

GASTOWN: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

by

ROBERT JAMES MOODIE

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1969

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

in the Department  
of  
Community and Regional Planning

We accept this thesis as conforming to the  
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

May 1971

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study.

I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of COMMUNITY and REGIONAL PLANNING.

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date MAY 5<sup>th</sup> 1971

## ABSTRACT:

The old Vancouver townsite offers the community planner an excellent study area in which to observe the cyclical nature of urban development. As well as being able to define the rise and fall of particular uses, the planner is able to identify criteria which dictate these trends.

The hypothesis or point of departure for this study was that, traditionally, economic values have been the prime determinants in setting the physical form of the urban environs. As this Gastown study indicates, this indeed has been the case, and, in fact, is continuing in the present restoration project. The conclusion of the thesis is that a much wider and more diverse perspective is needed in order to preserve the great variety of interests in the old townsite. Towards this end, a development programme has been suggested which would include inputs from all the groups or individuals in the community.

The first chapter outlines the history of the Gastown area. Growth patterns and development modes are traced from 1880 until the present day. A number of factors have been identified which affected the townsite's early growth, these include the geographical location of the settlement and the nature of its early industry, as well as the decision to locate the

western terminus of the CPR in Vancouver, and the Great Fire of 1886.

The city of Vancouver, from its incorporation in 1890, through to the present day, has continued to expand and diversify. As the population increased, the business district shifted to areas which were in closer proximity to the major markets. Once the townsite lost its importance as the central business district, it entered a period of transition. Various service oriented industries began to dominate Vancouver's once fashionable 'downtown area'. Gradually, the old townsite declined, buildings deteriorated and were vacated. During the depression years, the unemployed workers flocked to the coast and sought out this area because of its low rents and plentiful accomodation. From this time on, Vancouver's birthplace existed as a 'skid-road' - a community of pensioners, transients, and vagrants.

In the past three years, much attention has focused on the old townsite. The experiences of other cities with the restoration of historic areas has found form for its manifestation in the Gastown district. The problems and opportunities which the restoration project has encountered are outlined in the second chapter. The impact of the rapid redevelopment was felt first by the residents of the area - as some rooming-houses were closed, and rents in others increased, they were forced to leave the neighbourhood.

The lack of any clearly stated development programme has left the future of Gastown undefined and unstable. The social, economic, and physical factors involved in restoration have not been co-ordinated in any positive manner. The lack of communication between the various interest groups has forced each of them to join together. This 'horizontal stratification' has done little to foster communication between the groups. It has done even less towards defining community goals for Gastown's future. Presently, these groups are concerned with their own individual and immediate problems, and not with formulating a long-range development programme.

The vehicle whereby these groups could combine to formulate community goals and objectives is outlined in the third chapter. Gastown, as it presently exists, is an interesting and popular area of the city; whether it maintains this role depends on the events of the next few years. The existing trends would indicate that Gastown is slowly moving towards a single-purpose, commercial orientation, rather than towards optimizing its multi-purpose community potential. If Gastown is to assume a positive role in the urban environs, it must not over-specialize and eliminate the opportunities for variety and diversity. Without a development programme, Gastown lacks a community objective - it lacks a vehicle whereby each interest group can seek to operationalize their own goals and objectives.

To remedy this situation, a programme methodology has been

outlined. The emphasis in this programme is placed on communication between all groups in the community. The needs of the various groups must be acknowledged and handled in a positive fashion if Gastown is to maintain its character and diversity. Establishing a community development programme is viewed as the principle conclusion in this study. Through this approach, the social, physical, economic, and environmental components of the community could be optimized, and benefit not only Gastown, but, also, the larger metropolitan area.

A number of issues were seen where immediate changes might serve to strengthen the community while the development plan is prepared. These recommendations are not meant to overshadow the main conclusion, but, rather, are included as an interim step towards Gastown's restoration.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page:</u>
INTRODUCTION	... 1
CHAPTER ONE:      GASTOWN PAST	
Section One    :   1792-1880 Early settlement of Burrard Inlet	... 2
Section Two    :   1881-1886 Impact of the CPR and the effects of the Great Fire of 1886	... 8
Section Three:   1887-1890 Early years of the City of Vancouver	...11
Section Four   :   1890-1960 Growth of Vancouver and the subsequent decline of the old townsite	...16
CHAPTER TWO:      GASTOWN PRESENT	
Section One    :   Review of various approaches to urban restoration	...26
Section Two    :   Problems and opportunities of restoration in the Gastown area	...31
Section Three:   People and projects influencing the Gastown restoration	...38
Section Four   :   Development problems and conflicts in the Gastown restoration project	...45
Section Five   :   Function of the various interest groups involved in Gastown	...52
CHAPTER THREE:    GASTOWN FUTURE	
Section One    :   Summary of Gastown past and present, future development trends analysed illustrating the necessity of a conclusive development programme	...61
Section Two    :   Methodology and introduction of a community development programme for Gastown	...72
Section Three:   Interim recommendations	...80
BIBLIOGRAPHY	...89
APPENDICES	...92

LIST OF GRAPHS and ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>MAPS:</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Burrard Inlet circa 1865 .....	2a
2 Gastown 1870 Survey .....	5a
3 Gastown Study Area .....	92a
4 CD-1 Rezoning Area .....	86a
5 Transportation Reroute .....	86b

<u>DIAGRAMS:</u>	
1 Migration of CBD .....	11a
2 1889 Street-Car Route .....	12a

<u>GRAPH 1 - LAND-USE:</u>	
a Vacant .....	93
b Wholesale .....	94
c Retail .....	95
d Office .....	96
e Resident .....	97



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the co-operation and assistance from a number of individuals, this thesis would not be what it is.

The author expresses his gratitude to Dr. Craig Davis, and Professor Paul Roer, for their constructive comments during the course of this study. Thanks, also, to Ric Shepard, of the Vancouver City Planning Department, and to Mary Hart for her excellent typing and proof-reading. Finally, my sincere thanks to Doria for her patient editing, and to my family for their understanding during my darkest hours!

J. M.

## INTRODUCTION:

The history of Vancouver, and, particularly, its early growth around Burrard Inlet, has been well documented in primary sources. A great deal of this information is in the form of government documents, such as building permits, assessment roles, business licenses, and land registration records. Secondary information is also plentiful from various studies, most of which have adopted a 'macro approach' in documenting the growth and development of Vancouver in general. These reports have outlined, only casually, the forces behind the evolution of particular areas within the city itself.

In this study, I intend to omit many of the historical anecdotes and examine the primary factors which influenced the growth of one sector of this community, that being, the 'old townsite', or, as it is commonly known, Gastown. Following its progress through the years to the present, particular attention will be given to the various catalysts, or generators, of the now familiar growth patterns, which have shaped Vancouver into its present form. From an examination of past trends and the present situation, a projection will be made concerning the future of the area. Suggestions will be made relating to its probable stability, its growth, and its development, considering the influence of both public and private involvement.

CHAPTER ONE:  
Section One

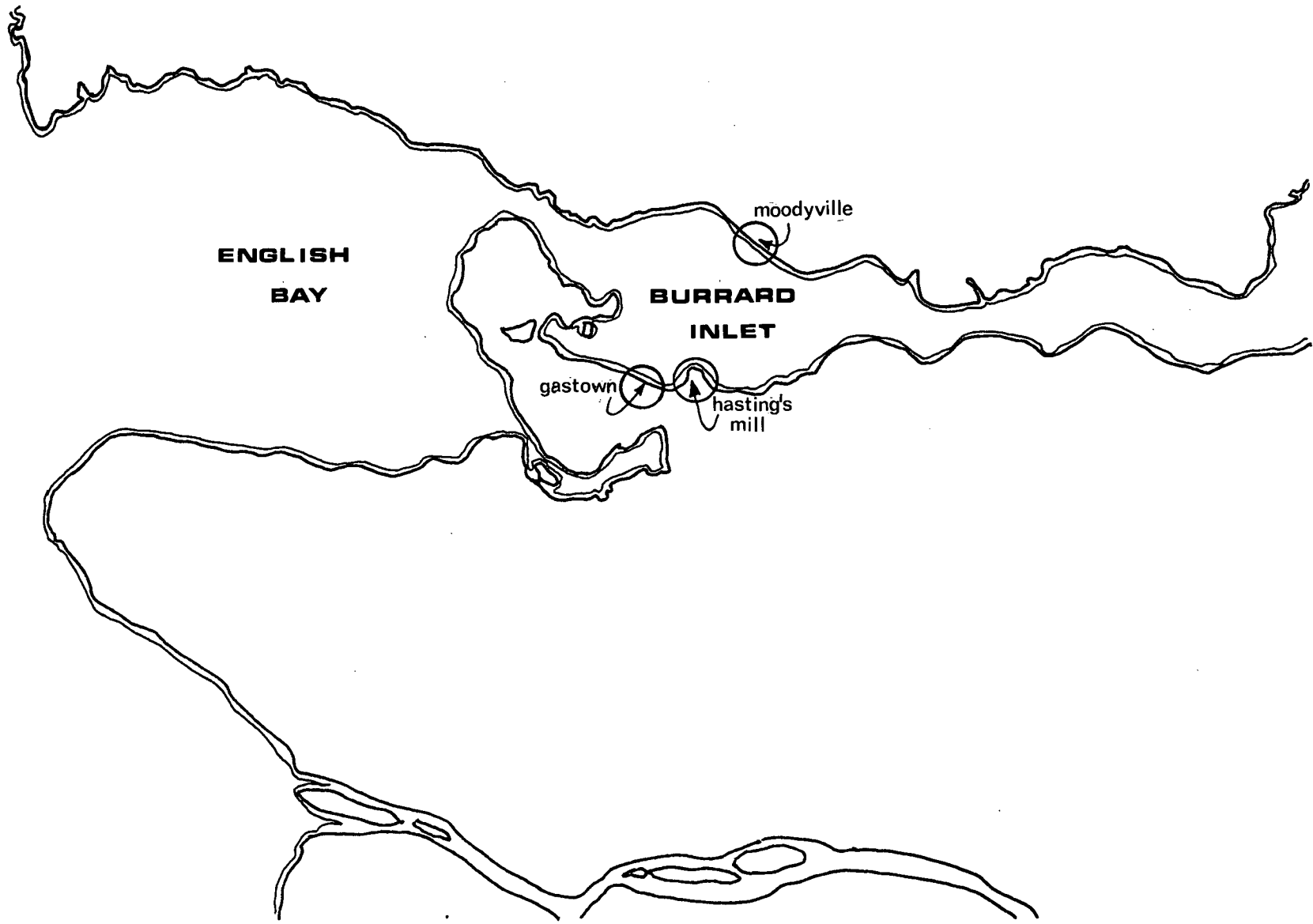
THE PAST

The origins of Vancouver date back to the end of the 18th Century. It was July 13, 1792, when George Vancouver first sailed into Burrard Inlet, having been sent from England to explore the north-west coast of North America. Noting the area as having an excellent harbour, Captain Vancouver departed, and, for over 50 years, the land, and the Indians, remained virtually undisturbed.

During the mid-1850's, the Indians witnessed the first of what was soon to become a steady stream of settlers. This first infiltration was stimulated by the quest for gold in the interior of what is now British Columbia. Stopping only for provisions and information, most of the white men stayed for a short time in the lower mainland before striking off for the goldfields. Although a small group did establish supply stores in the Fraser River communities, the trend was hardly towards settling the land; in fact, the Indians on Coal Peninsula were not to be outnumbered by white settlers for another thirty years. During this period, most of the activity focused on Fort Langley and New Westminster. It was not until the early 1860's that Burrard Inlet began to develop.

Two dissimilar events occurred which had a strong catalytic

**BURRARD INLET** circa 1865



**map 1**

effect in stimulating development of this area. In 1860, Col. Moody, a surveyor with the Royal Engineers, ordered a road to be constructed between New Westminster and Burrard Inlet (the North Road). That same year, Governor Douglas introduced the 'pre-emption' law, whereby all unoccupied, unreserved, or unsurveyed land up to 160 acres could be claimed and purchased by filing with a government magistrate. As opposed to 'squatting', this programme introduced an element of security into all land holdings. The potential of this area as a port gave it a definite advantage over New Westminster; now, with a land transportation link, and with the opportunity to obtain land cheaply, the area's future was determined. From the planning point of view, both these factors are very significant in the subsequent development of Burrard Inlet. The land policy granted a certain amount of stability to the settlement in the area, and the transportation link provided a relatively easy communication system with the established communities along the Fraser River.

In 1863, the land bordering the Inlet was surveyed and divided into five lots and two townsite reserves.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the entire area was heavily forested. Logically, when the land became available, the logging interests were among the first to enter the area. In 1862, the first mill appeared on the north shore. It was followed shortly by Stamp's mill near the second townsite reserve. For

1 See Map 1. Page 2a.

over twenty years, the generator for settlement and economic growth around Burrard Inlet was to be the lumber industry. Both mills gave impetus to the development of small settlements in their vicinity - Moodyville and Gastown. Because of the success of Stamp's mill, and the personalities of Gastown's early residents, the latter was soon to become the more prominent of the two.

The market for the lumber industry was oriented primarily towards Australia, South America, and South Africa.<sup>2</sup> Because of the presence of the First Narrows, and the inability of the large windjammers to navigate them, Captain Stamp built the first steam tugboat in order to tow the larger vessels into the inlet. The other mill quickly followed suit, and, soon, ocean-going vessels from around the world were loading in Burrard Inlet, giving further incentive to the development of the area.

In 1870, Stamp's mill was privately auctioned. The new owners changed its name to the Hasting's Mill, and, with the assistance of manager James Raymur, began the task of cleaning up what was now the Hastings Townsite. Gastown, as an early 'satellite community' of Hasting's Mill, continued to grow, and refused to tolerate any puritanical interferences from Raymur; because Gastown and the mill were mutually dependent, they tolerated each other's peculiarities.

2 B.C. Historical Quarterly, F.W. Howay; Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet. Vol. I. Jan. 1937. p.20.

In 1870, Gastown was surveyed under the direction of the Colonial Land Commissioner, Joseph Trutch. In the process, the village was officially renamed 'Granville'<sup>3</sup> - much to the consternation of the residents. The motive behind the survey was to provide additional revenue for the colonial coffers. A rigid 'grid' pattern was laid out, and the lots were put up for sale.<sup>4</sup> The first land sale could hardly be considered a success with only three lots selling immediately. More important to this study, however, was the fact that this survey provided a shanty-town with a considerable degree of order and stability.

The seventies saw increased construction in Granville, as the town gradually settled into its new role as an independent pioneer community. Maple Tree Square, at the junction of Water, Powell, and Alexander Streets, became the focal point of the town. Beside the square, Gassy Jack's new Deighton Hotel became the centre of many a fascinating tale. At this stage, it is worthwhile to note the nature of the business activity in the area. "They were all service oriented. Unlike many towns and cities, Granville had no primary economic activity such as shipping, milling, or manufacturing to dominate and channel its growth."<sup>5</sup>

3 "Named after George Leveson-Gower, second Earl of Granville, British Colonial Secretary at the time. He never came to Canada, but the name had more of an aristocratic ring to it than Gastown."

4 See Map 2. Page 5a.

5 Shepard, R. City Planning Department, Vancouver; Gastown/Chinatown Report. Unpublished. To be completed November 1971.

GASTOWN 1870 SURVEY



map 2



Although a large lumber industry was nearby, which, for many years, provided the means whereby the town could carry on, it was totally separate from it. This fact freed Granville to develop a diverse economic complexion. This trend was to continue until the community completely overwhelmed the mill.

A brief attempt was made, prior to the 1870's, to instigate a fishing industry. The extraction of herring oil achieved only moderate success, and, by the end of the decade, the firm had closed its doors. Consequently, up to this point, lumbering was the mainstay of the area.

Although the lumber resources were plentiful, and, indeed, Burrard Inlet had achieved world significance in the trade, the mills were still subject to the fluctuations of the world market. Beginning in 1870, and, lasting until 1872, the industry experienced a sudden recession forcing periodic closure of the mills. As was previously mentioned, the villages and the mills were very dependent on each other. During these times of poor markets, the activity in Granville and Moodyville was significantly reduced.

Granville began to move away from dependency on the mill as early as 1871, although the full effects of this programme were not to be enjoyed for another fifteen years. The Victoria Directory of 1871, listed a number of

independent enterprises locating in the Granville area. By the mid-seventies, the population for the inlet had reached about 470, and, the directory indicates that the dominant activities were beginning to focus on Granville.

At this stage in the city's history, a transition began. For a decade, the town had been slowly carved from the forests. Now, however, the rough pioneer atmosphere was gradually being civilized. A school was built in 1873, and, in the same year, a church was constructed. An era was at an end and a new one about to begin - heralding this new age were the gentlemen of commerce: the bankers, merchants, and businessmen. These men "depended upon a community structured around order, stability, and predictability, in order to carry out their transactions. Such a community was predicated upon a complex web of socio-economic inter-relationships that would have shackled the more spontaneous life-style of the pioneer."<sup>6</sup>

6 Shepard, R. op.cit. p.14.

CHAPTER ONE:  
Section Two

The most significant single event that launched Granville on the road to becoming a major commercial centre on the west coast was the decision to have the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway within its boundaries. In a feasibility study delivered to the C.P.R. in 1881, Granville was recommended over both Port Moody and Victoria because of its 'good harbour and potential for future development'.<sup>7</sup> Although a trend could be noticed as early as 1871 away from dependency on the mill, it was not until the final agreement was reached in 1884 that Granville 'would be free to shed its dependency and diversify its economic activities to include distribution, industrial, administrative, and service functions.'<sup>8</sup>

The agreement hammered out between William Smith, the premier of B.C., and William Van Horne, the general manager of C.P.R., is astounding, even by today's standards. One can only marvel at the presumed foresight on the part of C.P.R. Over sixteen thousand acres of land between Stanley Park and the Second Narrows, as well as the north bank of False Creek, a portion of Kitsilano, and most of Shaughnessy Heights, was granted to the C.P.R., in return for the extension of the rail line from Port Moody!

7 Mathews, J.S. Linking the Atlantic to the Pacific, Ocean to Ocean; Vancouver, Wrigley Printing, 1945.

8 Ibid. p.38.

Surprisingly enough, because of the intrigue and secrecy over many of these transactions, the general public did not recognize immediately the significance of this decision. The general feeling was one of confidence in the fact that the line would terminate in Port Moody. It was not until 1886, when the tracks actually passed Port Moody, that speculation began in Granville. Once it started, however, there was little to hold it back. In February, 1886, there were one hundred habitable buildings in the town; by the middle of May, there were over six hundred; and, by the end of that same month - over eight hundred!

