords who displace residents through excessive rent increases (Newman and Wyly 2006). The Pratt Area Community Council (PACC) created Brooklyn Community Action to build leadership among people who might be displaced, with these initial efforts quickly expanding into Displacement Watch; a program which "holds weekly meetings for tenants, negotiates with landlords and organizes letter writing campaigns, prayer vigils and demonstrations" (Jackson, quoted by Newman & Wyly 2006: 50).

reframing the debate: altering public discourse

As gentrification pressures started to mount in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, the establishment of the North of Market Planning Coalition (NOMPC) in 1980

gave the community the crucial organized front that it needed (Robinson 1995). With redevelopment pressures focused on the tourist industry, and the anticipated arrival of three large convention oriented hotels, the NOMPC began actively trying to protect the low-income, SRO dominated district from vast displacement and redevelopment. Rather than taking an entirely confrontational stance, the NOMPC looked to implement a 'new model' of urban development "in which the community, the city, and business operate within a framework of mutual respect, benefit and cooperation" (NOMPC quoted by Robinson 1995: 495). After a long-running battle, the hoteliers in the conflict agreed to extensive mitigations for the community in 1981, the first such mitigations wrested from hotel developers in the United States (Robinson 1995). In essence what groups such as NOMPC did was to make operational the philosophy that "those who profit from upscale development should be largely responsible for mitigating the harm their development causes to a local neighbourhood" (Robinson 1995:497).

Similarly, a protect-community movement in Chicago's working-class neighbourhood of Pilsen was able to focus on the oppositional discourse of gentrification, allowing them to reposition the struggle in the media by focusing on two differing representations; the first, the residents as positive identities rooted in the community, and the other with the developers casts as villains (Wilson, Wouters et al. 2004). The Protect Pilsen Coalition (PPC) reworked the dominant discourse in Chicago that painted Pilsen as a ghetto of crime and disorder and stressed the need to seek upgrades in the neighbourhood for the current residents. In addition, the PPC clearly articulated a discourse that highlighted the rise of a new destructive development alliance between private developers and local government that sought to rework the landscape to attract upper income investment, thereby destroying the traditional and longstanding community. They repositioned the developers from their representation as those who bring life to the city and economic well being to its economy, to "persistent, community-destroying entrepreneurs

(who) relentlessly comb landscapes to find best-profit opportunities... (and) destroy neighbourhoods and lives” (Wilson, Wouters et al. 2004). In addition to recasting the developers in this light the PPC also reworked the public image of Pilsen, switching from a discourse of ghetto and crime to descriptions of Pilsen as “a community where people carefully watch out for each other and raise their families in a sturdy and supporting community... Shopkeepers know everyone, people informally mingle in the streets, parks are places to meet friends and take children to play”. (Wilson, Wouters et al. 2004).

In the Tenderloin district in San Francisco the initial success of the slow-growth movement was also attributed to this ability to reposition the discourse surrounding the neighbourhood, not only changing the residents’ perception of their own community, but also the widely held perceptions outside of the neighbourhood (Robinson 1995).

These battles over discourse often get heated, as the stakes can be extremely high for both parties involved. As tensions between two groups increased in one resistance movement in Chicago’s West Town, one non-profit provider was painted by the Old Wicker Park Committee (OWPC) as creating unwanted public housing. As the conflict in the media increased, the battle saw new low-income rental projects torched while under construction and covered with graffiti, as the pro-gentrification camp accused the housing provider of harbouring drugs and criminal activity in its buildings as a way of fending off neighbourhood revitalization. (Betancur 2002)

creating a visible and vocal hostility towards gentrification pressures

With varying levels of success in this search for resistance through organized community, it appears there is potential for curbing the pressures of gentrification by engaging in a more visible and hostile approach to gentrification and unwanted neighbourhood transformation. Examples of neighbourhoods where development was resisted often

involve making the prospect of development less appealing. If economic gains are still to be made, a number of studies show that simply protesting the development, and the arrival of the gentry, is at times enough to persuade developers to seek less confrontational, and more attractive development opportunities. Perceptions of a 'ready-to-rumble' neighbourhood and "fears of virulent street tactics (that is, harassment of gentrifiers) most discouraged developers because they could make development projects risky" (Wilson, Wouters et al. 2004). In San Francisco, Rebecca Solnit (2001), cited one such highly visible, and confrontational response to gentrification in San Francisco's Mission district, where an initiative called the Yuppie Eradication Project placed posters throughout the city and wrote letters to the newspapers' editors calling for class war, including such tactics as the vandalism of luxury cars and fancy restaurants (Solnit 2001). Not only does the protesting and picketing of such actions create more headaches for developers during construction, but these tactics also have the potential to inflict a sense of questionability in the minds of the gentrifiers, thereby making developers question the location, and perhaps seek sites with less visible resistance to their presence.

achieving policy fixes to gentrification pressures

On the shoulders of these movements of community resistance a number of successes have been achieved in the policy arena that have thereby placed further restraints on the likelihood of gentrification and displacement in the future. As Wyly and Hammel (1999) have pointed out, certain choices made within the realm of housing policy can and do have important impacts in the spread and advance of gentrification. Housing policy is presented by a number of authors as being crucial to assuring long term successes in the provision of affordable housing, especially in cities with strong housing markets. In their study, Levy, Comey and Padilla (2006) noticed that retention of affordable housing during gentrification could be achieved in three areas: the production of affordable housing units; the retention of existing units by removing them from market forces

through government purchase of low-cost apartments; and finally through asset building in the community. Kennedy and Leonard (2001) found that by placing policy emphasis on the principles of equitable development, a fair and balanced approach could be reached for dealing with gentrification and its associated changes, an approach cited by Newman and Wyly (2006) as containing the greatest potential for avoiding the negative realities of gentrification.

Where political will is less than committed to these objectives, Robinson (1995) saw that complex, but achievable partnerships could be negotiated that coupled non-profit housing development corporations, with neighbourhood residents, government, and for-profit developers in a way that successes could be achieved where “an alternative market of de commodified housing” could be created “to help temper the speculative gentrification movements” (505). Outside of public interventions of policy developments, parallel gains in the stalling of gentrification have been made by organizations through private initiatives. In New York, “for more than two decades, FAC has raised millions of dollars to rehabilitate many abandoned buildings, transforming dilapidated properties into affordable housing under a ‘sweat equity program’” (Slater 2004: 1205). This removal of units from the market goes a long way in reducing the pressures of gentrification, but is often achieved in piecemeal quantities, especially as the local market continues to drive prices up. Through the very presence of these organizations, and the platform that they provide for the local residents to have their voices heard, they have helped to resist gentrification, by engendering a culture of resistance, and by empowering otherwise disenfranchised individuals to take their concerns to the streets to voice their struggle and to make their claims on their community.

In an examination of displacement and its pressures within the neoliberal landscape

of the New York housing market, where policies are focused on deregulation and market fixes, Newman and Wyly (2006) found that individuals who were able to avoid displacement, did so through an increasingly 'sophisticated and creative array' of methods. What they found was a "unique patchwork of city, state and federal programmes that (were) woven together in New York City to offer some measure of protection" in a housing market where 1 in 15 poor renters living in gentrifying neighbourhoods were unable to remain in the unregulated rental market (Newman and Wyly 2006: 41). While there were definitely positive achievements to note, the authors highlighted the limits of these precarious and uncertain strategies. One thing that the work of Newman and Wyly (2006) highlighted was that in heavily gentrifying neighbourhoods, public housing and rent stabilization are critically important, and in fact could provide an anchor to residents: "public housing, often criticized for anchoring the poor to declining neighbourhoods, may also have the advantage of anchoring them to gentrifying neighbourhoods" (Freeman and Braconi, 2004, quoted by Newman and Wyly 2006).

Those residents in the New York example who were unable to secure housing protected by public interventions were left to explore their own private strategies for remaining in their neighbourhood in the face of gentrification. These strategies included such unfavourable realities as accepting poor housing quality, coping with high housing cost burdens and/or sharing housing with other residents, or taking up residence in the informal housing market, where landlords provide housing to acquaintances charging rents below market value (Newman and Wyly 2006). As the authors point out this is a highly unstable and fragile arrangement, and falls quite short of being an adequate policy recommendation.

difficulties of relying on community resistance in the contemporary city

The results of these many attempts to stall the process of gentrification are varied. While achieving initial successes, many have highlighted the precarious nature of the types of arrangements that are counted on to hold these successes together. Over two decades ago Peter Marcuse (1985) highlighted the potential of public policy to retain affordability and limit the negative effects of gentrification. The author outlined how through a number of differing taxation strategies and zoning tools municipalities could place bounds on gentrification and limit altogether gentrification led displacements and yet despite these simply solutions, positive outcomes have not commonly been achieved (Marcuse 1985). While the suggestions made were relatively simple and clear in their presentation, they require a great deal of political will, as he found in his conclusion that “the major question is not whether gentrification can be controlled and displacement eliminated, but whether there is the desire to do so. This must ultimately be decided in the political arena” (Marcuse 1985: 945). Continuing to search for answers to housing difficulties twenty years later, Marcuse (2004) outlined five barriers to adequate governmental action in regards to housing the poor across the globe, and was still lamenting the lack of social consensus around issues of housing: “the quest for consensus, sometimes suggested as central to the role of planners and social policy advocates, is a dead end here. Consensus is a mirage, in an area so fraught with conflicts of interests and needs.” (Marcuse 2005).

One of the difficulties in creating consensus in a community is the number of differing visions that exist as to the best way forward for any community. Kennedy and Leonard (2001) point out that one of the difficulties of gaining a unified vision around the issues of gentrification, is rooted in the fact that owners and tenants typically have differing visions for the future of their community, with many of the changes associated with the process gaining remarkable support from home owners with a vested interest. This

support of gentrification has become even more heavily entrenched in the contemporary environment where home ownership has become the primary engine for capital accumulation.

In West Town Chicago this divided view of the future was embodied in two differing views: the gentrifiers fought for value enhancing investments, while working-class and low-income residents organized around priorities of stability, affordability, and improvements without displacement (Betancur 2002). Finding enough individuals with a similar voice is often a time sensitive step, allowing more flexibility and time to organize in communities facing a slower process of change, while rapid scenarios of gentrification have often left organizers with little power once the full momentum of the movement is underway. In retrospect, non-profit representatives and organizers in San Francisco's Mission district lamented their inability to take full advantage of potential resistance by missing the opportunity to educate neighbourhood residents, businesses and city officials about the dangers of rapid gentrification, leading some to the belief that the gentrification war was lost before the first battle was fought (Kennedy and Leonard 2001).

Hackworth (2002) found that gentrification largely altered its form following the recession in the early 1990s, with one of the four major transformations being the marginalization within the political sphere of the anti-gentrification social movements of the previous era. In response to fears of a depressed economy, the political sphere began fueling the process of gentrification in depressed areas in an effort to jumpstart the economic engine of the city. No-growth and slow-growth movements within this framework which called for the status quo were more easily ignored as the larger public grew less sympathetic to such concerns as redistributive politics became marginalized under neoliberal governance (Hackworth 2002).

Building upon these difficulties, Slater (2004) noted that in the Canadian case resistance has become even more problematic for organizers. Here the author saw that communities were much more fractured and disorganized, in comparison to the American example, a result he equated as being a product of the country's history of a multitiered political structure (Slater 2004). As a result of this reduced efficiency of resistance movements in the Canadian city in today's political climate, the focus here now switches to explore some of the 'softer' methods of limiting or controlling gentrification.

SEEKING 'SOFTER' STRATEGIES AND 'LOCAL LIMITS' TO GENTRIFICATION

In a political climate with little time for redistributive policies, it appears as though municipalities that desire a retention of affordability may have to seek 'softer' limits to gentrification as the effect of resistance movements appears to be faltering. With so much potential for stalling the process of gentrification, it is surprising how little work has been done on these 'softer' limiting factors, with one of the notable exceptions being the work conducted by Kate Shaw (2005) on "local limits of gentrification". Shaw's (2005) comparative review of the process of gentrification in Australia, the United States, Europe and Canada showed that in the second wave of gentrification particular characteristics in the neighbourhood had the potential to slow the process down, thereby reducing the negative impacts of gentrification and displacement. What she found was that in fact there were a number of "elements that facilitate or limit gentrification, that are within the reach of public policy" (172). In particular Shaw (2005) highlighted four common characteristics, of which a neighbourhood needed two in place to successfully steer the course of gentrification: the presence of housing stock not conducive to gentrification; a certain level of security in tenure for the local residents; a relative 'embeddedness' of local community and the presence of political activism; and a local government willing to intervene in the interests of low-income housing.

While a limited amount of other research has been conducted on the specific situations that can inhibit gentrification, this research utilizes the observations from the wide body of literature that has outlined the demands and environments that are prime candidates for gentrification, with the logic following that if there are certain elements that draw, or attract the gentrifier to the inner city, then by extension, the absence of such amenities or desirable factors, might repel gentrifiers or redirect them to neighbourhoods where these factors are present. The factors that can be observed include issues of supply, as well as various attractions, and disamenities that need to be taken into consideration.

housing stock not amenable to gentrification

Supply concerns here seem to be of an utmost concern, in particular the supply of a housing stock that is sufficiently suited to the tastes and preferences of the aesthetic eye of the gentrifier. This focus on aesthetic consideration has led to a new typology of housing in many cities, with noticeable features or styles becoming associated with the aesthetics of the gentrified areas such as 'Brownstoning' in New York or 'Whitepainting' in Toronto (Butler 1997: 38). Emphasis in a number of studies has highlighted the attraction of historic housing stock, with some studies highlighting this factor as a main driver of the process (Meligrana and Skaburskis 2005; Van Crieking and Decroly 2003). Realizing and building off the commonly cited preference of gentrifiers to move into these older districts, with an ample supply of renewable older housing stock, these two studies both see neighbourhoods with high levels of this type of housing as having the greatest potential to displace low-income households, as "dwelling built before 1946 (in the Canadian context) are more likely to contain the architectural features, neighbourhood attributes and proximity to downtown that are well-documented characteristics of gentrified (or gentrifying) neighbourhoods" (Meligrana and Skaburski 2005: 1572). It appears then that the size, quality, historical importance and interest

of the housing stock, as well as the function of the stock plays an important role in the process of gentrification where “small houses and apartments, inexpensive construction, avoidance of clearance and modest in-fill developments limit both the pace and extent of gentrification” (Shaw 2005: 175).

While these housing types appear to have an important draw, another building typology that has tremendous potential to fuel the process of gentrification is the presence of re-zoned industrial lands or old warehousing districts that possess buildings with a unique character providing for creative and individual identity formation for the gentrifying class; enabling an identity formation around a unique and ‘edgy’ type of living. The most common of these types, most associated with recent gentrification in the New Economy has been the process of loft conversions, where de-industrialized landscapes of advanced postindustrial cities have provided the sought after edge (Zukin 1989).

secured housing tenure

Beyond the particular typology of the architecture and the date of construction, it appears as though varied tenure arrangements can also have profound effects on the transformation of particular communities. One important piece of research to Shaw’s analysis was the work of Rose (1996) and her study of three neighbourhoods in Montreal, that despite showing the most ‘professionalization’ in the city during the 1980s, contained some stalling elements that ensured that they did not ‘see a new social homogeneity’ take hold into the 90s. In this study a number of factors were highlighted that help to illuminate possible elements that stall or redirect investment in the postindustrial city, providing a series of helpful insights for this thesis. In her study of one particular Montreal neighbourhood Rose (1996) found that in the 1960s and 1970s a substantial number of triplex units were bought by southern European immigrants and were largely renovated through ‘sweat equity’. Rose (1996) saw this incumbent upgrading

as an important piece of the story of retaining a certain level of social diversity and reduced housing turnover even on street segments with quite extensive gentrification. In relation to this finding, Shaw (2005) found that in cases where a rooted immigrant population had an ownership stake within a neighbourhood it had further potential to impede widespread gentrification as a number of these individuals rented suites in their homes at reduced rates to others within their social network, thereby limiting the power of market forces and providing a rooted presence of another population despite gentrification pressures.

As well Shaw (2005) noted that while it is widely accepted that as gentrification proceeds home-ownership increases, less noted is the observation that the higher the owner-occupation levels to start with, the lower the likelihood of gentrification gaining a strong hold. "Longevity of tenure, through home ownership, secure private rental, public or community housing, plays a vital role in limiting gentrification. It limits the number of units on the market, reduces attractiveness to higher-income purchasers, minimizes displacement and allows the development of embedded local communities" (Shaw 2005: 177). While providing security of tenure does certainly contain the potential of rooting a certain population to a neighbourhood, this is seldom sufficient to reduce the overall threat of gentrification, as many studies have shown that often home owners will in fact lend support to initiatives of gentrification, particularly if it involves a perception of a property value increase.

the absence of amenity

In nearly every study exploring the advance of gentrification, quality of life issues arise as central to the residential decisions of the gentrifiers. From commuting concerns to accessibility to amenities there appear to be a number of amenity packages that when on offer, provide a great deal of incentive to the new middle class. With a number of

these high amenity zones in the city already being located in close proximity to elite areas, often better served by the policies of local governments, it appears as though proximity to established elite areas plays a role in the location of gentrification (Ley 1996). These regions are likely the closest to physical amenities such as waterfronts, beaches, parks and views, and more likely to be in close proximity to downtown and the associated amenity package on offer there (Ley 1981). As a result of this draw towards amenity zones in the city, Rose (1996) highlighted the potential role that 'city beautification' policies could play in jumpstarting gentrification.

the presence of disamenity

Beyond favourable amenity packages it appears that the flipside of the equation may also provide helpful cues to the likelihood of gentrification. It appears that disamenity may have an equally relevant impact on gentrification as a strong amenity package. In particular a functioning industrial presence appears to limit the scope of potential gentrifiers for a particular community (Rose 1996; Shaw 2005). Regions of the city that experienced residential decline and subsequent rezoning to industrial lands in past generations sometimes contain broken up housing stock with lower rent regions, unattractive to the tastes of the gentrifier in between the industrial lands, where incomplete transition to industry occurred (Rose 1996). Accompanying this industrial land is often the associated transportation truck routes needed to support such venues, which can also be seen as a detraction to gentrifying classes seeking quality of life factors.

In addition, gentrification has been highlighted as being of largely European origin and largely Caucasian (Atkinson and Bridge 2005), thereby creating the scenario where neighbourhoods associated with gentrification typically are ones where the tastes and desires of this segment of the population are readily available, whether it be in regards to consumption needs or the entertainment venues of particular interest to the gentrifier.

While diversity is often accepted, at times embraced by the gentrifying middle classes, there appears to be less tolerance for diversity around issues affecting the children of this segment of the population (Pratt 1998; Butler 2003). In this regard, socio-ethnic diversity while perhaps providing an initial urban cosmopolitan appeal to the gentrifier, is seldom a desired trait of the child rearing gentry, and a high level of diversity typically appears to detract from the likelihood of widespread gentrification, thereby perhaps signaling a preference for a 'norm of similarity' (Pratt 1998).

Tied into this desire for this 'norm of similarity' is the perceived threat, and the desire of the middle class to live away from a visible presence of deep poverty, street crime, or social housing (Hamnett 2003). While perceptions in these circumstances tend to speak louder than realities, these types of elements appear to retain a certain potential to further detract the incoming populations of the new middle class. It is important to highlight however, that like so many of the other factors listed in this literature review the disamenities can often be overlooked in overheated housing markets where demand pressures are high. With these observations of the literature in mind, this thesis now moves to analysis cases of stalled or absent gentrification in Vancouver.

3

UNCOVERING A CASE STUDY: ABSENT OR STALLED GENTRIFICATION

By utilizing these clues from previous work on gentrification, we are provided with some possible indications to help anticipate where gaps in housing reinvestment might occur within the city. Neighbourhoods with long histories of organized and active residents in defence of their community in the face of gentrification could be expected to produce possible holes in the map of gentrification. Those communities that mobilized during a politically sympathetic government would be expected to show even more pronounced gains, as housing concessions and policy fixes obtained through successful protest would have more likely been achieved. In neighbourhoods where this active and vocal resident base is missing, one would expect other variables to be present if the neighbourhood has avoided anticipated development. Particularly, one would expect to find an absence of gentrification in communities devoid of historical housing, with a large presence of an aesthetically 'boring' or bland architectural character, and with consumption venues that are poorly aligned with the tastes of the gentry. Missing from the equation would also likely be the sought after amenity packages of waterfronts, beaches, views, large parklands or proximity to downtown, while a correlate of these predictions would be the presence of a high level of disamenities. Of particular significance in this regard would be a functioning industrial or manufacturing presence with its associated noises, smells and transport traffic. Beyond these aesthetic and environmental characteristics the literature also suggests that a certain demographic makeup might also slow the advance

of the gentrifier. Primarily it appears as though the visible presence of a marginalized population subject to deep poverty would be of importance, while further demographic variables might present the population as diverse, with little knowledge of English and largely of non-European origin.

To begin exploring the circumstances surrounding stalled or absent gentrification, it is important to select a neighbourhood to study that corresponds to apparent holes in the map of gentrification in the city. The foundation for this portion of the research relies on the detailed studies on gentrification in the Canadian context conducted by David Ley, culminating in 1996 with his book *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (1986; 1993; 1996). Through this research Ley found that the most responsive measure for gentrification was change in a social status index computed by aggregating indicators of professional-managerial employment and post-secondary education. If we identify where the greatest increase of this demographic is within the bounds of the city, we are better able to illustrate the general geography of the process. The justification for the adoption of this measure as a surrogate for gentrification was made by Ley (1986) who found that this social index held up best within the Canadian city to a wide range of tests including correlation at the census tract scale with other measures of gentrification such as rent and income, as well as intuitive definitions of high-status districts.

Not everybody is entirely comfortable using this measure however. Two such studies that attempt to add a more nuanced and predictive element to the statistical strength of Ley's measure of gentrification in Canada were conducted by Meligrana and Skaburskis (2005) and Van Crieking and Decroly (2003). In each of these studies the authors place an increased emphasis on the role of historic housing stock as the driver of the process. Realizing and building off of the commonly cited preference of gentrifiers to move into these older districts, with an ample supply of renewable older housing

stock, the studies began from the belief that neighbourhoods with high levels of this type of housing have the greatest potential to displace low-income households. By operationalizing gentrification in this manner however, the authors ignore the primary issue, the displacement of individuals and community, and instead focus their definitions on physical changes. As Ley (1993) points out, we must keep in mind that when considering the displacement of poorer households “the pre-eminent concern is the social transition that is taking place, and the result is the same regardless of whether it is accomplished through the renovation or the redevelopment of dwellings for the middle class” (232).

A further difficulty in the attempt made by Van Crieking and Decroly (2003) to reinterpret the geography of gentrification was that by statistically dividing change into four categories, gentrification, marginal gentrification, upgrading and incumbent upgrading, they essentially muddy the longer running impacts of any of these changes. By replacing calls in the literature for a ‘geography of gentrification’ (Ley, 1996; Lees, 2000), with a ‘geography of neighbourhood renewal processes’ the authors narrowly reduce the understanding of gentrification to the ‘yuppification’ of neighbourhoods where sharp class transformations and conflict arise. Although these more complete examples of gentrification highlight the process most starkly, the displacement inherent in what the authors term ‘upgrading’ should not be semantically neutralized.

VANCOUVER’S GEOGRAPHY OF GENTRIFICATION

If we operationalize gentrification then, according to the social index outlined by Ley, and map it over the history of Vancouver’s gentrification dating back to 1971, some general observations can be made that begin to highlight some interesting trends.

Adjusting for census tracts as they existed in 1971 and subtracting the 1971 index from the 2001 index, Figure 1 illustrates the geography of social status change over the 30-



Figure 1: Vancouver's gentrification

year period, a change that is equated here with an index of gentrification. The scores of change have been divided into quintiles to illustrate the relative transformation that has occurred within the city as a means of delineating the bounds of this study.

As expected from the literature, the highest quintile scores are concentrated in tight proximity to the amenity rich and previous elite areas in Vancouver. In particular the beach and waterfront pathways that line much of Vancouver's westside shore and the downtown peninsula appear to be major foci. This westside waterfront is home to a number of marinas, beaches and the a seamless pathway system that encompasses the Vancouver peninsula, running from the convention centre in the north east corner of downtown, around Stanley Park, False Creek and culminating just west of Kitsilano Beach. In contrast to this, the eastside waterfront is dominated by industrial port functions, with the Port of Vancouver providing a barrier to waterfront access

throughout the majority of the eastside waterfront, running from Portside Park (C.R.A.B. Park) at the north end of Main Street to New Brighton Park on the north eastern corner of Vancouver's eastside. Even at these parks, pedestrian access is impeded by railroad tracks that need to be crossed over, providing a less seamless connectivity of community and waterfront than is present in the westside communities.

In addition to the beach presence, the map tends to also exhibit heavy clustering of gentrification around traditionally elite districts in the city, including Shaughnessy, Vancouver's premier address for nearly a century. Radiating out from these elite areas, the highest scores of gentrification tend to extend westward toward the high amenity western border of the city that lies adjacent to Pacific Spirit Regional Park. This park is a major draw, providing wooded trails for running and mountain biking, the University of British Columbia campus, as well as a number of secluded beaches, nestled at the foot of the steep Point Grey cliffs.

An associated observation here is the marked concentration of change and the sharp north-south boundary that separates the west and eastsides of the city, falling roughly along Main Street. This division, while clearly visible, appears somewhat obscured in this map, as the census boundaries of the city in 1971 straddled the Main Street divide south of 16th Avenue. While this perhaps removes some of the clarity of the east-west differential, the historic divide in Vancouver between the blue-collar, non-Anglo eastside, and the white collar, middle- and upper middle-class, Anglo westside appears to retain salience in this mapping, thereby suggesting that some limiting factor to gentrification may exist along this perceptual border. The most pronounced point of this split appears at the north end of Main, where we see the only location in the city where the top and bottom quintiles of gentrification sit directly adjacent to one another, thereby highlighting a dramatic edge to the process at the border of downtown and the

community of the Downtown Eastside, an observation which will be further explored shortly.