By 1886, the B.C. Directory estimated the population of Granville to be approximately six hundred people. Thus, between the years of 1871 and 1884, the population, effectively, only tripled. This growth was solely due to the impetus of the lumbering and shipping industries. Except for the hectic pace set in 1886, speculative activities due to the coming of the C.P.R. were minimal, and completely in the background. This period, of roughly fifteen years, was one of economic and social entrenchment.

Just as June 1, 1886, marks the arrival of the C.P.R. tracks and a turning point in Vancouver's history, so June 13, 1886, marks another turning point. This was the Great Fire that absolutely levelled the town. Over one

thousand wood frame buildings were burnt to the ground. However, the amazing impetus generated by the C.P.R. land speculation was not to be easily quelled. Before the ground was cold, construction had begun on a number of buildings - this time, of brick and iron. Granville was entering a new era, and, now, because of the fire, there was an opportunity to make a fresh start with more mature and sophisticated ideas as to how the city should develop.

CHAPTER ONE:  
Section Three

Granville came of age April 6, 1887, when it was incorporated as the City of Vancouver. One of the first bylaws passed by the new mayor, M.A. McLean, was regarding fire regulations. Wood frame buildings were now replaced by more permanent structures of brick and stone. Many of these buildings in the Gastown area still remain today.

At this same time, the C.P.R. was busily clearing the land immediately to the west of Granville, in what was known as the 'CPR Townsite'. The entire area was undergoing a fantastic boom. Retail, business, and real estate interests were all carried along in the flood. The centre of all this activity still focused on Maple Tree Square, although all the surrounding area was well settled and developed. However, this situation was only temporary. The C.P.R., in a logical desire to develop their own land, established their station at the foot of Granville Street. At the same time, they began work on the first 'Hotel Vancouver' at Georgia and Granville. Subsequently, the west-end was opened for residential development. This growth, whether planned or not, began the westward 'migration' of the city's downtown core; a process which has slowly continued through to the present day.<sup>9</sup>

9 See Diagram 1. Page 11a.

# MIGRATION OF C.B.D.

BURRARD  
INLET

1870-  
1890

1940-1960

1890-1930

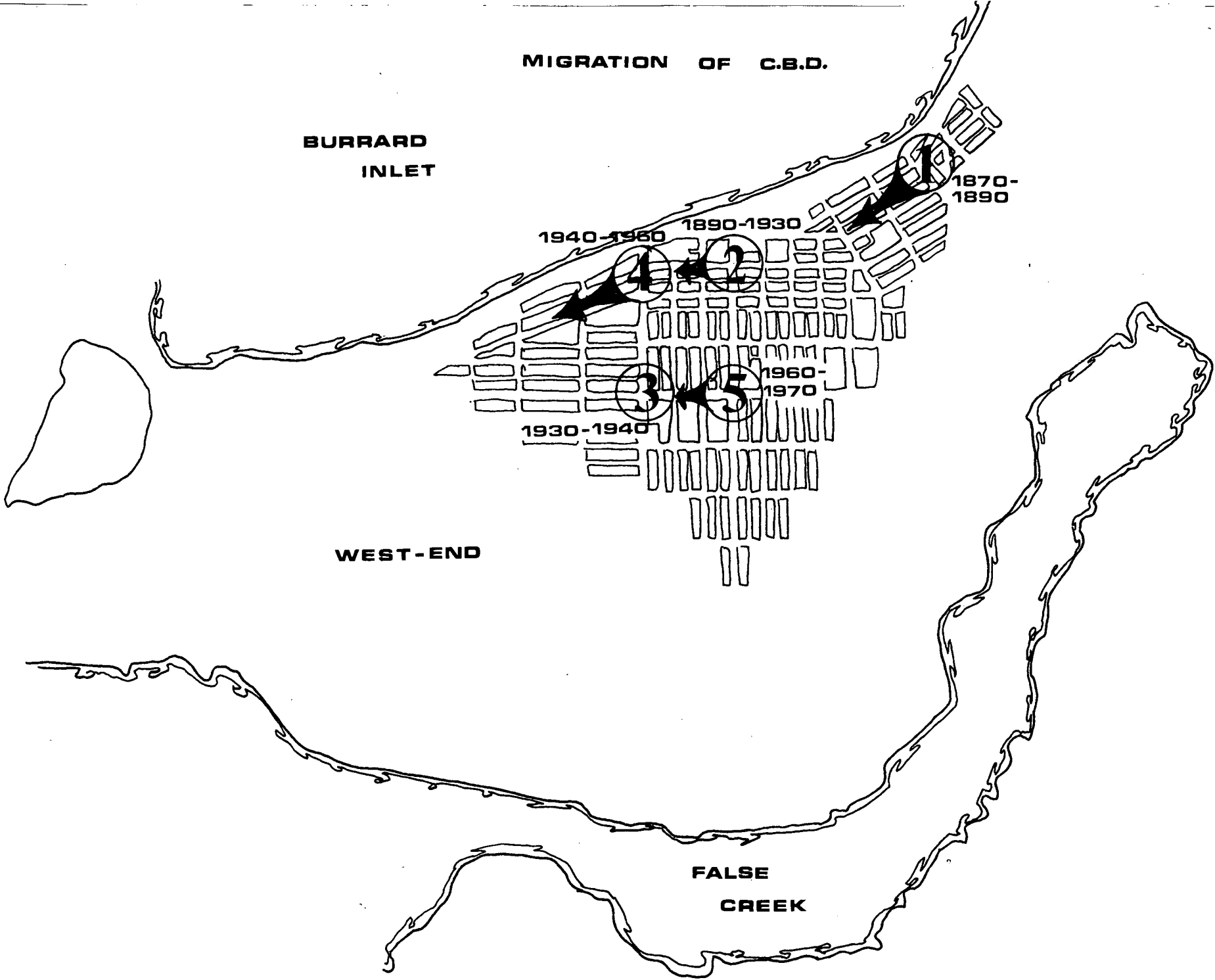
1960-  
1970

1930-1940

WEST-END

FALSE  
CREEK

diagram 1



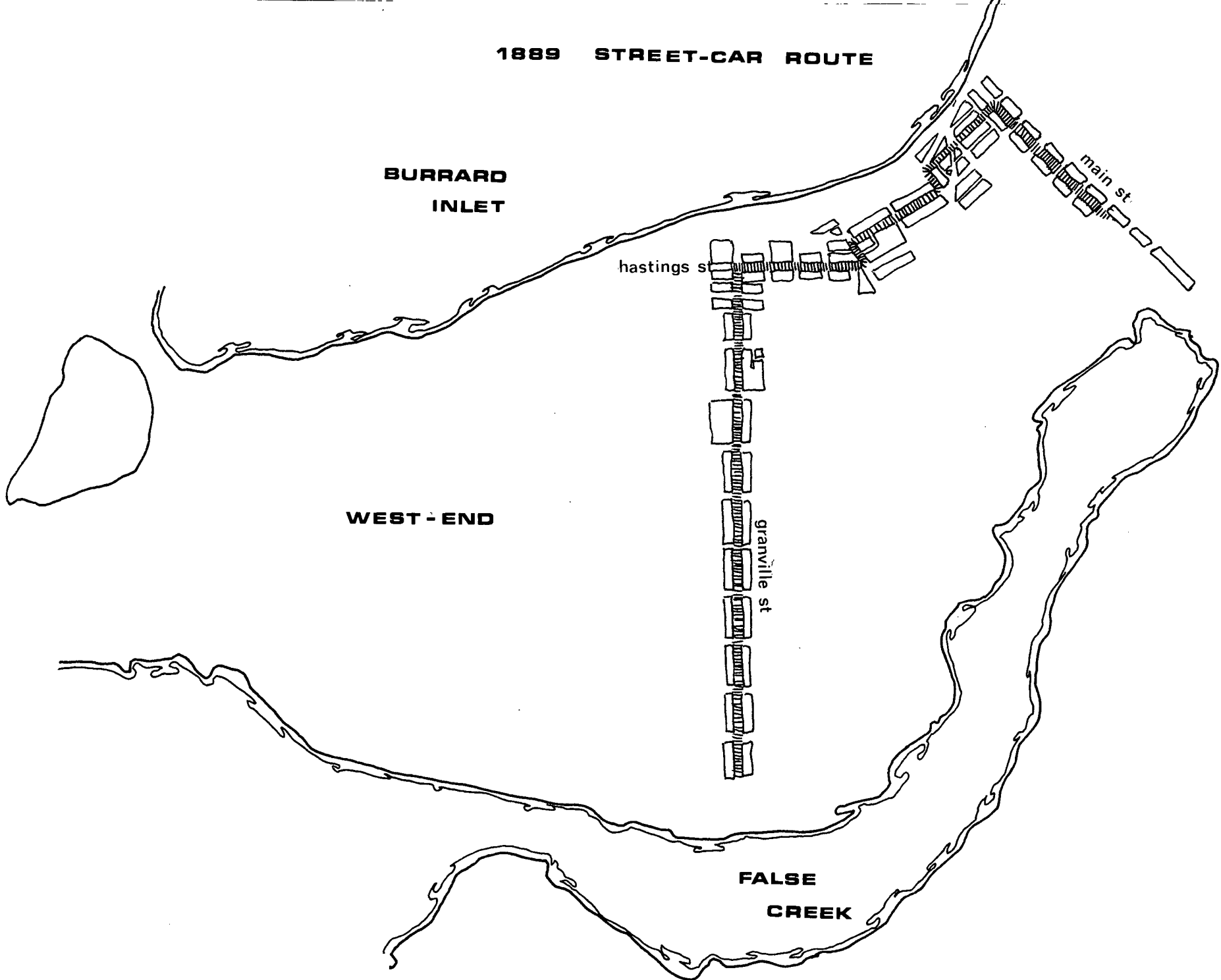
The boom made heavy demands on the resources of the new city. With little assistance from the senior levels of government, Vancouver forged ahead on its own. One temporary solution to offset the lack of government financial support, was through private ownership of utilities, such as electricity, water, and transport. In 1887, the privately-owned Vancouver Electric Illuminating Co. activated the lamp standards it had installed in the 'Gastown' area. A year later, the Vancouver Waterworks Company built the first water main across the inlet. This installation relieved the threat of typhoid fever, always prevalent in communities relying on shallow wells.

The Vancouver Street Railway Co. was founded in 1889. The incorporation of this service was to have a profound effect on the future pattern of development in Vancouver. Tracks were laid, initially, from the depot on Main Street, along Main to Powell, from Powell to Carrall, Carrall to Cordova, Cordova to Cambie to Hastings, Hastings to Granville, and Granville down to False Creek.<sup>10</sup> The street railway system had a very significant effect on the resultant development of the downtown area. Accessibility was now ensured for almost the entire peninsula. Residents were no longer restricted to living within walking distance of their place of work. Following the residential dispersion, merchants and businessmen also began a slow migration away from the old townsite area.

10 See Diagram 2. Page 12a.



**1889 STREET-CAR ROUTE**



**diagram 2**

Before the arrival of the C.P.R., there were no wholesale houses, and retail activities dealt, primarily, in every day goods. After the railroad's arrival, the retail trade began to diversify to include dry goods outlets, hardware stores, and tailor shops, as well as pharmacies and book stores.<sup>11</sup>

Slowly, the old townsite began to undergo yet another change. Warehouses and wholesale outlets began to replace the once fashionable shops along Water Street. By 1896, some of the wholesale houses from Victoria detected the potential in the area, and, either opened branch offices, or, transferred their operations entirely to Vancouver.<sup>12</sup> The wholesale business that first began to appear in 1870 was stimulated by three factors:

1. The growing dynamism of the city itself.
2. The location of Vancouver at the crossroads of the North American markets and trade with the Orient. This was facilitated by both the C.P. Railroad and their steamship lines.
3. The city's growing function as a supply centre for the hinterland of British Columbia.

Yet another indicator of the deepening sophistication of the city's economy was the evolution of the 'general store' into the department store.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1886,

11 From B.C. Directory. 1886-1890.

12 Makovski, L.W. The Rise of the Merchant Princes. British Columbia Magazine. Vol. 7. June, 1911. p.543.

13 Harker, D. The City and The Store. Vancouver. Privately printed. 1958.

the Hudson's Bay Co. had built a store on Cordova Street - in 1889, they established a branch at Georgia and Granville across from the new C.P.R. hotel. Finally, in 1892, the company shifted its entire operation to the branch location. This move followed C.P.R.'s lead into the relatively unpopulated area. As it turned out, the Bay was only the first of an increasing number of merchants to begin the migration out of Gastown.

The C.P.R. further capitalized on its presence in Vancouver by beginning a trans-Pacific shipping line with its purchase of a number of steam-driven ships from the Cunard Line. From 1887 to 1892, the trans-Pacific passenger and freight activities were intensified, with the C.P.R. broadening its service to include the famous 'White Empress Line'.

Until 1890, a number of principal forces can be isolated and credited with guiding the growth and development of Vancouver:

1. 'Vancouver had become the distribution centre for coastal and interior locations. (Freight rates made it more economical to ship directly to Vancouver and then to the interior)'.<sup>14</sup>
2. Vancouver had become the control and administrative centre for most of B.C.'s economy.

<sup>14</sup> Morely, A. From Milltown to Metropolis. Mitchell Press. Vancouver. 1969. p.105-107.

3. 'The railway intensified trade and commerce yet did not detract from the area's primary industries (mainly the lumber mills)'.<sup>15</sup>

Although Vancouver may have been garnering the economic control, the political power centre still remained in Victoria. This struggle was compounded by an economic conflict between the large eastern and other outside commercial interests. Both the economic and political factors had a significant hand in the ultimate development of the city. Vancouver's economy was enhanced by one further influence. With the exception of the lumber mill, there were no large industries, and, therefore, no labour problems. The economic substrata of the city consisted mainly of clerks, merchants, and businessmen, which were difficult groups to organize.

15 Ibid. p.105-107.

CHAPTER ONE:  
Section Four

From the 1890's onwards, the developments in Gastown became inextricably mingled with the growth of the entire city. 'Secondary sources' of information relegate this area to the background, with only periodic mention. For this reason, data has been gathered from the Vancouver Directory relating only to the 'old townsite' area. This has been graphed for the period 1880-1970, and analysed, relative to the developments in the city itself.<sup>16</sup> In this way, it is possible to observe the factors influencing the decline, and subsequent rebirth, of this area, in the late sixties.

At the beginning of the 1890's, Vancouver, along with the rest of North America, experienced a significant recession. This was the first time, since the incorporation of the city, that its momentum had been slowed. The percentage increase of growth in the area declined considerably, reaching its lowest point just at the turn of the century. The vacancy rate reflects, to a considerable degree, the lack of stability in the area. During this period, there was no thought of the area maintaining its role as the business district. Gastown, therefore, entered a stage of transition with the emphasis shifting towards the wholesale industry. With the arrival of the C.P.R. to

<sup>16</sup> See Graph 1. in Appendix One.

to Vancouver, and the increasing wholesale trade that it generated, there was a strong pressure for warehouse space in the townsite district, as well as in the areas to the east and west. When Vancouver experienced this recession, property values declined to the point where the wholesale industry was able to expand into the Gastown district, thereby replacing many of the office buildings. Consequently, the number of offices is seen to decline sharply during the nineties, and, although they recovered during the boom in the following decade, Gastown never regained the prominence it had held prior to this period. 1890 marked the height of Gastown's role as the fashionable and prestigious business location.

During the recession, the wholesale industry experienced a slight decline, however, with the presence of the railroad, its existence in the area was firmly established. In contrast, Gastown's retail trade began to slip. Although it did not appear to be immediately affected, near the end of the decade, a drop in its growth rate could be seen. With the labour force unemployed, the stores in the area that catered to their needs were forced to close. Because of this, a process of consolidation and amalgamation occurred, with the larger firms absorbing the smaller ones. The recession, combined with the expanding pressure of the warehouse industry, gradually forced the retail trade out

of Gastown. From 1900 until 1930, it steadily and rapidly declined.

In contrast, residential population in the area was constantly on the increase. The recession did very little to dampen this trend, in fact, with the wealthy citizens moving into the west-end at the beginning of the nineties, and vacating Main Street ("Blue Blood Alley"), a new group of residents entered the area. The newcomers were not completely destitute, but they did lack the means of the former inhabitants. Because of this change, the specialty shops on Cordova Street lost their market, the residential density in the area increased, and the quality of services declined.

In 1898, Vancouver received a brief, but critical, economic boost, which successfully lifted it out of the slump. The Klondike gold rush began. Although the actual gold rush lasted less than a year, the influx of capital into Vancouver provided the city with enough of a catalyst to begin a boom, which was to last over a decade.

During the early 1900's, the vacancy rate in Gastown levelled off, and maintained a more stable balance than had been experienced previously. At the end of this decade, an increase in the number of vacancies could be seen as Gastown continued to change its commercial structure.

Unlike the preceding period, offices, during this decade, increased sharply in numbers. It is evident from the directory, however, that these were of a different 'type' than those that had previously occupied the area. Rather than the 'men of commerce', the new occupants were concerned with the wholesale, warehouse, and storage industries. Beginning in the 1900's, and continuing until the 1930's, both the office and wholesale index reflected this inter-relationship.<sup>17</sup> During this period of overall growth and development in Vancouver, both these interests expanded considerably.

The retail trade in Gastown continued its steady decline, which had started almost twenty years before. Small shops were closed from the recession, or bought out by larger interests. Of these firms, some, no doubt, represented the warehouse interests in the area. With this industry on the increase, many retail outlets were bought out, to provide the much needed space for this expanding trade. The comparative floor space ratio can be estimated at, approximately, 100:1 for wholesale over retail. In addition, the westward migration was further accelerated by the construction of the present post office at Granville and Hastings, which firmly established the area as the commercial centre for a number of years.

17 See Graph 1. in Appendix One.



The resident population in the Gastown area levelled off during this period, indicating a time of relative community stability. In 1907, Powell Street, which was the centre of the Japanese community, was the scene of Vancouver's first race riots between orientals and whites. The situation created an atmosphere of tension, and did little to foster integration with the neighbouring communities. It was not until 1941, that the situation was to be finally, and, rather drastically, alleviated.

The 1900's, again, saw the rich on the move, this time, from the west-end into Shaughnessy. The main catalyst for this latest migration was their popular acceptance of the motorcar. Following their departure from the west-end, apartment developers entered and established a trend, which has not declined, to this very day.

From 1910 until 1913, the city continued to progress, and the old townsite continued to be relegated to a more and more subservient role. Gastown held neither the political influence nor the public concern, and was, therefore, forced to accept whatever came its way. During the period of 1913-1914, another recession hit Vancouver, but, because the city was better established than it had been during the 1890's, its effects were not so detrimental, particularly to the individual and the small shop owner.

In the decade from 1910-1920, there was an increase in the number of vacancies in the townsite area. This trend was created not only by the 1914 depression, but, also, by the outbreak of World War I that same year. The number of offices also dropped, as did the number of wholesale establishments. In 1914, the port experienced its first decline in business volume since its creation. Understandably, this would affect the townsite area because of its strong service function related to both the port and the railroad.

The decade from 1920 until 1930 was dominated by two very significant occurrences. The first world war ended in 1918, and the Great Depression struck Vancouver in 1929. The period was not completely negative, however, particularly for the port. The Panama Canal, which was officially opened in 1914, was, only now, having a definite impact on the port's volume of trade.<sup>18</sup> The canal's traffic increased threefold during this decade.

The vacancy rate in the townsite dropped drastically during the twenties. It coincided with an equally drastic increase in the resident population of the area. With the war ending, and the depression beginning, Gastown began to house the 'down and outs'. Accomodation here was both plentiful and inexpensive. It was not long before the area was considered a slum, and, therefore, a 'problem'

18 Roy, P. The Rise of Vancouver. Unpublished Masters Thesis. Toronto. 1968. p.80-82.

in the eyes of civic officials.

Office spaces increased along with the wholesale interests, following their decline in the previous decade. The Panama Canal, and the increased port activity during the war, both acted as 'generators' for the economy. The retail trade in Gastown ended its decline in this period. 1930 marks the lowest point in four decades (1890-1930).

The City of Vancouver has been criticized, by some, as being underindustrialized.<sup>19</sup> Its consequent dependence on the port activities was a vital influence in directing the growth of the area, and relegating a once viable community to the role of a secondary service agent.

The depression continued to grip the city until 1935. The decline in the vacancy rate experienced during the 1920's levelled off in this next decade. By 1940, the number of vacancies reached an all time low, indicating an increase of activity in the area. In this instance, it was reflected by an increase in both the wholesale and retail trade. The rise in the wholesale industry reached a record level in 1940. As a result of this tremendous activity, a subsequent boom occurred in the retail market. This was the first time, in four decades, that the retail index showed an increase.

The number of offices began to decline during this period,

19 Morely, A. Milltown to Metropolis. p.122., and  
Roy, P. The Rise of Vancouver. p.56.

a trend which was to last until the present time. This was the first occasion, since 1890, that the office and whole-sale trend did not coincide. This would indicate some sort of dichotomy in the community at this time.

The resident population declined, also, during the thirties, in contrast to its increase during the previous decade. This was probably due to the outward migration to more preferable surroundings of those forced into the area following the war and during the depression. This left a fairly stable community, with one exception. At the beginning of the second world war, the Japanese were evicted from their homes centering around Powell Street, and their long-standing community in the Gastown area, was, thereby, effectively destroyed.

During the 1940's, the port activity was stimulated from the effects of the Second World War, and, thus, the vacancy rate continued to decline. At the same time, the number of residents in Gastown decreased, as did the number of retail outlets and wholesale distributors. In a report submitted to city council in 1948, Harland Bartholomew, the city's planning consultant, recommended a number of restrictions on 'street front' loading, which, effectively eliminated the warehouse industry from Water and Alexander Streets.<sup>20</sup> Many of the buildings were retained by the owners, because the property values were then so low that it was not profitable to sell. Because of this

20 This is explained more fully in Chapter Three, Section One.

speculative activity, the wholesale index does not decline as sharply as it should, had all the empty warehouses been included as vacant.

The number of offices in the old townsite increased during the forties as a result of the heightened activity around the port; however, the majority of these closed during the following decade, when interest in Gastown reached a record low.

The fifties and sixties were a period of steady decline in almost all Gastown activities. Although the number of residents remained relatively stable, there is a marked reduction in the wholesale, retail, and office indexes, and, as would be expected, the vacancy rate increased. Added to the virtual expulsion of the wholesale industry were several other factors, which helped to provoke this atrophy. Among them, were the departure of the Japanese community - in 1941; the demise of the North Shore ferries - in September 1958; and, the removal of the transit line from Powell Street - in 1952. Each of these events cut off some of the external flow of activities and energy into the district. The significant point, that the graph indicates during these two decades, is that the area as a unit was declining in all fields. This had not happened before. There had always been a situation of 'give and take', with one activity dominating

as another declined. During this period, it is clear that outside interest and confidence in the townsite had disappeared, and, virtually all the commercial establishments were moving - relinquishing the area to the oldtimers and transients.

Clearly, Gastown was in need of a stimulus similar to the 1898 gold rush, to bring it up from this slump and restate it as a viable component of the city.

CHAPTER TWO:  
Section One

THE PRESENT

The numerous urban renewal schemes of the fifties and sixties, met with little success in achieving either their long or short range goals. Although the concepts may have been sound, the developments failed to meet their objectives. The 'bulldozer' methods behind these projects left little, if any, of the previous community structure, either physical or social. The principle of redeveloping urban areas is certainly a valid one, particularly in our modern cities where land is always very expensive. The problem, therefore, becomes one of devising a viable alternate approach to that of razing entire neighbourhoods, in an attempt to relieve the problems typical in declining urban environs.

Urban areas are especially subject to cyclical patterns of development, particularly during periods of rapid growth. This is characterized by fast expansion with little internal growth, shifts to new sites rather than rebuilding, and a general neglect for the redevelopment of any particular areas. Vancouver, like most North American centres, has, only recently, passed this stage in her growth. As vacant land becomes scarce or non-existent, developers are forced to purchase land already developed. The choice now becomes whether to rebuild or to renovate.

1 Such projects as Raymur Place and McLean Park typify this type of redevelopment programme.

In North America, there has been no dominant land management tradition. Until very recently, there was always room for expansion. Land was, therefore, treated as a 'dispensable commodity'. It was the means towards an immediate capital gain. The concept of 'land husbandry'<sup>2</sup> has had little effect as an alternative to exploitation. Because the metropolitan centres may well be running out of vacant land, this attitude of land management may become a suitable vehicle towards rehabilitation of the core areas.

The recent past would indicate that constructing new buildings has been more favourable, and, no doubt, satisfies a majority of the market. There is, however, a very good case to be made for renovation as an alternative to major urban redevelopment. By encouraging the imaginative re-use of existing, but declining, neighbourhoods, gains can be made not only in economic fields, but, also, in social considerations (less community disruption, no conflicts of scale, etc.).

During the last decade, numerous North American urban centres have experienced a revitalization of certain areas of the city, and, in this respect, Vancouver is no exception. Generally referred to as restoration projects, these schemes have several common features.

2 Leaving the land in an improved or upgraded condition.



Usually, they are initiated by the stimulus of private capital seeking to increase the viability of some declining or decaying area. These projects<sup>3</sup> have met with a large amount of success, not only in attracting visitors, but, also, as office and retail areas. The renovated spaces are very popular amongst the avant garde; architects' offices, artists' studios, craft shops, and boutiques are found in considerable numbers.

The popularity of these projects has created several problems for the developers. Since a fashionable trend is, in fact, being marketed, the concern, or interest, is usually very intense. Because of this, planning in its traditional sense is rather difficult.<sup>4</sup> Control is seldom maintained by a single interest, as more and more developers and speculators buy up the adjacent properties. Often conflicts arise, and considerable time and energy is spent on increasing the marketability of one's own area. Logically, this detracts from the overall area as a community or neighbourhood. In the rush to get involved, and the subsequent attempts to attract the consumer, a 'blatant' commercialism is difficult to avoid. Without some form of community organization, or 'steering committee', to establish policy, orderly development is very difficult to maintain.

3 Bastion Square, Victoria; Vieux Carré, New Orleans; Beacon Hill, Boston; Ghiradelli Square, San Francisco.

4 Because of the time involved in preparing market studies and land-use schemes, as well as social surveys, planning often lags behind the actual physical development programme.

City planning, in relation to restoration projects, has been forced, generally, into a somewhat secondary position, at the same time, of course, being very much in favour of the overall concept, since it increases the city revenue. The planner's role, however, should be one of active involvement, rather than that of a bystander, for the following reasons. The city planners hold control over a number of key interests affecting the area's ultimate development (setting assessments, establishing zoning regulations, controlling road development, and governing peripheral development), they should, therefore, be very much involved working in co-operation with the owner/developers. How this co-operation could take place, and, how the character could be maintained, will be the subject of a later section.

Vancouver, as has already been mentioned, is typical of many cities with respect to restoration projects. The first section of this thesis documented the land-use in the old townsite area. The cyclical nature of development is illustrated, when, almost one hundred years later, the focus of much attention is centred again on Gastown and Maple Tree Square. This area has come to life again in the last two years. Its new role appears promising, although there are a number of 'stumbling blocks' to

overcome before its position is secured as a stable component in the urban environs. Because of Gastown's recent and rapid growth, its foundations may be rather insecure. In addition, because of the time lag at city hall in responding to the developer's initiative, a workable relationship has not yet been established between the owner, the resident, and the city planner. The developer tends to prefer a policy of 'laissez-faire', whereas the city wants to co-ordinate the project with other communities in the neighbourhood. The issues, centering on the social and community problems in the area, are extremely complex, and, therefore, will be discussed in a later section. At this time, suffice it to say, that some sort of compromise must be developed in order to gain maximum benefit from the resources of all interest groups.

CHAPTER TWO:  
Section Two

The idea of renovating parts of the old townsite has been in the minds of some for a great many years. Gerald Thomson,<sup>5</sup> who, like his father and grandfather, works in the area, tells of early restoration attempts during the thirties. Unfortunately, the war, and the subsequent rent freeze, brought these projects to a halt. In the early sixties, a 'paint-up clean-up' campaign was organized, in an attempt to improve the image of the area and stimulate interest in the 'townsite'. Thomson, along with some others, began re-investing all his profits into up-grading his property. Until this time, Gastown had quietly existed as Vancouver's 'skid road'. The once fashionable heart of the city was providing shelter for alcoholics, the disabled and handicapped, the transients, and the vagrants. This group, together, constituted the 'bums' and 'rubbies', and a squalid atmosphere pervaded which made it a very unfashionable district of town. Because of the dominant male population and its somewhat inhibiting effect on visitors, a conscious decision was made on the part of the owners to alter the social structure of the area. This was achieved by closing some of the boarding houses and evicting the tenants. Emphasis was put on ground floor shops, so

5 Gerald Thomson owns a number of buildings in the 'west townsite' (centred around Water Street and Cambie Street). He is recognized, by many, as an authority on the history of Gastown, particularly as it relates to the restoration programme.

that they could subsidize the vacant rooms until a suitable tenant was found. These spaces were then renovated to become offices or warehouse showrooms.

The potential for redevelopment in Gastown was first brought into general focus in 1965, following a report by City Planner, W. Graham.<sup>6</sup> The report followed a number of city-sponsored redevelopment schemes, which had largely ignored the problems of this area. The report was significant for a number of reasons, but, most important for the purposes of this study, was that it defined the complex social problem in the district. In suggesting a possible remedy, the report noted that there was "the opportunity of preserving some of the historical associations in the area".<sup>7</sup> This, it stated, could be combined in some form of physical and social redevelopment programme. Until this time, the area had existed as a nondescript sector of the city, surviving in the backwash from the westward drift of the downtown core, its significance known only to the historians and archivists. Following the Planning Department's report, a number of events took place in quick succession.

In 1966, the city began to put into action several of the recommendations laid out in Graham's report.<sup>8</sup> They were shortly joined by the increasing interest of the private developer, which complicated an already delicate

6 City of Vancouver Planning Department. 1965. Downtown-East Side Report.

7 Ibid. p.15.

8 Negotiations were underway to establish a social service branch in the district.

situation. The Planning Department was attempting to define a programme which would relieve the social tension in the area, but, was prepared to leave the physical problem of decaying buildings for the time being. The developers quickly realized the potential of the area, and began buying the old buildings. Their interest was directed towards restoration, and, ultimately, the creation of a centre similar to those in San Francisco (Jackson Square and Ghiradelli Square) and New Orleans, (Vieux Carré), not to mention the interest stimulated by Victoria's Bastion Square.

The conflict which developed, is, of course, fairly obvious. Even before the City Planning Department could establish a policy on the social problems, let alone implement it, the land was purchased, and much more rapid and radical changes were taking place. The forces behind the physical redevelopment were very direct, and, indeed, very fast, in achieving their own self-defined goals. It is important that this should not be viewed from a negative perspective, since it was this dynamism that brought Gastown back to life. With the increased activity and renewed interest in the area, the possibility of integrating the previous residents into the community could be explored. Rather than relocation, a programme of subsidized, or low rent apartments, would directly benefit all old age

pensioners, etc., as well as provide a beneficial mix in the Gastown community. Before discussing the physical restoration of the area, it would be worthwhile to analyse further the social issues.

The 'Downtown-East Side' report begins with a very well stated word of caution. "Any attempt to improve the physical environment must be preceded by a careful study of human problems. Otherwise we merely shift skid road to another part of the city or scatter residents to other locations where they would probably be both unhappy and unwelcome".<sup>9</sup>

At the time of this report, (1965), a number of 'service agencies' had been working in the area for some years. Such organizations as the Salvation Army Harbour Light, the Central City Mission, a number of smaller missions, and about five churches, all provided assistance. This help ranged from 'soup and sandwich lines' to shelter, and, in some cases, job placement programmes. One of the report's suggestions referred to these organizations; it stated that, "city council express its support of a co-ordinated approach by public and private agencies in a positive programme aimed at reducing human problems and social costs in this part of the city."<sup>10</sup> Although this was a very general objective, it was still a valid recognition of the need for some type of organization and

9. Downtown-East Side Report. p.14.

10 Ibid. p.15.

involvement on the part of the city in working with these people. With the establishment of the Social Planning Department in October 28, 1969, an advisor was sent to the Gastown 'skid road' area, to work with a branch of the social service department which had been there for a number of years.

Data gathered by these two departments is useful in understanding the social structure of the area. During the depression years, there was a large increase in the number of residents, and, although most of these people were unemployed, rather than transients or vagrants, they began the entrenchment in the Gastown area. It was not long before it became established as a community for the less fortunate section of the urban populous. 'Skid road' deteriorated, both physically and socially, as the population of unemployed, sick, and poor, steadily increased. The present residents in this area can be placed generally into three groups; the homeless transient, the old age pensioner, and the unemployed (including the disabled and handicapped). The 1961 census showed a population of 2,508 in the district; of this, 2,200 were male, 1,373 were single, 756 were over 65, and, only 109 were 20 years old or younger. Although this latter category has increased considerably in the past ten years, any programme or proposal must acknowledge the unique demographic structure of the area, particularly as it





relates to the single male over 65.

The townsite residents are there, generally, because of one factor - they have little or no alternative. Because of physical or social misfortune, they are forced into a dependent situation, existing on welfare or pensions, with little opportunity for physical or vocational rehabilitation. This is not meant to imply that all the residents would prefer to live elsewhere; in fact, it has been documented,<sup>11</sup> that many have a very strong sense of community. The significant point to be emphasized is that although these people have very definite feelings about their neighbourhood, they are in no position to restrict or direct changes in their environment. Yet, as established members of the community, they should be granted some consideration in its future development.

As well-intentioned and well-meaning as these statements may be, they hold little ground or gain little sympathy from the private developer. Logically, he is concerned with his own particular objectives, and, in working towards them, the shifting of 'skid road' may not appear very significant. During the period of rapid development, (1968-1970), there were two principle 'forces' in conflict, one being the developer's interests, and the other, the residents who were being displaced. Unfortunately, the city agencies do not qualify as an effective force in

11 Downtown-East Side Report. City Planning Department. 1965.

the community, because, at the time of the initial re-development, they lacked either a policy or a programme for the area. With the social and physical structures rapidly changing, they were thrown completely off balance. Old values and previous relationships were no longer valid. With these changes, the resident's lot was often worsened. They were being uprooted from their hotels and rooming houses and forced to go elsewhere. At the same time, their semi-private and undisturbed community was being invaded by people critical and unsympathetic towards their life-styles. An inevitable conflict was growing in an atmosphere of distrust and hostility, as more and more of their institutions were destroyed or displaced.

CHAPTER TWO:  
Section Three

There is still no positive programme or policy for the Gastown area - each interest group works in virtual isolation from the others. Consequently, much time and energy is wasted. There is still the opportunity to derive definite benefits for all interests in the area, through the acceptance of some fundamental, overall, policy guidelines. Bringing the interest groups of the area together to organize a comprehensive programme will be discussed in a later section.

Restoration of the old townsite had been in the minds of some owners for a great many years before it became a reality in 1968. The early attempts at revitalizing the area were guided by the energy of Gerald Thomson and the co-operation of the Community Arts Council. In 1962, the 'Townsite Committee' was formally organized as a steering party for future Gastown development. The Townsite Committee asked City Council for co-operation, since they believed the project was in the best interests of Vancouver. The programmes for development were to be worked out through the committee and presented in council in briefs. An 'ideal' policy of mutual co-operation and good neighbourliness were the guidelines for these

development schemes. The ideas were sound in principle, unfortunately, the Townsite Committee was a 'single interest board', and, included neither residents of the area nor significant numbers of merchants. The rationale behind this composition was that the owner/developers had the most to lose, should the project fail. Clearly, this is a question of scale, as a merchant could very well lose his life-savings much more rapidly if the area declines. His stake in the area, not in dollar figures, but in commitment, is in most cases, just as great. This is particularly true of the small shop or restaurant owner, backed with only limited capital and vulnerable to personal liability. Thus, the decision to exclude the merchants from the steering committee would appear, at first glance, to be unjustified. However, this was the reality of the situation in the mid-sixties; the owner/developers set the goals and established the direction of the project.

The original objective set by the Townsite Committee was to establish a 'furniture district' in the area. This goal has often been overshadowed by more grandiose schemes, although there still remain a number of large warehouses which have been converted to furniture showrooms.

Following the restoration of Jackson Square in San Francisco during the sixties, the concept of creating a socio-cultural centre in the townsite was explored. At this time, capital for this style or scale of development was not available; it was not until September, 1968, that money began to flow into Gastown restoration. Many events happened in quick succession restoring the vitality and activity in the old town centre.

In the summer of 1968, a group of interested citizens, under the sponsorship of the Arts Club, were discussing ways and means of creating interest in the area. In September, a "walk" was organized by the Community Arts Council. Approximately five hundred people turned out, on a wet and cold Sunday, for a tour through Vancouver's birthplace and a discussion of the area's potential. Such people as Arthur Erickson and David Spearing - architects; Walter Hardwick - urban geographer; and Mayor Tom Campbell, were on hand, to discuss the future of Gastown. All were vigorously in favour of extensive preservation and renovation of the area.