An even clearer representation of the role that the proximity to elite districts plays in gentrification can be identified if we separate the mapping of gentrification into the three decades from 1971-2001 (Figure 2). Here it becomes clear that change in the early stages of gentrification in Vancouver was tightly associated with proven and amenity rich neighbourhoods of the elite, with very little gentrification proceeding outside of these regions. If we examine the latter periods however, we see a much more sporadic diffusion of the process where census tracts in the top quintile of change, are no longer necessarily tied to these proven markets. This observation tends to add weight to the theories presented in the stage model of gentrification, where the work of the pioneers, and the lessons of profit have been proven in nearly any inner city community in Vancouver, and address alone no longer seems to be enough, as perceptual barriers seem to have fallen for

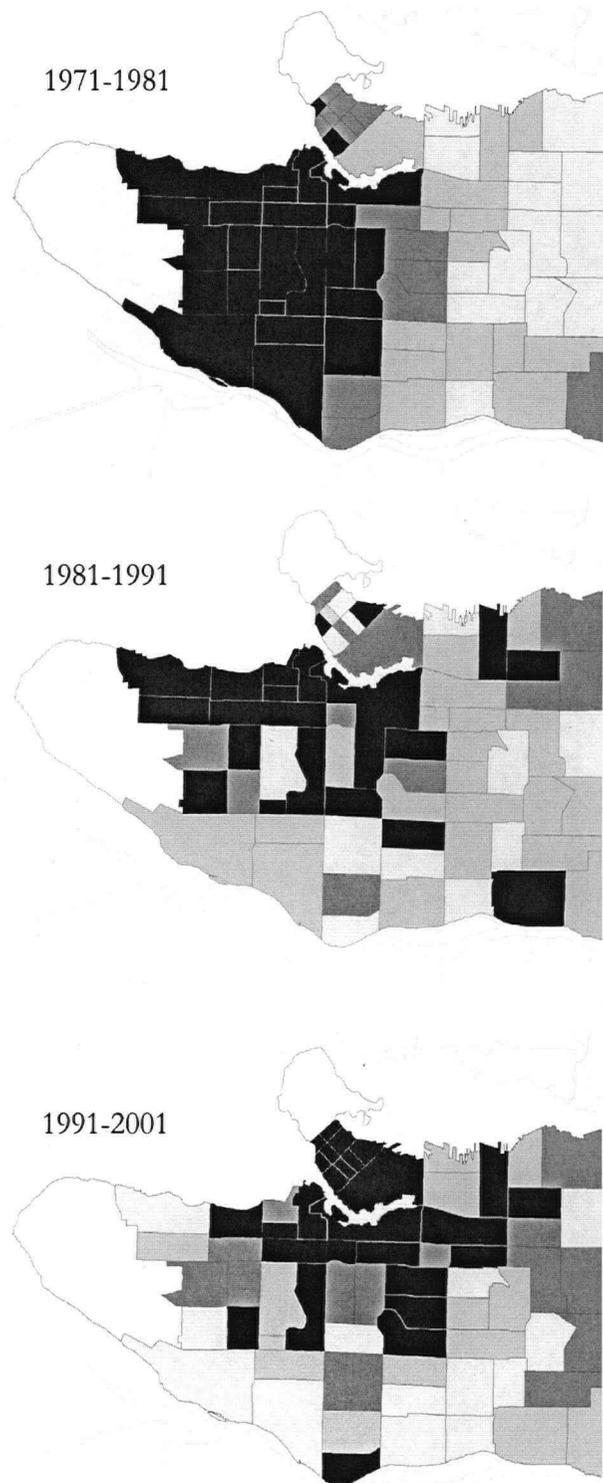


Figure 2: Vancouver's Gentrification by decade, mapped by quintiles.

developers in these previously untested landscapes. This observation was made by Ley (1993) who saw this trend as being indicative of more conservative investors testing the waters of inner-city living with the middle-class. Once this initial experiment was conducted and investors saw potential profits they became more comfortable investing in these proven ways of living. As a result the 1980s and 1990s saw a much more cavalier and geographically dispersed process of change within the city of Vancouver.

While the mapping of the 1980s and 1990s shows that gentrification has begun to infiltrate the traditional bounds of the east-west divide in the city of Vancouver, an examination of the 1971 and 2001 social index at the start and end points of the data set highlight that despite this diffusion of investment throughout the eastside, traditional distinctions continue to hold, with only two of the 68 census tracts in the entire city moving from the bottom half of the social index, to the top (Figure 3).

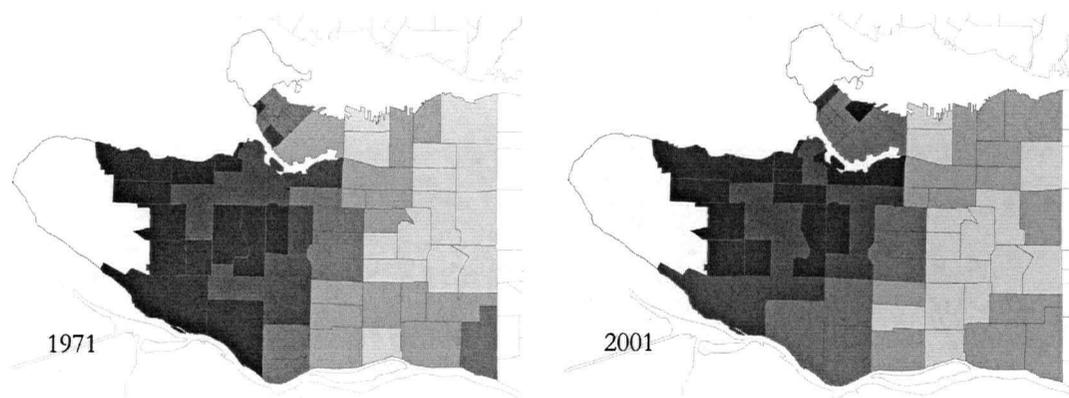


Figure 3: Vancouver's Social Index by quintile. 1971 & 2001

sharpening observations through correlation

These visual observations from the mapping are sharpened through simple correlation as illustrated in Table 1. But to address the nature of the larger question of this thesis, of where gentrification is least likely, priority and emphasis here is placed, not on the traditional question of what factors are most likely to lead to gentrification, and be

Table One: Correlation of 1971 & 2001 Vancouver census variables against low values of gentrification from 1971 – 2001

<i>Variables¹</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>2001</i>
Distance to downtown & the peak land-value intersection		0.46
Distance to nearest district park		0.45
Distance to waterfront pathway system		0.63
Distance to nearest beach		0.77
Population (>15) married	0.48	0.33
Single-detached housing	0.42	0.20
Owner occupied housing	0.39	0.12
Number of persons per dwelling	0.53	0.51
Multiple family homes	0.68	0.71
Duplex housing		0.59
Married without children		-0.58
Common law without children		-0.47
Single parent households		0.68
Single parent, female		0.52
Single parent, male		0.32
Population aged 35-49	0.51	0.01
Population aged 19-34	-0.33	-0.40
Immigrant population	0.20	0.75
Asian born population	0.45	0.76
Population of Buddhist faith	0.51	0.67
No knowledge of official language	0.52	0.83
Born in the United Kingdom	-0.63	-0.78
Born in the United States of America	-0.79	-0.82
Population of visible minority		0.81
Population of Anglican faith	-0.61	-0.77
Population of United faith	-0.27	-0.71
Distance to elite district		0.60
Median dwelling value	-0.50	-0.32
Constructed between 1946-1960	0.53	0.23
Average income	-0.32	-0.75
Population without income	0.65	0.33
Population >15 with less than grade nine	0.64	
Incidents of low income families		0.71
Distance to industrial land use		0.43

(data source: Canadian Census 1971; 2001)

¹all variables calculated as percentages within tracts, unless otherwise stated

present in gentrified neighbourhoods, but rather the question of what factors, when present in 1971 decreased the likelihood of wide-spread change, and what factors are present in the neighbourhoods in 2001 that saw the least amount of gentrification. As a result of this line of inquiry the correlations have been reversed compared to previous studies, thereby relating Vancouver census variables, from both 1971 and 2001, against low values of the gentrification index.

Of the variables explored, proximity variables tended to provide some of the strongest correlation. Tracts where little gentrification occurred were in 2001 far from the amenities of downtown (0.46), major district parks (0.45), and the waterfront pathway system (0.63), and further from a city beach (0.77). Households in low gentrification tracts were, at the beginning of the process in 1971, more likely married (0.48) and living in single-detached housing (0.42) that was likely to be owner-occupied (0.39). Another factor that seems to impede gentrification was a certain amount of crowding, with higher numbers of inhabitants per dwelling (0.53) and multi-family households (0.68) both impacting the advance of gentrification with their presence in 1971. While the presence of owner-occupied, single-detached housing in 1971 decreased the likelihood of gentrification, lower gentrification scores also correlated strongly with the presence of duplex dwellings in 2001 (0.59).

While marriage increased the likelihood of stalling gentrification, census tracts that had a high number of couples, either married or living common-law in 2001 that choose not to have children typically were less likely to avoid being gentrified (-0.58 and -0.47 respectively), while the presence of single parents (0.68) was more common in low gentrification tracts in 2001 (0.52 for female parent, 0.32 for male parent). With such a strong correlation to the presence of single mothers it would appear as though the measurement of gentrification by the social index may in fact allow the impact of the

marginal gentrifier as defined by Rose (1984) to slip through its measurement.

As the youth of the counter-culture began to rework the landscapes of the inner city, the age cohort with the least likelihood of spurring gentrification in 1971 were those between 35-49 (0.51), while not surprisingly, the presence of young adults, ages 19-34, decreased a neighbourhood's likelihood of stalling gentrification (-0.33). If we move ahead to 2001, the presence of young adults remain problematic for attempts to stall change (-0.40), while the relationship of the 35-49 cohort lost its strength of correlation with impeded gentrification (0.01).

A number of interesting relationships appear when we look at cultural variables in relation to low scores of gentrification³. Here we see the presence of an immigrant, non-Anglo Canadian population to be the most likely in areas of stalled gentrification. In 1971, the presence of an immigrant population (0.20), particularly of Asian origin (0.45), with a religious affiliation with Buddhism (0.51) and without knowledge of an official language (0.52) all strongly correlated with tracts with less gentrification over the next thirty years. Anglo-Canadian traits and those of Western culture decreased the likelihood of a neighbourhood resisting the advance of gentrification. While immigration improved the ability to curb gentrification, immigration from the Western nations of the United Kingdom (-0.63) and the United States of America (-0.79) both decreased the likelihood of low gentrification scores, as did an Anglican (Church of England) faith (-0.61). Moving ahead to explore the data in 2001, these cultural observations only sharpen. Here we find that areas that have scored lower in gentrification contain an immigrant population (0.75), with no knowledge of an official

³ While these correlations are very strong, some caution does need to be taken, as the measure being used in this study, education and occupational measures, does privilege the local resident with a strong knowledge of the dominant business language of English. While this needs to be taken into account the observations tend to support the findings of other studies that have seen the process as one dominated by Western cultural preferences.

language (0.83), a high likelihood of Asian origin (0.76), and a high number of visible minorities (0.81). In conjunction with these findings, the presence of Anglo-Western characteristics are even more apparent, with American (-0.82) and British (-0.78) origins, as well as Anglican (-0.77) and United (-0.71) faiths being even more unlikely in low scoring gentrifying areas. These findings only strengthen the observations of a number of researchers, who have seen the process of gentrification as an Anglo-western phenomenon (Atkinson and Bridge 2005).

Proximity to elite districts⁴ in 1971 decreased the likelihood of stalling gentrification (0.60), while lower median housing values (0.50), and a high percentage of post-war construction built between 1946-1960 (0.53) both improved the likelihood of a lower presence of gentrification in the tract. Areas of low gentrification scores had a lower socio-economic standing in 1971. Incomes were likely to be lower (-0.32), while the presence of individuals without income was more common (0.65). Education levels were also lower in these areas, with a strong correlation appearing with the number of individuals over fifteen years of age with less than a grade nine education (0.64). In 2001 these socio-economic variables only strengthened their relationship; areas of the city that showed lower levels of gentrification were more likely to have higher incidence of low income families (0.71), while individual income levels were also likely to be lower (-0.75).

While proximity to high amenity regions made low scores in gentrification unlikely, the proximity to industrial lands factored in more positively in a community's ability to avoid the negative realities of gentrification (-0.43). While the distance to industry showed a strong relationship to low social index increases, this number would likely have been even higher if a couple of clarifications were made to the industrial activity present in

⁴ Elite districts were identified as the top 10% of tracts in terms of median dwelling value, and the distances for correlation were measured as straight line distances from the centre of each tract in the remaining 90% to the centre of the nearest elite tracts.

Vancouver's land use map. Located in close proximity to a number of the most desirable and gentrified landscape in the city in 2001 were a few relatively small and benign industrial uses. Located at the foot of the Burrard Street Bridge, and situated directly between the archetypal yuppie preserve of Kitsilano and the prototypical postindustrial marketplace of Granville Island is a Molson Brewery operation, occupying a small industrial site in the midst of widespread gentrification. Even more directly associated with the artistic markets of Granville Island is the presence of Ocean Construction's concrete batch plant that has been the main provider of concrete to Vancouver's downtown, and has been situated on the previously industrial Granville Island since 1917. Neither of these industries appear to be noxious and perhaps removing these non-noxious types of industry from the land use maps may strengthen this correlation. Further from these two relatively benign industrial uses is the impact that the old industrial function of the Arbutus Walk had on the mapping. While present in small segments in 2001, the rezoned and largely gentrified Arbutus industrial district, in the city's westside, has removed nearly all industrial functions, steps have been made to remediate the land, and redevelop the area as largely residential. If these and other clarifications were to be made to the map and if uses were classified in terms of their impact on the environment; whether it be through noise, air, or aesthetic considerations, it would appear that the significance of industrial lands may play an even larger role as an impediment to gentrification.

It appears as though the literature on gentrification tends to be largely borne out with these correlations predicting districts unfavourable to gentrification in Vancouver. With this in mind this thesis now turns to explore some of the more subtle limiting factors that have stalled or stopped gentrification in a couple of points of relative absence of gentrification on the maps and on the ground.

interview selection and research methodology

The remaining work relies upon fieldwork, archival sources, secondary sources, and data bases, with the bulk of the data coming from a series of twenty-five interviews with local experts with long memories. While the list is far from being exhaustive, effort was made to try and provide a wide range of views and ideologies to provide a more representative sample of the wider community. Individuals from a variety of occupations were interviewed with focus centred around individuals who have not only intimate knowledge of the community, but also have either lived or worked in the neighbourhood for a number of years. The interviews included community leaders, city planners, politicians from various levels, housing advocates, real estate agents, business owners and two local business organizations, as well as employees with of non-profits and research organizations.

THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE: ON GENTRIFICATION'S EDGE

The first area to be explored in this thesis and by far the most obvious absence of gentrification in Vancouver is the community of the Downtown Eastside (figure 4). Many predictive studies of gentrification would have expected widespread transformation to have already rapidly occurred in the Downtown Eastside. Adjacent to the city's downtown core, and mere blocks to the peak land-value intersection, the community is unquestionably home to the region's most pronounced rent-gap. So extreme is this variation that that a 10 minute walk from the heart of the district into the downtown core in 1997 brought with it more than a 1200% jump in property values⁵ (Steele 1997). Outside of this gradient, the neighbourhood also, as the city's original town site, contains an expansive collection of historic buildings and aesthetically interesting, diverse, and unique urban landscapes which

⁵ Comparable prices cited by Steele (1997) were \$70/sq ft in the Downtown Eastside, as opposed to \$900/sq ft in the Downtown core.

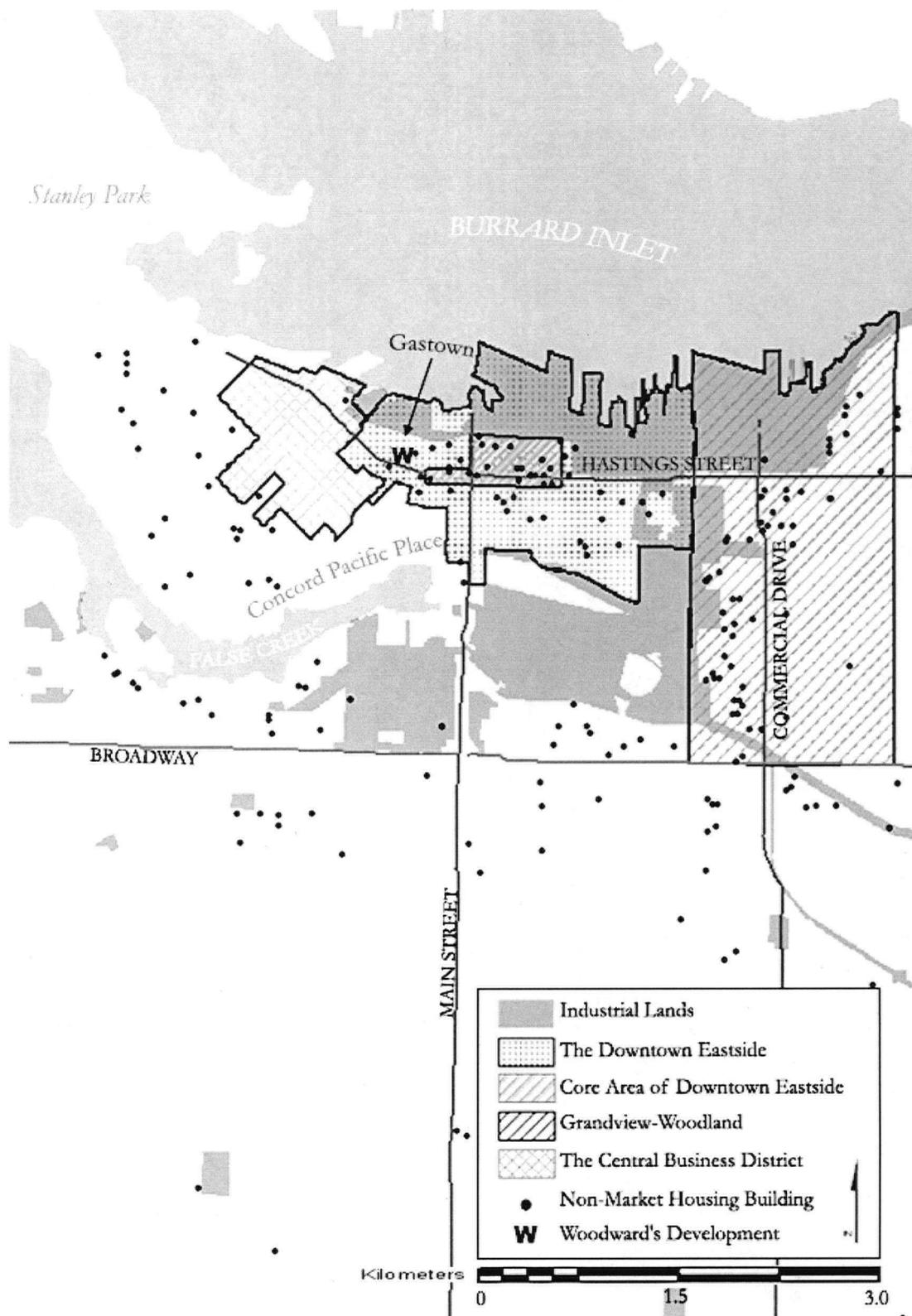


Figure 4: Community context map. The Downtown Eastside and Grandview-Woodland

would be of considerable value to the stylized preferences of the young urban gentry. Yet despite these factors, nearly any mapping of socio-economic data, a quick field visit, or even a glance at the gentrification map of Vancouver (Figure 1), clearly highlight that the historic divide between the community and the remainder of the city retains its hold. The question of most interest to this thesis is why? Why has this neighbourhood, despite a wide range of attractions resisted the advance of gentrification for so long? What is it about the neighbourhood that makes the advancing and expanding gentry in Vancouver consider alternative locations of residence? In short, what factors or circumstances have apparently stopped gentrification in its tracks, right outside the city's most expensive land values?

Despite its close proximity to the central business district and its associated amenity package a number of factors seem to provide clues as to the reasons for the delayed gentrification in this affordable district including extreme poverty, a long neighbourhood history of conflict, and the presence of an extremely marginalized population with its associated social services and housing. As Vancouver's original town site, the history of the Downtown Eastside is well established and well rooted in the historic development of the city and its region. Its history has been tumultuous to say the least, and in many regards can be best summed through its decline, with the present day result being a neighbourhood and its residents generally considered to be among the most marginalized in Canada (Hasson and Ley 1994).

Originally the home base for British Columbia's resource extraction industry, the early function of the Downtown Eastside focused on servicing the desires and needs of the single men of these industries and as a result became a site where 'in between job', seasonal labourers could not only find dollar-a-day accommodations but also the entertainment they desired (Blomley 2004). As the economy of the city grew

and the majority of new investment capital shifted west, the transition facilitated the initial separation between the middle and upper-class west-side from the working-class eastside. With this shift the affluent members of society migrated out of the community and the Downtown Eastside became a physical extension of the provincial resource economy (Hasson and Ley 1994). Canneries, sawmills, meat-packing, and metal-working facilities all agglomerated within the region (Hasson and Ley 1994), creating, due to this concentration of blue-collar labourers, a sense of working-class pride within the community.

At the outset of the First World War, the vibrant Downtown Eastside continued its function as the centre of warehousing and transportation for the city, as well as acting as the main shopping corridor for the working-class (Blomley 2004). Following the Second World War however, the community began a slow and continual decline as its central role in warehousing, transportation and manufacturing operations, based on resource extraction of the hinterlands, began to fade (Sommers and Blomley 2002). With a decline in the seasonal work, many of the employees of the extraction industries sought full-time residence within the existing hotels of the Downtown Eastside, thereby securing the function of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Units within the neighbourhood as permanent, full-time residences. By the end of the 1940s the region had become the full-time home to a concentration of retired resource workers, a surprising number of whom had been handicapped by industrial accidents (Hasson and Ley, 1994).

Following the wartime recovery efforts the community became even further marginalized from mainstream society and by the 1960s substance abuse had become increasingly noticeable as the community of retired and unemployed resource workers were joined by a “transient population of middle-aged and elderly men, some alcoholic, natives, and youth” (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p.175). With this further marginalization from the

remainder of Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside became increasingly identified, not through the work ethic and achievement of its once proud resource workers, but rather through the morally deviant activities which were becoming more frequent (Sommers and Blomley 2002). With the community now “coded as a place of dubious morality, racial otherness, and masculine failure” the discourse of ‘skid road’, became readily applied with all of the negative connotations that it carries today, thereby re-imagining the community in the eyes of the dominant class as “a pathological space of interlocking moral and physical blight” (Blomley 2004: 34).

More problematic to the livelihood of the community and heavily implicated in this narrative of decline was the role that the district’s flourishing drug trade began to play. With its proximity to the Vancouver port, the Downtown Eastside acted as a gateway to the Canadian drug market, resulting in drugs in the neighbourhood being not only readily available but also very cheap (Shier 2002). This concentration of drug trafficking and its related problems was made clear in the LeDain Commission on non-medical drug-use that noted that 62% of Canada’s 4000 heroin addicts resided in the province of British Columbia with the majority of these frequenting the local market of the Downtown Eastside (Shier 2002). While already under incredible stress from the ills of heroin, a further element was added to the neighbourhood’s struggle with the introduction of injectable crack cocaine in the early 1990s. Implicated in the arrival of this relatively cheap and plentiful intravenous drug was the makings of an HIV/ AIDS epidemic which was well known to local officials by the summer of 1994 and which had infected nearly half of the six to ten-thousand addicts that frequented the Downtown Eastside by 1997 (H. Smith 2003).

As the general Vancouver public became increasingly aware of the health issues associated with drug use in the community, fear turned public discourse decidedly against

the neighbourhood, extending the pathologization of the poor into the pathologization of the entire neighbourhood where the “whole population of the district was perceived as a bunch of dope fiends” (Sommers and Blomley 2002: 21). Rooted in fear, public accounts in the media such as “Vancouver’s worst neighbourhood... probably Canada’s worst neighbourhood” became commonplace (A Vancouver Sun TV critic in 1998 cited by Sommers and Blomley 2002: 19). Worse than this, the neighbourhood became a generally regarded ‘no-go’ zone for local Vancouver residents who increasingly bought into the idea that the “escalating anarchy and open drug market” had transformed the Vancouver community into an area that not only fell outside of ‘civilization’ but went beyond ‘the boundary into hell’ itself (Sommers and Blomley 2002). The pathology of the neighbourhood was beginning to threaten the entire city.

Running parallel to this demographic decline was the similar story of the desecration of the commercial function within the community. Although there were certainly signs of distress on Hastings Street⁶ in 1973, the neighbourhood still consisted of a diverse and vibrant entertainment and retail district that appealed to not only the neighbourhood’s traditional working class residents, but also the artists and other counter-cultural groups that frequented the area during that period, thereby leaving the district with a very respectable vacancy rate of 3.9% (CCAP 2002). The 1980s however, initiated the decline of the area’s commercial scene as a number of regional developments removed clients from the street. By 1984, the downtown suburban style mall of Pacific Centre was being hailed as “Canada’s most successful mall”, while the construction of a large suburban mall in neighbouring Burnaby, with the associated access that the arrival of the rapid public transit Skytrain brought in 1986 inevitably ensured that the commercial rôle of Hastings Street would substantially decline (CCAP 2002). By 1986, closures

⁶ The main commercial corridor of the Downtown Eastside

along the street had pushed vacancy rates to 13% with the crushing blow coming to the neighbourhood's commercial function in 1993 with the closure of the large Woodward's department store, initiating a widespread withdrawal of the commercial function in the community leading to the 2002 vacancy of 43% (CCAP 2002).

As the neighbourhood became more and more marginalized within the Vancouver conscience and as decline and fears of the neighbourhood began to permeate the larger society the success of the Vancouver police was increasingly evaluated by their ability to contain prostitution and the drug market to the core of the Downtown Eastside (Blomley 2004). This attitude and support of the policy of containing the ills of the city within the neighbourhoods of the most disadvantaged communities was not new, and in fact had been going on for quite a while in Vancouver. "Through influence, connections, money and an at-large system that historically concentrated political power in the westside because of high voter turnout there, the westside has insulated itself from much of the change that has burdened the rest of the city" (McMartin 2004). This at-large system of local politics in Vancouver ensured that up until the 1970s nearly every councilor in the city had been elected from the westside, thereby solidifying the political might of the elite through City Hall. One outcome of this setup was the increasing tendency of social services and housing to be consolidated in the less affluent neighbourhoods of the eastside, particularly the Downtown Eastside. One previous Vancouver councilor highlighted in an interview what he referred to as a 'little unspoken agreement' between the political left and right in Vancouver where the left fought for non-market housing and social services in the Downtown Eastside to avoid gentrification, while the right agreed to this practice as a means of keeping those services and people out of the other neighbourhoods. This long running pattern of concentrating services in the community has fueled the perception by the larger Vancouver society that a culture of poverty exists in the Downtown Eastside, thereby

helping to postpone the incoming gentry. While this false perception may have delayed gentrification it appears as though it has now also presented political justification for the goal of 'revitalization without displacement'.

By the onset of the new millennium the concentration of services and social housing had resulted in the scenario where nearly 80% of the low-income housing in the downtown core of Vancouver was concentrated in the Downtown Eastside (City of Vancouver, 2001). To provide a more comparative understanding of the concentration within the neighbourhood, non-market housing accounts for only 8.5% city wide in Vancouver, whereas in the Downtown Eastside the proportion of non-market housing is roughly 50% where over 90% of neighbourhood residents are tenants (City of Vancouver 2002; 2003b).

The stigmatized and marginalized nature of the Downtown Eastside has left it constantly in conflict with the larger Vancouver society. While conflict in the community has its history rooted in earlier labour disputes, the battle over the definition of the community and its resistance against gentrification owes a great deal to the founding of the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA). DERA was formed in 1973 to demand the recognition of the of the area as a residential community and to attempt to re-image the neighbourhood by drawing attention to the role that its residents played in the building of the local economy and the expansion of the west including its former loggers, miners, seamen, railroad workers, waitresses, cooks, longshoremen and millworkers (Sommers and Blomley 2002). The association fought to remove the previous name of 'skid road' and replace it with the community name of the Downtown Eastside.

Through this reworking of the local discourse surrounding the neighbourhood



Figure 5: The Woodward's department store in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

and by highlighting the rooted and long standing community presence there, this organized community was also able to problematize hegemonic ownership models by staking a collective claim in the neighbourhood (Blomley 2004). This questioning of established norms is perhaps best illustrated in the community's successes surrounding the negotiation and redevelopment of the Woodward's department store (Figure 5). Following the closure of the store in 1993, conflict ensued as the owner sought to redevelop the site into condominiums. Feeling threatened by the inevitable gentrification, the community and its activists in the Downtown Eastside began reworking the unquestioned ownership model by staking a claim in the large department store, thereby claiming that "Woodwards belonged to the neighbourhood" (Blomley

2004: 39). Through this battle, the residents had put forth two powerful claims: first, that private property relations were a threat to their community, and second, that a more positive property claim was one that stressed a collective ownership, vested in the low-income residents that lived in the community (Blomley 2004). The building belonged to them. Its history was something they had created. This assertion of community ownership was founded on the belief that local residents should be recognized as having some rights in decisions over their neighbourhood's future.

The reworking of the discourse surrounding the ownership of Woodward's is one example of how quite often conflicts over communities facing gentrification are rooted in battles over control of the dominant discourse. Often, the momentum of the struggle lies in favour of the group that is best able to delineate the perceptions of the media and the political decision makers. Beyond property claims, activists in the Downtown Eastside had to also first address the more general discourse that surrounded their neighbourhood, to rewrite the community as something other than 'skid road' (Hasson and Ley, 1994). By focusing on the long tenure and stability of the community and its older residents, activists were able to break down public perceptions and media images of the Downtown Eastside as "skid road" characterized by transience, welfare dependency and criminal activity (Blomley, 2004; Hasson and Ley, 1994).

While this historic division has stood the test of time along the borders of the Downtown Eastside, it appears as though the present day optimism around the revitalization of the neighbourhood may finally bring with it the wholesale entry of the middle class. On the dawn of the 2010 Olympics, in a developer friendly local political climate, and with the recent approval and ongoing construction of the redevelopment of the Woodward's building with a two-thirds to one-thirds mix of market and social housing, it appears as though a new wave of gentrification pressure is about to test

this neighbourhood's long ability to resist profits drawn from this sizable rent-gap. As property values in the city expand rapidly, the once unthinkable neighbourhood for gentrification now seems to have adequate demand while the previously impenetrable obstacles of poverty and street disorder may no longer be sufficient barriers to the advance of gentrification as is evident in the single day sell-out of the Woodward's redevelopment.

The Woodward's building has long held an iconic position within the community. The building's large red 'W' (Figure 6) has stood as the symbolic meeting place of the two-sides of Vancouver (Blomley 2004). As redevelopment proceeds, the construction site at the old Woodward's department store stands in not only as symbolic of the ensuing gentrification of the neighbourhood and the entrance of the middle class into the traditionally working class and impoverished neighbourhood, but also as a symbol of the valiant and ongoing struggle by the community to fend off the wave of gentrification that has been on the community's doorstep since at least the late 1980s. As a result of the pressures and publicity garnered by the activists surrounding the battle over the Woodward's building the outgoing provincial government purchased it from a previous developer in 2001 and promised to fund the construction of 100 units



Figure 6: Woodward's 'W'

of non-market housing within the structure. (Blomley, 2004). As it is presently being built, this rooted and powerful community has successfully leveraged an additional 100 units of affordable housing while holding up redevelopment of the site for over ten years through this rewriting of hegemonic accounts of ownership.

Yet despite these successes, the discourse that has already altered greatly surrounding the neighbourhood appears to be undergoing yet another edit, this time by the pen of the developer. Under the neighbourhood's current speculative environment and with a reduction in the discourses of fear that surrounded the neighbourhood for so long, one housing advocate in the neighbourhood cited the mental shift happening in people towards the long stigmatized Downtown Eastside, where the "eastside now is not considered as dangerous anymore, and the media is not fueling that perception [of disorder]". These altering perceptions have been accompanied by an increased level of tolerance to difference and disorder as gentrification has begun to reform the neighbourhood with even the long stigmatized 'east'side title now being commodified by developers as they push the image and ideals of a gritty 'eastside chic' (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Commodifying the 'East'side

Even within the Woodward's redevelopment, this turbulent history has been utilized and packaged as the developers have pushed the 'edginess' of the neighbourhood as a way of marketing the units to an urbane clientele; in a way almost daring them to buy into such an 'authentic' property:

If you've lived in Vancouver all your life you may think of Woodward's as edgy. But if you moved to Vancouver in the last 10 to 15 years, or have resided in any other major city in the world like New York or London, you will recognize the incredible potential – this is an emerging area. Not a sanitized environment. Neighbourhoods like this are rare and offer an authentic mix of cutting-edge culture, heritage and character. That's why the intelligent buyer will get in early. This is the Future. *This is your neighbourhood*. Be bold or move to suburbia. (Rennie Marketing System 2007)

The future is uncertain in the Downtown Eastside and this optimistic discourse of neoliberalism is not the only voice being heard in the Downtown Eastside. Running parallel to this incoming gentry is a commitment by City Hall to proceed in the Downtown Eastside through a policy of "revitalization without displacement", citing an explicit acknowledgement of the potential of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games to displace a large segment of this population (Bid Corporation 2003). So as these competing voices clamor to be heard the severe polarization in the community cited by Heather Smith in 2003 is likely only to increase. While the pressures of redevelopment have been encircling the neighbourhood for a long time, it appears as though the full transgression of the boundary into the Downtown Eastside may now be imminent. As this transition proceeds it remains unclear as to which segment of the polarized population will truly be able to lay claim to the marketer's phrase: "This is your neighbourhood".

While the lessons learned in the Downtown Eastside have some utility for understanding possible limiting factors to gentrification, the extreme conditions of crime and disorder

as well as the neighbourhood's long history of poverty and activism, create certain situations that are not only extremely unique, but also quite unlikely to be accepted as reasonable policy options for municipal governments interested in controlling gentrification. As a result this thesis now switches to a neighbourhood in the city where gentrification and change have seemed inevitable, and yet, despite widespread anticipation and fear, never truly gentrified as fully as predicted.

GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND: CURBING THE TREND

- 1974 The whole area is in a **transition** stage. It **could become another Kitsilano** (Bower, quoted in Hanson and Daniels 1974).
- 1976 Grandview-Woodland is in the process of being 'discovered'. The area that was Vancouver's first suburb in 1891 is now an inner-city neighbourhood **on the verge of becoming fashionable** (Smith 1976: 23)
- 1979 Commercial Drive (Grandview-Woodland's main commercial corridor) is the focus of an extremely diverse community, an urban environment that has always been in the process of becoming something else. The **pressures for change have never been more unrelenting** than they are today. (Bulhozer 1979, quoted in Jackson 1984: 150)
- 1980 But there is **another trend in Grandview** worth noting: the New Wave immigrants – **young people from the westside of Vancouver**. (White 1980: 106)
- 1981 Now, as the detached family house becomes increasingly unaffordable, the neighbourhood is **being transformed** by a new ethnic wave – people whose mother tongue is neither Italian Chinese nor Punjabi. The **newcomers are white, many of them young professionals** with few or no children (Bohn 1981).
- 1984 ...there have been a number of indications from a range of sources that the area may currently be experiencing some 'incipient gentrification'. This so-called 'discovery' of Grandview-Woodland by an, as yet, small group of young 'professional' and 'pre-professional' adults, together with the likelihood of yet further escalation of investment activity, leads the writer to suspect that

Grandview may well be **on the verge of quite substantial residential change** in the coming years (Jackson 1984: 92).

- 1989 ...the area is **threatening to turn trendy** and some say it may be on the verge of a real estate boom that will **transform it into Kitsilano east** (Stainsby 1989: D14).
- 1990 Commercial Drive is a picture of a street **in transition** (Appelbe 1990: 9).
- 1993 Commercial Drive, recently an ethnic street in the process of becoming also a political one, is now an ethnic/political street **in the process of becoming** also an **edgily fashionable** one. (Sutherland 1993: 106)
- 1997 There is a spectre haunting Commercial Drive – **the spectre of gentrification** (Ward 1997: A14).
- 2005 Urban renewal or not, the neighbourhood today is feeling the **early effects of creeping gentrification** (Berson 2005: H6).

Kyle Wilson removed the merchandise from the cellophane wrapping and replaced the missing items in their usual spots on the shelf. Reminiscent of the public character⁷ in Jane Jacobs' (1992 [1961]) celebrated bible of urban livability, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Wilson took the pulse of Grandview-Woodland daily for the past 13 years from behind the counter of his periodical shop. As an active and involved community member, Wilson played the role of bellwether for the community, deeply involved and actively aiding the course of the neighbourhood's future. **"Gentrification will never happen... I tell people that all the time"**, he stated bluntly.

⁷ "The social structure of sidewalk life hangs partly on what can be called self-appointed public characters. A public character is anyone who is in frequent contact with a wide circle of people and who is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character. A public character need have no special talents or wisdom to fulfill his function – although he often does. He just needs to be present, and there need to be enough of his counterparts. His main qualification is that he *is* public, that he talks to lots of different people. In this way, news travels that is of sidewalk interest" (Jacobs 1992 [1961]: 68).

constant change: the early development of grandview-woodland

Gentrification and change have been constant 'buzzwords' in the community of Grandview-Woodland since the 1970s. Tied up in the common street discourse, the ever present pressures of development and speculation have fostered continual predictions of transformation from a predominately working class, immigrant reception neighbourhood to a gentrified landscape similar to that of Vancouver's most prominent example, Kitsilano. With its proximity to downtown (Figure 4), a commute free of a bridge crossing, a large and relatively affordable stock of heritage homes, a number of attractive tree-lined streets, and a long history as a neighbourhood with a thriving bohemian, artistic, and counter-cultural status centred around the unique and popular retail strip of Commercial Drive, these predictions of widespread gentrification and transformation in Grandview-Woodland seem well founded.

Yet despite these ongoing predictions, an examination of the overall gentrification of Vancouver from 1971-2001 (Figure 1), as well as the community's social status index of 2001 (Figure 3) highlight that Grandview-Woodland in many ways has resisted widespread gentrification and remains what it has been for generations: something unique; something wildly different; something exceptionally diverse. These observations of the community as being a location where gentrification has stalled are confirmed by the alternative mapping methods conducted by Meligrana and Skaburskis (2005) as well as that by Walks and Maaranen (forthcoming).

But how exactly has this neighbourhood retained its diverse and vibrant character despite these predictions? Or perhaps more explicitly, how has the neighbourhood curbed this at times seemingly unstoppable force of gentrification and change, particularly in a metropolis with sustained growth and the most expensive housing market in Canada where demand and supply pressures should have forced gentrifiers into this relatively

cheaper district? This chapter begins to explore these questions through an examination of the neighbourhood's physical landscape including its historical development within the Vancouver context. I also consider the policies and decisions made in the community around issues of zoning and land use, including local housing policy and policy about the presence and behaviour of the associated populations in Grandview's public space. As well this chapter also begins to explore issues of criminality and public disorder and the impact of these perceptions on the decisions of the incoming gentrifier.

a history of speculation

The history of Grandview-Woodland has been one of constant flux, marred with uncertain and speculative investment. Situated in north eastern Vancouver, the location of the present day community acted as a site of logging and hunting functions during the late 19th century as a portion of a timber stand of Hasting's Mill on Burrard Inlet. The original roadways of the area were nothing more than skid roads for logging functions which ran north up the present day Commercial and Victoria Drives emptying into the water below. The rugged nature of the region took a decided turn in 1891 with the arrival of the interurban rail line connecting downtown Vancouver with the nearby city of New Westminster. With hourly service running up the present day Commercial Drive, residential development began as developers and investors in the area began marketing the region as "Vancouver's first suburb" (City of Vancouver, 1975: 4). Away from the noxious industry that lined the downtown shoreline, Grandview-Woodland became a reprieve from city life for the upper- middle-class Vancouver population. As investment began to flow into the neighbourhood the early residents of Grandview-Woodland built a number of stately homes along the scenic ridges which lined the eastern half of the present day community, thereby best enabling them to take advantage of the 'grand view'. These original residents were primarily of British origin, and many of these early investors produced real estate fortunes during the boom period of 1905

to 1912. One such example came in 1911, where a few years after purchasing a city block at Commercial and Williams for \$1,500, George McSpadden turned around and sold a portion of that block to the government for \$125,000, to be used as a military camp during World War I and later a public park (Hanson and Daniels 1974). But this transformation into an enclave of the elite was never fully realized, and even in the neighbourhood's peak of the boom years, there was always the scenario where "the mansions of Vancouver's nouveau rich... were interspersed with the modest homes of the middle class, and the one-room shacks and cabins of struggling immigrants" (Smedman 2006).

The optimistic and speculative environment that became a trademark of the neighbourhood's early years didn't last long and as economic depression rolled into the First World War the neighbourhood began to slip into decline as new elite districts on the city's westside were opened up and developed. With the completion of the Burrard Street Bridge and the development of the westside suburbs of Kitsilano, Point Grey and the premier address of Shaughnessy, the neighbourhood of Grandview-Woodland began to mirror the decline in other eastside Vancouver neighbourhoods as the previously mentioned establishment of an east-west differential coded the eastside neighbourhood on the 'wrong side of the tracks'. With the establishment of this geography of a socially divided Vancouver, a number of the previous large single-family homes in Grandview also fell into decline and as a result were divided into rooming houses and single room occupancies for incoming immigrants and blue-collar workers (Smedman 2006).

two vancouver: the city's eastside/westside divide

Any understanding of both the barrier to change along the city's larger east-west divide and the process of stalled gentrification in Grandview-Woodland has to include the

traditional perceptual divide along the Main Street corridor. Rooted in a long running history, dating back to the early days of settlement, this perception of difference has remained in local discourse and has presented the two sides of the same city in dramatically different ways (Blomley, 2004). This divide appears to have retained salience today, thereby coding the eastside as a “part of Vancouver where people live only by necessity, never by choice” (White 1980, quoted by Bouthillette 1997: 221).

The currency of this stigma is clearly illustrated with a quick examination of discussions on two local web-blogs, *Discover Vancouver* (2006) and the *Vancouver Housing Market Blog* (2005). Within these internet discussion boards the presence of this mentality becomes quickly apparent: “I’m not putting down East Van -- it’s just that, rightly or wrongly, East Van has a negative connotation.” (posting by \$1,000,000+: 8/21/2006). Or more explicitly:

I don’t even like driving through there. I couldn’t imagine actually living there. I think that East Van is probably the most overpriced area right now. If I had the choice of living in East Van, or leaving the Province, I’d just pack my bags. I’ve lived here my whole life, and East Van has always been a shithole. It never seems to get any better, and anyone buying there right now and expecting it to get better are going to be waiting a long time. (posting by The man: 9/5/2006).

Even those individuals who identify the dramatic changes currently reshaping the eastside of Vancouver are reluctant to see a change in the eastside’s character:

...the presence of moneyed folks isn’t necessarily going to magically transform its character. Without being racist about it, there’s much more ethnic diversity on the ES, more recent immigrants, more longstanding but unmoneyed immigrants etc... and there’s of course worse than that. Come hang out by the Broadway skytrain station, and catch the culture! (posting by *vanloon*, on 09/13/2005),

Less than half an hour later this respondent added to the posting with a politically aware statement linking this negative perception of the eastside with the larger process of

gentrification:

...I meant no racist intent in my earlier post. Quite the opposite. I wonder sometimes if “gentrification” is shorthand for “move the unassimilated Asians along”... But you have to wonder if some of the transplanted debt laden young professionals will really be into it, or if they’re hoping to recreate the culture of the westside where a different culture is already firmly in place. (posting by *vanloon*, on 09/13/2005).

While certainly a series of anonymous postings on the internet need to be taken for what they are, these quotes tend to highlight the long running discourse in Vancouver which was echoed in the interviews where one realtor noted that “the eastside is still on first impression by a lot of people, blue-collared, immigrants with low incomes”. One community worker commented further on the neighbourhood’s perception in the mind of westside residents: “I think that this place has a bad reputation in the rest of the city... people think that it is slumming to go on the eastside... so I think part of it is the stigma of being in East Vancouver.” Or further a local art dealer on the street commented: “I knew people who wouldn’t even consider coming east of Main Street, it was like, too scary for them right; too dangerous. And there is still people who have that feeling, that it’s too dangerous to come over here”. While all of these comments tend to highlight opinions or perceptions of other individuals, one westside resident made the perceptual division clear in a battle with City Hall during a meeting regarding the introduction of an unwanted light-rail transit route through her westside community:

We are the people that live in your neighbourhood. We are dentists, doctors, lawyers, professionals, CEOs of companies. We are the crème de la crème in Vancouver. We live in a very expensive neighbourhood and we’re well educated and well informed. And that’s what we intend to be (Pamela Sauder of the Arbutus Corridor Residents Association, quoted in McMartin 2000)

As these quotes make abundantly clear the stigma associated with this division

unquestionably remains, although it appears that it is perhaps a local prejudice, rooted in tradition rather than reality that is often passed onto new residents as they arrive in Vancouver. This observation was reflected in the experience of an employee of a local Business Improvement Area who noted:

I actually grew up in Toronto, and spent ten years out in Nova Scotia. And when we moved out here one of the first things that people said to us is, you don't live east of Main, so it never even occurred to me to look for housing there, and I think that that reputation is very ingrained and the feeling that you know, if you can afford your house on the westside, if you can get west of Main you're doing good... when I started working here, and I told people I would be working on East Hastings, my friends were like 'oh my god, are you going to be safe there?

As newcomers arrive into Vancouver and search for a place to live in the increasingly unaffordable city one can assume that this somewhat arbitrary and irrational perceptual division of the city along historic lines is going to become less and less likely to stall the advance of gentrification into the eastside of the city.

One of the central elements of this divide and part of what furthered the differential as time wore on was the discrepancy between the provision of services on the 'two sides' of the same city. Rooted in the political structure at-large political system a great deal of alienation from City Hall developed. In the 1970s, the City initiated a local area planning program to address neighbourhood issues. As the lead community planner began the project he noted the difficulty in gaining support from the Grandview residents who "historically... have felt at best under-represented at City Hall, and at worst that any interest shown in the area by City Hall must inevitably signify something unwanted about to be imposed on the neighbourhood" (Buholzer 1976: 19). This traditional perception of alienation from City Hall appears to have retained its relevance:

there used to be a real discrepancy on how we were given basic services

versus the westside, and we'd see that in snow clearing, we'd see that in park maintenance. I have friends who live in False Creek and we have parks that are pathetic, pathetic, and we couldn't get anything done, and yet people who live in False Creek the park board maintains the walkway along the South Shore of False Creek, I'd go over to my friend's house, I'd bike there and you'd see these park board people busting their butts, putting in seasonal planting, this and that, and we couldn't even get basic grass put in our parks. There was a huge discrepancy. And I think that the quote unquote gentrifiers, who have come along, just take stuff on and they're vocal, and I think that's helped change the place for the good, for everybody (local artist and community volunteer).

This increasing presence and influence of the gentrifier on the eastside as highlighted in this interview, shows the importance that amenity plays in the lifestyle choice of the gentry, but also highlights how, as the number of these individuals increase, the landscapes of the eastside neighbourhoods are being reworked in their vision. The observation, by this Grandview resident corresponds with the mapping of Vancouver's gentrification patterns in Figure 2, where we see during the 1980s and 1990s this long-standing barrier losing some of its significance as redevelopment and investment by the middle class seems to be much more scattered throughout the city, especially since the 1990s. This sense of a changing discourse surrounding the perceptual barrier came out in a number of interviews where one real estate agent highlighted that: "as the city grows, it won't be the east-west divide, it's going to be the neighbourhood that drives the price". This same realtor also a migrant to Vancouver saw this division as irrational upon his arrival and thereby anticipated the border falling much earlier:

If you want to go back to the 70s, if you were priced out of the westside market, you wouldn't move eastside, you would have moved to Richmond... at that time the real estate board had divided Greater Vancouver into regions, the westside and Richmond were together as one region. And eastside Vancouver and Burnaby were together as one region as the working class blue collar area, and so there was still that divide at that time and it only started coming down 25 years ago. If I had one of those really beautiful old heritage houses for sale I would advertise them in the westside real estate weekly and the westside agents would laugh at me and go 'why are you advertising an eastside house in the westside'.

But very slowly people who couldn't afford to live in the westside would buy the best properties and that's what started the change. And as people moved the barrier began to fall.

'little italy': an immigrant reception neighbourhood

As this division took hold in Vancouver, the flood of immigration which has long been the narrative in the city began to flow into the more affordable eastside communities. This story is noted in Grandview-Woodland where the initial demographic makeup dominated by British migrants altered greatly following the First World War when Italian, Chinese and Eastern European residents became significant components of the neighbourhood's population. Following the Second World War, a renewed influx of Italians moved in, greatly altering the landscape of the neighbourhood through renovation and the presence of commercial functions. While this influx solidified the community's title of 'little Italy' which continues to be used today, in many ways the case of Grandview-Woodland mirrors the example of 'Little Italy' in Toronto where Hackworth and Rekers (2005) saw that the ethnic packaging was much more a case of marketing the neighbourhood's real estate than a name based in statistical reality. Continuing the pattern of transition, Grandview's Italian demographic dominance was short lived as the continual wash of new immigrants into the 50s and 60s included a large number of Chinese who took up residence there as the neighbouring Strathcona became increasingly overcrowded. Running parallel to this trend, was the simultaneous departure of many of the Italian families that followed the larger North American trends of the era with the middle class out-migration as they became established within the larger Canadian society. By 1971, only 14% of the population was described as Italian (Smith 1976) as a large percentage of these families relocated to the neighbouring suburb of Burnaby, a transition which opened up room for the East Indian immigrants who entered into Grandview in the late 1960s attracted to the community by the lower housing costs (City of Vancouver, 1975). By 2001, the number of residents who

identified their mother tongue as Italian had dropped to 2.8% (City of Vancouver 2003), thereby highlighting the salience of Hackworth and Rekers' (2005) observation.

By the end of the 1960s the community had a whole different demographic makeup from its initial elite establishment as a much more impoverished population moved in, making the neighbourhood a prime location for an urban federal renewal project which was predicated on the observation that the neighbourhood had a "need for more adult education, [a] concentration of public housing, excessive unemployment, high incidence of immigrants, shortage of parks and recreational facilities, low incomes, older housing, [and a] high percentages of families on welfare assistance" (City of Vancouver 1968:

3). While undergoing substantial transformation in demographics, the streetscape and flavour of the neighbourhood has been reflected through this diverse presence of a wide variety of first generation immigrants who have called Grandview their home:

every time a wave (of immigrants) goes through they leave a few things behind, there's places down here that are Portuguese, there's a few places that are Brazilian, and that's why there are about 25 or 30 ethnicities on the Drive, it's a residue of this constant wash (of immigrants) that comes over the place" (local business owner).

land use diversity and an industrial presence

Tied up in these transitions and the larger perceptual divide in the city has been the concentration and clustering of industrial functions within the lower-income, blue-collar communities of the city's east side. This heavy presence of industrial land uses was one of the limiting factors highlighted by Rose (1996) in the Montreal neighbourhood of Mile End where a large portion of the neighbourhood was devoted to an industrial land use that provided the heart of the city's garment and textile industry. Much like Mile End, industry plays an important role in understanding the dynamic of Grandview-Woodland and its delayed gentrification (Figure 8). Lining the western border of the



Figure 8: Grandview-Woodland land use and non-market housing map

neighbourhood along Clark Drive and forming a large segment of the north western corner of the community, industrial land use consists of a significant component of the community's overall footprint. Interspersed amongst these industrial functions are a number of residential buildings that would be of interest to only a few gentrifiers, leaving a certain amount of housing as what, through visible cues, one would assume to be low-rent and as a result more accessible to a low-income population (Figure 9).

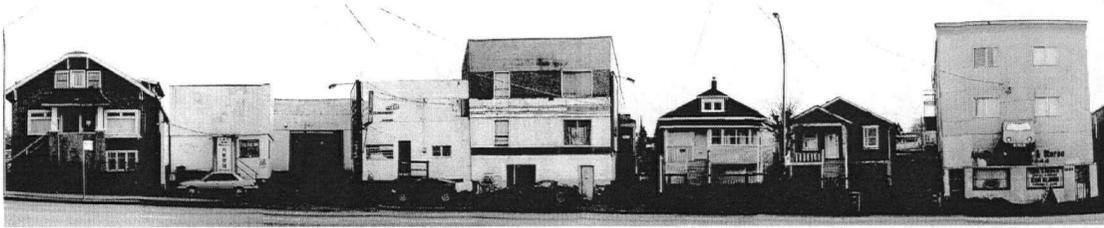


Figure 9: Light industrial and residential mix

The heavy industrial uses that are located mainly around the north end of the community, and in particular the port lands, provide sizable disamenity to potential gentrifiers. One such function, a poultry and food-waste reduction facility which began its operations in 1964 has been cited in a number of the interviews as well as media reports as a potential barrier to widespread gentrification in the neighbourhood. One housing advocate interviewed how lives in the neighbourhood cited the presence of this facility, West Coast Reduction (Figure 10), as a major factor in turning him vegetarian! Comparing the amenity packages on offer in Grandview and Kitsilano, and the impact this has on gentrification, he had this to say:

Well I think that it's access to amenities, and it's community and safety, so, historically Kits was gentrified in the 70s, and I remember the hippie stuff there, where it had high amenity, access to the beaches, away from the freeways and the smell of West Coast Reduction, I don't know if you live near the plant? It makes me ill; it's one of the things that made me a hard core, well not a hard core but a vegetarian.