For some time, the city had been considering freeway plans for Vancouver, connecting Highway 401 to the downtown core and the North Shore. In the fall of 1968, the consultants' report was released,<sup>12</sup> and four of the five plans included some development along Carrall

12 Warnett Kennedy was the consultant for this particular area.

Street to the waterfront, either as tunnels or 'open cuts'. The consultant stressed the co-existence of the freeway and the community, while the Townsite Committee argued that it would completely destroy Gastown.

At this same time, Project 200 was announced.<sup>13</sup> The freeway link was programmed to include service to this large waterfront development. Ultimately, because of the public outcry against the freeway, a boisterous hearing was conducted, and, City Council, subsequently decided against any expansion of the roadways through Chinatown or along Carrall Street. Interestingly enough, opposition to Project 200 was almost non-existent, and many people, including Hardwick (who was instrumental in having the freeway plans altered), went on record, speculating that Gastown and Project 200 would compliment each other.<sup>14</sup> As time progressed, this latter project encountered a number of difficulties, and was forced to be reduced in scale. Because of this, it would now appear unnecessary to construct an extensive transportation link to service the development.<sup>15</sup>

Late in 1968, work began in earnest on Gastown's rejuvenation. Larry Killam, along with his brother Eugene, and Hank Gourlay, purchased the old Alhambra Hotel. Together, they formed the 'Town of Granville

13 Project 200, which included office towers, high-rise apartments, shops and department stores, was designed to stretch from Cambie Street below Hastings along the waterfront to Granville.

14 The Province. Sept. 18, 1968.

15 David Mooney-The Sun, Nov. 1970. Project 200 no longer needs freeway service because of reduced scale.





Investment Company'. The 'Disabled Veterans' Building, on the north-west corner of Cordova and Carrall, was also purchased by this group, giving them control of 75% of the land fronting onto the two-hundred block Carrall. In November, the group announced plans to restore the Alhambra Hotel, designs were prepared, and, in December, renovation began. Killam's particular interest was in the formation of a new community in the area, and towards this end he foresaw the top floor of the old hotel housing artists' studios, with the street level shops specializing in arts and crafts. The influence of Greenwich Village in New York, and Toronto's Yorkville, were very evident.

The rapid renovation of the building around Maple Tree Square (Carrall, Water, Alexander and Powell Streets) produced some interesting effects. Previously, the efforts of the Townsite Committee had progressed very slowly and very cautiously, concentrating on the western sections of the area (Water, Cambie, Richards, and Cordova Streets). The Committee was very determined to examine the potential stability of any development, since a loss of public interest, at this stage, would finish the area as far as prospective tenants were concerned. Now, with rapid growth in the eastern end of Gastown, the control of the Townsite Committee was lost.

In fact, they had not been concerned in restoring this area until Project 200 and Woodward's Stores firmly decided on their future developments. This should not imply that the group did not approve of Killam's approach, as the influx of new capital and fresh energy was always welcomed, although no doubt with a certain air of scepticism.

During the spring of 1969, many events took place, which helped direct the future of Gastown in a positive fashion. Army & Navy Stores obtained the Stanley and New Fountain hotels, which stood across from their discount centre on Cordova Street. Their intention was to demolish the buildings in order to create parking spaces. In April, Professor Harold Kalman, from U.B.C., who was actively involved in Gastown, presented a brief to City Council, requesting that the demolition permit be refused and that the buildings be maintained as an integral part of the Gastown Community. It was felt, both by Kalman and the Arts Council, that the issue was more than the preservation of individual historic buildings. "It was the preservation of the total fabric of the street and district in which too many holes already existed".<sup>16</sup>

These two hotels were of particular significance, since they backed onto the infamous 'blood alley', and, if they were to be demolished, the alley would be lost.

As a result of the brief, a subsequent Council ruling refused the permit. The buildings were then put up for sale by Army & Navy on the condition that the city would grant them a parking permit elsewhere. With this issue temporarily settled, the problem became one of finding a buyer and a productive use for the two hotels. This was not to be resolved for over a year.

In April 1969, the City Planning Department responded to the activity in the Gastown area. Bill Graham, Director of Planning, announced that the firm of Birmingham and Wood has been retained to prepare a feasibility study for the restoration of the area. This was to be in the form of a public report presented both to City Council and to the various interest groups. When completed in mid-June, the "Restoration Report", as it was titled, recommended that a careful and thorough study be made of both the physical and social problems in the area. While this was being conducted, a moratorium on demolition permits was recommended, as well as the enactment of protective and historic preservation legislation and new zoning bylaws. A formula for tax relief to encourage restoration and renovation was suggested, and the report also advocated the establishment of a civic-community commission to give advice and guidance in preservation, restoration, and remodelling.<sup>17</sup>

17 Birmingham and Wood. 1969. 'Restoration Report - A Case For Renewed Life in the Old City'.

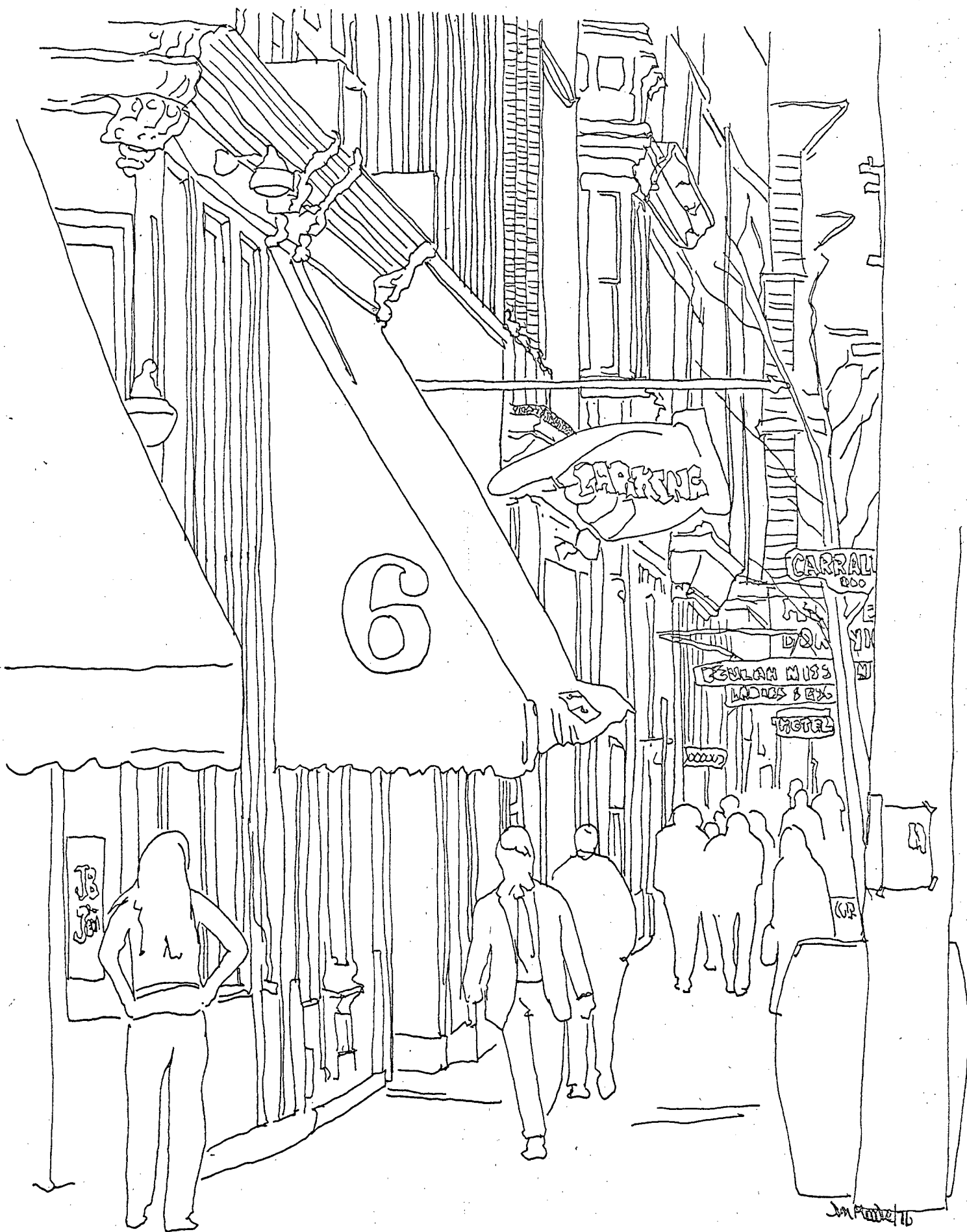
CHAPTER TWO:  
Section Four

In the summer of 1969, Gastown came into its own. Numerous boutiques and craft shops were opening, and daily crowds of shoppers and sightseers were visiting the area. In the Alhambra, there were two boutiques, an antique shop, an art gallery, newspaper office, and a small coffee shop. Around the corner, on Water Street, the Antique Flea Market had been open for five months; every Sunday, it attracted a crowd of about 1,000 people. By August, there were an estimated twenty to thirty new businesses in the area. Some shops adopted a policy of opening Thursday to Sunday, in order to concentrate on the weekend visitors. Also in August, the Gastown Gazette appeared as a once-monthly edition.

By September 1969, Gastown had passed through its first successful summer. The impact from the tourist trade was very significant, as well as the interest shown by the lower mainland residents who found Gastown an interesting and exciting place to shop or browse. By this time, Town Group Investments Ltd.<sup>18</sup> were involved in the renovation of seven major properties in Gastown. Rents were rapidly approaching those of shops in West Vancouver or south Granville.<sup>19</sup> Rooms in the area which

18 The 'Town of Granville Investment Company', headed by Larry Killam, changed its name in 1969.

19 The Province. Sept. 6, 1969. Rents approx. \$3.00/sq.ft.



had been renting for around twenty dollars a month, were now renovated, and commanded rents in the neighbourhood of sixty dollars. With such increased activities, the older residents were being evicted and forced to move to areas further east. Many of these people had been living in the district for over twenty years, and, were, for the most part, neither derelicts nor vagrants. Nevertheless, these individuals were at a particular disadvantage, since they had not been aware of what was happening, and, even if they had been, they did not possess the power to control any of the developments. Many were further frustrated in their search for a new community or neighbourhood sympathetic to their needs.

By the end of September, activity in Gastown had somewhat subsided, and the City, acting on a recommendation from the Restoration Report, began to participate actively in the development programmes for the area. A meeting was called, early in October, by the Planning Department, and was to include all interest groups in the community - tenants, residents, merchants, owners and developers.

Henk Vander Horst, one of the original Gastown merchants, raised several critical issues at this meeting. He explained that the "Gastown revival must not be thought

of as an overnight affair. Residents in the area must be looked after, they can't be swept under the carpet... The area is important to municipal interests as well as those of the provincial and federal governments."<sup>20</sup> As a remedy, on the local level, Vander Horst advocated positive constructive co-operation between owners, merchants, and residents. In order to achieve this co-operation, the concept of employing a non-partisan consultant was forwarded, which would aim at maintaining a balance between development and growth. Emphasis was placed on the fact that this was no longer a 'beautification project', but, rather, a 'community planning development'. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that funds would be made available from the next five year plan to ensure 'the next stage of revitalization' (which was left undefined).

The development of Gastown has been strongly influenced by one particular firm of architects. Birmingham and Wood, located at Pender Street and Carrall Street, have contributed very positively to the growth of the area. This firm was commissioned by the City to prepare the 'Restoration Report'. The report was significant in a number of respects; it incorporated the combined talents of a wide variety of experts in its preparation and presentation. The final document was a well-written challenge.

20 The Sun. Oct. 18, 1969. Vander Horst.

to the City to begin some constructive restoration in the area, before the opportunity was lost.

Bud Wood, one of the senior partners with this firm, has often voiced skepticism about the proliferation of boutiques in the area. Without some sort of stable economic base, he felt that the townsite would not be able to compete with other districts of the city. Operating on this premise of establishing a 'mix' of activities and functions in the area, Wood began work on a hotel renovation for U.B.C. professor Richard Wilcox. Wilcox was the new owner of the 'Cozy Rooms' on Carrall Street - the focal point of this building being the government liquor store on the main floor. Much to the consternation of many residents, this facility was closed, and work began on the restoration. In March, eleven sleeping rooms were converted into four luxury apartments, with rents in excess of \$150.00! Many were skeptical as to whether there would be a market for this type of accommodation - but, well before the apartments were completed, there was a lengthy waiting list. Wilcox, his wife, and two young sons, gained considerable notoriety when they moved into one of the suites, as Gastown's inhabitants were still, primarily, single middleaged men. The intent was to encourage more families, in hopes of establishing a residential mix, in what was being referred to more and



more frequently as the 'Gastown Community'.

In June 1970, activity in Gastown began on a different level. This time, it was in the area of policy and programme formulation, and was instigated by City Hall. A preliminary study had been presented for a beautification programme in Gastown, with special attention being given to maintaining a certain character and atmosphere in the area. The guidelines for this study had been set by Allan Parker in the city's 'Current Planning' Department. The programme was estimated to cost \$270,000., with the property owners contributing \$170,000., which would indicate a heightened sense of responsibility and concern about an orderly, balanced development.

The proposals were tabled by City Council, in order to hear first from the various interest groups of the area. As well as a programme to improve the visual quality and appeal of Gastown, the report set down guidelines for establishing an overall policy and development plan. A community association was suggested, involving all interest groups in the area, and chaired by the Director of Planning at City Hall. This group was to meet periodically to discuss the direction and development of the townsite.

A particular concern at this time, and one which especially perturbed Fina Arts professor Harold Kalman, was the lack of any real control over restoration and development. In April 1970, Kalman spoke out against the random and uncontrolled demolition of certain buildings in the area. At that time, he urged the City to take an 'architectural survey' of Gastown, in order to preserve buildings which had a particular significance to Vancouver's past. He also recommended zoning changes, in order to facilitate a more harmonious development.

The 'Restoration Report', submitted by Birmingham and Wood, on June 18th, 1969, recommended two solutions to the problem of control. The first was to establish an 'official plan' for the area, and the second proposal was to establish Gastown as an 'historic precinct'. Section 561 of the City Charter would permit a development plan relating to only one area of the city. This would have the dual purpose of controlling demolition and restoration, as well as bringing about the necessary zoning changes.<sup>21</sup>

The report continued to recommend a full study of the area. The proposed cost was to be \$30,000., and was to include both the social and physical problems involved with restoration. In this first report by Birmingham and Wood, the social problems had been dealt with in a

21 Portions of the townsite were still zoned industrial. It was suggested that these be changed to commercial.

rather sketchy fashion. This was particularly irritating to Terry Willox, editor of the Gastown Gazette. In order to remedy this problem in the full scale report, an 'on site office' was to be established for the duration of the project. Funds were made available by City Council, and the Planning Department began its task, which is to be completed in June 1971.

CHAPTER TWO:  
Section Five

The original developers and major property owners in the eastern end of the townsite (centred on Maple Tree Square), joined together, in 1969, to form 'Town Group Investments Ltd'. The motives behind this merger were aimed, principally, at scaling the growth and development of the area as a unit. The Town Group<sup>22</sup> frequently charged that the City was, and had been, ignoring this district, and, therefore, they were forced to take development matters into their own hands. By July 1970, the Group had invested more than \$750,000. in the area and owned eight major Gastown properties.<sup>23</sup>

Since this group was formed in January 1969, rents in the area have rapidly increased, to the point where they now rival such established shopping districts as South Granville and West Vancouver. Larry Killam, president of Town Group Investments Ltd., claims that rents were minimal before, and that an increase is understandable when one considers the amount of capital that has been invested. The concern expressed by the merchants was that the small craft houses and boutiques would be forced out of business by the increasing rents.<sup>24</sup>

22 Members included Larry Killam, Saun Flynn, Terry Willox, Ian Rogers and Richard Wilcox.

23 Holdings included 1 Alexander; 75 Alexander, 97 Alexander; 18 Water; 1-9 West Cordova; 407 West Cordova and the Alhambra Hotel.

24 In July 1970, the average ground floor rent was \$3.50 per sq.ft. per annum.

A number of similar 'interest groups' were formed, in 1970, to represent the merchants and the residents of the townsite. The Gastown Merchants Association and the Gastown Improvement Association were both established in an attempt to set a development policy for Gastown, and to create a programme outlining future goals and objectives. Both these groups were especially conscious of the critical situation into which many of the older residents were being forced. The residents organized themselves in an attempt to present their grievances to City Hall. The Gastown chapter of the 'Pacific Community Self-Development Society', as well as the Gastown Residents' Association, and the Cordova Redevelopment Corporation, were all working towards alleviating some of the conflict encountered by the residents. Before progressing with this issue, an outline of the commercial-retail structure in Gastown will be discussed.

In terms of sales volume, the boutiques and craft shops claim only a very small proportion of the area's total sales. With the estimated gross sales per day in the vicinity of \$15,000., the small merchants lay claim to only \$3,000., or approximately 20%. In 1970, there were an estimated 80 merchants in the area competing for this relatively small share of the sales. The remaining \$12,000. was divided amongst the three principal retail

outlets - Pier 1, Cost Plus, and Trident Imports - and, also, The Old Spaghetti Factory.

The small shops, and these four major businesses, seem to feel a mutual dependency upon one another. The shop owners feel that the large import houses and The Old Spaghetti Factory act as magnets or generators for the shopping district. Because of their size, they can afford to advertize, and, thereby attract more shoppers into the area. On the other hand, the managers of these larger establishments feel that the small shops give Gastown the needed atmosphere, and help to maintain a certain character in keeping with the overall townsite concept - they keep the area from appearing over-commercialized.

The amount of capital invested in the townsite by the four principal companies exceeds \$750,000. These are very professional operations; two of them, Trident and Pier 1, are subsidiaries of large American chains. Both Cost Plus and The Old Spaghetti Factory are Canadian owned and operated. Of the \$12,000. in sales divided amongst these four companies, they each stand to gross \$600,000. from sales each year. Although this is only an approximate estimate,<sup>25</sup> it indicates the rapidity with which their original investment is regained.<sup>26</sup>

25 Figures of sales volume and investment capital obtained from The Sun financial writer Jacques Khouri, July 18, 1970.

26 Pier 1 invested \$200,000. in rental lease and stock (\$2.00 per sq.ft. per annum). Cost Plus invested \$80,000. in renovations and stock (short term occupancy). Trident invested \$300,000. in renovations and stock. The Old Spaghetti Factory-\$200,000. in renovations & spaghetti:

The problem, which some feel may develop in Gastown, is a disruption of the delicate balance between the large commercial enterprises and the small shops. There is, also, the concern that Gastown could well be 'boutiqued to death' if it is not overrun by the large-scale retail interests. John Cromack, owner of Rumpelstiltskins, stated this problem very well, "there's room for everything in Gastown so long as there's not too much of one thing". Unfortunately, programming this mutual dependency into future policy goals is a very difficult task.

In early May 1970, the Gastown chapter of the 'Pacific Community Self Development Society' began a programme to assist the local residents. The concept centred on the purchase of the Stanley Hotel and New Fountain Hotel, still owned by Army & Navy Department Stores. Because the owners recently had been denied a demolition permit from City Council, they were willing to sell, in exchange for the City granting them a parking permit elsewhere in the district.

The 'Self-Development Society' applied to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the money to cover purchase and renovation of these hotels. A figure was set at \$500,000., and, application was filed, in May,

under the relatively new 'innovative housing clause' of the National Housing Act, which supports this type of housing programme.

While the application for funds was being processed, concern for the old-time residents was kept alive. In August, the Downtown Tenant's Association, (President: Lewis Williams), organized an open air meeting in Gastown. On this occasion, the guest speaker was alderman Harry Rankin. He began by making the candid observation that "Gastown was a nice tourist attraction with a mess of misery all around it".<sup>27</sup> He continued his attack on what was being neglected by both the municipal and federal levels of government. At the conclusion of this meeting, a petition was circulated requesting City Council to freeze rents and prohibit evictions, except for 'just causes' - (i.e. rent arrears or excessive nuisance).<sup>28</sup>

George Whitman, the Vancouver Director of Social Planning, and Jonathan Baker, his assistant, made several pertinent observations at this time. It was realized from studies in other cities, that as residents were forced out of one area, they would move the least distance possible from their old neighbourhood in order to remain in a somewhat familiar environment. "Skid road" then only shifts its centre a few blocks away. Predictably,

27 The Province. Aug. 3, 1970. Harry Rankin.

28 Examples were given of owners making 30%-40% profit on hotels. Buildings were grossing \$30,000. per year on property and improvements valued at \$60,000.





this would lead to a worse living environment, and would not benefit the residents in any way.

In Gastown, a rent control policy has often been suggested. Unfortunately, it is the expressed desire of some of the developers to 'clean-up' the district by clearing out the 'bums and drunks'. The developers have often been criticized for adopting this rather indifferent attitude; however, considering the market forces operating in the area, the fact that the old resident often comes out 'second best' should not be blamed entirely on the developers and building owners. Because the residents were not, in their opinion, necessary or beneficial to Gastown, no concessions were made nor any compromises given, which would have permitted them to stay. The intentions of the developer were two-fold - in the first place, he was attempting to maximize the rate of return on his capital investment by renting to more affluent tenants, and, secondly, he was striving to change the atmosphere of the area and make it more acceptable to the new residents, visitors and shoppers, alike.

The Gastown merchants, for the most part, have adopted a much more liberal attitude towards the old residents, than have the developers. Many have argued that it is these very people that give the townsite the necessary atmosphere, which keeps it interesting. Millor

Pollack, a shop owner, believes very strongly in not forcing these people out of the area. Cost Plus owner, Laurie Fribbie, and Peter Pulos of The Old Spaghetti Factory, agree, but feel that even given the opportunity to stay they would prefer to move because of the changes which have taken place. They no longer would feel comfortable in the area.

In September 1970, some of the residents were in fact given the opportunity to remain in Gastown. Plans were unveiled for the renovation of the Stanley Hotel and New Fountain Hotel into a hostel for some of the displaced residents. The complex was to include boutiques and restaurants on the main floor, and a library, common rooms and sleeping areas on the upper floors. In total, about 100 rooms were to be provided, at an average of \$40. per month. Revenue, obtained from the rental space on the main floor, would go towards subsidizing the rents, and, possibly, beginning a fund, whereby similar projects could be launched.

On September 18th, 1970, Robert Andras, the Federal Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, announced that a grant of \$777,700. had been made to the 'Cordova Redevelopment Corporation', and the 'Gastown Residents' Association', in order that they may begin work on the project. This development established a precedent,

whereby many other similar schemes may begin. The successful integration of these people back into the new community, although only a start, could have certain advantages, and offer many lessons relating to problems with 'urban renewal'.

In November 1970, the Gastown merchants encountered a rather difficult problem. As the area had evolved, an official policy of Sunday operations had developed. When only the small craft shops remained open, no one seemed overly concerned; however, with the inclusion of the large retail establishments, rumoured complaints by merchants in other areas reached the city prosecutor, accusing the establishments of violating The Lord's Day Act. The provincial Attorney-General handed down a decision that all shops would have to close on Sunday, in accordance with the law. What followed, was nothing less than a small explosion, led by the merchants, and supported by the hundreds of 'Sunday-Shoppers' who enjoyed Gastown as a place to stroll and browse on the weekends. The merchants conferred, and voted to stay open and face any charges as a unified group; at the same time, alternative solutions were being explored. The one most favoured, seemed to be the recognition of Gastown as an 'historic precinct'.<sup>29</sup> This approach was followed, and, in February 1971, the

29 This legislation would give the city much wider control over demolition and development.

provincial government passed a decision granting Gastown this special status. Although specific provision was not made for violation of the Lord's Day Act, the issue was to be put under further study - presumably, legislation would be introduced into the 'historic precinct ruling', whereby certain shops could remain open. In the meantime, the merchants continue to attract large crowds of 'Sunday-Shoppers'.

CHAPTER THREE:  
Section One

In the first section of this thesis, it became quite evident that the development trends in Gastown since the 1900's had not had any positive impact on the city itself. Once the area slipped from prominence as the city centre in 1900, it remained in the background as a service oriented warehouse district. The property values declined, and the quality of the buildings rapidly deteriorated. Coupled with this, the old hotels and rooming houses filled with low-income groups, which have inhabited the district ever since.

Although the service performed by the warehouse industry is essential to any metropolis, the negative impacts should not dominate the area in which they are located. In an attempt to alleviate the traffic congestion generated by this 'land-use', City Council, in 1948, was presented with a proposal to prohibit trucks from loading in the streets. This recommendation was made by the city's planning Consultant, Harland Bartholomew, but was not acted upon until 1954, when it received the approval of council. Because a majority of the buildings could in no way accomodate the loading bay requirement, the wholesale industry was virtually eliminated from the area overnight.

Bartholomew's 1948 report recommended further changes in the Gastown district. Water Street, Powell Street, and Carrall Street were scheduled to be widened in an effort to ease the congestion of peak hour traffic entering the downtown peninsula. As a result of the earlier decision which doomed the wholesale industry, property values were very low. It was, therefore, recommended that some of these structures be demolished, in order to provide 'on grade' parking, to serve the downtown core. In 1954, when the full implications of this programme reached certain historically conscious citizens, as well as a number of property owners interested in restoration, a public outcry erupted. This was the first instance where thoughts of preserving the historic site became a public issue. Ultimately, council was forced to rescind their earlier decision to widen the streets, and, instead, put forward a motion, making some streets 'one-way', and altering the 'curb-side' parking during certain hours.

The result of this activity was clearly of no benefit to the Gastown district. Its role had been defined by council as service oriented, aimed to satisfy the more immediate demands of the city centre. The thought of considering this area as a community supporting a high density residential population, was seldom entertained, either by the city officials, or by the general public. The fact that

this was the case did little to alleviate the problems encountered in what was generally referred to as Vancouver's 'skid road'. With the rapid exodus of the wholesale industry, outside interest declined, as did the buildings and the atmosphere in Gastown.

Until the present day, the social and physical situation in the townsite has been largely ignored. The city was receiving no significant positive returns from the area, and, in fact, turned its back on the townsite's dilemma.

In the second section of this thesis, it was seen that the impact of the Gastown restoration began to focus public attention on the area. What was seen, was a district of the city that had obviously been neglected for many decades.

The first group to establish themselves in the townsite were the new owners and developers. Almost immediately, a conflict became apparent. The long-time residents were evicted from their boarding houses and hotels as renovations began. The first to be criticized for creating the 'social problems' in Gastown, were, therefore, the developers. Clearly, the problems were there long before any restoration projects began. It was the increased attention which brought these issues into public perspective, particularly since Gastown was receiving wide



coverage from the news media.

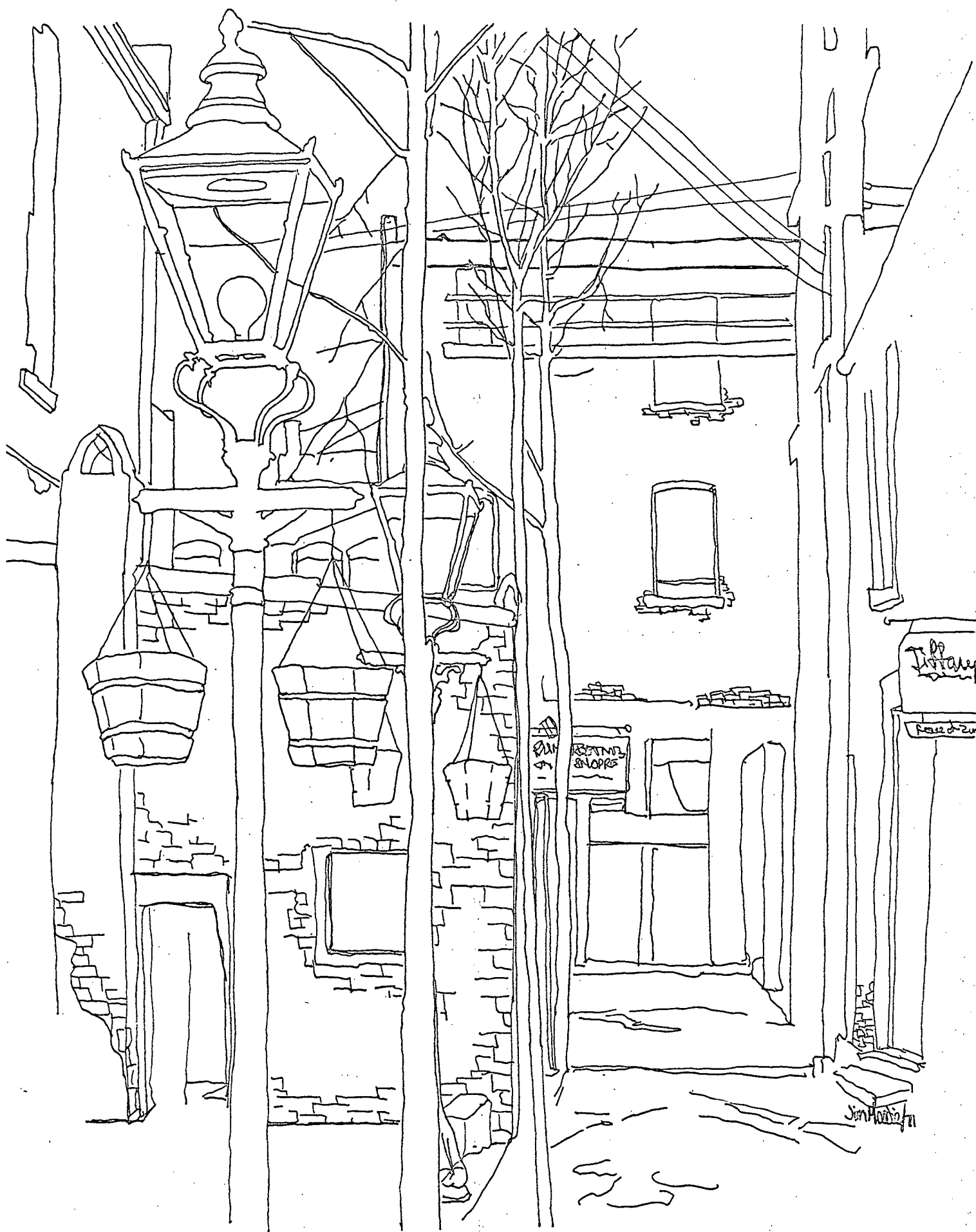
Since nothing positive had been done for the residents of Gastown for a great many years, the sudden boom of increased activity greatly intensified the social problems. The restoration projects did nothing to alleviate the resident's problems, but, instead, further complicated them. This issue is particularly relevant in considering future Gastown development. It would seem reasonable to expect that with the increased amount of capital circulating in Gastown, there might be a repartition which would benefit the residents. For some time, this was not the case. It was not until the residents formed their own association and began making their views known that their situation improved. The Stanley/New Fountain hostel is an excellent example of this 'self-help' programme in action. The significant point to realize is that the residents could not have developed this concept without the impetus of the restoration, and, in this respect, they are dependent on the new activity. It remains to be seen whether this dependency is mutual.

The residents are only one interest concerned with Gastown's development. With them are other groups, such as the merchants' association, the investment association, and the developers. Each has certain goals and objectives

towards which they have been working; similarly, each has an idea of what the final programme should and should not include. Herein lies one of the basic problems of 'plan formulation' for Gastown. Each group has banded together in a rather formal fashion. This type of organization on the 'horizontal plane', clearly does not lend itself to impartial and rational reasoning as to the best plans for Gastown as a whole. Each group works towards its own objectives, with little concern for the others.

Because of their financial commitment, and the traditional power or control possessed by the owners and developers, they have, until now, succeeded in directing the Gastown redevelopment according to their own goals and objectives. Shop-owners and merchants are permitted space in the restored buildings at the landlord's discretion - few members of this group have had a voice in the renovation of their particular stores. Their position as tenants is very clear, and, they have not been permitted a voice in the development or direction of the townsite restoration, even though they are very much a part of it. This latter point is particularly applicable to merchants who have been involved in the area for a number of years, and, in most cases, have a definite opinion regarding Gastown's future orientation.

Pursuing this argument to include the long-time residents



presents a particular problem. The townsite area has very definitely gone through a metamorphosis in the last few years. Certain functions which no longer perform a viable role, have been forced out of Gastown, in favour of attractive shops and restaurants, which characterize the envisioned atmosphere in the townsite. Similarly, the older residents are being forced out of the area, because they are not seen as a component in the final 'product' as seen by the owners and developers. The wholesale industry, and its subsidiaries, can relocate in areas where the rents or markets are more suitable to their needs; unfortunately, the residents are not as flexible. As individuals in the community, they should have certain rights and a voice in the direction which Gastown takes.

In order to effectively alter this organizational system, an alternative must be suggested which is agreeable to all concerned. Two other groups, which, also, have a particular interest in Gastown, are the city planners and the shoppers and visitors. The latter, although not actively involved in the direction of the restoration, must still be acknowledged as one of the 'life forces' in Gastown. Without the commerce generated by the shoppers and visitors, the townsite would not be in the position it is in today. Also concerned, is the city Planning Department.

Although it does not have a 'day to day' role in Gastown, its interest in the direction of the project is particularly relevant from a community planning perspective.

The commitment from the various interest groups has been noticeably lacking with respect to the city Planning Department. Only recently, have they adopted a more positive approach towards alleviating some of the area's problems. In June of 1970, City Council authorized a twelve month \$30,000. full-scale study of Gastown and Chinatown, including analysis of the economic, physical, and social problems. Unfortunately, this report has been delayed, and will now not be completed until November 1971, by which time, some of the opportunities for optimal development may be lost.

If the townsite continues to develop in the manner previously outlined, there will, undoubtedly, be a definite negative impact on the 'Gastown community'. The following comparison well illustrates the problems encountered by a single-purpose programme oriented to satisfy only one particular and specific goal. Comparing Gastown, as it is presently oriented, to the typical suburban shopping centre, offers a number of similarities and differences - it is these peculiarities that make Gastown an interesting and vibrant environment. The large Park Royal shopping centre in West Vancouver,

provides a number of useful comparisons. Included on this site are a large number of apartments, numerous shops, two theatres, and several restaurants. The stores in the shopping areas have been connected by large enclosed malls. These malls are purposefully designed to imitate the 'streets' of more traditional shopping areas. In Park Royal, as in most centres, the malls are successful only to the extent that they facilitate a dry, protected route for the shoppers as they move from one store to another. Attempts to enliven these malls at specific times during the year, have not often met with much success. Shoppers are concerned with their function as access corridors, rather than an interesting and pleasurable route to take - strolling and browsing from one store to the next. For the most part, these malls have a striking similarity to hallways, rather than 'streets'.

The parking situation in most shopping centres presents a further problem - because the complex is totally surrounded by parking, the shopper is able to drive almost to the front door of any particular store, thereby reducing the opportunity of utilizing the mall to any great extent.

Park Royal is totally oriented to the consumer, and the area bustles with activity during shopping hours. However,

after the stores close, there is no interest to attract a crowd. It has been noted, that a high-density apartment complex is located on the western end of 'Park Royal North'. This concentration of residents could have been beneficially integrated into the shopping district in such a way as to increase the use and viability of the area as a whole. Now, because of their relative isolation on one corner of the site, there is no opportunity for unconscious mixing or mingling of shopper and resident. Under the existing layout, specialty stores cannot afford to stay open later, because of the lack of a market. The apartment dweller would not walk from his suite to the stores; instead, he drives to the small shops further west along Marine Drive for late night shopping.

The Park Royal twin theatres have a positive effect on activity in the complex. Unfortunately, like the apartments, the theatres have been situated in relative isolation on the extreme western end of 'Park Royal South'. Again, this has eliminated any opportunity for small 'service facilities' (after hours cafes, restaurants, or coffee houses) to maintain a business generated from the theatre traffic. It is noteworthy that some theatre-goers will get in their cars and drive to the White Spot, at the south-eastern end of the site, and stay in their cars as they enjoy an 'after the movie'snack.

What has this to do with Gastown?

Three significant points have been outlined which apply to Gastown in a very definite sense. First, the separation of various land-uses has negated any opportunity of a 'mix'. On the Park Royal site, there are three distinct activity nodes (shops, apartments, and theatres) set as far apart as possible. Between these areas exists acres of parking lots - this leads directly to the second issue; by permitting the development to be completely surrounded and dominated by parking lots, any positive benefits which may have accrued from the malls has been lost. Both these features contribute to the third problem - that is, having a large area, such as this, operating effectively only eight hours of the day, and dominated by a 'single purpose' orientation.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the townsite district was graphed as it rose to prominence in the 1880's as the city centre, and then through a series of altering land-uses, began a steady decline. From 1940 until 1968, this decline continued. The activity in the townsite has always been directed through the 'free-enterprise' system of permitting development to respond to the market demands. In the light of recent knowledge and experiences in a number of fields, this is no longer deemed a satisfactory method of urban





land management. The second chapter of the thesis, documented the recent rebirth of the Gastown area - for two years, the redevelopment and renovation has proceeded again according to market trends.