While the plant received only two complaints about air quality from residents in 1994 after upgrading the its environmental controls, as time wore on complaints from neighbourhood residents rose to fifty in 2003 before spiking to 350 complaints in 2005 (Howell 2005). While there doesn't appear to be anything different about the operating procedures surrounding the plant since the mid 1990s, it appears as though the level of tolerance in the neighbourhood towards the smell has dropped substantially, perhaps indicating a transformation in the demographics of the neighbourhood, "The make-

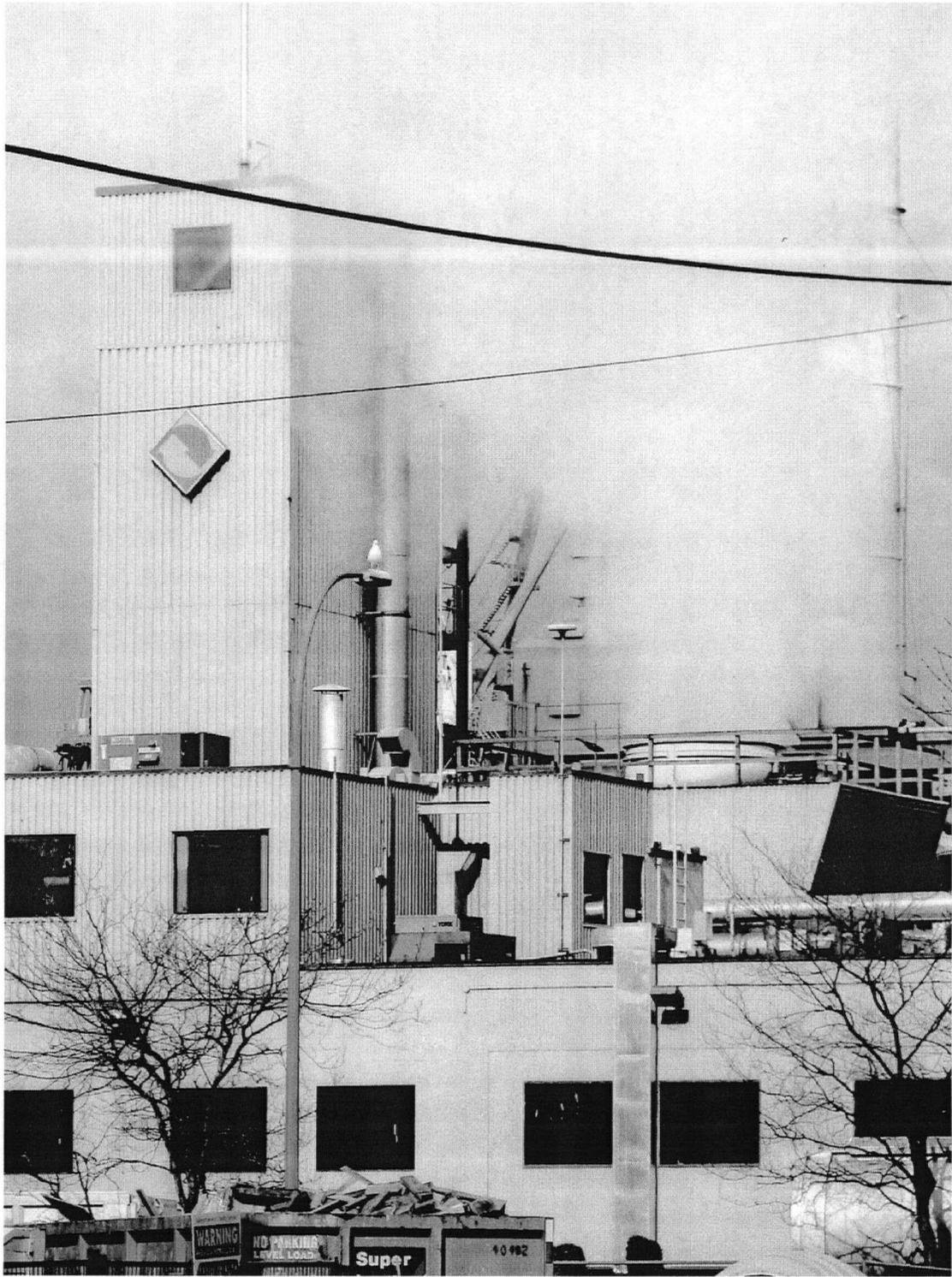


Figure 10: West Coast Reduction

up of the neighbourhood and peoples' tolerances and various things changed, and all of a sudden it's no longer good enough" (the manager of environmental and technical services at West Coast Reduction, quoted in Howell 2005).

Rachael Scott, a westside resident who moved to Grandview-Woodland when she purchased her first home there, claimed that the reason for the sizable increase in complaints in recent years was the fact that many of the longtime residents were complacent, but as gentrification proceeded the general level of acceptance went down. While these gentrifiers would complain, few were willing to remain in the neighbourhood, "in my building alone, eight suites have turned over the last ten months, all people from the westside... we have higher standards of living and higher expectations and everyone is absolutely outraged that this has been going on" (quoted by Rossi 2005a). But the reality is, that for the City of Vancouver, and as far as the GVRD is concerned, the service provided by West Coast Reduction is a valuable one that is crucial to the region. While the District is not willing to allow the plant to operate without up to date equipment and scrubbers, they are not likely to close the plant without the decision to leave being made by the business itself. As one member of the GVRD's air quality department noted, the neighbourhood has long sat adjacent to industrial lands, and those who move into the neighbourhood and expect it to change are unlikely to find the support they seek (Rossi 2005a).

While providing a certain disamenity to the neighbours of Grandview-Woodland a study of industrial land uses in the 1990s conducted by the City found that the current uses of this land was unlikely to change as there was not only a need to retain these lands in their present uses for economic reasons, but also an increasingly environmental and politically popular incentive to retain them. Paraphrasing the study's results, a planner noted:

you have a bunch of plumbing companies and laundries and bakeries, most of their products get distributed within the city, or they provide a city within the city, and the thinking then was that this was an efficient way of providing services locally. Now it's even more important because we're concerned about traffic volume and sustainability and environmental impacts. Then it was thought about, now it would be more probably, more central to the argument, that those areas are needed. Also we currently have less than a 2% vacancy rate, in fact I think it is more like a 1% vacancy rate, so that implies that they continue to be needed on that basis.

While this function is valued and present in today's Vancouver, only time will tell if the City's planning department will be successful in retaining this industrial function within the bounds of the city. As has been seen in past moves in the name of 'livability', redevelopment of brownfield industrial sites to residential uses have been extremely profitable not only for the land owners, but also for the city, which has extracted sizable public amenity through the rezoning process. The huge economic gains of rezoning in the city afford a ten-fold rise in values in the downtown where a two to three million dollar acre of industrial land would be worth twenty-five to thirty million dollars if rezoned to residential use (interview with City Planner). With such a widespread differential, one can expect that the pressures on rezoning of underutilized industrial lands will remain high in a city with an increasingly shrinking land base for future development.

While the general rule of this industrial landscape is one of residential disinvestment, there appear to be small pockets within this sea of industrial land that is, due to current housing pressures, providing an interesting landscape for a certain portion of the gentrifying class that is more constrained by costs. So while for the most part, these industrial landscapes continue to provide a release valve on housing prices, there do exist examples where gentrifiers are entering into these 'edgy' landscapes as was highlighted in the personal decisions of one local realtor who grew up on the west side of the city and

who, with price as a major driver, relocated herself on the industrial fringes. Not only does the interview highlight the lessened role of industrial land within the community as enough of a disamenity to resist gentrification, but it also highlights the shifting perception surrounding issues of the fading east-west division in the city despite the aforementioned mismatch of amenity:

I mean I come up and visit my parents, and you know the westside is prettier. The boulevards are nicer; there's less garbage... I mean there is more affluence there. Commercial Drive is a little grittier, it's a lot more industrial mixed in with residential... growing up on the westside I would never have envisioned myself living in such an industrial area, but there is just something about it I just can't move from.

While the industrial land use remains in Grandview-Woodland, these shifting perceptions around the ability of coexistence of these polarized uses in many ways highlight the shifting nature of industrial land use within the postindustrial city. While much of the landscape lies apparently under-utilized, an interview with a city planner revealed that this seemingly abandoned industrial land was still heavily relied on and formed an integral component of the shifting Vancouver economy. With an industrial vacancy rate in the city and in particular in Grandview-Woodland at nearly 1%, this visibly vacant landscape according to the planner, played a sizable role for the city's position as 'Hollywood North'. Many film studios, preferring the anonymity that comes along with this perceived abandonment, have located film functions within these landscapes that acted as a previous home for the heavy industry once present in the community on a much larger scale. While heavy industry is slowly losing its foothold within the neighbourhood as a result of economic transition, this shift is not only effecting the community by replacing jobs of the old industrial function with higher-skilled occupations of the cultural economy, but also in many ways removing another barrier to wider gentrification.

As it stands, visible signs are present in the community that suggest the displacement or replacement of heavy industry with segments of cultural industry. Graphic design shops and industrial artisans can be noticed in the neighbourhood, while a large metal foundry appears to have become the home to a movie studio, providing a flexible space for a number of different backdrops (Figure 11). So although the industrial land retains a very low vacancy rate it appears to be losing some of the more noxious elements that might dissuade gentrifiers, thereby providing more unique landscapes, without the perceived health drawbacks. While a rezoning of the industrial land to residential uses seems unlikely in Grandview-Woodland, if this transition to a cleaner, more post-industrial economy continues, one might anticipate that an increase of gentrification in these previously undesirable locations could very well be a narrative of future change within the community.



Figure 11: heavy industrial land converted to film industry

traffic congestion & its associated issues

Intricately tied into this industrial function, and providing yet another disamenity on offer in Grandview, is the role of transportation and freeway activity within the community. Hastings Street in the north end of the neighbourhood, 1st Avenue in the middle, and Broadway, the neighbourhood's southern border, all function as main east-west thoroughfares in the city, with both 1st and Hastings hooking up directly with Highway 1 and providing the primary routes from the suburban communities of the Fraser Valley to downtown. Should the province continue with current plans of their Gateway Project and the twinning of the Port Mann bridge (Province of BC 2007), it would result in these arterial streets becoming only more congested, providing a bottleneck to the transportation of an inevitably increased suburban expansion. This expansion is one of the most vividly protested issues in Grandview-Woodland today, and the way in which the province deals with the execution of their Gateway planning is likely to heavily impact the community and its desirability in the eyes of the middle class as the negative impacts of traffic alter the neighbourhood fabric: "all of that traffic that is coming into Vancouver, has got to come through East Vancouver, and it changes the way, it changes the neighbourhood".

In addition to these main commuter routes connecting the regions outer suburbs is the role that Clark Drive plays (Figure 12) as the city's primary north-south truck route serving the port and shipping functions. Acting as the neighbourhood western border, the already heavily congested truck route is likely to experience increased volume as one elected official reported that the Port Authority expects a four-fold increase in the number of containers coming into the port in the next 20 years. Not only would this increased volume result in more truck traffic, but also the congestion and associated particulate air pollution that goes along with it. The disamenity of traffic associated

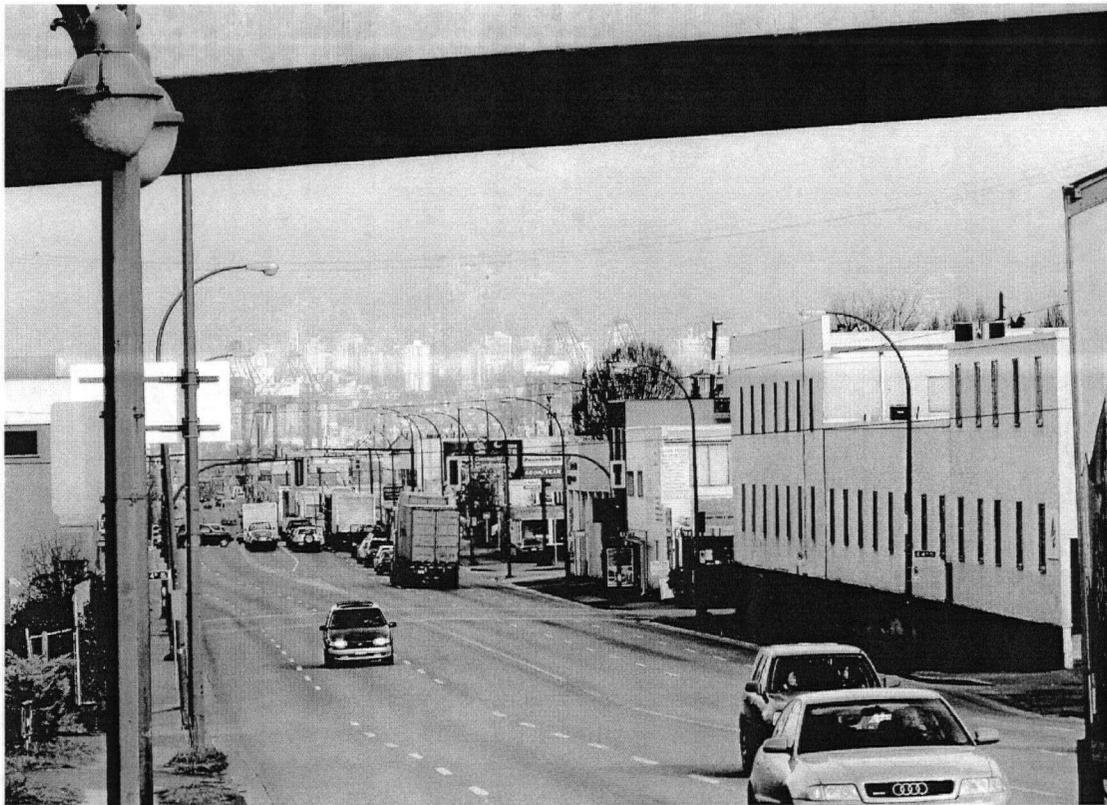


Figure 12: Clark Drive. Grandview-Woodland's western border

issues provides a prohibitive element to the incoming advance of the gentry and as in Montreal's Mile End community (Rose 1996), the presence of the busy and noisy thoroughfares has contributed greatly to the overall stock of affordable housing in the neighbourhood with mainly low-rent apartments and visibly disinvested housing interspersed amongst the industrial land and lining these busy roads.

a diverse housing stock

As a result of these diverse observations – the rise in lower income populations and new immigrants, the presence of industrial lands, and the fact that a the neighbourhood has experienced both a bright and speculative initial boom followed by a longer, more enunciated period of decline in investment – an associated wide range of housing types is present in the Grandview-Woodland community. As already pointed out, the neighbourhood, as a result of the period of growth and affluence that marked its

early years, is positioned as one of the few eastside neighbourhoods in the city with a wealth of turn of the century historical architecture; presenting a sizable draw to the gentrifying class. While the presence of these large houses has great potential to displace the low income population, the neighbourhood's long period of decline in the eyes of the westside Anglo population has allowed for a number of housing concessions to be made that seem to have played a sizable role in positioning the neighbourhood as an area of a diverse population. Throughout the periods of decline, a number of providers of affordable or non-market housing within the neighbourhood have secured housing through strategies including the conversion of the large stately single-family homes into multi-family uses. Many of these homes were successfully removed from the market by non-profit providers and co-op housing operations in the neighbourhood, including the home of one of the area's prominent early community members, Edward Faraday Odlum, a professor turned realtor who has been credited with providing the community with its name (Smedman 2006). The Odlum house was purchased by the East Vancouver Housing Co-op in the late 1970s and currently functions as seven separate apartments. Evident of the intensive decline that the area had experienced, Jane MacDermot, the co-founder of the Co-op, noted that the once proud house of Odlum had been "cut up into quite nasty little rooms – 11 of them (and)... was dilapidated and on its way to becoming a slum" (Smedman 2006: 7).

These purchases by non-profit housing providers were paralleled by a focus of governmental spending in the neighbourhood on social housing during the neighbourhood's years of disinvestment. With areas zoned for higher densities, cheaper land values, and a community that was considered tolerant and accepting of the needs of the lower income members of society, Grandview-Woodland became a prime location of housing investment by the various levels of government. Through this focused provision, the neighbourhood has achieved a remarkable stock of non-market

units leaving, according to one housing advocate and researcher, roughly 25% of the community's rental housing as either social or co-op housing, thereby providing a secure and fixed anchor to the neighbourhood for a sizable population of low-income residents. In fact, this concentration of non-market housing in Grandview-Woodland makes the community home to the largest number of non-market buildings out of any community in Vancouver with more than 70 buildings removed from intense market forces currently impacting the city (Table 2). If we map the City's present non-market housing inventory (Figure 13), and examine the totals in Table 2, the long running social service placement within the City's eastside communities become clear.

While tolerance of difference has long held a central place in the identity of Grandview-Woodland, the concentration of non-market housing projects within the area has not always been wholeheartedly accepted by the wider community. In the mid-1970s,

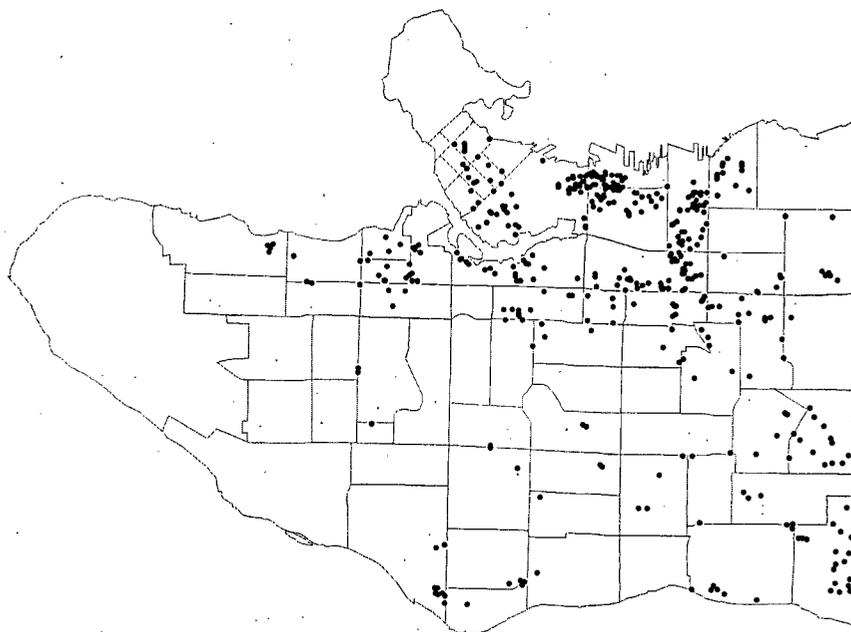


Figure 13: The City's non-market housing inventory

Table Two: Service Concentration: Vancouver's spatial distribution of non-market housing in differing communities and over the larger eastside/westside divide

<i>Community Name</i>	<i>Eastside/Westside</i>	<i>Total Buildings</i>	<i>Senior Housing Units</i>	<i>Family Housing Units</i>	<i>Other Units</i>	<i>Total Number of Units</i>	<i>Units/Building</i>
Grandview-Woodland	E	70	741	958	424	2123	30.3
Downtown Eastside ¹	E	64	1664	721	1554	3939	61.5
Central Business District	W	39	860	721	1347	2928	75.1
Mount Pleasant	EW	29	263	307	322	892	30.8
Fairview	W	28	269	963	333	1565	55.9
Kitsilano	W	28	249	277	200	726	25.9
Killarney	E	27	316	1709	131	2156	19.9
Renfrew-Collingwood	E	23	401	593	101	1095	47.6
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	E	22	241	245	178	664	30.2
West End	E	18 ²	1172	276	238	1686	38.3 ²
Hastings-Sunrise	E	16	385	458	64	907	56.7
Marpole	W	13	216	292	102	610	46.9
Victoria-Fraserview	E	13	501	309	8	818	62.9
Riley Park	EW	5	96	212	54	362	72.4
Sunset	E	5	98	189	14	301	60.2
West Point Grey	W	4	200	66	6	272	68.0
Arbutus Ridge	W	3	183	0	0	183	61.0
Oakridge	W	3	181	0	0	181	60.3
South Cambie	W	2	0	31	17	48	24
Dunbar-Southlands	W	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Kerrisdale	W	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Shaughnessy	W	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
EASTSIDE TOTAL		279	5681	5708	2900	14289	51.2
WESTSIDE TOTAL		133²	2355	2619	2193	7167	45.1²

(data source: City of Vancouver 2007)

¹ The Downtown Eastside has been divided into two communities on the City's non-market housing inventory website, the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona. There is a great deal of political debate in the definition of the Downtown Eastside and its mapping. For a more detailed discussion surrounding the mapping and remapping of the Downtown Eastside see Blomley 2004, pages 66-74. For the purpose of this table, the more inclusive definition has been utilized to emphasize the concentration of services in the area, which is downplayed through divisive definitions.

² In the West End community the Mole Hill Project is a series of non-market housing units built within a single city block in a number of old heritage homes. While the City of Vancouver separates these out as individual projects, this table has combined the units giving the total number of units in West End a count of 18 as opposed to 44. While the unit totals have been combined in this table and in the mapping of social housing in this thesis, the calculation of units/building utilizes the number 44 to give a better representation of the scale of the projects.

the city had approved eleven applications in for non-market housing apartments in Vancouver. Of these, eight were slated to be constructed in the apartment zoned areas of Grandview-Woodland. Feeling as though the city was unjustly focusing these new projects in the community, some residents fought what they saw as a 'dumping' of social services by City Hall in their politically alienated community. Gladys Chong of the Grandview Property Owners' Association questioned the actions of the City by asking, "don't you think we are congested enough (with public projects)? How much more space are you going to take from us?" (quoted in Vancouver Sun 1976). As the conflict over these non-market buildings heated up, those who resisted the location of these units in the neighbourhood accused the City of attempting to create "more ghettos and instant slums" (Ron Blunden quoted by Griffiths 1976). Yet, rather than being an outright resistance against affordable housing, the charge was focused around the excessive concentration within the community, as was highlighted by Chong in another interview, "we are not against low-cost housing... but it should be spread over the city" (quoted in Barnett 1976).

It is important to point out, that while these buildings were eventually built, the fears of Grandview-Woodland becoming a ghetto or instant slum never materialized. While the community does hold the title of having the most buildings of non-market housing in the city, it has fewer units of this type of housing than a number of communities thereby resulting in a scale of building that blends seamlessly into the larger community. So responsive to the scale of neighbourhood, these 70 buildings often require a City housing inventory map in order to differentiate market from non-market housing construction in Grandview-Woodland.

While well integrated into the larger neighbourhood context, these non-market units do provide a rooted population of impoverished residents, unlikely to be removed

through gentrification. Another interesting observation that can be drawn from the mapping in Figure 8 is the great deal of clustering of non-market housing within the community, thereby suggesting a specific geography to the community's rooted low-income populations. There appears to be a tremendous clustering of the non-market units around the industrial zoning and the apartment districts, focused primarily west of Commercial Drive and then extending north of Venables Street and creating somewhat of a barrier to widespread change within these smaller micro-geographies.

While the non-market units within the neighbourhood secure a certain presence of affordability for the most heavily impoverished, a number of market fixes are also present. With 63.8% of dwelling units in the area being low-rise apartments and 71.5% of all dwellings being rental, even the market side equation has provided some relief on pressures (City of Vancouver 2003). Even within the single-detached and duplex land-uses in the south-east corner of the neighbourhood there appear to be pockets of affordability, mixed amongst larger fields of gentrification. Here, like the example of the Odlum house, there are instances of divided homes providing some relief at the entry price level and acting as a draw for individuals forced out of similar housing elsewhere in the city:

I think that as they're closing the SROs (in the Downtown Eastside) we have housing stock that you can get for 375 a month; we have rooming houses in the neighbourhood. The house on the corner here has housekeeping rooms, where they have a room and they share a bath... There is one that is right down on Williams, right before you get to Victoria that's got a rooming house, and there is a lot of that type of housing on the other side, and so as people are looking to, well as people are being evicted and they have to look and they don't want to be too far, they're a number 20 bus ride away from any services that they want in the Downtown Eastside (community non-profit volunteer).

In many ways this diverse and affordable mixture of housing options in the

neighbourhood has been cited by a number of the interviewees as one of the only factors in avoiding the widespread displacement of the low-income community still living in Grandview, thereby providing almost a counter balance to some of the other changes accompanying the pressures of gentrification.

the presence of a marginalized population

One of the results of such a diverse stock of housing within the district is an equally diverse population. While generally embraced within the community, this large diversity has the potential to conflict with the preferences of the gentry who, depending on personal opinions, may or may not desire as much variation in housing and residents. As one city planner highlighted, the neighbourhood has:

quite an eclectic range of social housing... [it] has the largest chunk of aboriginal social housing; it has a large chunk of housing for people with mental illness, so it has housing for folks, those two groups, who are seen as problematic in the city and other neighbourhoods, whether rightly or wrongly. And so Grandview-Woodland has been historically a tolerant neighbourhood, and that may be one of the reasons why those folks who are looking for a more pure or exclusive living environment are looking in places like Kitsilano, or elsewhere.

While the above quote implies a certain tolerance on the part of the neighbourhood, one business owner saw the range of social services in Grandview-Woodland to be more clearly rooted in the political implications of the traditional east-west division within the city:

You also have all those services here, I mean we have the Mosaic, we have the Kettle society; and so you get your mentally ill clients, and you get your new immigrant clients, and you've got across the street the probation office, which I could do without that, and so we've got our share of social services stuff down here that you wouldn't get on 4th Avenue (Kitsilano's commercial corridor) either. I mean, the City was used to ignoring this neighbourhood for a long time, because it'd just go 'oh who cares, just set it up there, it's out of our face, we all live on the westside anyways' cause council traditionally all came from the westside, so they'd put it on Commercial Drive or something like that.

Whatever the reason this sizable presence of social services perhaps highlights yet another possible explanation to the stalling of gentrification in the neighbourhood, as the professional middle class that forms the gentry perhaps is turned away from the neighbourhood due to the anchored presence of a marginalized population.