Considering the previous example of Park Royal, this is clearly not a satisfactory method of procedure. Gastown is a community involving a number of unique interest groups - as such, it must be granted specific guidelines to ensure its optimal development. In an urban setting, the various interest groups cannot be separated and placed at opposite ends of the site. A programme must be developed, which will, in some way, benefit all groups involved, and not inhibit the rights of any particular minority interests.

CHAPTER THREE:  
Section Two

A number of problems have been referred to which have inhibited overall community organization in Gastown. In preparing a plan or proposal for development, these issues must be recognized, and solutions offered. As a first step in this direction, three problems will be outlined, and then developed in the 'goals analysis', which follows. This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list, but, rather, for purposes of illustration, serves to demonstrate the approach or methodology that must be taken in the preparation of a development plan.

1. The political or 'power structure' is divided into a number of conflicting groups. This organization does not facilitate maximum use of the resources available to the community.
2. There is no common objective towards which all interest groups are working - each has a self-defined and somewhat limited orientation.
3. There is little or no co-operation between groups to formulate a policy which is acceptable to all - communication is either extremely limited or non-existent.

The organization in Gastown is a fundamental issue, in

that it could channel or direct the energies of the different groups towards a common goal. Presently, because of the horizontal stratification, the owners and developers are directing the growth. In a free enterprise situation, this should not be at all surprising. There are, however, a number of advantages to introducing a community development programme, in that it would constructively organize or direct the energy of the various groups towards more positive community-oriented goals. Through this co-operation, a more stable base would be developed for future growth and expansion.

In some situations, the lack of dialogue between particular groups would not inhibit progress or jeopardize long-range development goals. Large-scale projects, such as the Pacific Centre Complex, which radically alter the existing use to some new or alternate use, are not concerned with the previous interests. Such developments are generally oriented physically and economically, rather than socially. In contrast, the Gastown restoration project cannot impose itself on the present environs. In order to preserve a particular atmosphere and scale in its development, it must acknowledge certain past relationships, such as, the scale of the buildings, the social structure of the community, and the historic significance of the area itself. A

dialogue between past, present, and future 'users', is vital, in order to preserve an intimate atmosphere in Gastown.

There is another fundamental difference between the Gastown restoration and traditional urban redevelopment projects. Every group, including the shoppers and visitors, considers the area as an existing and long standing 'community'. Yet the owners and developers, the merchants, and the planners, all have a different concept of what the 'Gastown community' consists of, and towards what ends it should develop; clearly, this is one of the first objectives that must be made explicit. When combining the three problems previously outlined, and considering them in operational terms, one realizes that a working definition of the 'Gastown community' must be reached, in order to begin any sort of constructive dialogue between the various groups.

As a first step, a general goal statement must be made. The goal should be in broad enough terms to include all those concerned with the area. From this, objectives can be established, relating to the goal in general, and the interest groups in particular. The criteria for the objectives, is that they must be complementary to each other. Any assumptions should be clearly stated at this

stage, as well as all definitions of terms involved.

In this manner, the following general goal has been established as an overall guideline for development in Gastown.

GOAL: that the 'Gastown community'<sup>1</sup> be developed in such a manner as to insure its continued viability as a multi-purpose node in the urban matrix.

Considering the previous comparison with Park Royal, and remembering Gastown's position relative to the central business district, as well as the number of interest groups<sup>2</sup> actively involved in the project, it becomes apparent that Gastown should not develop as a 'single-purpose' project. Through a programme of group integration and mutual dependency, the stability of the community is enhanced socially, economically, and physically - and, at the same time, this strategy ensures that interest and activity in the community is kept alive.

OBJECTIVE: that through the design and implementation of a development programme, the goals of the

1 Community is defined as a body of persons having common rights, interests, and privileges.

2 This would include the residents, shop-owners, merchants, developers, landlords, and city planners, as well as the visitors and shoppers.

interest groups are optimized.

The need for a sound programme of development in Gastown is essential. Because of the wide variety of concerns in the townsite, various groups have specific ideas as to how the development should proceed. The Gastown community has the opportunity at this point in time, to develop all these interests to its collective advantage. Through the formulation of a vehicle accepted by the various groups, this would become a reality. The vehicle to achieve this end is summarized in the following assumption.

ASSUMPTION: that a 'steering committee' will be established, consisting of representatives from the various interest groups, and chaired by an impartial 'third party'.<sup>3</sup>

The steering committee chairman would perform the role of mediator or liaison between the interest groups. It would be the responsibility of this committee to establish a comprehensive development plan for the townsite, integrating the goals and objectives of the individual groups in such a manner that they would compliment the overall goal and objective.

3 This should be an informed individual or group which has not had direct involvement with any particular interest group in the area.

With these general statements, the scope of the project is somewhat defined. A point of departure is established. The next step is to encourage each group to formally outline their particular needs and desires, and, thus, formulate their own objectives regarding Gastown's development. This is the task that only these groups can perform - no survey can adequately document their needs or outline their priorities. By employing the interest groups or their representatives, on a continuing basis, a valuable communication link is established through the steering committee. The dialogue generated from the committee will work towards acquainting the groups with the unique needs and concerns of "trade-offs" and compromises between the groups would become possible.

Following the formulation of group objectives, comes the integration of these into a working policy, which is in harmony with the general goal and objective of the overall project. During this stage, the role of the steering committee chairman will become critical. It would be his responsibility to ensure that the unique needs of each group are integrated into the plan, without any one group dominating. In this way, it would be possible for each group to maximize their own objectives within the constraints or parameters set by the committee as a whole.



The methodology, thus far, has outlined the steps towards formulating a policy - as of yet, nothing has been stated with respect to establishing a plan or working programme. The general goal statement provides an orientation or direction, however, the actual approach has not been resolved. This would have to be developed through meetings with the steering committee. As well as outlining the approach, the committee would have to implement the objectives of the interest groups. What follows, is a hypothetical example of how this operation might proceed:

Considering the residents of Gastown as one interest group, it will be assumed for the purposes of this illustration that they feel strongly about certain aspects of the district, and do not wish to be displaced. Having formed an active group, they have developed the following goal in conjunction with the steering committee:

'that the residents in the townsite area be given the opportunity to remain as members of the new community'

Their objective might appear as follows:

'that the residents establish priorities and work towards implementing these in the light of their goal'

This goal and objective might conflict with the goal of

one or more other groups, who feel the old residents would not have a positive impact on the area as they envision it. At the meetings, such an issue as this would have to be resolved with the residents stating their case for staying, and the opposing interests explaining their objections. Alternatives and compromises could be suggested by the others on the committee. In the final analysis, it would be the responsibility of the committee chairman to make a policy decision in what he felt was the best interests of the future Gastown community.

From this, the development plan would evolve as the final step of the methodology. Following its approval and implementation, the steering committee should not consider its task is complete. Revisions and alterations will be needed constantly, as the emphasis or direction in the community shifts - illustrating the fact that planning must be a continuing process.

CHAPTER THREE:  
Section Three

There are a number of areas where changes could be implemented immediately, in order to ensure that the character and atmosphere of Gastown is not lost. These recommendations are based on changes presented in briefs from various delegations, made to City Council, as well as from the experiences of other cities. For the most part, they involve legal and administrative actions, and, therefore, are the responsibility of City Council to implement. The recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1

That a study be made of the British Columbia Historic Monuments Act, and amendments suggested, in order to make it more relevant to the Gastown restoration project.

Rationale:

An approach which was discussed earlier, was that of establishing an 'official development plan' for the Gastown district. The Vancouver charter, Section 561, permits council to adopt a plan which relates to:

- (a) 'any particular area of the city or to a specific project or projects within the city'
- (b) '...and designate areas for special projects,

including those which require development or redevelopment as a whole.'

Because of the amount of control that was possible, this approach was favoured by some. Unfortunately, the opportunity to implement such a proposal has been temporarily lost, due to the provincial government's legislation following the 'Sunday-openings' ruling in December 1970. At that time, the provincial government enacted portions of the Historic Monuments Act to protect the Gastown shop-owners from prosecution, ensuing from violation of the Lord's Day Act. Although the Historic Monuments Act was not originally intended for protection and administration of urban areas, such as Gastown, with extensive amendments, it could have general advantages.<sup>4</sup>

The common problem which both the 'development plan' and the 'historic monument' proposal encounter, is that of setting exact boundaries for the precincts. Thus far, this has not been established, and, no doubt, will arouse considerable consternation amongst the surrounding owners when it is finally decided.

The approaches adopted by other cities involved with jurisdictional problems related to similar restoration problems, has been included in Appendix Two.

<sup>4</sup> Should these amendments be unachievable within the confines of the act, it should be repealed, and an official development plan adopted. Presumably, one of the first tasks of the steering committee under either proposal would be the organization of a development plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the steering committee be elevated in status to that of a special commission, and be given the authority to scrutinize all restoration plans. In so doing, it should have the power to approve or reject development proposals.

Rationale:

This would be one advantage of having the Gastown district set aside as an historic precinct, since under the legislation, the establishment of special boards and commissions is permitted. This commission should include members of the suggested steering committee, as these individuals would have a firm understanding of the area's problems. Because the board would have members from all the interest groups, a valuable communication link would be kept open.

As has already been mentioned, the chairman of this group should be an unbiased 'third party'. The body itself should be granted the status and authority of a special commission, thereby relieving City Council of a burden it would neither have the time nor the information to handle satisfactorily. The commission would have the authority to approve or reject development proposals within the precinct.

In this way, the development programme would progress in a controlled and organized fashion. The special commission would serve the additional function of a communication source for outside interests.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

That some satisfactory formula for 'cost-sharing' be developed, not only on the city and entrepreneurial level, but, also, at the provincial and federal government levels.

#### Rationale:

The designation of the Gastown district as an historic precinct brings certain financial pressures onto the owners and developers. The restoration and revitalization in the area would result in increased assessments. Coupled with this, any beautification programmes would increase the property values and further raise the assessments. The shop-owners, merchants, and residents would all experience these changes through increased rents. Without some concessions made on the part of the city, it may be felt by the owners to be uneconomical to upgrade their properties because of the increased taxes they would face. The findings of a number of U.S. surveys, which support this argument, as well as excerpts from

their tax concession by-laws, are included in Appendix Three.

The provincial government has gone on record a number of times, suggesting that it would be willing to put up certain capital for further redevelopment in the Gastown/Chinatown district. The offer is outlined in a letter to MLA Herb Capozzi from Minister of Municipal Affairs, Dan Campbell, dated March 17, 1970.<sup>5</sup> Basically, the province has offered \$35,000. per year, for five years, if the city and federal government will also contribute similar amounts over the same period of time. The city's 'committment' could be provided in part from private sources within the concerned area.

The exact terms of this agreement from the provincial government will have to be developed further, in view of the fact that both the city and the federal government are actively involved in a number of projects in the Gastown area.<sup>6</sup> In view of these facts, it would seem logical for the city to pursue the provincial government's offer.

<sup>5</sup> A copy of this letter is included in Appendix Four.  
<sup>6</sup> The federal government with the Stanley/New Fountain hostel and the city on the development study.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Gastown district be rezoned to 'Comprehensive Development - 1' (CD - 1).<sup>7</sup>

Rationale:

This procedure would be an interim step, as outlined in the City Planning Department's proposal presented to the Board of Administration, June 2, 1970.<sup>8</sup> Its purpose would be to "achieve a greater flexibility in permitted uses while at the same time enabling council to have control over development that would normally fall within the 'outright-use' category."<sup>9</sup>

This programme would permit existing uses to continue, while at the same time, allowing council to approve new development, which it felt was in keeping with the envisioned character of the area. Rezoning to CD-1 would also include certain sign control by-laws.<sup>10</sup> In keeping with 'recommendation 2', it would seem logical to incorporate this authority under the jurisdiction of the 'special commission'.

The area designated for CD-1 rezoning has been kept to a minimum. Attempts to link the Gastown and Chinatown developments through this legislation

7 Rezoning to CD-1 gives City Council control over what new developments should or should not be permitted. Map 4 illustrates the area affected by this proposal.

8 File reference C 36.4.2. General Report - Gastown Chinatown.

9 Ibid. p.2.

10 Selective zoning guide outline is included in Appendix Five.



have not been made. It is felt that both projects are unique, and should develop independently.

Peripheral development in the Gastown area should be controlled by the Department of Licenses and Permits, on the recommendations of the 'special commission'.<sup>11</sup> The City Planning Department would be kept informed of adjacent developments, renovations, or restorations. In this manner, they would be aware of changes being proposed, and would be able to discuss, with the neighbouring developers, any detrimental effects their project may have on the historic area.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5

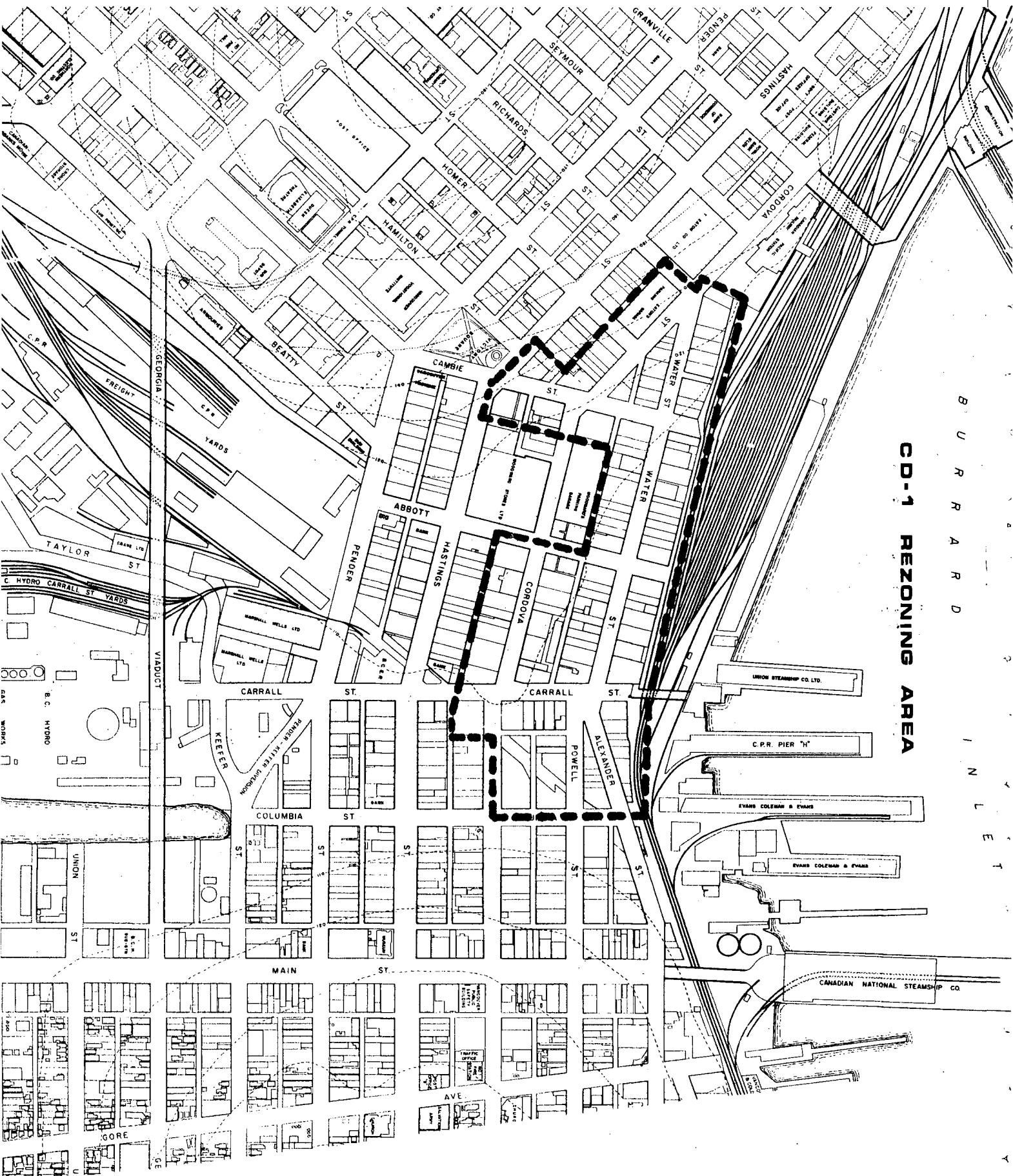
That a pedestrian orientation be encouraged in the Gastown area.

#### Rationale:

Because of the nature of the restoration to date, a great many people enjoy strolling in Gastown - either shopping or just browsing. Many of the area's unique shops are located around Maple Tree Square. Unfortunately, this square is now the junction of four main roads. By closing certain streets<sup>12</sup> to general traffic, it would be possible to regain a more pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

11 The authority of the special commission would correspond with the boundaries set by the CD-1 rezoning, and the historic precinct. Map 4. Page 86a.