While a diverse and stigmatized population on the streets perhaps has little effect in stemming the early phases of gentrification, when the process of change is initiated by individuals who not only desire a diverse environment, but seek it out as a requisite of a strong neighbourhood, the latter phases of gentrification have been shown to be less receptive of such diversity. For individuals who have been socialized into believing that the separation of groups into clean categories is desirable (Sibley 1995) the sheer diversity and unclear or completely lacking boundaries in Grandview-Woodland has the real potential of instilling a sense of discomfort in incoming gentry with less liberal views on social mix. This appears to be the case in a number of the interviews conducted:

I was living in Strathcona for 16 years until just a few years ago, which is just adjacent to Grandview-Woodland, I raised my children there. Our children attended school elsewhere, in North Van, and the westside of Vancouver, and I remember that many of the kids were really wary of coming to visit us. They were afraid. So I think that that has stopped gentrification, or rather it has slowed it down. I think that people are afraid of difference if they've grown up in homogeneous communities. And there are a lot of differences both in Strathcona and Grandview-Woodland, so unless you have come from another big city, or have come from a milieu where you are comfortable with difference, you are going to be wary. And there has been, there has always been tension and accommodation of difference in the neighbourhood.

The fear of the unknown clearly exacerbates this continued desire for separation and associated NIMBYism (Rose 2004). Seemingly of importance in this regard, as highlighted earlier by the city planner, is the role that the large groups of the two heavily

stigmatized populations of the mentally ill and aboriginals play in the minds of the more conservative members of the middle class.

While adding greatly to the diversity of the neighbourhood and consisting of roughly 10% of its total population, the aboriginal community is a visible and active component of the neighbourhood of Grandview-Woodland. Within the sizable stock of non-market housing within the neighbourhood is a disproportionate amount of buildings devoted to the aboriginal community with 22 projects or nearly 70% of the city's total (City of Vancouver 2003; 2007). Adding to the complexity of the community's micro-geographies is the geographic clustering of the services and housing devoted to the needs of aboriginals in Grandview-Woodland. While the locational concentration of other services, including those devoted to new immigrants, is focused along the more European strip of Commercial Drive, the aboriginal population and its associated services are more focused along the stigmatized East Hastings Street corridor in the northern half of the community. With the process of gentrification heavily indicative of the Anglo Canadian community of Vancouver, this large presence of aboriginal individuals has been cited as a possible factor in stalling the advance of wider gentrification: "another element is there are significant native housing units in the area, I think that might, just because there are lots of aboriginal people, probably adds to some of the stigma that people feel" (community centre employee).

The presence of aboriginal cultures in the Canadian city has long been seen as contradictory in Western thought, with a fundamental tension being set up in our society between the idea of aboriginal culture and the idea of a modern 'civilization' (Peters 1996). According to Peters (1996), the Western ideology and writings around the aboriginal in Canadian cities has been structured in such a way that the common discourse is one shrouded in a dichotomy that sets urban life up in direct contrast to

authentic aboriginal culture, thereby defiling the urban aboriginal through their very presence in the city. The resultant identity thereby attributed to the urban aboriginal by the dominant Western culture is one that invokes neither the traditional non-aboriginal readings of the aboriginal as either 'good' or 'bad' Indian, but rather through the third major image of the "degraded, often drunken" aboriginal that the author claims has come to represent the image of the urban aboriginal in the Canadian city, whose "neither noble nor wildly savage but always scorned" (Berkhoffer, quoted by Peters 1996: 49). In many ways, Peters (1996) highlights how "in European thought, aboriginal culture is incompatible with urban life" leaving aboriginals constantly confronted "with explicit or implicit messages that cities are not where they belong as people with vibrant and living cultures" (60). Under such cultural assumptions, it appears as though the presence of this population has the potential of resisting the entrance of some of the latter stage gentrifiers who subscribe to a more conservative, Eurocentric ideology.

Another heavily stigmatized group within the Canadian society that has also played a sizable role in the history of this tolerant neighbourhood is the mentally ill. Much as was the case in Slater's (2004b) examination of the Toronto community of South Parkdale, Grandview-Woodland was heavily affected by the "the radical shift of the provincial government towards the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients in favour of 'community-based care'" (1197). Much as the closure of the Lakeshore facility in Ontario caused a flow of psychiatric patients into the community there, the already tolerant Grandview district became a primary site for the relocation of this stigmatized population as the Province began to follow the nation-wide trend of deinstitutionalized care and by 1990 had embarked on their own restructuring of mental health through the Mental Health Initiative (BCMHA 2007). This large presence of the mentally ill in the community at times creates a sense of discomfort for the typical gentrifier, as "(we have) people with mental illness, who are not just homeless but are screaming in the park:

people get afraid of that” (non-profit employee).

With little or no boundary separation between differing groups in Grandview-Woodland, the presence of this noticeable population of mentally ill residents has the potential to resist the gentrifier who desires a more homogeneous and cleansed environment. This was evident in a discussion with one Vancouver realtor, who himself renovated two houses in the neighbourhood before moving west to the neighbourhood of Kerrisdale. He found the diversity at times unbearable: “I mean after a while... it gets to you. You see these grubbies all the time...outside your doorstep so to speak”. While Butler (2003) found that many of the gentrifiers he spoke to in his study went to great lengths to ensure that they and their children lived separate lives from their ‘non-middle class’ neighbours, preferring instead for difference in their community to act as a “social wallpaper” for their lives, in Grandview-Woodland it appears as though the diversity presently on offer is a little too ‘in your face’ for the more conservative members of the gentrifying class:

There have always been issues of vulnerable people. But I don't think there is any question that the number of homeless people has increased exponentially, the number of people who have serious mental health problems on the streets has increased exponentially. The number of people living with addictions have increased. All of those things. So it is a different type of problem, a much more in your face problem, and in some ways it is a more serious problem (an elected official).

a criminal presence

Beyond the marginalized aboriginal and mentally ill populations in the community, there seems to also be a perception that there is a concentration of a more problematic and criminally inclined population as well. This perception of criminal activity is rooted in a long history of a discourse of criminality that has hung over the community. In the 1950s, when the community was viewed with fear and disdain in the rest of Vancouver

as an “area... on the skids” police officers were assigned to patrol Commercial Drive as punishment (Inspector Lake, quoted by Daniels and Hanson 1974: 43). Yet despite the earlier activity in Grandview, a past president of the Grandview Woodland Area Council in the 1970s commented that “there hasn’t been a gang movement here since the late 50s... it died with Elvis and Sputnik” (quoted in Daniels and Hanson 1974: 43).

Despite this ‘death’ of youth based criminal activity, Grandview-Woodland in the 1970s continued to be stigmatized and feared in the wider society. Challenging these perceptions and fears, a local reporter sarcastically ‘took his life in his hands’ as he wandered through the a local park where a series of apparent gang incidents terrorized the city’s population: “this must be the authentic wild side of town. A sunny afternoon of rape, pillage and assorted other violent crimes to look forward to as we stroll bravely in infamous Clark Park, scene of some of Vancouver’s great gang wars” (Hanson 1973). As Hanson (1973) highlighted over thirty years ago, this perception of criminality in Grandview has held a special place in the perceptions of the larger Vancouver community. After diverting his story to a flowery illustration of the picturesque elements of Clark Park he returns to the focus of the story:

But back to the crime. Where is the crime? Aba! To the west we see a sign saying that there is to be no playing golf on the park grounds. And, yes, there are some people pitch and putting. A clear defiance of the law; but they are lads in shorts. Not even one little-bitty knuckle-duster. They don’t even have the decency to menace us with their nine irons as we stroll past...

More crime. Some swine has wound the chains on the swings around the top bar of the frame, leaving the little chairs out of the reach of any but seven-foot toddlers... this dastardly deed can only be the work of the Clark Park Gang.

As a result of public perceptions and discourse, the neighbourhood’s parks became the site of conflict as pressures from the general public led to increased police presence and

eventually led to the “Clark Park rally, held by assorted freaks, solid citizens and others to protest alleged police brutality in the parks” in the summer of 1972 (Hanson 1973). This constant battle over the rights to public space continues in Grandview today, where anti-establishment posters proclaim that “parks are for the people, not the pigs!” (Figure 14). It is this long running defiance, and no longer the crime in the neighbourhood that has led a number of Vancouver Police Officers to candidly express their preference of patrolling the more stigmatized Downtown Eastside over Commercial Drive, where “there is a kind of anarchist reflex against authority” (Birrell quoted by Smedman 2003). This history of confrontation has led some residents in the community to grow tired of these “protest anything activists” who seek to “defy authority at every turn” (Smedman 2003).

While the discourses of crime and disorder have long been present in Grandview-Woodland, it appears as though this discourse is no less relevant today. In a recent newspaper article, one local resident cited that since 2005 “there was a tripling of strangers and homeless and junkies occupying the neighbourhood. It seemed there were more vagrants on the streets than there were residents” (quoted in O’Connor 2006). One local resident went so far as to compare the neighbourhood intersection of Grant and Commercial to the heavily stigmatized Hastings and

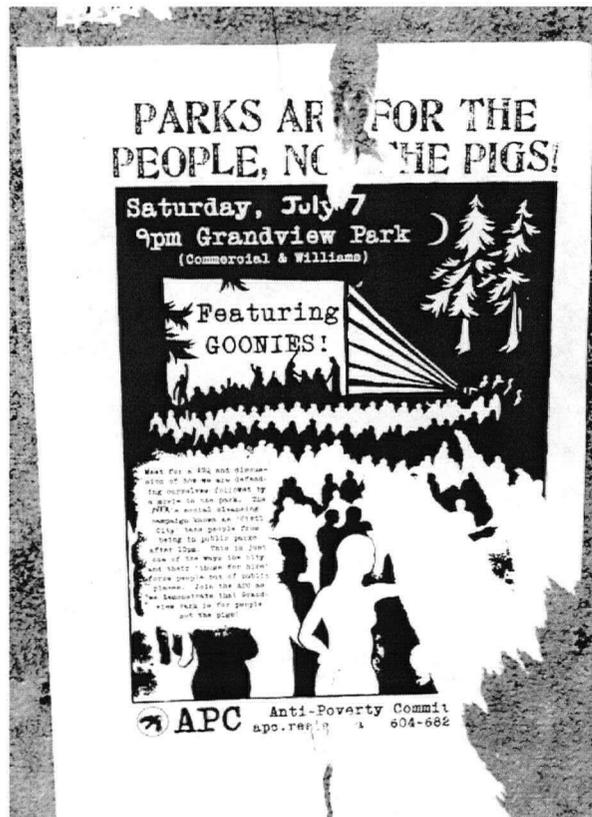


Figure 14: Parks are for the people

Main of the Downtown Eastside (O'Connor 2006). Yet despite these proclamations, some residents have raised the question of whether or not these observations are rooted more in perceptions than reality:

...to be honest with you I think that was more in the press than the reality of what was happening. There was definitely crime on the Eastside, but when I look at strata documents from apartment buildings over in the Kits area, I see much more crime as an issue that is happening in Kits then it actually is over in the Commercial Drive or Mount Pleasant area... Mount Pleasant has a higher crime rate than does the Commercial Drive area, but I think that it has changed somewhat, but I think the perception is skewed and when you actually do look at the incident rate I really do think that it is much more perception than reality as far as the crime rate is concerned (local realtor).

While the public discourse and media focus surrounding the Downtown Eastside seems to have largely shifted in favour of developer interests, the traditional discourse that designated the neighbourhood as the centre of crime and disorder within the region retains significance. In areas such as Grandview, residents seem to have adopted the perception presented by two Vancouver police officers who liken an increased perception of criminality throughout the city to the links with the Downtown Eastside: "We have all felt the pervasive influence of the [Downtown Eastside] when we become victims of break-ins, car thefts, and other crimes" (quoted by Sommers and Blomley 2002: 45). A local politician who makes his home in Grandview echoed these sentiments:

... when the police did the crack-down in the Downtown Eastside it was like toothpaste, you squeeze it and it goes somewhere: it went to Granville; it went to the West End; and it came to Commercial Drive. And so, the net effect of that has been that all of a sudden the neighbourhood is changing in terms of the level of drug dealing, and you see that specifically up by the Skytrain station. So you have probably the biggest interchange of people in the city going through that Broadway and Commercial skytrain station and transferring from the rapid transit system with many of them transferring to a slow system: a bus. And you get a lot of people there who are doing or selling drugs and you get a lot of people who are now using the Skytrain system to basically do break and enters and get out of the neighbourhood quickly and fence stuff.

This secondary issue being highlighted by the politician is another factor that is readily identifiable in the interviews, where there is a sense that the introduction of the Skytrain, Vancouver's rapid transit system that arrived in the neighbourhood with the 1986 international exposition, has created a node of criminal activity that has 'spun out of control'. Grandview-Woodlands southern boundary is home to the Broadway Skytrain Station, which connects the two lines of the local rapid transit system and is one of the busiest commuter intersections in the city. As a result of the heavy foot traffic, the intersection provides a scene with a great deal of litter, panhandling and drug dealing, leaving some residents to complain that they have to "run the gauntlet of junkies, dealers and aggressive panhandlers and squeegee kids every time they catch a bus, use the bank or walk to Safeway for groceries" (quoted in Smedman 2003). It is this concentration of drug related activity that has led one individual to name the Station "the Canadian Superstore of drug dealing" (quoted in O'Connor 2006). While the activity of the street presents an extremely unattractive element for gentrifiers searching the Vancouver landscape for the best place to call home, the population present there tends to present a similar discomfort where one resident who lives near the Broadway Skytrain Station characterized the individuals who loitered at the intersection as being "nasty looking street kids" (resident quoted by Rossi 2005b).

Comparing Grandview with the neighbouring eastside neighbourhood of Mount Pleasant lining the Main Street corridor, one neighbourhood resident and volunteer highlighted the difference between the two citing not only the Skytrain, but other possible disamenities as well:

...the Skytrain station, the bus, the number 20 bus, from the Downtown Eastside, we have a lot of crime and disorder issues here and Main Street doesn't have that yet. They're insulated from the Skytrain, and... they just don't seem to have the problems. They don't have the panhandlers, they don't have the disorder, the

swarmings or the assaults or stuff that we have; it's interesting.

While not directly implicated in the negative perceptions along the Drive, another element that the Main Street neighbourhood also lacks but that turned up in other interviews is a more direct link to the influence of the Downtown Eastside associated with the heavily stigmatized East Hastings Street which runs through the northern segment of Grandview-Woodland. East Hastings is synonymous in Vancouver with the antisocial, criminal elements of the Downtown Eastside and its presence in Grandview-Woodland, even if a decidedly different East Hastings than is present further west at Main Street, is a very difficult stereotype to break in the mindset of the westside gentry.

One business owner highlighted the role of criminality in stalling the flood of widespread gentrification clearly when he noted not only the proximity of the Downtown Eastside and its associated ills, but also the perception of this diversity to the gentrifying class:

We're right next door to it, and so it's never going to be a comfortable place for that sector of the middleclass who are reaching for the trappings of upper class or pretend to be upper middle class; and they want to think that they are clean of all that and yet we always get those pressures from the Downtown Eastside: the derelicts and the drugs, and the hookers, and drug use, and thugs, and all that and they're so close that they always get stuck here all the time and that just creates enough of a discomfort so that people with intentions of climbing the economic ladder get out of here and leave as quick as they can. Once they start getting the money to do so they have the means and they get out, they move out.

This same shopkeeper continued, highlighting the extreme diversity, tolerance and the general trade-offs involved in living in a vibrant and healthy inner city neighbourhood where everyday life required an acceptance of annoyances:

In the same way that it is a neighbourhood where immigrants typically wash through here, people of different kinds from all over the country come to find

refuge here and all that, it's also the case that people with professional jobs who are starting a new family who have higher income than others also wash through here. And you know, they don't all last, they come in here they like it for the flavour, but then they're unhappy for having their car window smashed in every now and again. But you know that's part of the flavour, part of the deal with the local flavour and vibrancy is that you get young entrepreneurs who work with crowbars smashing windows, you know, it's part of the entrepreneurial spirit as well, and you know, I don't like my windows being smashed either, but that's the kind of place it is. And so they get really upset, and the more money that they've invested the more they feel they have the authority to speak. So if you buy a house for \$600,000, if things don't go the way you want them to in your neighbourhood, and you get these petty little problems that you thought \$600 000 and your professional income should have been able to buy you out of, then yeah, you become an ally of conservative forces. Again, it's the same problem though. They didn't check it out before hand.

This acceptance of the criminal element wasn't only held by this store owner. Another non-profit employee's comments mimicked those put forth above, presenting not only an acceptance, but a desire to retain the feel of the neighbourhood: "that's the neighbourhood we live in. Sometimes you have to call the police".

While perceptions of criminality seem to be providing a barrier to wider gentrification, it is importance to point out that this feature alone is far from sufficient in curbing change on its own, for as Newman and Wyly (2006) have illustrated, even in a disinvested neighbourhood struggling with the associated ills of a violent crack cocaine culture and the local handle of 'Murder Avenue' there is potential of rapid gentrification and transformation into a centre of fashionable restaurants if other factors are not in place to resist larger changes. Similarly, Slater (2004) highlighted through an interview with a gentrifier that while crime may be a concern in the rougher neighbourhoods, it is often a complex calculus of factors that eventually leads to a final locational decision of the middle class.

the extremely tolerant 'drive'

One element that defines Commercial, and the wider community of Grandview-Woodland is the tolerance of difference that is shown on the streets in the community. While individuals recognize that crime is a part of the daily reality in the city, they are not as quick to associate criminality with the impoverished populations that frequent the neighbourhood's streets. While the majority of the city applies an almost uncritical application of a type of broken windows theory to policing in preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games, and the redevelopment and revitalization of the Downtown Eastside, the City's vast and growing homeless population has been placed under increasing stress as conservative urban policies have been adopted within the City including the mayor's latest strategy of "Project Civil City". This policy, has been explicitly highlighted as "vital to the successful implementation of EcoDensity in the City of Vancouver (where) we want our citizens to choose to live in high-quality, ecodense neighbourhoods (which) requires a commitment to minimize public nuisances and improve public order" (Sullivan 2006). But the resolutely revanchist (Smith 1996) discourse justified as providing a landscape amenable to the goals of attracting residents for EcoDensity (read gentrification) can be seen as an effort to reclaim the city from public disorder, apparently caused by the 'aggressive' panhandling of the city's homeless population. Anti-homeless policies, such as the mayor's, have placed extreme stress on the City's homeless as enforcement of the Civil Cities Project has been justified for removing discomfort and difference from the city where "they call everything aggressive panhandling, not looking good and scaring the white women is apparently aggressive panhandling" (city activist).

While this confrontational neoliberal approach to city building is increasingly and uncritically rolled out in the City's downtown peninsula and other neighbourhoods, the long history of tolerance in Grandview-Woodland appears to be intact as the

neighbourhood retains its critical view of anti-homeless laws making the Drive a much more enjoyable and copasetic environment for the city's homeless population. This reality is reflected in the findings of one study that noticed that 81% of the homeless interviewed in Grandview-Woodland claimed they felt as though they belonged in their community (Strathcona Research Group 2005).

So what is it about Commercial Drive and the wider community of Grandview-Woodland that makes it such a different neighbourhood from the others in the city? What provides the root of this tolerance, and how, despite the increasing pressures of demand, has the neighbourhood been able to retain diversity when a number of studies have highlighted the inability of disamenity on its own to resist gentrification in the overheated real estate market? It would appear from a brief break in a local coffee shop, or a quick glance at the discourse and ideology of the posters and graffiti in the neighbourhood that a different culture has moved onto the Drive and throughout the larger neighbourhood. The next chapter addresses the gentrification underway to try and uncover some of the other clues to the stalled change in Grandview-Woodlands.

GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND:
UNIQUE CULTURE/UNIQUE OUTCOME

“Just give me a second”, he yelled from the back of the storage room as he shuffled through unmarked, ambiguous cardboard boxes. “There really is no worse time of the year than tax season is there?” I awaited his return, browsing over the unique works of art on display for sale in the gallery. “I’ll find them later” he stated returning to the front of his shop, “if the receipts are there now, they’ll be there when I look later won’t they?” He had a point.

Carl Bennett was the archetypal Drive storekeeper. As colourful as the art he displayed, Bennett was as far removed from the corporate entrepreneur as you could get. In many ways an artist himself, Bennett represented those he served through his embodiment of the artist mentality where his laid-back, “anti-bourgeois, anti-conformist disposition... [would] sit uneasily with the servant of mass society” (Ley 2003: 2530). While his gallery on the Drive had survived 20 years, this wasn’t his first business venture. Originally a proprietor of a similar shop in Kitsilano, Bennett fled the area during its gentrification as it grew increasingly inappropriate for his counter-culture, anti-establishment mentality.

Bennett wasn’t the only individual who relocated on the diverse and tolerant Drive around this time. In the 1980s a stream of artists and politically progressive thinkers and activists flocked to the East Vancouver enclave as the critical culture of Kitsilano began

to dissolve through widespread gentrification. A peer of his during this relocation, Bonnie Beckwomen, herself an artist and storeowner described the transition and the momentum that accompanied this influx, “the young people started to become attracted to the culture that a lot of us were familiar with... the culture that brought us together initially was a political interest to change the world” (quoted by Schweitzer-Isaac, 1995). This chapter explores the impact of these early gentrifiers as well as other individuals in the neighbourhood in an attempt to uncover their impact in the story of stalled gentrification. What was it about this population, and the way in which they settled into the community that has provided potential blockages to wider change, and how has this diverse population altered the identity of the community and that of incoming residents?

a different kind of culture; a different kind of community

Ethnic enclaves, such as the 1980s Grandview-Woodland have long been the prime candidates to sprout the arrival of this bohemian counter-culture, as the diversity and stigma contained within these communities makes them not only affordable to the incoming bohemian, but also creates a perception of a more authentic and valued landscape through the eyes of these critical thinkers (Lloyd 2006). As one artist, interviewed by Ley (2003) pointed out, these types of marginal neighbourhoods are sought: “Artists need authentic locations... every artist is an anthropologist, unveiling culture. It helps to get some distance on that culture in an environment that does not share all of its presuppositions, an old area, socially diverse, including poverty” (2534). One Brooklyn born neighbourhood artist reiterated the importance of such environments as she reflected on her arrival in Canada, and the personal liberation that her subsequent relocation to Grandview-Woodland gave her:

we rented, first on Point Grey Road and then up on West 16th by UBC and I just found it incredibly uptight, sterile, in the late 70s. Like 76 I think. And I just couldn't, you know, I thought that was what Canada was like, 'oh my god it's so boring' you know 'people are so reserved', and being a person that has always

been an artist, I am quite, you know not a mainstream type person and so it was a very hard place to be that way, there.

While many of the early gentrifiers cited the affordability of the neighbourhood as the main factor in their decision to locate in Grandview-Woodland in the 1980s, this sense of freedom of expression and release from the confining codes of the westside was also crucial to many of them, with the neighbourhood providing a place with “an incredible amount of room for people who are disenfranchised” (Filipenko, 1993). This tolerance and personal freedom was echoed in an interview with one of the shopkeepers on the Drive:

This place, it is like an escape hatch for misfits from all across Canada. You can always come, not just to Vancouver, but the Drive in Vancouver, and you can walk up the street wearing just about anything and nobody is even going to flinch an eye... any different kinds of people, any different kinds of race, anything at all: it's just always tolerated.

The neighbourhood's long history of diversity of all types has fueled the formation of a local identity within Grandview-Woodland which seems to wholeheartedly celebrate diversity and tolerance making the sighting of “punks sitting next to three-piece suits” a common day occurrence (Appelbe 1990). With such an eclectic vibe on the street it is perhaps somewhat surprising that more complete gentrification hasn't taken hold. In particular, the large presence of artists has often been cited as the catalyst for widespread change due to their standing within the larger society (Ley 2003; Lloyd 2006). While they choose to remove themselves from the everyday spaces of the hegemonic culture, those on the other side of this creative divide see the artists as intensely desirable; held up as authentic and visionary individuals who contain more than enough ‘cultural capital’ to account for any deficit in economic capital that would preclude membership into the dominant class (Ley 2003). It is this high standing within society that allows developers to follow into these ‘authentic’ environments of the artist and commodify these newly

tamed landscapes. But yet despite these observations in the literature, there remains something within the larger culture of Grandview-Woodland that has slowed this wider transformation.

not your regular gentrifier

One factor that appears to have greatly assisted the neighbourhood in resisting the widespread transformation into a 'homogenous yuppie preserve' has been the type of gentrifiers that flocked to the neighbourhood during its early phases of change. While many studies on gentrification have focused on sharp definitions that grouped the incoming waves of gentrification into a clean categorization, Rose (1984) has sought to muddy these conceptual waters. In particular she attempted to better understand the impact on community and gentrification through the presence of what she termed the 'marginal gentrifier' whose moderate incomes made the inner city their locational choice by necessity; where their combined family responsibilities and employment situation dictated these decisions for them. For these 'marginal gentrifiers' the option of housing co-operatives and other small, more affordable living arrangements formed the sought after locations (Rose 1984).

While Rose didn't attempt to downplay the impact of these individuals on the displacement of poorer residents she did clearly articulate the potential of such groups to alter the typical narrative of gentrification implied in generalized accounts. For Rose (1984), models that utilized the terminology of "first stage gentry" for instance, implied a common goal for the entire group, often highlighted by a stage of transition where the 'first-stagers' would profit greatly and move on. The unique circumstances surrounding the lifestyles and decisions of the marginal gentrifier made it unlikely that they would be willing to trade in their lifestyle decisions in exchange for profits, thereby making the smooth transition to the second stage of gentrification much less likely. Instead,

the life situation of these 'marginal gentrifiers' were rooted in a desire to integrate into a community that provided them with a social network and connections to the older community. The presence of these individuals thereby carried the potential to provide a rooted community that the classification of 'first-stage gentrifier' didn't (Rose 1984). With a variety of different and precarious class positions, this marginal gentrifier is not, as a traditional stage model might suggest, structurally polarized from the displaced, but rather they shared some very basic needs and desires, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of the potential and results of gentrification; opening the door for the consideration of potential alliances between the two groups with the possibility of positive change and the creation of a rooted and critical population of these marginal gentrifiers.

In the study of the stalled gentrification in Mile End in Montreal Rose (1996) highlighted how the built form of the community made it a prime candidate for this segment of the population which echoes similar realities already highlighted in Grandview-Woodland:

for reasons linked to the particular history of city-building in Montreal's older neighbourhoods, 'highly gentrifiable' types of housing are often interspersed at a fine geographic scale with dwellings commanding lower rents and sale prices – smaller and lower-quality triplexes, or four- or five-plex units, as well as newer infill apartments (147).

This diverse mixture of not only physical but also the social morphology of Grandview-Woodland during the 1980s attracted many different types of households, including those with different family structures, genders, sexual orientations, and ethnic identifications. As this unique array of households moved into the area, they brought with them their ideals and visions for the community, as well as their political beliefs, contributing greatly to the tolerance and diversity present on the neighbourhood streets today.

One group that highlights the role of the marginal gentrifier in Grandview-Woodland most clearly is the presence of the large lesbian community that located in the neighbourhood during the arrival of the early political thinkers of the counter culture. Two neighbourhoods harboured sizable communes of lesbians in Vancouver in the 1970s: Grandview-Woodland and Kitsilano (Bouthillette 1997). As Kitsilano gentrified, those individuals who desired that marginal countercultural ambience that drew them originally to the neighbourhood looked east and relocated to Grandview-Woodland, where that culture remained. Bouthillette (1997) draws the link between the lesbian community and the counterculture by highlighting the intricate connection between the movement of the counterculture, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the role this movement played in the formation of a group consciousness within the lesbians. As a result of these connections, the author saw the formation of a lesbian community that shared many of the same values, priorities, and tastes as the counterculture, thereby playing a significant factor in the locational decisions of Western lesbian enclaves. In this regard, the culture along the Drive has long "embodied for lesbians a distinctive set of politics and material possibilities" (Bouthillette 1997: 221).

The large presence of politically active women within Grandview, both through the lesbian community and the larger feminist culture that developed within the political sphere of the Drive in many ways ensured that a different perspective evolved there than in other neighbourhoods in the city more dominated by the hegemonic culture of a patriarchal society. A survey conducted in Greater Vancouver in 1990 highlighted that there is a decidedly different opinion held by men and women in regards to ideals of community, house, and home that in many ways permeates the larger discourse in Grandview. Of particular interest was the fact that women were much more likely than men to support statements such as 'Housing developments should contain a variety of

income groups'; 'The single family house is not essential for a 'true' family life'; or 'I like the variety and stimulation one finds in the city' and less likely to agree with statements like 'Attempting to mix lifestyles in any one part of the city leads to friction' (Hardwick, Torchinsky and Fallick, 1991 cited in Pratt 1998). If we then associate these ideological beliefs with a more feminine reading of city building, much in line with the ideological foundations presented by Jane Jacobs (1992 [1961]), then it appears that the large and vocal presence of a rooted and political feminist culture on the Drive has in many ways ensured a very different neighbourhood fabric from those communities guided by the male dominated landscapes elsewhere in the city.

an active and vocal community

The history of activism in Grandview-Woodland finds much deeper roots in the neighbourhood than even the developments of the counterculture and perhaps provided the initial draw for this active community. Dating back to the early days of the neighbourhood, residents formed together to petition City Hall for a more equitable distribution of amenities to the then far off suburb. In 1907, Edward Faraday Odlum and William Miller formed the Grandview Ratepayers' Association and met weekly to address community issues such as transit, street improvements, and community beautification (Smedman 2006). While the decline of the neighbourhood removed this affluent discussion of beautification, the community continued to band together to fight the City for more basic amenities. In 1952, the impoverished neighbourhood complained about the deteriorating situation on their streets, where not only did they 'lack proper lighting, have old poles, crumbling pavement and poor drainage', but the community also felt they lacked amenities, with poorly equipped schools and no library (City of Vancouver 1975). Within two years of the initial complaint, the neighbourhood, dubbed "the Cinderella Community" by one local journalist, was celebrating brighter streets and new blacktops, while the celebration of the library would have to wait until

the arrival of the Britannia Community Centre in 1971 (City of Vancouver 1975). This culture of community activism and political involvement was ramped up in 1969-70, when several local groups, including large numbers of students, banded together to stop the extension of the freeway down Venables Street to the Georgia viaduct, thereby solidifying the presence of a politically progressive culture of resistance and mobilization within the community.

The contemporary presence of this rooted culture of politically left-leaning sentiments is perhaps best illustrated through the 2001 B.C. Provincial Election, where a complete Liberal party sweep of the total 79 seats was disrupted only by two ridings where the more left-leaning NDP MLAs were elected: one starting at Commercial Drive going west; the other starting at Commercial Drive and heading east. Perhaps a more pronounced demonstration of the neighbourhood's culture of political left-leaning tendencies comes in its history as the home-base for the province's Communist Party. While certainly not the only anti-establishment voice in the neighbourhood at the time, as is clear in the memory of one housing advocate and researcher who lived in the area in the 1980s, it provided a rooted presence for the multiple and fragmented voices of the neighbourhood's rooted political left:

the Communist Party... had kind of provided the sort of backbone for everybody else. There were all these CP front groups that people worked through, and there were all these organizations that the CP sent people into to take over and stuff like that, and everybody hated them. Well everybody I hung out with, we were all anarchists and punks and stuff like that, we all hated the Communist Party, but you know we defined ourselves in terms of being opposed to them and being too cool, or too radical for the NDP on the other end of the exact same spectrum. But they were pretty key.

This culture of political resistance shows a great deal of similarity between the eclectic and active politics on the Drive and that found by Shaw (2005) in her study of the Australian neighbourhood of St. Kilda, where she saw the cultures of alternative values

containing a politics of resistance that had evolved over the decades, thereby becoming a part of the local tradition. The author found that this vociferous and at times abrasive activism sat uneasily with some of the gentrifiers who felt more inclined towards the hegemonic politics and culture of larger society. For these individuals, this social milieu which placed resistance as part of the everyday discussion and practice, and etched this confrontational discourse into the physical fabric and collective consciousness, was uncomfortable, thereby reducing their commitment to the place and forming a potential limit to the further advance of late stage gentrifiers (Shaw 2005). Beyond simply being politically active, the neighbourhood on a number of occasions has left visible markers that the politics which guide the larger society do not necessarily apply to Grandview-Woodland. Prior to efforts of the local business improvement area (BIA) to rid the street of graffiti as a way of making the environment more amenable to the tastes of the middle-class consumer, the area's buildings acted as a political billboard for the anti-establishment population.

The presence of this politically vocal graffiti along the Drive was noted by Bruce Serafin (1994) who cited examples of the local messages of 'Smash Capitalism' and 'Smash Patriarchy' and noted how the underlying tone and message of these tags presented the voice of a decidedly middle class and educated population. While the tone of the message was lighter than the ones he saw in the American inner city, it nonetheless highlighted that the local "dream life of militant activism'... (was) still being passed on from one generation to the next" in Grandview-Woodland (83).

multiple visions, multiple voices

While this rooted politically active population is present in the community, it is in no way the sole voice and as pressures from Vancouver's increasingly hot real estate market and

gentrification mount the two competing voices are both vying to define the common discourse on a wide range of issues:

you clearly have two different views who are both quite activist around the community and there is a push and pull that goes on and I see that in meetings that I've been invited to, who push and pull around... the community, and it's not a bad thing necessarily, but it is what it is (elected official).

So rather than being a community with a homogenous voice, Grandview-Woodland appears to present two primary discourses surrounding a number of issues within the neighbourhood. Don Mitchell (2003), in his book *Right to the City*, highlighted how struggles in the contemporary city, including those surrounding gentrification and neighbourhood conflict, tend to revolve around two prominent ideologies or utopias of the ideal city: the first being a utopia of spatial form, where through policy and urban design, these individuals seek to achieve a perfectly ordered public space and aesthetic form; while the other central vision, similar to the ideology already highlighted in this chapter, shares a similarity with a kind of "utopia of social process" (Harvey 2000), where the belief is that an active process of continual flux and struggle will eventually result in a truly just city; a city that is open and accessible to all.

These conflicting ideologies appear to be the source of tension and conflict within Grandview-Woodland, where neighbourhood groups from polarized positions have battled over definitions of community. While the utopia of spatial form tends to hold hegemonic position within larger society at the present, one thing that the discourse in Grandview highlights which is clearly echoed by Lou Reed's character in the 1995 film, *Blue in the Face*, is that not everybody in the city desires this pure and ordered environment:

I'm scared in my own apartment. I'm scared 24 hours a day, but not necessarily in New York. I actually feel pretty comfortable in New York. I get scared like in

Sweden. You know it's kind of empty. They're all drunk. Everything works. If you stop at a stop light and don't turn your engine off people come over and talk to you about it. If you go to the medicine cabinet and open it up there'll be a little poster saying 'in case of suicide call...'. You turn on the T.V. and there's an ear operation. These things scare me. New York? No (Wang & Auster 1995).

Individuals who share this discontent with the overtly ordered and clean urban environment, and the policy and decisions that overemphasize these utopian goals of spatial form, see the results as providing "the worst of all worlds: danger without pleasure, safety without stimulation, consumerism without choice, monumentality without diversity" (Wilson 1991: 9).

While these competing views of the city are constantly battling for a hold on local discourse, this polarized split in ideology can be clearly illustrated in a number of local examples of conflict within the neighbourhood. One such conflict surrounded panhandling at the local liquor store, where a local journalist, mockingly laid out the hypothetical solutions of the competing camps where the person with 'right-wing leanings' would "have legions of police officers physically hauling off the 'cretins' so that the important business of doing business could be carried out day-to-day", while the "left-leaning' person, in rented accommodation, with no offspring to support and temporarily blinded by the scribblings of Proust or Sartre would view the just-mentioned tactics as reminiscent of your everyday, unjust, totalitarian state" (Spitale 1992).

In a more recent conflict relating to this same liquor store, tensions in the neighbourhood once again rose as home owners around Victoria Park grew tired of the constant drinking that was going on near their homes. As the residents grew increasingly tired of events they perceived as inappropriate, they set their sights on a number of the policies of the nearby liquor store on Commercial Drive, and found success in altering the business conducted there in March of 2004 (Rossi 2006). The issues of contention

for neighbourhood residents included a number of policies including the sale of single cans of beer, as well as the store's return policy that allowed individuals to return as many cans as they wanted, one of the few stores in Vancouver to allow such actions. As a result, the group of residents began to pressure the liquor board to clean up the store and alter some of the policies that they cited as being problematic. Their actions initiated a widespread conflict within the community between competing visions of public space and personal freedoms:

...there was a big outcry against gentrifying the liquor store. There were a whole bunch of people who felt that they should be allowed to return as many cans, because it was more convenient for them. And that you shouldn't discriminate. Why shouldn't we sell singles if other people do, this is discrimination... but interestingly enough, the ones I knew who were speaking out, were probably at the same socio-economic and educational level, just different social perspectives... It wasn't the old drunks that protested, you know they don't protest, they just carry on... but some people feel though, I am my brother's keeper, I should advocate for them, and good for them, but I guess there were just other views of what's good for them (artist and community volunteer).

Of particular interest in this observation is the fact that the root of resistance highlighted in the conflict was not necessarily based in class conflict between polarized classes, but rather was one based upon alliances around political ideology, which perhaps presents some suggestion of potential for a coalition across a variety of classes to stall gentrification. Another conflict that forced these voices in the community out resulted when the local volunteer Community Policing office relocated a short distance from Commercial Drive to the fringes of the Britannia Community Centre overlooking Grandview Park. To a number of individuals concerned with infringements on public space and an individual's rights, this move brought a great deal of tension with it:

there were huge problems, because there was a whole segment of the community saying it will be the police taking over the park, it would be the police surveillance of the park and public space, etc. But Britannia supported us moving in because the park was getting so bad that people had stopped bringing their kids there...

it was that bad, because the drug dealers were hanging out by Commercial Drive, which was the park side. But there were demonstrations and community protests against us, and there were three arson attempts. But then on the other hand there were a ton of people who wanted us there...But it was an interesting time, because it really was polarizing segments of the community and not at all by income, definitely by politics (Volunteer with the Community Policing office)

While the Community Policing office eventually relocated back to Commercial Drive, the battle over this most public of spaces remains in the mind of the local activists, as was highlighted in the previous chapter. The conflicted community vision around issues of crime and drug use highlighted in the previous quote extended to another case in the community close by, where the Napier Greenway, a small pedestrian connection that links Commercial Drive with the Britannia Community Centre, has been another hotly contested public space putting these conflicting ideologies to the test:

...a place called the Napier Green Space... has become in the last year a flash point for tolerance. People think that they are tolerant and everything is fine, but the behaviours that were going on there! There was drug selling, like marijuana and other stuff to kids; there was a guy there that was called 'Reverend Divine and the Church of the Ganja' and Reverend Divine when arrested and apprehended by the police claimed that it was his right to do this... so there is constant clash of values, some people want these people turfed... I think that place is a really interesting focus on what we're tolerant of, and I think I would say about stuff like that this community is very much like they say 'Kits goes Skitso'. There is really two competing views of this that just really don't mesh, and I'm talking among average residents. A lot of the residents want it 'cleaned up', whereas other residents say 'everybody is entitled to public space' (community policing volunteer).

The idea that "some of your most liberal, left-wing opinions are coming from people who are very well off" (community centre employee) comes out again here, where an alliance with marginal concerns seems to have significantly heightened the political clout of issues affecting the impoverished residents of Grandview-Woodland, thereby creating a critical mass of individuals unwilling to accept the revanchist policies inherent in

neoliberal city building.

Another event within the community that brought these issues to light, resulted when local retailer Gina Marshall became the subject of a smear campaign and boycott following her personal crusade to rid the Drive of “bums and panhandlers” (Shore 1992). As the head of the Commercial Drive Merchants Association she initiated a plan to clean-up the area from the “moochers and alcoholics”. Provoked by this call for spatial order, those individuals who subscribed to the more inclusive, neighbourhood based outlook initiated a campaign to get “Miss Marshall and others like her out of our neighbourhood” (Local poster, quoted in Shore 1992). While the Merchants Association eventually changed their name to the Drive BIA, their continued belief in the ideology of spatial order continues and as a result so too does their conflict with the other half of the population as was pointed out by one of the employees with the Drive BIA:

I get emails all the time telling me that we're ruining people's neighbourhood, like 'thanks so much for paying people to clean up and take the graffiti off and take the posters down because really that's freedom of expression and artistic right, and all that'. To each their own, if you've got a tagger who's extremely artistic and he wants a wall I can give him a wall and he can do whatever he wants with it. But if you've just got a bunch of little kids who want to make their mark and mess everything up then...

While this clearly classified presentation of the polarized views around public space seem to tell a great deal about the reality on the street in Grandview-Woodland there appears to be evidence that as the process of gentrification advances, and as the pressures of homelessness, drug addiction, and mental illness increase on the street, perhaps these clean divisions are muddied a little as a deeper fractioning seems to emerge. Here what appears to be happening is the situation where individuals who at their core may desire to be inclusive and accepting of all individuals, they find that as the pressures of disorder rise, they become less supportive of the changes in the community and find themselves

increasingly conflicted:

I think it is a pretty tolerant neighbourhood, but I think more and more, what people are being asked to tolerate is changing... So we're not willing to tolerate the neighbourhood becoming a crack haven, where kids have to put up with needles in the park and a bunch of addicts who are short a little money on the way to get their fix and decide they are going to bust into somebody's house and grab something in order to get their drugs...you know we're a tolerant community. We're a diverse community. But we're not prepared to see our neighbourhood converted to a drug haven (elected official and local resident).

This bind and the conflicted conscience of the local residents is becoming a common narrative within the community where the rooted identity of tolerance remains, but where individuals are finding solutions to the problems facing the community to be very complex. For much of the community however this complexity is being dealt with, rather than being used as an excuse, where the long running and rooted identity of tolerance has placed an increased focus on searching for progressive ways of addressing issues that in other parts of the city are being approached more brashly:

you see a lot in the city about the issues of addiction, with the mayor and news articles with people bitching about addiction and it's not the same in this neighbourhood... we are too, but people in this neighbourhood, our main concern is the people that are addicted. We want to help... (Drive shopkeeper)

So while many individuals in the community continue to support an inclusive and diverse environment within their neighbourhood, the increasing issues of criminality and 'disorder' on the streets have become a constant struggle:

there's a kind of torn conscience here that a lot of people are ripped up on, we don't like crime, we want more police, and we want more crime reduction measures going on here, but it is not like we want private security guards going around beating people up and stuff like that. And we're sympathetic, the neighbourhood is sympathetic, and we know that a lot of what passes as petty crime is mental health issues. So people are kind of torn, they don't want to

sound like they are complaining about crime like people do in other parts, and yet we want something done, we want crime lowered...and it's an issue that people are trying to figure out. How do we deal with crime and drug addiction and all these other things? (local writer and business owner)

This conflicted conscience is also reflected by an elected official who saw a new more property based ideology appearing in east Vancouver with the arrival of gentrification:

I wouldn't say intolerant, they're progressive on a lot of things, they are supportive of people who are vulnerable, but they are very concerned about their family's and their own interests, and they have a much bigger expectation particularly around the protection of their property. Not wanting open drug sales, not wanting some of the activity that links to prostitution in their community, and understandably so. So demanding a much stronger enforcement of that, and a much stronger response to people dealing with these issues. That was never the case in East Vancouver (elected official).

It appears that as the price of real estate continues to be driven up in the neighbourhood, expectations of individuals paying close to a million dollars for their homes have also greatly increased:

and so there's that pressure, people buy in here, and the higher the cost of residential property gets, the more people feel entitled to declare what the place should be. I mean, I agree. If you spend three quarters of a million dollars buying some piece of shit house and with hoodlums that break into your car every couple of weeks you're entitled to a bad viewpoint. You got ripped off (local business owner).

But while the pressures from this population is increasing this same business owner was quick to point out that this is not a one directional increase, and in fact:

What's happened is it raises the pressure, but the pressure remains equal on both sides, so now the tension is higher. The tide of conservatism won't happen here. But whereas there used to be a low level battle that you only really realized was going on after you'd lived here for a few years and got to figure these things out, and get to know the different players in the neighbourhood, now the energy is

much higher, but it is higher on both sides. So now we have more severe social problems, where the government has cut back welfare and now there's people that don't have any state support at all, there's a huge wave of people sleeping outside; sleeping in doorways; or on the sidewalks. You know you can walk up the street at five in the morning and it is incredible the number of people that are sleeping out in the elements; where at the same time you've also got the huge invested property owners. So both things have risen. The social problems are way more severe now than they were 15 years ago and so is the wealth... So yeah there are much more statements of conservative pressures going on in the neighbourhood, where at the same time there is an equal rise of pressure going the other way. And things are much more ugly as well.

While a number of issues have blurred the bounds of ideological opinion within the polarized middle class, one area where this ideological divide becomes clearest is in issues where the new incoming gentry attempt to alter the existing neighbourhood fabric with the sole goal of securing or realizing profit. This profit seeking gentry finds very little comfort in the common discourse and general mentality on the streets of Grandview-Woodland, as it appears as though a wide range of the population is at least partially hostile to household displacement. When one developer sought the quick support of the community for a redevelopment of the troubled Skytrain station at Broadway and Commercial, the lack of support for the initial plan led the confused architect to claim that "the area takes pride in its poverty" (quoted in Godley 1989). Surprised that even the home owners near the station wouldn't support the hegemonic goals of revitalization and redevelopment the architect continued with a sense of disbelief in the lack of support, claiming that "no one is going to spend money on redoing old homes... if that part of town doesn't change" (Godley 1989).

While this developer was surprised that the hegemonic mould didn't hold within the community, he wasn't the only individual who didn't find support where most expected. One resident who attempted to sustain the frontier of profitability by seeking to take revanchist steps (Smith 1996) by removing an undesirable element from the local park

found a similarly cold response from one community policing volunteer:

A woman bought a house across on Charles Street... it was a beautiful big house and it had a second floor porch and a suite up there and stuff, anyway, she buys the house, and the same thing, every Tuesday night this guy Gordon, from the Vineyard church comes and feeds chili to a few hundred people who line up. They're poor; some of them are addicted; some of them are drunk; they don't always behave well; they throw their bowls around; you know whatever, and after a few weeks she came in to say that... she had moved in and that she was charging \$1500 for her upstairs suite and how could she ask \$1500 for this suite when across the way is this collection of homeless people you know, making a mess every week. And she felt that we should support her, go to the City, and make it stop. You know, get it out of there. And I said, well no, this is an institution in this neighbourhood, and she said to me, and I have never forgotten this conversation, she said 'you could call it that, but this neighbourhood is changing, and this stuff has got to change too, it's got to stop', and you know it was all I could do to not throttle her, I'm just like 'get out of my neighbourhood'. But she was a classic, this woman was to me a classic experience of people moving in, not liking what they see, and not adapting to what's there, but wanting it to change or go away.

anti-gentrification sentiment

These types of exchanges have fueled a great deal of anti-gentrification sentiment within the community that seems to be providing another possible stalling element to further change. As Wilson, Wouters and Gramenos (2004) have illustrated, often this presence of anger, and a visible sentiment of anti-gentrification discourse within the community has a significant potential to curb widespread change. In Grandview-Woodland the long history of resistance to gentrification, and the fear that this change is happening, coupled with the willingness of the residents to show their distaste for the associated changes that they perceive is perhaps providing one element of the story of stalled gentrification:

...one of the reasons why gentrification won't happen in the way that people are fearful of it, I think, is because there are always these young hotheads that are willing to throw graffiti up around about yuppies all the time who think that it is happening... so, if everybody relaxed and believed as I do, that gentrification just won't happen, then maybe it will. Because that element of resistance and anger



Figure 15: STOP gentrification. informal street politics

towards evidence of gentrification is one of the things that keeps gentrification away. People with money to buy property, with security in life and jobs who buy property, skip over this place to go somewhere else, because it's got this image (local writer and business owner).

Beyond these more brazen examples of anti-establishment graffiti in the neighbourhood highlighted earlier, there have been other visible markers of informal local politics as was noticed in the placement of anti-gentrification stickers on local stop signs (Figure15).

seeking a 'norm of similarity'

While it appears that there is wide support for the goals of social justice on the Drive and a gentrifying population with a rooted identity of tolerance, there is some indication that for some, this acceptance and support of difference ends with the introduction

of children into the equation. A study conducted by Pratt (1998) exploring issues in a neighbourhood in east Vancouver found that while the gentrifier may appreciate, accept, and even at times desire diversity within their own living environment, when the issue of children is entered into the equation the result is often a return to a 'norm of similarity'. This desire for a norm of similarity could be a possible factor in an explanation of lower gentrification levels in Grandview-Woodland as the gentrifiers reconsiders their locational choice when their child reaches school age:

... a friend of mine moved, bought a really gorgeous heritage house, her kid was going to kindergarten, and this is a person who sends their kids to preschool, and she couldn't believe that half the class had never used the scissors before, there was a big aboriginal population, and I guess the kids could do other things and that, but they were not school ready, and her kid was. And I think that a lot of people then left because of that reason. Cause they bought here because it was affordable family housing, and then they realized that they weren't getting what they wanted (community artist).

This lack of school readiness was borne out in studies as well, as was highlighted by a non-profit worker dealing with children in the neighbourhood, "research is showing that we're one of the top neighbourhoods for the worst indicators, showing that young children are not ready to go to kindergarten." As a result of this lack of readiness, Pratt (1998) noticed that a number of middle-class parents in her east Vancouver study area actually transported their children out of the neighbourhood in search of child care. This cross-border transfer of children has now extended beyond childcare and now into the public school system as well.

Prior to 2002, students enrolled in the Vancouver Public school system were required to attend a school in close proximity to their home, thereby following strict catchment boundaries. After 2002 however, the government opened up this process, making these barriers more permeable, allowing children to cross boundaries if there was

room in another city school (McMahon 2007). The perceptual divide between eastside and westside schools is apparent in the fact that 3.5% of westside students left their community to go to school as compared to 20% of eastside students (McMahon 2007). In this same study, the author found that despite an increase of school-aged children by 5.1% on the eastside between 1996-2001, there was actually a 1.9% decrease in overall enrolment in eastside schools.

These perceptions of a mismatch between education on the west versus eastsides of the city was reflected by numerous individuals including a member of one eastside parent advisory council who commented on the fact that this perceptual imbalance includes the belief that the culture at westside schools are more academically oriented, and that a higher percentage of students there will go onto a postsecondary education (McMahon 2007). This distaste for the local education was reflected by one Vancouver realtor who faced this same personal conflict:

...so far the people that I've noticed are the ones who are starting a family. So when the kids get to school age they'll move out. School is one of the things. We had the same issue. We lived right behind the school. It was so convenient. Both my kids could just walk to school, it was a block away. But then after attending that school, we just found that it wasn't up to par as far as what we thought the school should have so we had to leave.

identity construction, self-selection and individual choice.

Gentrification has been cited as being a means for an enlargement of identity (Ley 1996), and in many ways the neighbourhood of choice of an individual goes a long way in forming this personal identity. There is always potential for a spatialization of identity to occur, where we as individuals seek out those neighbourhoods that best conform to our personal construction of our own identity. While certainly not a one-way effect, our presence in the neighbourhood, in community groups, on the street, also contains potential to alter the reality around us; to begin to in a way redefine what that place is,

thereby highlighting the intricate connection of place and identity formation. Different places contain different actors and as a result present alternative visions and ideologies which guide and direct everyday life, and while we enter into a space with our own preconceptions, the potential exists for our own sympathies to change as we come in contact and interact with individuals who hold differing ways of seeing the world. As a result it is important to realize that as we move around in different spaces in the city “we never enter into an empty space, we always enter a place that has a history” (Ley 2006). In Grandview-Woodland it appears as though the dominant local identity attracts a certain type of person, where “people here pride themselves on having more artistic or creative impulses, being alternative and having an activist orientation, being conscious of social processes like gentrification”. (Britannia employee)

For individuals who understand this interconnection of place and identity, the choice of moving into Grandview-Woodland involves understanding that there are certain factors in place that make the community what it is. Often the choice is made, in full awareness of the opportunity that that lifestyle brings: “I think it’s tradition as much as anything, because we have that tradition of the lefty loosey-goosey neighbourhood; and I think people who moved into the neighbourhood maybe adapted a little bit” (business owner). Whereas the new resident who is anticipating the discourse and ideology of the neighbourhood to align to their own prejudices or the beliefs and visions of the hegemonic mould guiding development in the rest of the city, the experience of living on the Drive may be less enjoyable and much more frustrating:

We’ve had a number of people who have complained, complained, complained and then left, but if they’re going to be complaining about stuff like that, then good riddens to them then in my opinion. But I think now maybe, more the buyers understand what they’re getting into, you know and they’re opting for it (community artist).

This idea, that the 'buyers understand' and opt for the life on the Drive often guides many of the decisions of incoming residents. A city planner who lived in the area mirrored this claim of a type of 'self-selection' that happens:

But I think that you still get self-selection happening. People who aren't tolerant don't move [here]. Basically the character is there. Or they move after, but I think that what happens is that they don't go. The interesting thing with gentrification is that when you get people moving in who don't like it the way it is, and they're buying it because of price, and then they try to force change, which is happening in parts of the Downtown Eastside. Where people with money are saying 'there is a deal here', they don't like what the place is, but they think it is going to change and they're going to push that change as hard as they can. I think in Grandview-Woodland, the area has got a certain character and people either buy it or they don't... I think people self-select, I mean it's not Kitsilano in terms of access to beaches, and all that sort of yuppie stuff.