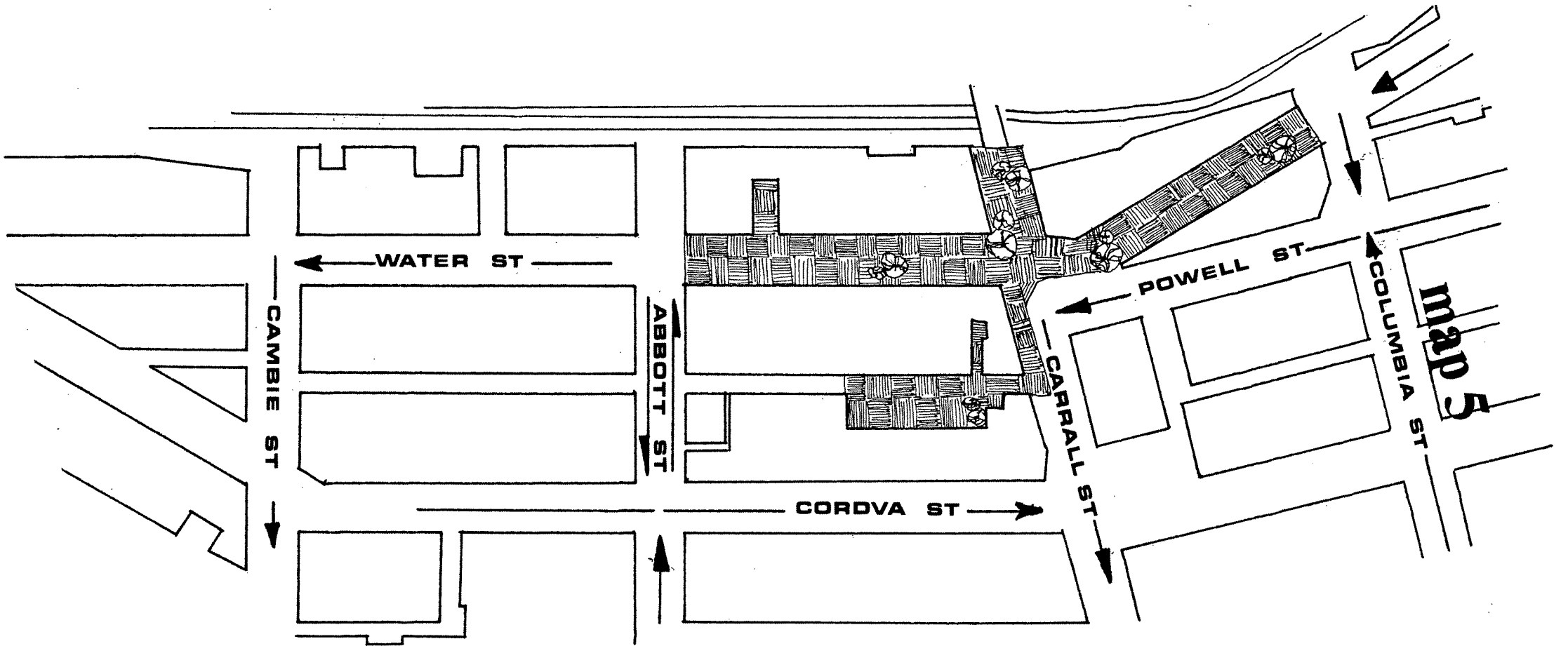
12 Map 5. outlines this proposal. Page 86b.



**CD-1 REZONING AREA**

**map 4**

TRANSPORTATION REROUTE



The Parks Board, in December 1970, expressed the need for a 'mini park' in the townsite, and mentioned the desire to develop one on Maple Tree Square. The park concept would only be possible if the road recommendation was first implemented.

Parking in Gastown has been indicated as a potential problem; however, with the new Woodward's multi-level garage under construction on Water Street, and other 'on grade' parking lots in the vicinity, this issue is not viewed as an immediate concern. If the demand became evident, additional multi-level structures could be built privately to serve this need. In general, it would be desirable to locate this parking on the periphery of the district.

The preceding list of recommendations is not intended to suggest a 'physical plan' for Gastown - rather, these are seen to be areas where immediate action on the part of the city will ensure that the atmosphere and character of the old townsite is not lost, while a full programme is being developed. These recommendations should not jeopardize any particular interest group, and are intended only for the betterment of the area as a community. Furthermore, these proposals should not overshadow the goals statements, nor the necessity for the implementation

of the programme suggested earlier - that is, the formation of a steering committee, composed of representatives from the various interest groups.

The need for sound planning is essential, but takes time to develop. Its ultimate impact necessitates thorough considerations by all contributing groups. The advantage of these five recommendations is that they permit certain immediate controls to be set, while the overall community plan is developed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I BOOKS:

Bullock, Orin M. The Restoration Manual. Connecticut Silver Mine Publishers Inc., 1966. 192 pp.

Final Report of the Historical Districts Study Committee. Cambridge, Mass., Historic District Preservation Press 1965, 92 pp.

Gras, N.S.B. An Introduction to Economic History. New York, Harper, 1922.

Hall, E. The Hidden Dimension. Doubleday and Company. New York 1966.

Harker, D. The City and The Store. Vancouver, Mitchell Press, 1958.

Historic Preservation Today. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1965, 180 pp.

Lynch, K. The Image of the City. Cambridge, Mass., Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1960.

Mathews, J.S. Linking the Atlantic to the Pacific, Ocean to Ocean. Vancouver, Wrigley Printing, 1945.

Morely, A. From Milltown to Metropolis. Vancouver, Mitchell Press, 1969.

Tunnard, C. and Pushkarev, B. Man-Made America: Chaos or Control. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963.

Vieux Carré Demonstration Study. New Orleans, Bureau of Gov't Research, 1968.

### II PERIODICALS:

Gastown Gazette. ed. Willox, T. August 1969. Vol.I. following editions.

- Jacobs, S. "A Current View of Area Preservation". Journal of the American Institute of Architects, Dec. 1964.
- Lichfield, N. "Cost Benefit Analysis in Urban Redevelopment". Institute of Business and Economic Research Journal. Berkeley, 1962.
- Moway, F.W. "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet". British Columbia Historical Quarterly. Vancouver 1937.
- Reed, Thomas. "Land Use Controls in Historic Areas". Notre Dame Lawyer. Feb. 1969.
- Vancouver Daily World. Souvenir Edition, 1867.
- Vancouver Sun, and, Vancouver Province. Clippings from 1968 and following editions.
- White, H.E. "A Discussion of Historic District Legislation". Columbia Law Review, New York, April 1963.
- Wrenn, T.P. "Real Estate Realities". Historic Preservation. XV, Washington, 1963.

### III STUDIES AND REPORTS:

- Bartholomew, H. Plan for the City of Vancouver, Vancouver 1929.
- Community Arts Council. Gastown Revisited, Vancouver 1970.
- Vancouver City Planning Dept. Downtown-East Side, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Downtown Vancouver - Five Development Concepts, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Restoration Report - A Case for Renewed Life in the Old City, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Vancouver Redevelopment Study, 1967.
- Vancouver Town Planning Commission. Relevant reports from 1948 and following.

IV UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

Brooks, F.G. Vancouver's Origins. Unpublished thesis from the U.B.C. Department of History. 1952.

Roy, P.E. The Rise of Vancouver 'I'. Unpublished thesis from U.B.C. Department of History. 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Rise of Vancouver 'II'. Unpublished thesis from University of Toronto, Department of History, 1963.

Vancouver City Planning Dept. Gastown-Chinatown. Report to the Board of Administration, 1970.

\_\_\_\_\_. Gastown-Chinatown Study. Unfinished. To be completed Nov. 1971.

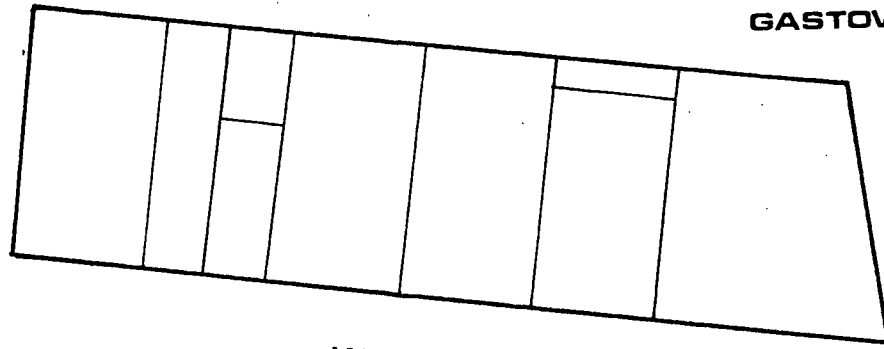
Van Weston, P. Goal Formulation and Achievement in Historic District Preservation. Unpublished thesis from U.B.C. Department of Community and Regional Planning, 1970.



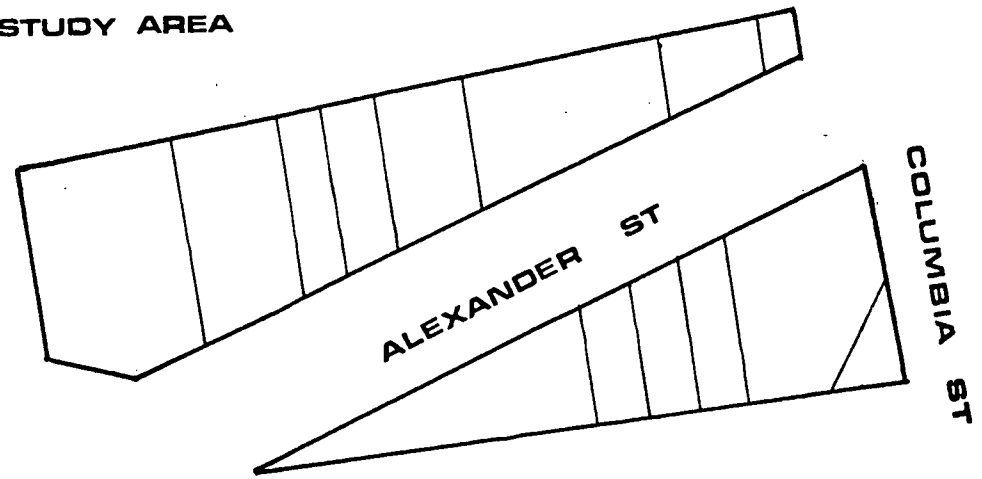
APPENDIX ONE

Appendix One outlines the study area which was employed for the purpose of analysing development trends in this thesis (Map 3). An explanation of this information is to be found in Chapter I. Data which produced the land-use graphs was gathered from the city directories and historical records dating back to 1870.