For those individuals highlighted by the planner who are looking to change the local culture in Grandview-Woodland, or who simply don't realize it is there when they move in, the experience has the potential to be short lived. But there are two types of scenarios that one local realtor sees with the young incoming gentry:

Well I sort of see both sides of it. I'll get the couple, the young couple that was just married, and they'll see that Commercial Drive is a nice area, they've heard it's really good, they'll move in but they don't at the same time appreciate that Commercial Drive is nitty-gritty. And a lot of people like that vibrant part of it; and for other people that move in, within a year or two years they go 'we don't like it, as much as we like our house and our street, we don't like the whole atmosphere around there' and they actually move back out.

There is more to the community than simply aesthetic considerations and this is a central understanding that needs to be realized if the incoming gentry are to remain in the neighbourhood for a long period. It is what the essence of the neighbourhood is that matters most, not simply the design of the housing stock:

you can run through here like they did ten years ago where there must have

been a sale on purple paint because ever second house had purple trim on it. I mean that's just a paint job, but I know what's going on underneath the surface. So you know, before anybody spends three quarters of a million dollars on a house moving in here, thinking that they're getting a cheaper version of some place in West Vancouver... they think they're getting a cheaper version of it; an everyman's version of it. But they're not though; this place is rough and dirty and there is always going to be drugs and hookers and crime and all that sort of shit, because that is what the place is. And you can't doubt it, it's unmistakable, and you can't make it otherwise. It's got that (local writer and business owner).

So this process of self-selection appears to have reduced the negative effects of gentrification, by not simply becoming a community that has opened the door wide to redevelopment and goals of neoliberal cleansing. The culture of the Drive appears to be rooted and instilled in the public perception, making it clear to individuals throughout the city that as one community centre employee put it "you have to have a certain sensibility to survive in this community... [which] relates to the tolerance". It appears as that associated with the desire of tolerance, the neighbourhood has also become home to a philosophy that breaks from the societal norms that dominate other communities around issues of home:

Well, we love the area. You can access everything... the flavour of the Drive and the diversity... we live in a Co-op and that's part of our philosophy, and that whole way of living in terms of sharing and celebrating is what brought us to the Drive (non-profit employee).

This ideology and identity is not for everybody in the city and the level of community on offer in Grandview can be too much for some individuals in today's society. One realtor and past resident who moved from the Drive to a westside neighbourhood highlighted that the ideology of community found within the neighbourhood had the potential to at time become a little too overbearing and 'too friendly' for him and his family. The difficulty for them was found in the differing opinions on where the boundary of neighbourhood life ends and private, personal life begins:

...we've always liked the Drive, I think it's a friendly neighbourhood, sometimes too friendly... you can be sitting on your front porch and people will come up to you and just start chatting. You can paint your house and people will stop and say 'it's ugly': it's not the colour they would choose. So if you're in another neighbourhood, like where I am now, if you paint your house they will say it is nice, but they wouldn't give you their opinion, so that's friendly...

Grandview-Woodland appears to have become a prime location for young, critical thinking university graduates. Rose (2004) noted that although many of the gentrifiers perceived diversity as a beneficial element of inner city living, many of these individuals, rather than participating in this diversity, were simply attempting to live up to their own constructed view of their identity and their belief that they should appear to be "residentially correct" to their peers. Perhaps some of this element is present in Grandview where one local real estate agent noted that:

there's also a demographic there where you got a lot of, can I say left-wing highly educated people. That have all of a sudden got some very good paying jobs, but they do not want to seem to their peers to have migrated to the right, by moving into [the westside neighbourhoods] Dunbar or Kerrisdale. So even though they've got this fabulously good income they want to buy along Commercial Drive along with their working class friends and associates and along the 'in' street. And as more and more of those have bought it has become more and more of a middle class neighbourhood.

Whatever the reason, it appears as though this rooted population of critical thinkers has greatly slowed the tide of widespread gentrification and conversion in Grandview-Woodlands, preventing a 'homogenous yuppie preserve' by standing up for an ideology and politics rooted in a desire for a certain level of social justice within their community. So then the question in light of these findings needs to be readdressed: Has gentrification in Grandview-Woodland been stopped?

6

GENTRIFICATION STALLED, OR THE CONTINUAL MARCH?

“So I think gentrification has happened, but it has been quite slow. You haven’t seen massive redevelopment, it’s almost like it sneaks in the back door... there is no question though that there have been changes. Absolutely...”

- Local Elected Official

Like every neighbourhood in Vancouver, Grandview-Woodland has not entirely avoided the transformations associated with the process of gentrification. While a number of concessions have been made to limit its negative effects, it appears clear from the evidence from the interviews and a more detailed review of various census variables that the neighbourhood has experienced residential and commercial turn-over since the 1970s. While certainly far from widespread gentrification and transformation into a ‘homogenous yuppie preserve’, it appears as though there has been concentrated gentrification within differing sub-regions of the neighbourhood, with housing sales of over a million dollars cited in a few instances.

micro-geographies: a question of scale

While the earlier chapters highlighted some gains in affordable housing within the predominantly single-family region of the south eastern segment of the neighbourhood, a walk through the area seems to suggest a more thorough process of gentrification has begun to transform wide segments of the region into visibly gentrified landscapes.

Reviewing 2006 census variables tends to highlight the overall trend as well as population densities have dropped continually since 1996, thereby implying that many of these previously sub-divided accommodations may be on their way back to the original use of single-family (City of Vancouver 2003; Canadian Census 2006). As a result, it appears as though a certain level of polarization may be setting into the community, where the east and westsides of Commercial Drive are perhaps beginning to face differing realities, with greater displacement occurring east of the Drive:

I find that there is a certain polarization happening, and it's an east-west thing within Grandview-Woodland. And west of Commercial Drive is the poor side, and east of Commercial Drive is the yuppie side. I don't perceive it that way, but I can see why some people do, and I know a lot of people do. If you're buying a house to fix up, mostly people are on the Eastside of the Drive, between Commercial, Victoria and Nanaimo. That's the eastside and the other side is Commercial to Clark, so down there you'll have more of the housing co-ops the basements suites the this and that, and speaking as a volunteer with community policing, there's way more policing problems on that side, or crime and disorder problems on that side, then there are on this side... (community artist and volunteer)

Some of the visible transformations of the streets east of the Drive maybe of the type identified as incumbent upgrading by Rose (1996) who saw a great deal of renovation and improvement conducted by the immigrant population through 'sweat equity'. In the 1970s, Daniels and Hanson (1974) highlighted this trend in the local Italian population that lived in and around the Drive. Here the authors found the process operating where an exchange of services occurred between neighbours who helped one another and where "there's no money involved [but sometimes] maybe a bottle" (Benincasa quoted by Daniels and Hanson 1974:43). It was this process of incumbent upgrading that was cited as keeping so many of the heritage homes in good condition. While potential exists that much of today's renovation remains of this type, visual cues in the neighbourhood suggest otherwise where the current changes appear to be more indicative of an aesthetic

of gentrification, than one of simple renovation and repair, where emphasis is placed on historic quality, even in houses that lacked these features originally.

Within this large segment of single family housing there appears more complexity to the story where certain segments have been highlighted as being more attractive to gentrifiers than others. One realtor, who had owned two houses within Grandview-Woodland noted this variance within the single family regions: "There are very different neighbourhoods even within Grandview, there are quiet neighbourhoods, away from the grit, and then there are pockets. Choice locations..." These observations highlight that even within widely gentrified neighbourhoods there are more and less desirable choices for gentrifiers thereby creating a geography to the change even at a micro-scale.

In addition, while the socio-economic mix highlighted in earlier chapters appears to have retained a certain salience through the presence of social housing and the associated services, the role of the neighbourhood as a traditional immigrant receptor within the city of Vancouver appears to be fading as gentrification within the neighbourhood proceeds:

I think that this area used to be more of a first receptor area... Grandview-Woodland tended to be more for first immigrants. I think what's happening now, with housing prices and the squeeze on housing stock, and because people who are here love living here, more of that turnover has been in Burnaby... My sense is that there are more English speakers in the area then there were in the past (community centre employee):

So while the neighbourhood's socio-economic statistics tend to imply that gentrification has stalled relative to the city, the observation above is also confirmed by a local non-profit worker with an immigrant service organization who noted this Anglo presence being increasingly more prevalent: "well definitely it is changing. And interestingly I see more from the observation of other people that there are more Caucasians, and not the

newer immigrants, the arrival immigrants”.

Beyond simply being an issue of price, one realtor noted that those immigrants looking to buy real estate in the city look at Grandview-Woodland as a pricey neighbourhood with little to attract them. In this regard, the retail function on the Drive and the housing typology are much more aligned and suited to the aesthetic desires of the Anglo-Canadian population seeking an attachment to the historical landscapes of the colonial city:

I think the immigrants just find it too pricey. If I'm thinking of immigrants from Asia I think it's less than that, they'll go to areas like Victoria, or Killarney, and they would buy a different style home. And they don't care to have the character, they're not drawn to that. And plus the retailing there does not cater so much to the Asian, so they would rather go south and that's where they hang out, so no... I'll get calls from an ad and they'll say 'oh that's too much money', so they won't spend that much money for that area, where I think the locals or Caucasians would.

This contradictory acknowledgement of the neighbourhood being a whiter, more Anglo-centred neighbourhood, as well as a locale that has resisted gentrification complicates an easy reading of gentrification within the neighbourhood. These observations call into question issues of scale in the study of gentrification. While at the community scale it appears through statistical analysis that gentrification has been slowed in some regard, thereby allowing the neighbourhood to retain a diverse socio-economic mix, a finer scale analysis of certain streets reveals that very different realities exist even within the same section of a single community. In addition, one might suggest that the social status measurement utilized to outline the bounds of this study has perhaps allowed the impact of the marginal gentrifier to slip through the measurement, however as this study outlined earlier the mapping of these findings were verified through other studies. The role that the marginal gentrifier, who entered into the neighbourhood in

the 1980s, has played in the construction of the present day landscape of Grandview-Woodland has perhaps been underplayed in this analysis. Through their early arrival and rooted presence in the neighbourhood they appear to have ensured that they would not fall victim to the subsequent displacement, too often associated with stage models of gentrification while at the same time sharing many of the consumer and community ideals of the more stereotypical gentry.

It appears as though it is this rooted population of marginal gentrifiers, coupled with other early arrivals of the first stage of gentrification in the neighbourhood who have become the most vociferous in attempts to resist the wholesale transformation of the neighbourhood into a 'yuppie preserve', thereby placing a great deal of effort in attempts to resist the further gentrification of their unique, identity-forming neighbourhood into simply another homogenous and corporate enclave.

A further complication in presenting Grandview-Woodland as a successful example of stalled gentrification is the role of up-scaling of services on Commercial Drive. A number of studies have stressed the importance of reading the commercial landscape into a wider understanding of gentrification and change within a community. In this regard Rose (1996) has pointed out that "one of the clearest indexes of a neighbourhood's cultural appropriation by the new middle class might lie in the transformation of commercial services and particularly that of a neighbourhood's retail infrastructure" (159-60). Everything changes in the process of gentrification, not just the residential streets and in the case of Commercial Drive it would appear that widespread commercial gentrification may be a reality. One store owner noted:

I mean the services have changed to accommodate the different bunch of people. The restaurants are more expensive, there are clothing stores that sell new clothes, and the ones that sell second-hand clothes aren't 'second hand', they're classic clothes or retro clothes, but it's not Value Village.

Highlighting the difficulty that this places on a community, a local politician noted the reduction of functional services and the increase of gentry focused establishments:

I have seen... a lot of the family run businesses disappear, and I've seen the service type industries, the camera shop, the flower shop, the repair place, and a number of others, the plumbing place, Hillcrest Plumbing used to be on there, and so it's changed considerably. It's mostly restaurants now, and so there is a significant change in terms of the business climate on Commercial Drive, it used to be a much more ethnic and services in its breakdown, there used to be more hardware stores, Manitoba Hardware store, and more clothing stores, so now it is dominated by food and coffee shops and the like.

In 1990, a local businessman and owner of Octopus Books described the neighbourhood as "the last little pocket that developers haven't got to" (quoted in Appelbe 1990). Later in the same article another owner on the street commented that "I just hope they don't 'Kitsilano' it...I like Commercial Drive as it is". While these two quotes seem to be saying the same thing one might question whether or not 'the way it is' necessarily means it is 'not gentrified'. This is one of the binds of this research, for while it would appear through census data analysis that the neighbourhood of Grandview-Woodland has maintained a certain level of its diversity, the streetscape of Commercial Drive has an extremely 'gentrified' feel. This distinction between 'developed' and 'gentrified' appears to be the big issue between opinions on the Drive. While nobody in the neighbourhood seems interested in supporting chain stores, or the new build developments that line suburban commercial corridors, gentrified establishments on the Drive are widely present, serving a high-income, professional clientele from across the city. Yet despite this the focus of resistance against commercial gentrification is targeted at chain stores, showing more of a socio-political inclination as opposed to a desire to retain the affordable services needed for a wide ranging population. Here this targeted response towards perceptions of gentrification linked to corporate logos can be seen:

I don't think that I would call it a 'movement', more 'erratic, uneducated behaviour'. I mean I get harassed all the time with accusations of convincing the Lululemon wearing moms of the world to move in and demand a Starbucks, because the Starbucks moves in. Yet I didn't know there was a Starbucks moving in until it actually opened. And then someone, no idea who, took it upon themselves to trash the front windows of the Starbucks, they got broken pretty much once a week for the first six weeks that they were open. You know, and that was their way of dealing with change in their neighbourhood (member of Drive BIA).

Yet while there are differing perspectives on the level of gentrification along Commercial Drive, the selection of the neighbourhood as one of the 15 hippest neighbourhoods in North America in the *Utne Reader* (Walljasper and Kraker 1997), suggests that any claims of resisted gentrification within the neighbourhood's commercial functions would require a reassessment.

Running parallel to these many observations and in particular tied up in the role of the marginal gentrifier in Grandview-Woodlands, has been the changing economic situation of the female population where, since the 1980s an increase in annual earnings were the result of rising education levels, an increase of high-level occupations, pay equity programs and the overall number of hours worked (Rose 1996). This increase in economic positioning of the female population has provided more ammunition to the observation that much of the visible gentrification in Grandview, has the potential of being the work of female-led incumbent upgrading, a changing reality on the ground that was also picked up on by a local art gallery owner on the Drive:

...and another thing that I really noticed when I first opened is I had a lot of lesbian clients, because it was sort of their neighbourhood, it was the lesbian neighbourhood of Vancouver, and they'd always come to my store and go 'oh, man...' you know, but they'd never buy anything. And then finally I asked one of my well off lesbian clients, 'so what's with you dykes, don't you decorate?' and she said 'well that's because we're poor, and you know, quite often we came out

of situations where it's an abusive thing, or we are single mothers', but over the last five or six years I've seen that incredibly totally change because I've got tons of lesbian clients now, and they are *clients*. You can see that their social level has really come up; they have good jobs; they're professional; and so it's not that poor single mother lesbian thing anymore, there are a lot of professional women and stuff.

While the community at large tends to lament any changes that they see as altering the overall fabric of the neighbourhood the conflict between reality and nostalgia seems to be problematic as this contradictory bind seems to ignore the essence of the place according to one storekeeper and author who clearly articulated the reality:

What everybody says they don't want here is for things to change, and at the same time the one characteristic that defines this place is its constant changing. When I first came here 25 years ago the big fear was gentrification of the neighbourhood and the yuppies moving in and all that, and there is still that fear today... It's like living on the crest of a wave, it feels like it's always changing, but you're always on the crest of the wave. So, in my research into the history of the place in my different writing projects, I found that its not just the last 25 years, it's the last hundred years that it's been like this. This neighbourhood has always been the first place of residence for new waves of immigrants... So there is a constant change all the time. And to stop change would be to take away the actual vital sense of the place, even though you don't want it to change cause you like it the way it is. Everybody who comes here and stays here does so because they like it, well... so you see what I mean, it's a complex thing? How do you embrace change if you like it so much you want it to stay like it is, and staying like it is means allowing it to change all the time?

While change has certainly been a cornerstone of the essence of Grandview-Woodland, it appears as though the most recent transformations in the community in many ways mimics a similar trend of polarization noted by Heather Smith (2003) in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where she saw an intra-neighbourhood pattern of simultaneous upgrading and downgrading. This trend was highlighted by a local politician:

People either are doing quite well, and there are lots of people in the community doing quite well, there is lots of money in the economy right now, and there is

lots of work for people who are working. So those folks are doing well but the cost of living is going up. People who were in a position where they bought a house ten years ago are doing pretty well right now, they built a little bit of equity and prices are good and interest rates are down... but if they're not in that place then they're struggling.

This observation was echoed by a number of individuals who cited this reality, and the widening of the gap between the two, "what I see in this area is the widening of the gap of the rich and poor. People who move in who are professional are wealthier than has been on Commercial Drive... so there is that wider gap" (Britannia employee). These findings tend to lend weight to Meligrana and Skaburski's observation that "gentrification is polarizing neighbourhoods by income level" (1589).

social diversity and gentrification policy: 'the uneasy cohabitation'

Stage-based theories of gentrification have tended to dismiss 'social diversity,' like marginal gentrification, as an epiphenomenon, a transient stage a neighbourhood goes through en route to *embourgeoisement*. For some neo-Marxist scholars, the consideration of social mix is an irrelevant diversion for critical urban research agendas (Smith, 1987). But findings for Montreal in the 1980s give cause to question such assumptions. Might not social diversity turn out to be an enduring feature of many inner city neighbourhoods – depending on, among other things, variations in residential morphology at a micro-scale and the nature of state intervention in local housing markets? (Rose, 1996: 155).

While social mix policies and ideologies have held a persuasive and long running position within the hegemonic Canadian vision of city building and community, a number of authors have recently called to task this idea that social mix is inherently a good thing, particularly in relation to its role in the promotion and advance in the field of gentrification (Slater 2004; Lees 2000; Blomley 2004). The failure of gentrification, despite the promise of personal liberation and emancipation highlighted in early accounts of Canadian gentrification has led Lees (2004) to claim that these emancipatory

accounts of gentrification are inherently flawed in that they create visions of potential benefits, despite the author's view that the eventual end point of gentrification almost always involves the displacement of the previous residents. Beyond this claim, Slater (2004) has highlighted that these emancipatory elements and actors are no longer to be found in contemporary Canadian gentrification, and therefore they should be abandoned along with the celebration of social mix discourses, calling instead for a reassertion of more critical research of gentrification, thereby leaving the emancipatory accounts in the past as predictions and celebrations made too early in neighbourhoods that eventually ended with displacement (Slater 2006).

Tied to these views is the realization that the concept of social mix and the promotion of diversity are seldom as innocent as they appear (Blomley 2004), particularly when utilized as a promotional tool of cities projecting an image of 'livability' as a competitive strategy to attract the wrongly assumed fluidly mobile 'creative class' of the new economy. As a result of these misled beliefs in the potential of diversity, Robson and Butler (2001) see the process of gentrification rather than a positive and emancipatory diversity being instead more of what they call 'social tectonics', where a series of social plates overlap or run parallel to one another providing the always present potential for friction or conflict in the community when these plates of various social groups collide.

Yet despite these observations is it possible, as Rose (1996) claims, that there may still be some potential for social diversity and social mix to be a beneficial, and more importantly, an achievable end within the city, if the local conditions are aligned in such a way? If this end is possible, should we be so quick to assume that diverse socio-economic neighbours cannot live next to each other without the presence of one group inevitably leading to the displacement of the other?

While many authors see only the potential for conflict within these tectonic relations, Pratt (1998) moves beyond such readings and instead highlights the potential for resistance of gentrification through such messy and unclear divisions of space present in a community such as Grandview-Woodland. Sibley (1995) has noted that environments like Grandview, with unclear bounds or classifications provide venues to encourage social interaction, tolerance of difference, and possible potential for mixing. Pratt's (1998) view of social diversity, much like Robson and Butler's (2001), doesn't present diversity as being overly fluid whereby a homogenous identity of social mix evolves. Instead she puts forth the image of "multiple grids of difference [with] complex and varied links between place and identity formation" (27) where through crossing these various overlapping grids, awareness of common issues is heightened and in turn begins to restructure ones identity as travel over these social borders is undertaken. Through interviews with a number of different residents, Pratt (1998) noticed that despite the claims that tectonic social relations can only lead to conflict and disinterested friction she found that "boundaries and commitment to the local are not necessarily politically regressive. In this instance, they nurtured a willingness to cross boundaries of identity and culture. The boundedness of the local opens possibilities to create relationships across differences" (40) and in fact an effort of "sorting through the boundaries and overlapping ideological spaces – seeing boundaries and points of intersection – is a very preliminary step toward building alliances that might work against the homogenizing forces of gentrification." (43). So while she notes that a simple enjoyment of this difference is unlikely to result in positive resistance to gentrification, she highlights that "if the residents have any hope of retaining the social and economic diversity of their neighbourhood, they will likely have to move beyond "enjoying" difference to actually engaging with it by pursuing a common political project located in space" (Pratt 1998: 44). Perhaps this is where Grandview-Woodland's greatest gains in resistance have been made in diverting the widespread process of 'gentrification generalized'.

CONCLUSION

“Cities happen to be problems in organized complexity, like the life sciences. They present ‘situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtly interconnected ways’. Cities, again like the life sciences, do not exhibit one problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all. They can be analyzed into many such problems or segments which, as in the case of life sciences, are also related with one another. The variables are many, but they are not helter-skelter; they are ‘interrelated into an organic whole.’”

– Jane Jacobs (1992 [1961]: 433)

I return to Jane Jacobs in the concluding chapter of this thesis not simply as homage to her life’s influence on urban thinking, but also due to the impact of her work on my own academic development as well as the story in Grandview-Woodland. The clarity of the message presented in her seminal piece, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is as important and salient now as it was in the 1960s and in the study of Grandview-Woodland something unmistakably rooted in the writings of Jacobs resonates in the Vancouver community five decades later. So many of the ideas and thoughts of Jacobs present themselves in Grandview-Woodland where the characters in the book are embodied in the individuals who walk the streets, in a neighbourhood that is critically and constantly engaged in seeking thoughtful and responsible solutions. Here, like in the book, the realization has been made that “a successful city neighborhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them” (Jacobs 1992 [1961]:112). Understanding the complexity of the contemporary city is something that

is as difficult now as ever. Old formulae and theories are faltering, while daily decisions are being made not based on an honestly attempted effort to understand the inherent complexity of the city, but rather based upon assumptions of hegemony, that continually roll out similar strategies of destructive growth around the globe.

The hegemonic definition of global developmental strategies as they currently stand are rooted in neoliberal tenets and based upon fears of economic decline and failing in the seemingly fluid competition between cities for global positioning. Under such an uncertain and speculative framework, decisions are presented to the general population with inevitable languages tied up in false choices. Insecure incomes, occupations, and the perception of an unstable and volatile global competitiveness have greatly decreased the population's focus on social safety nets, focusing instead on self-survival techniques, in an 'every individual (or city) for themselves' mentality. In an attempt to position themselves competitively, individuals have unquestioningly adopted the hegemonic and unapologetic discourse of Locke's pursuit of the highest and best use across the globe, where constant 'improvement' and continual upgrading through invasion-succession models of urban development are seen as the only way forward in the contemporary city.

As the priorities of urban governments now centre around the opening up of the city to this global investment, Smith (1996) has seen the approach to be highlighted through the development of the revanchist city. Within this framework, the criminalization of more and more aspects of the everyday lives of the homeless has become increasingly pervasive, with the dominant discourse around these individuals shifting "from the sympathetic albeit patronizing stance of the late 1980s to a more brazen indictment of homeless people not just for their own predicament but for larger social ills" (Smith 1996: 227). These revanchist policies and actions are a present day reality in Vancouver as is seen in such initiatives as the mayor's Civil Cities Project where strategies are

being mobilized with the sole justification of opening up spaces in the city and making them perceptually safe for investment and consumption. The hegemonic positioning of this type of discourse focused on urban regeneration and environmental initiatives represents to Smith (2002) not only the next phase of gentrification in the city, but also a “considerable ideological victory for neoliberal visions of the city” (446).

These perceptions of this need to open up space for capital, as well as the acceptance around the globe of anti-homeless policy, feed on fears not only of falling behind in the global market, but also fears of disorder and the other. It is this positioning that has instilled in the public the perception that when addressing neighbourhoods or communities facing stresses of gentrification there inevitably exists some false choice of either widespread gentrification on the one hand, or some degenerate street scene on the other. It is this false choice, presented in the common discourse that has fueled the often uncritical acceptance of urban policies that support and seek gentrification, where individuals are feared into thinking that if they don't side with gentrification, than the city will inevitably fall into a position of disrepair. As a way of bringing clarity to these fears of dilapidation and decline the realization needs to be made that “*either* unliveable disinvestment and decay *or* reinvestment and displacement is actually a *false choice* for low-income communities, and that progress begins when gentrification is accepted as an *injustice* and not as a solution to urban poverty and blight.” (Slater 2006: 753, original emphasis). An opinion of a former Vancouver politician fits into this ‘either/or’ category surrounding perceptions of gentrification:

If you were really going to try and stop gentrification, the assumptions underneath that are very difficult to talk about but, ‘You really don't want people to come in and improve the quality of the neighbourhood? You really want to keep it poor?’ As a few studies at least, that I have read about gentrification, the poor don't much like the neighbourhood either, and when it starts to improve they will actually make more of an effort to hang on... It becomes a very easy political target, without a solution.

It is important to stress, as this thesis has attempted to highlight, that this is indeed a false choice and that despite these powerful assertions of inevitability there is always more than one potential outcome from the complex arrangement of variables facing our cities. Beyond this reality, these types of claims that the poor benefit from market led 'revitalization' have been exposed by Newman and Wyly (2006) as being extremely fragile and uncertain statements without the appropriate state corrections. Playing into this hegemonic account of city building is the perception inherent in the goals and visions associated with liberal humanism and the goals of diversity.

In conclusion to her examination of the neighbourhood change in Montréal, Rose (2004) stated that gentrification is a 'slippery' area in which to introduce the discourse of "social and tenure mix". Although she is not ready to entirely dismiss the possibility of benefits from such a discussion, she does place caution on the prospect and calls for an examination into the unanswered questions surrounding the "uneasy cohabitation of gentrification and social mix" (280). This debate, and the many unanswered questions around the validity of the claims of social mix as a positive policy for urban living leaves much to be discussed. As Atkinson (2004) has pointed out, "there is clearly no reason to believe that diversity is bad but such discourse has often served to mask a supplanting of existing residents, rather than their integration into future places and plans" (127). While there are pitfalls to diversity discourse, especially in this 'slippery' discussion around gentrification, what this study has attempted to show is that there remains tremendous potential in seeking diverse communities that promote and encourage interaction and understanding. As Pratt (1998) has highlighted this doesn't have to mean a complete submersion with diversity, but rather an acceptance and cohabitation with it, where a tremendous potential exists for opening up spaces for dialogue and the creation of collective goals of community.

While highlighting that diversity contains potential for beneficial results, this author is in no way calling for the uncritical acceptance of pushing social mix into poorer regions through the one-way introduction of the middle class, and would in fact stress that there is a real need to place greater restraint upon the uncritical application of the liberal humanist ideals of accessibility to all. Diversity does not necessarily have to mean accessibility to all, all of the time. There needs to be places in the city that allow for these 'grids of difference' to emerge that would otherwise be overpowered in a fluidly diverse urban arrangement. While social mix has great potential, the too often resultant 'melting pot' of liberal humanism needs to be avoided. As Mitchell (2003) has pointed out, the commonsense reality of liberal humanism is flawed and selective, whereby the goals of opening up spaces to all, has most typically and uncritically resulted in the opening up of spaces to the dominant members of society who are then able to set the rules of the norm based upon their own desires and beliefs.

It is important to realize that "where severe inequalities exist, to treat the strong and the weak alike only ensure that the strong remain strong, the weak remain weak" (Forester, 1987; 421). In this regard, Young (1990) cites a need to move away from the hegemonic conventions of liberal humanism and instead seek out a type of 'coalition of difference' in the city, rather than some unified public ideal. Young (1990) challenges the ideal of justice that defines liberation as the transcendence of group difference, which she sees as an ideal of assimilation, and instead argues that a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact far more liberating, therefore endorsing a politics of difference. This politics of difference argues that equality, as the participation and inclusion of all groups, sometimes requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups and in order to promote social justice, social policies may have to accord special treatment to certain individuals (Young, 1990).

The current ideology which holds hegemonic power in regards to the direction of the city is never an inevitable path. There are alternatives to the path of homogenization and gentrification and the complexity of the situation makes either/or choices not only overtly simplistic, but also glaringly flawed. As this thesis has attempted to show, there are alternative neighbourhoods, differing ideologies, and differing outcomes to global processes and as Katharyne Mitchell (2004) has shown in *Crossing the Neoliberal Line*, hegemony is fluid. The powers which unquestionably guide our society are constantly reworked through presentations in media and by restructuring the common discourse (Mitchell 2003). This thesis has attempted to uncover one possible alternative.

So then, as this thesis nears its conclusion the question remains: can gentrification be stopped?

The answer, while certainly not needing this study to arrive at it is 'yes'. As was highlighted by Marcuse (1985) over twenty years ago municipalities have long had at their disposal the tools to stop displacement led gentrification, requiring little more than social consensus. What this study has reinforced is that gains can be made with the right collection of variables aligned and with the right mixture of a wide variety of things, but that in the end, if an effort to retain a certain population is not made, gentrification will inevitably advance into regions with high amenity and a desirable supply. Certain neighbourhoods contain real potential to resist gentrification and widespread displacement and it is here where more studies need to be conducted to uncover the contextual differences.

The Downtown Eastside, as well as a number of other examples in the literature, have highlighted that even in the most disenfranchised communities, residents who are able to

band together to fight the forces of gentrification, can and do achieve beneficial results. Decisions in housing policy and zoning contain great potential to retain current residents in their communities, while at the same time stigmas associated with decline rooted in poverty, criminality, and a perceived and at times real disorder are seldom enough to resist gentrification without sufficient support from a government that is interested in the issues of the local tenants.

Another thing that becomes clearer, and is related to the observations in the Downtown Eastside, is that as the realities of gentrification continue to alter the landscapes of our cities any effort to create a diverse and healthy mix of individuals cannot begin in the poorest, most impoverished neighbourhoods. Achieving social mix throughout our society must not begin in neighbourhoods such as the Downtown Eastside where the resultant and inevitable displacement will leave residents without a replacement option of housing, thereby forcing even more individuals to the streets in our city. As has been made clear through the recent NIABY (Not in anybody's back yard) movement in the westside community of Dunbar against the placement of site supportive housing for the dually diagnosed, the rest of the city is unlikely to be overly receptive to the allocation of services often found in the tolerant Downtown Eastside (NIABY 2007). Until every community in the city has accepted a certain portion of these services, gentrification and the promotion of diversity in a community that consists of 90% tenants cannot gain any benefits without severe pressures being placed on the local population.

In the case of Grandview-Woodland, it appears as though the wide variety of variables have led to some successes in resisting or stalling gentrification, and have thereby provided a positive model upon which to explore recommendations. While unable to resist or stop gentrification in its entirety a number of factors highlighted in this study have presented sufficient barriers which in conjunction with a wide range of variables

has helped the neighbourhood avoid the widespread transformation into a yuppie preserve that has so often been cited in other examples. While the displacement that has resulted through a slow but continual process of gentrification remains problematic, relative to the remainder of contemporary Vancouver a number of positive gains can be cited. While policy recommendations would be helpful, caution should be raised against any simplistic application of the lessons in Grandview-Woodland to the other communities, for here, like any other neighbourhood, it is the organized complexity that leads to these outcomes, not simply one or two variables.

Crucially important to the observed successes in Grandview-Woodland has been the neighbourhood's historical positioning on the fringes of the larger Vancouver society and the resultant slow and patchy development that has come to represent the long-running history of change within the community. Within this narrative of incomplete investment is the resultant landscape of a diverse housing typology, creating streets in constant transition with seldom a case of a homogenous block. The various eras of housing construction are all present on the streets of Grandview, from the heritage home, to the architecturally bland 'Vancouver special' and all types in between, so that it is often difficult to find a single street within the neighbourhood defined by a single era, style, or even typology. This extremely diverse housing stock in the neighbourhood appears to have opened up a great deal of room for a wide variety of income levels and lifestyles throughout the community. The long and drawn out period of decline following the neighbourhood's initial optimism allowed the entry of a rooted presence of social housing and associated services for the impoverished members of society, which has been cited by a number of the experts interviewed as a primary reason for the neighbourhood's ability to curb the trend of change.

Of extreme importance to this narrative of retention is the role that the industrial

presence in the community has played. Its impact on affordability goes beyond the disamenity that it provides in the eyes of the gentrifier and includes the reality that the incomplete transition to an entirely industrial landscape has left a number of affordable housing options dispersed within the fragmented landscape. This idea of incomplete, yet constant transition is an underlying reality throughout the community, where continual change without high pressure demand has left variety on even the most homogenous streets.

Beyond these landscape considerations it appears as though the early gentrifiers of the 1980s were perhaps a breed slightly different from the traditional first-stagers. The presence of a long stigma associated with the eastside coupled with the community's marginalized outlook and the presence of a diverse patchwork of housing and tenure types, has allowed entry into the neighbourhood of a number of marginal gentrifiers including a large segment of the counter culture, artists, as well as a large gay and lesbian community, thereby greatly altering the politics of the street and ensuring a community identity rooted in critical resistance to the hegemonic views of the larger society towards definitions of house, home, neighbourhood and the ideal city. When attempting to better understand the transitions and effects of a gentrifying neighbourhood it is important to keep in mind that "there are many different routes to the gentrification of a neighbourhood, with different types of actors taking the lead in different contexts" (Rose 1984: 57). Complexity is heightened in Grandview-Woodland where the process and the players involved is muddied somewhat by its variety, "it's so multicultural, it's so diverse... there is no one label that would fit. In my mind that's a good thing, because that means you have to go outside of the box to think about this neighbourhood" (non-profit employee).

Not only is the local population diverse and eclectic, but any reading of the

neighbourhood needs to also highlight the complex and varied micro-geographies present within the neighbourhood. Within the neighbourhood the industrial and apartment districts north of the stigmatized East Hastings street experience divergent paths and experiences, both through visual and census observations, from the gentrified commercial and residential landscapes that line the heart of Commercial Drive. Ranging from the industrial lands along Clark Drive on the neighbourhood's western border, to the single family residential district of the south east, to the heavy and noxious Port lands, to the apartment districts in the north east and south west corners, the diversity of geographies within Grandview-Woodland tends to almost call for a more fragmented and focused study of the micro-geographies functioning within the larger community as a way of better understanding potential barriers to gentrification. While a more fragmented study might prove fruitful, it is the wide collection of spaces on offer in Grandview that has made this neighbourhood such a productive venue for exploring potential elements that can stall, stop or redirect the gentrification in the city within this study.

So then, in light of these observations, can the successes of Grandview-Woodland be replicated?

Well, maybe not. Mimicking this chapter's opening quote by Jacobs (1961), Atkinson (2004) highlighted the complexity of the problem as well as the fact that "housing and urban policies are not sealed units of delivery that can be deployed with fully envisaged results. Policies operate in a wider social and economic context that make it hard to anticipate outcomes" (127).

While the lessons and policy implications of Grandview-Woodland tend to suggest that the potential exists to alter the hegemonic hold on development and recreate the scenario

in the community elsewhere, the search for social consensus required for such policies seems unlikely in the present situation where:

right now, as the world gets into this somewhat paranoid environment of global warming, and no-resources, and population growth, and the future, and jobs, and all that kind of stuff. When people start to focus pretty much on their own needs... what tends to result is a lack of social consensus, or a lack of support for social sharing, caring, and all that kind of stuff... But once you strip away the safety net nobody should be too surprised that a bunch of people end up on the street. And the response to that can either be 'oh that was a mistake, let's rebuild the safety net' to some degree... or it be, 'we're going to replace the safety net with razor wire and security staff'... so you can get the razor wire response, or you can get the 'oh we need to help these people' response, and right now in our society we're teetering on either way (City planner).

So in such an environment it appears as though the decisions needed to replicate the success are unlikely to be found. As a secondary factor, and perhaps more fundamental to any acceptance of anti-gentrification policy it appears as though neighbourhoods based on the ideology that is current in Commercial Drive and the larger Grandview-Woodland are not for everybody. In the contemporary city, it appears as though there are a finite number of individuals who share this neighbourhood's optimism around inclusive community, and perhaps a high percentage of Vancouver's progressively liberal population is already concentrated in and around areas such as the Drive. We need not look further for proof of that than the widely popular internet classified website Craigslist, where a full-paged rant titled "!*#% You Commercial Drive" brings this point home while providing a more thorough and colourful analysis of the culture on the Drive in one page than this author could dream of presenting in an entire thesis (Craigslist 2005).

While a number of authors have highlighted the problematic connection of social mix discourse and gentrification, the case of Grandview-Woodland appears to perhaps

suggest that the benefits of socio-economic diversity may be achievable if the right mixture of community can be obtained. As Pratt (1998) has highlighted, there exist opportunities even within socially tectonic environments to make positive gains against the advance of gentrification if the right factors are in place. While there is no doubt that there is a 'slippery' element to the promotion of such discourse, the observations in this study instill optimism in this author, that perhaps even in today's climate of neoliberal politics, there exists real potential to limit the continued gentrification and homogenization of our cities through community awareness, positive governmental policy and a renewed focus in the goals of a diverse and vibrant neighbourhood.

EPILOGUE: DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CONTEMPORARY
GENTRIFIER

“But, gentrification is a good thing right?” the confused undergraduate asked from one of the back rows of the lecture hall. Annoyed at the misdirected question the disgruntled professor simply grumbled “No” as he carried on with his lecture.

Dissatisfied with the one word answer the student interrupted, “but... umm... excuse me... if the prices go up in the neighbourhood, couldn't people just sell their homes for more than they paid and move somewhere else? Wouldn't they benefit from the improvements? Wouldn't the increase in land values help them?” Clearly the nuances and realities of gentrification were a little muddled to me when I began my undergraduate degree.

My entry into this debate began as a twenty-one year old undergraduate in Urban Studies at the University of Calgary. As a naïve member of the dominant class I began my education with a hope of one day improving our cities by finding ways to make areas like Vancouver's Downtown Eastside more 'livable'. The farthest thing I was aiming for was the removal of the present population, yet my perceptions of the best way forward were rooted in my uncritical acceptance of popular discourse and media perceptions which would do just that.

As a result I entered into university and immediately began my pursuit of an architectural degree. As I neared the completion of my undergraduate degree I had engaged in the gentrification literature a little bit and by this point I realized that the revitalization of dilapidated areas may not be the most responsible approach to creating environments of conviviality. Yet despite this realization, I retained the belief in my abilities to create better cities through design. I explained my occupational goals to my undergraduate thesis supervisor, Professor Byron Miller, who looked rather confusingly at me as he tried to convince me that with my concerns and visions in mind maybe architecture wasn't the most suitable path. He explained to me his own personal journey and encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree in geography. I shrugged these suggestions off and continued on my pursuit of an architectural degree.

Six weeks into the Architecture program at the University of British Columbia, while sitting at my desk working on a class project I had an epiphany⁸. The goals I was most interested in pursuing in the urban environment could not likely be achieved by designing aesthetically pleasing spaces upon building sites. I shifted my focus towards a study of geography.

Beyond highlighting my youthfully ignorant arrival at geography, another thing that this self-indulgent story shows is the difficulty of achieving success in attempts to control gentrification in a society that is conditioned to believe that it contains beneficial potential. While immersed in the literature we at times forget that the larger, dominant voice in society is not the one we read in critical academia. The easiest way for me to realize this is to remind myself of my own ideological outlook at the commencement of

⁸ I really kind of doubt it is still called an epiphany when somebody has already told you something. Sorry I am a little bit slow Dr. Miller!

my academic career at which time much of the literature on gentrification was already written widely denouncing the process.

BUT GENTRIFICATION IS GOOD, RIGHT?

Certainly not rooted in revanchist objectives, my opinion was simply one of an uncritical mind that had accepted the messages given to me by those who dictate the direction of our cities. One thing that has become abundantly clear through my education is the fact that I was certainly not alone in my belief that gentrification was good. Since I began this thesis I have been confronted by a number of highly educated individuals who have looked at me with the same confused face I had when I confronted my irritable undergraduate professor and ask my misdirected question. These are just a few of the many examples:

While visiting from San Diego, and transitioning between her PhD in genetics and the commencement of her Medical Doctorate, I explained my thesis topic to a sister of one of my good friends (fittingly enough) over dinner at an Italian restaurant on the Drive. As I began to explain what I was looking at, she almost immediately stopped me and looking confused asked: "but, gentrification is good, right?"

In an interview with a reporter from Canadian Geographic following the receipt of an award from the organization that publishes the magazine, a similar question was raised by the educated journalist: "why would you want to stop gentrification?"

After having read the article in Canadian Geographic about my research (which surprisingly enough failed to properly represent the project), I was invited onto a CBC radio show to discuss the findings of my thesis on the afternoon talk show, On the Coast. The voice of the public, radio host Priya Ramu opened the interview and proceeded to ask a number of shockingly problematic questions, thereby highlighting the difficulty of resisting gentrification in the contemporary city. She began the interview with the question, "gentrification is usually considered a good thing for a neighbourhood, right?" After addressing the complexity of this question and outlining the observed successes of resisting gentrification in Grandview she continued, "Is there a danger though in this? I mean if Commercial doesn't evolve does it run the risk of getting

left behind as other parts of the city grow, and develop, and become more economically viable?" I reiterated my observations of the community, highlighting the positives, before she clarified her previous statement: "Can it stay the same, do you think. Especially as we head towards the Olympics, and I think that's sort of what I was referring to. Does it run that risk of getting left behind as money goes elsewhere, or does it become a ghetto at a certain point if for example social housing, if it becomes sort of an enclave of social housing? Is that actually a good thing?"

It is these rooted hegemonic perceptions of gentrification, growth, global competitiveness, and fears of falling behind that highlights the most extreme and pressing issues that needs to be addressed in gentrification research right now. How does the phenomenal work that has been done in academia since the 1970s, constantly highlighting the inherently negative externalities of the process get articulated to the point that the common discourse evolves to "gentrification is good, right?" Is it possible, and more importantly, what would it take to arrive at a more critical tone surrounding the displacement and the injustices of a system that works in the favour of developers and land owners and the expense of the city as a whole.

The problem is that in the Canadian context, gentrification is all too often seen in a positive light (Slater 2005), and is constantly reinforced as such in media projections and the rise of signs and symbols placing value in the process through outlets such as Home and Garden Television. These focused celebrations of renovation and aesthetic design in the media reflect the larger trend in the Canadian city where the common classification of 'Canada's Coolest Neighbourhoods' centres on ones that have "experienced or [are] experiencing gentrification" (Slater 2005:39).

In a discussion about the troubles of gentrification research with Elvin Wyly during the writing of this thesis, he noted how it was the paradoxical nature of gentrification that has made it a central topic for investigation. The difficult and unclear reality of the

process and the bind of excitement and disappointment, depending on one's framing of the issues has added to the difficulty of studying and better understanding gentrification in the contemporary city. For many individuals in our society these landscapes of gentrification are some of the most enjoyable and most interesting of all the regions of our cities. The converted loft spaces provide a housing typology not profitable or necessarily practical under current zoning bylaws and with the consideration of construction costs. So it is these unique environments, with older historic buildings, that allow us to feel connected to something beyond the everyday. While providing celebrated landscapes for those able to afford them, the problematic transition that took place through the process of gentrification and displacement is too easily forgotten when our focus is on the enjoyment of the present day.

But the argument has been made, that gentrification is not the same today as it was when it was first being studied as a fringe process. It is a process that can only be understood through an understanding of its locational context, its temporality and the methodology by which it has been studied (Lees 2000), and it would appear that today's generation of gentrifiers has very different expectations and goals inherent in their involvement in the inner city housing market. Slater (2004), in his analysis of the revanchist and emancipatory discourses and their implications in both the Canadian and American context, found that neither explanation is overly germane to the contemporary gentrification in the Canadian city. In fact, he argued that the emancipatory elements identified by Ley (1996) and Caulfield (1994) are eroding and seldom present in contemporary Canadian gentrification. He felt that this erosion had proceeded to the point where he questioned whether one could find anything positive to say about the neighbourhood change currently underway in Toronto. In the Toronto example Slater (2004) saw a city driven by neoliberal policy at both the municipal and provincial level, where like so many other places gentrification had become the *intended* consequence of

policy initiatives (Slater 2004). Beyond these observations, Ley (1996) has highlighted that the present day focus of gentrification around consumption, real estate markets and the aesthetic has made the process an increasingly unfulfilling one, where the criticism of the counter-culture has been replaced by consumption focused motivations and individualistic tendencies (Rose 2004). It seems clear that the realities of gentrification have shifted as the new generation of gentrifiers are faced with a decidedly different city than their parents. But what do we do with this observation? How do we address this reality?

A GENTRIFIER IN GENTRIFICATION RESEARCH

I move now to a personal vignette, not simply to ease my conscience and work my way through my own personal bind as an academic and a gentrifier, but also to highlight the complexities and challenges of gentrification research and policy as the next generation of gentrifiers enter into the picture. I will begin this discussion with the personal confession that I am implicated in the process of gentrification in the city of Vancouver, while I must say that I feel guilty and torn between what I know and what I do. Like anybody forced to confront their personal hypocrisy I am constantly trying to justify my decisions as I work through my everyday actions. Through the course of writing this thesis, my wife and I bought, renovated and then sold a condo, before recently purchasing a house within the city of Vancouver that we will move into on the same day that this thesis is due. While our intention at first was to remain in the condo for a couple of years, as personal situations changed we decided to move our plans ahead; anticipating another member of our family come Christmas.

These observations that there is a need to study the generational differences in gentrification becomes abundantly clear when I look at the varying ways the definition of house, home and neighbourhood have shifted. Tied up in this transition of thought

is the divergent perceptions of what constitutes 'a lot' of money between my parents' generation and today's young adults. I moved to the Vancouver Lower Mainland with my parents in 1988 when my father was transferred from Edmonton. My mom and dad sold the only house I had ever lived in for under a hundred thousand dollars and bought a place in a Vancouver suburb for twice that amount. At the time my parents were somewhat stressed by the fact that they would be taking on an extra hundred thousand dollars on their mortgage, while I remember my own thoughts as a nine year old with a five dollar a week allowance wondering how anybody would ever pay off such a debt. Well times have changed and what is 'a lot' has changed along with it. When my wife and I began searching for a place last year we were looking for a condo that was 'affordable' and in a vibrant, and yes 'authentic' urban neighbourhood. We purchased our 600 sq/ft, run-down condo, in an eastside neighbourhood for ten thousand dollars more than my parents paid for our house 18 years earlier and thought little of it. For individuals who purchase homes in my generation risks and uncertainty are approached with a different mindset than my parents' generation.

As a result of the situation where a one-bedroom apartment has become the same price as a five-bedroom house a decade earlier, housing in our society has unfortunately become a commodity first and a home only sometimes. For individuals in the situation of my wife and I, asset accumulation through renovation appears to be an unquestioned path towards homeownership and many individuals we talk to pat us on the back for making a 'smart investment', or taking steps towards 'the only way a young couple can get into a house these days'. It is here that I justify my selection of this troubling path as I see it as a balancing act that needs to be taken on so many levels.

First off, I feel as though it is not only unfair, but also irresponsible for me to expect that my wife give up all of her beliefs and dreams surrounding the ideals of a family

home because of my guilty conscience. I cannot expect her to sacrifice her goals and dreams for my ideology, and yet at the same time, despite what I have learned I too retain this culturally rooted goal of home ownership. The second bind is that I desire to have an occupation that is rewarding for me and allows me to constantly be seeking more creative ways within our cities to house individuals throughout the socio-economic spectrum in our society. I know, as I begin to look for employment and realize that a pregnant wife means one income for three people that the expectant salary has to be a factor in my selection of employment. While I am not willing to sell out the things I believe in, I am equally unwilling to stress out my family by pursuing a benevolent goal for substantially less money than could be made elsewhere. Therefore, I see the process of capital accumulation through renovation as the best possibility for my wife and I to gain financial freedom from our mortgage, thereby allowing us to live comfortably in a small house⁹ as close to mortgage free as possible, thereby enabling us to pursue careers more inline with our goals but perhaps for less money. The irony and hypocrisy latent in my understanding is, I know, somewhat problematic. But I believe that by freeing myself from the burdens of the housing market through renovation, I will be better able to pursue the career that I desire. This is the flawed justification I have used to ease my conscience of my actions.

CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDER 'FLIPPING'

As I write these words, I am abundantly clear about the flaws in my thinking and the acceptance of the rooted cultural assumptions that I have tried to call into question throughout the larger thesis. I know that the realities inherent in this troubling and destructive process of gentrification through renovation¹⁰ is troubling to the larger

⁹ Of course the small house would have to conform to our idealized aesthetics of design and lifestyle

¹⁰ Is this my semantically less troubling way of saying 'flipping', a term which as a gentrification researcher I try to avoid at all costs much like the gentrifier who considers only their neighbours gentrifiers and never themselves?

city, yet I carry on through my justification outlined above. I know that for my wife and I with our low level of economic capital, and high cultural capital and sweat equity potential, renovating a house and selling it is our only way to get into the house we desire in a neighbourhood that provides the lifestyle we are looking for. Now there are obviously some pretty glaring assumptions laden in this statement, but these simply add to the difficulty for policy makers. First, why do we aspire to be in a house? And second, why is it that most individuals in my generation assume that 'the economic ladder' is something you never walk down, an equally flawed assumption but a widely held cultural assumption nonetheless. Finally, there is the foundational assumption which makes gentrification research possible: the unquestioned belief in our society that property ownership is something that one must always aspire to.

MAKING HOUSING A HOME AGAIN

One of the biggest problems facing the promotion and advance of gentrification is the reality that under the present neoliberal system, with the opening up of markets and the extreme profits made through speculative development and land purchase, is that in the minds of many individuals housing and property is now primarily a method of capital accumulation. This societal approach to housing needs to be readdressed: housing needs to once again become a home. If it is to remain a commodity that we buy and sell like stocks on the TSE than the construction of neighbourhoods, and the very definition of neighbourhood is going to be one increasingly fraught with battles over land values. When the Grandview residents who arrived with the counter-culture pass on and the community falls into the control of the individuals of my generation who grew up in a culture of speculation, what is to happen to the neighbourhood when the constant push to increased 'curb appeal' for maximum profits blurs the values that have rooted that community for so long? This is the struggle that our city is going to face, because for

those individuals in their 20s and 30s who have matured in a market of speculation, the attachment to home has perhaps altered for those who remain in the city, while those of this generation who rightfully seek to find their place in the property market, who are unwilling or unable to engage in the troubling game of speculative renovation, are forced to seek residence in a city far away from the demands of the Vancouver housing market.

If we are going to continue to operate in an economy where housing is an 'investment' first, a 'home' only sometimes, then it seems blatantly obvious that some correction of the current taxation schemes need to be pursued in the field of housing and real estate. As property owners continue to profit off of real estate transactions and speculative purchases and as the reality in Canada continues along the trend of a polarized "tale of two Canadas" (Hulchanski 2004) where homeowners become increasingly rich, while renters continue to become increasingly disadvantaged we need to reassess taxation laws that were put in place before the explosion of real estate values. Why does security of home have to also be tied up in extremely profitable capital gains? If we could somehow take the speculation out of the equation then perhaps hope could be restored in the possibility of creating cities and neighbourhoods where it is about quality of life for all, and not a polarized environment of wealth and poverty. The extremely high profits are fueling the flipping and pre-construction speculation boom driving prices up in this city. Assignment sales, also known as the flipping of pre-built condominiums, is one area of the market that needs to be removed through taxation. While this discussion requires a great deal more research, and perhaps another thesis, it is the belief of this author that a real need exists for government to reconsider taxation laws around property, where a system is put in place that utilizes this money to once again fund housing in Canada. The difficulty here lies in the brilliance of capitalism and the democratic calculus that has been so wisely introduced into property markets: How do you convince a democratic society, where 60% or more are property owners, to alter taxation laws against their

primary mode of capital accumulation and taxation shelter? This is going to be tough.

NOTHING IS INEVITABLE

One thing that this thesis has attempted to highlight above all else is the reality that when thinking about the issues plaguing our cities or our larger society, nothing is inevitable. Nothing simply happens. And even when extended to the case of gentrification, housing or even the associated homelessness it is important to remember that, “homelessness exists not because the system is not working but because this is the way it works” (Peter Marcuse, quoted by Rosler 1991: 121). Policy decisions, public perception, and ideology go a long way to defining the kind of cities that we live in and in the end it is the actions of individuals that contain the greatest ability to alter the systems by which we live. For as Peter Marcuse (2005) has noted “the individual is not obligated to succeed, for that may be out of his or her control; but neither is the individual therefore relieved of the obligation to try. More can’t be asked, but trying, with all the limited power we... have, is the least we can do” (5).

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APPENDIX: CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS
APPROVAL