GASTOWN STUDY AREA



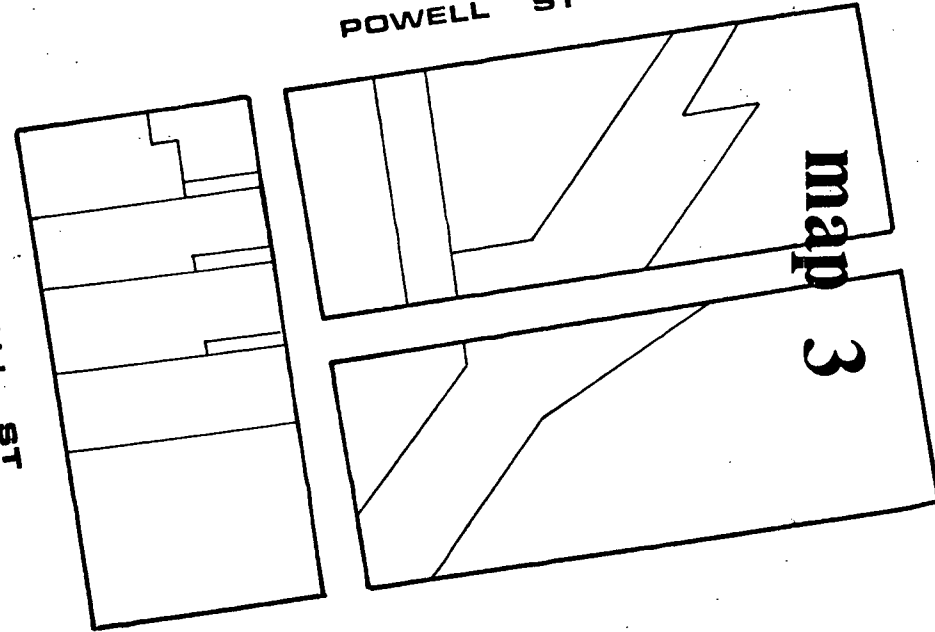
WATER ST



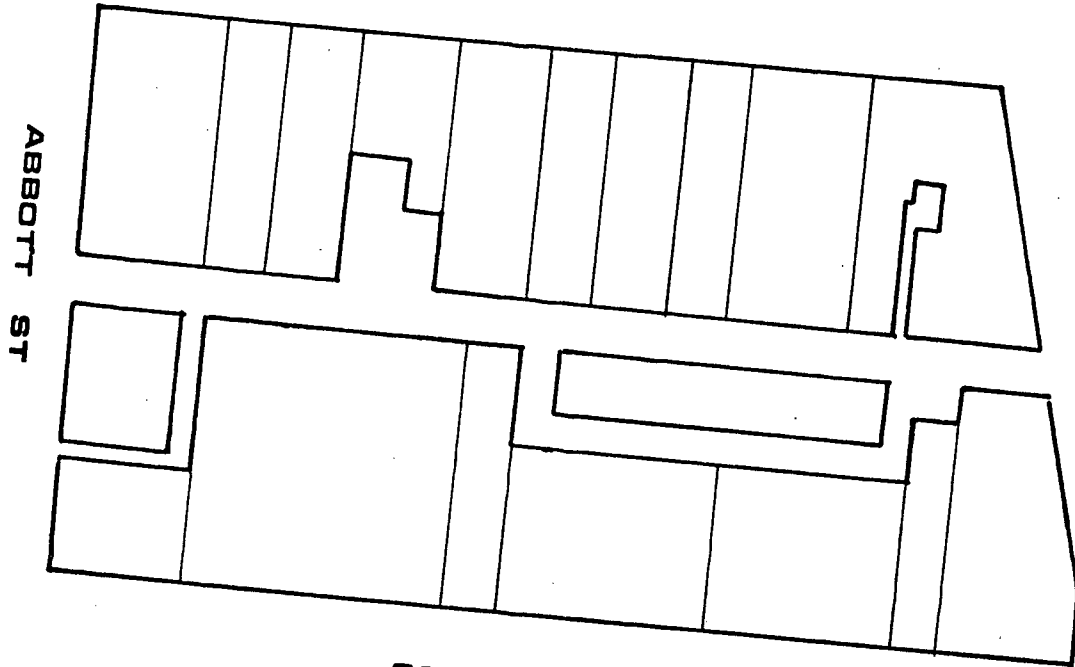
COLUMBIA ST

POWELL ST

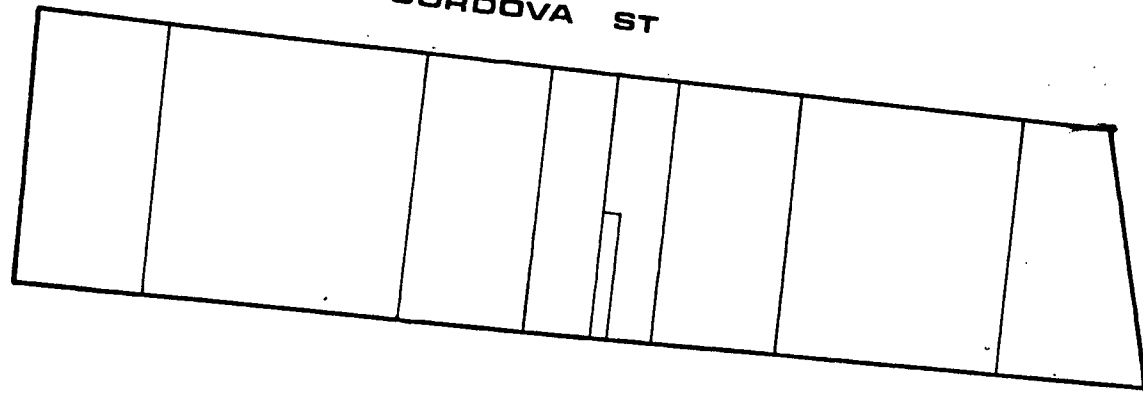
CARRALL ST



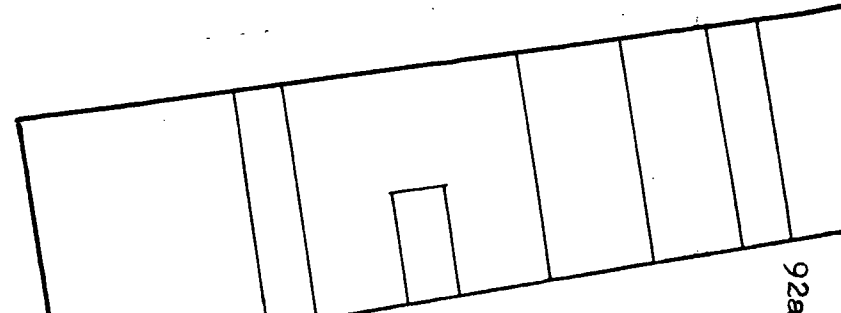
map 3

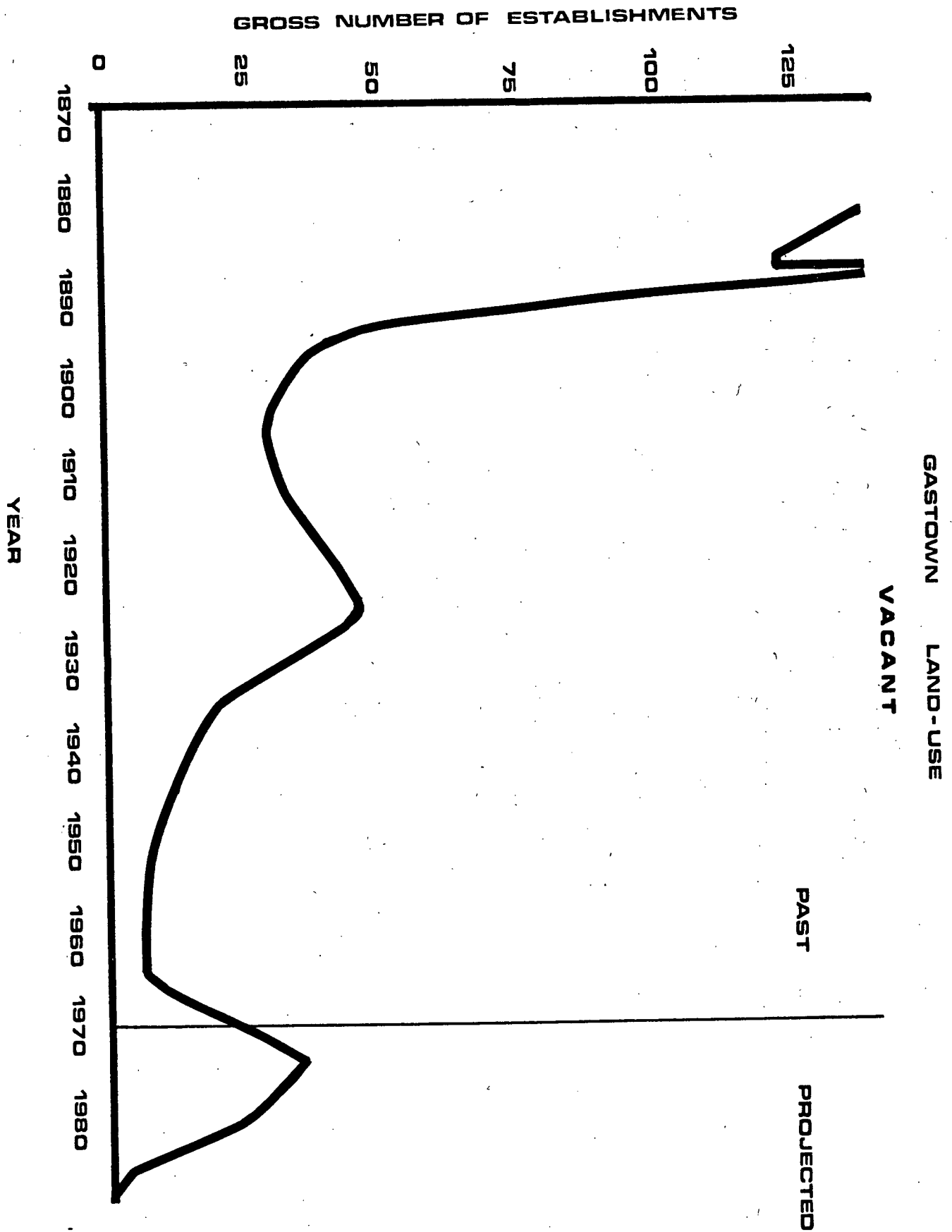


CORDOVA ST

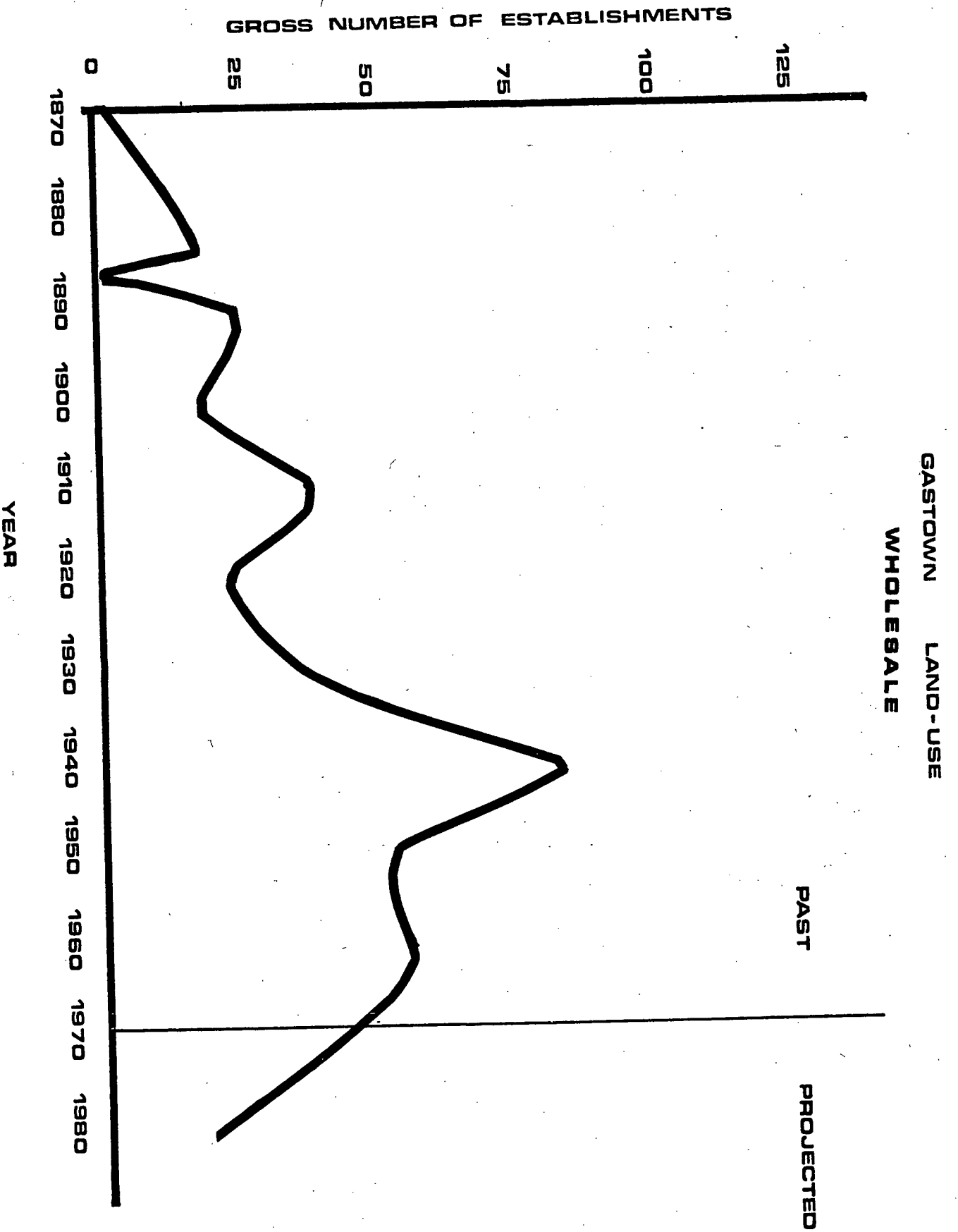


ABBOTT ST



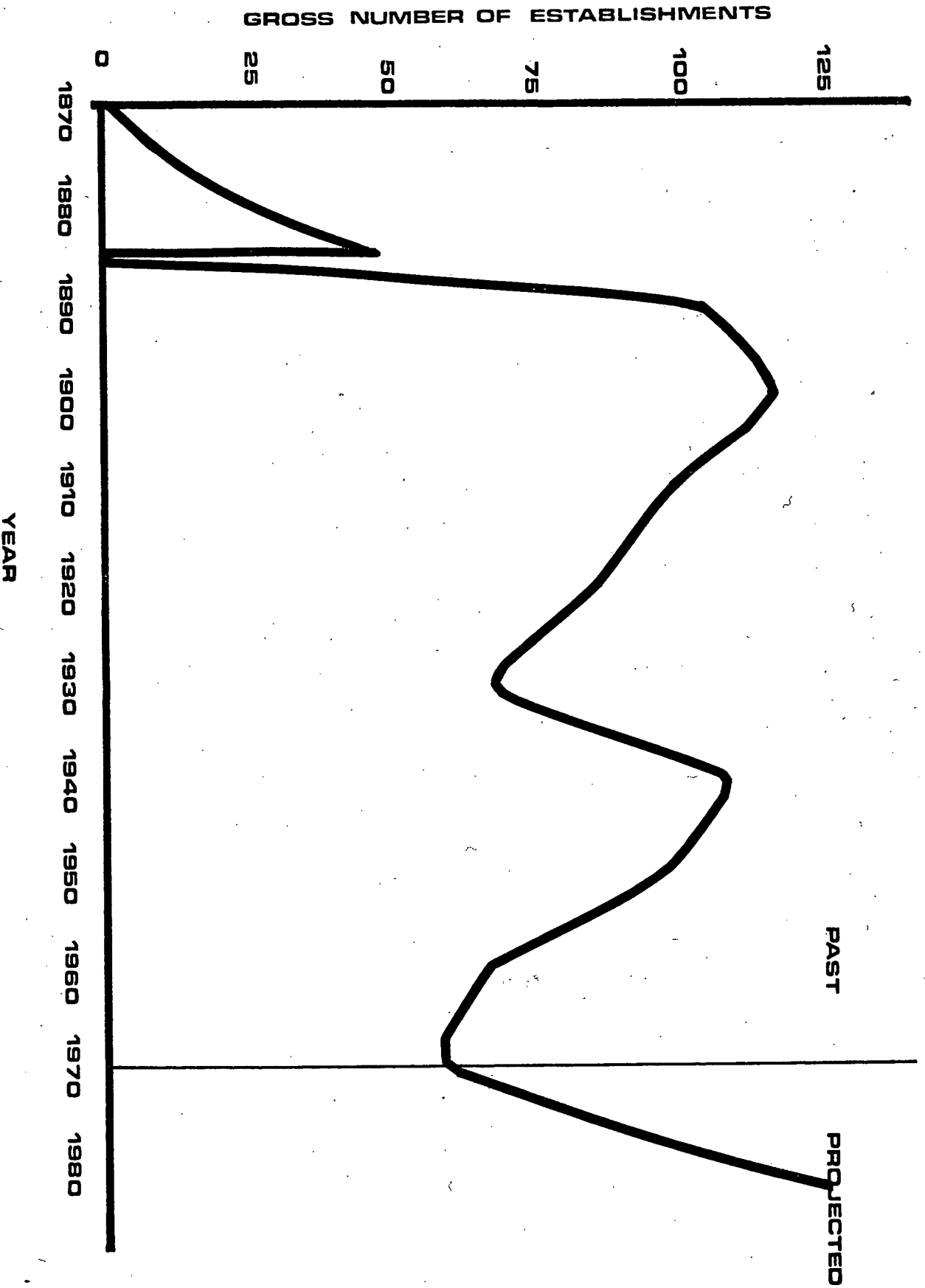


**Graph 1 A**



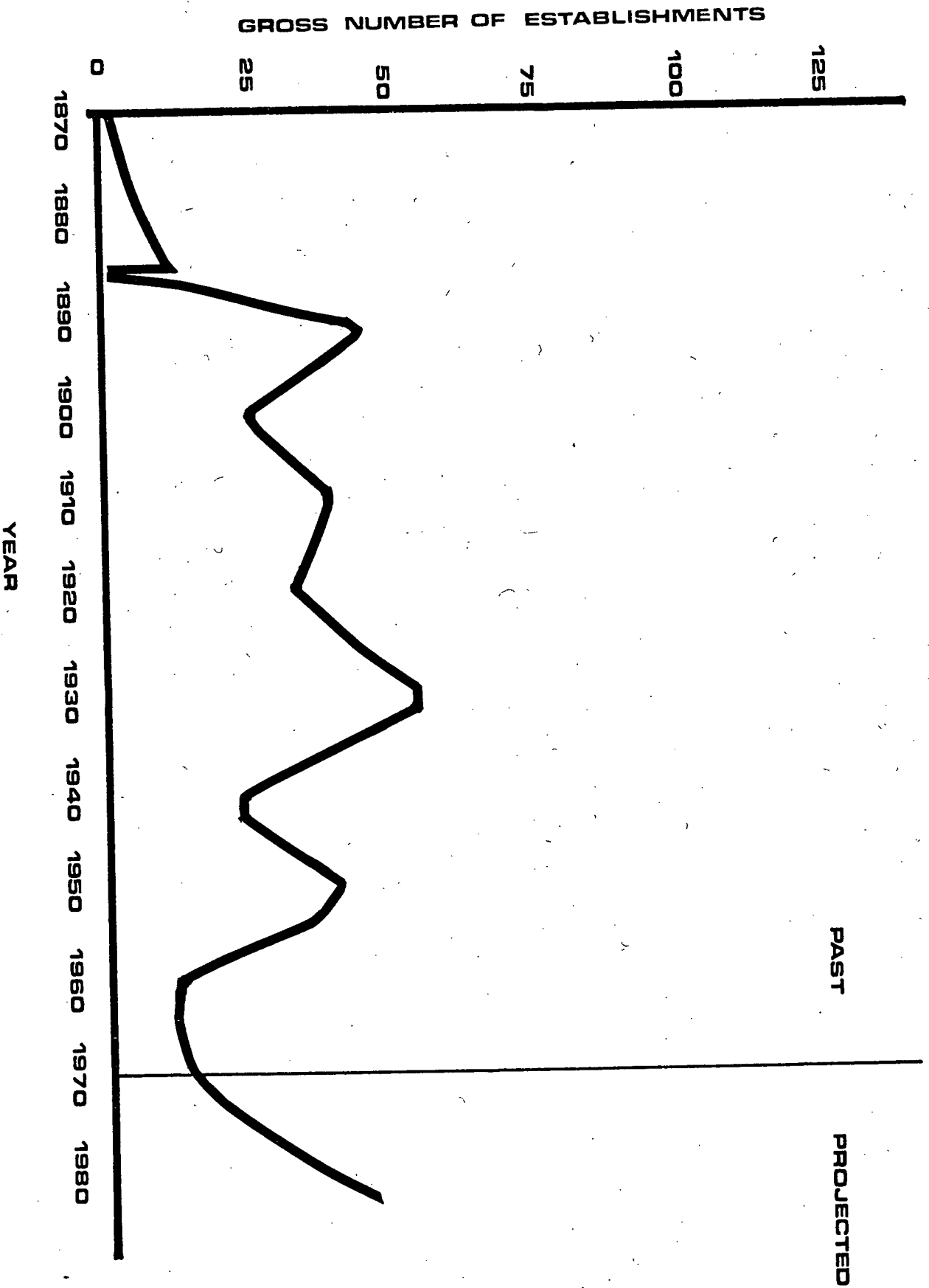
**Graph 1 B**

# GASTOWN LAND-USE RETAIL



graph 1C

# GASTOWN LAND-USE OFFICE



graph 1D



APPENDIX TWO<sup>1</sup>EVALUATION OF HISTORIC PRECINCTS IN OTHER  
NORTH AMERICAN CITIES

Any reader, seriously concerned with preservation and restoration developments in other cities, is referred to a thorough study by Pieter van Westen, Goal Formulation and Achievement in Historic District Preservation, U.B.C. 1970. Van Weston's study presents a 'macro' approach to restoration, and includes extensive references on historic legislation and administrative policies. In formulating a development programme for Gastown, this study would provide excellent background information on the advantages and limitations of various approaches.

The following excerpts from a Vancouver City Planning report provide some particular examples relevant to the Gastown situation.

I Historic Area Zoning

Historic area zoning is a form of control that has been applied to areas containing concentrations of historically significant structures. The goal of such control, has been to prevent wilful destruction of the cultural value inherent in the existence of historic structures.

1 Appendix II, Appendix III, and Appendix V, were presented in the City Planning Department's report to the Board of Administration, June 2, 1970.



These regulatory devices have been enacted and employed, predominantly, by municipal governments, and regulate the development of land and the construction of buildings thereon, in the interest of general welfare.

In the U.S., these regulations, while differing in detail, are quite similar in their general approach. A more or less standard procedure has been to make historic regulations a part of the existing zoning ordinance. When this is done, a new district is created, within which special regulations are applied. The heart of many such regulations is the creation of a special commission, which is given various names, such as the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission (Boston), or, the Commission of Architectural Review (Richmond). This special commission, is given the powers of approval or rejection of plans for building, alteration, repair and demolition of structures within the district. The action of the commission may or may not be binding on the actions of the building inspector. The powers of the commission, however, are usually limited to a review of exterior design and construction, to assure harmonious development within the district.

San Francisco, in 1966, added a new article (Article 10) to their municipal code. The purposes as set down in

Section 1001 are particularly noteworthy:

"SEC.1001. Purposes. It is hereby found that structures, sites and areas of special character, of special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value have been and continue to be unnecessarily destroyed or impaired, despite the feasibility of preserving them. It is further found that the prevention of such needless destruction and impairment is essential to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. The purpose of this legislation is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public through:

(a) The protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures, sites, and areas that are reminders of past eras, events and persons important in local, state, or national history, or which provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture, or which are unique and irreplaceable assets to the city and its neighbourhoods, or which provide for this and future generations examples of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived;

(b) The development and maintenance of appropriate settings and environment for such structures, and in such sites and areas;

(c) The enhancement of property values, the stabilization of neighbourhoods and areas of the city, the

increase of economic and financial benefits to the city and its inhabitants, and the protection of tourist trade and interest;

(d) The preservation and encouragement of a city of varied architectural styles, reflecting the distinct phases of its history: cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural;

(e) The enrichment of human life in its educational and cultural dimensions in order to serve spiritual as well as material needs, by fostering knowledge of the living heritage of the past."

The major thrust of civic action to date, has concerned itself, primarily, with architectural control - that is, control of demolition and of visual exterior changes of the structures, and has skirted the issue of the uses to which the buildings will be put. However, the Vieux Carre study sets down specific proposals in this direction. It states, that the sum total effect - buildings plus environment, including the manner in which the buildings are utilized - is important. The study developed a Composite Treatment Index, which scored each building in the Vieux Carre on the basis of three factors - the building's architectural/historical significance, its land-use compatibility, and its physical condition.

Thus, a basis is established, by which standards can be set, not only to judge buildings, but, also, the use to which they should be put, and, thus, complement the total environment.

Historic preservation in Canada has been less notable to date. Montreal is the only major urban community to employ protective legislation to control its historic precinct - Old Montreal (130 acres in size). In 1962, the City of Montreal created the Jacques-Viger Commission, a citizens' committee concerned with the conservation of the Old City. In 1964, the Provincial Government declared Old Montreal a historic site by means of Quebec's Historic Monuments Act - thereby preventing demolitions, alterations or changes, either interior or exterior, to structures within the precinct, without the authorization of the above-mentioned commission.

Elsewhere in Canada, a number of historic villages have been created, such as Ontario's Upper Canada Village. In B.C., two such communities are under the protection of this Province's Historic Monuments Act:

- A. The restoration of Barkerville was brought about by the 1958 Centennial Committee report, which focused attention on the possibilities that Barkerville offered.

The B.C. Legislature, in 1959, declared Barkerville a

Historic Site, and established the Barkerville Restoration Advisory Committee. This committee, undertook historical research, and established guidelines for the research of the old mining town.

The actual execution of restoration work, and the redevelopment of the site of Barkerville, was turned over to the Department of Recreation and Conservation. This department is also responsible for maintenance of the grounds and buildings within the historic site, paid for on an annual budget basis.

- B. The restoration of Fort Steele is an outcome of local interest. In 1964, the B.C. Provincial Government declared Fort Steele a Historic Site, and established the Fort Steele Foundation, which was given \$100,000. to undertake studies and start actual restoration. It is expected that at some time in the future, the Department of Recreation and Conservation will take this project under its wing, as it did in Barkerville.

## II Historic Area Rehabilitation Through Urban Renewal

A considerable number of American cities have produced master plans for historic districts, in recent years, and have been able to take advantage of the U.S. Federal Urban Renewal Law for their preservation and redevelopment.

One of the most successful attempts at preservation, through urban renewal law and financing, has taken place in Philadelphia. Hundreds of old and historic houses have been preserved in the central area, notably in the Society Hill district, through the impetus of the Washington Square East and Washington Square West urban renewal projects.

In 1957, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority began the planning of several projects for the area. Approximately 1,200 buildings have been restored "according to their original designs and a vibrant residential community is rising to replace decay caused by 100 years of neglect. Converted storefront residential buildings are being returned to their original use and appearance. As in the early days of the city, prominent families and young professional people are settling there". The success of Philadelphia, in combining historic and aesthetic preservation with urban renewal, is being repeated in San Antonio (Texas), Mobile (Alabama), Bethlehem (Pennsylvania), Savannah (Georgia), Chicago, Washington D.C., San Francisco, and numerous other American cities.

Locally, Victoria's rehabilitation of Bastion Square was achieved through urban renewal techniques. In that project, the city purchased several of the derelict

buildings surrounding the square. These were then re-sold, subject to compliance with the project's design criteria. City work on the project was completed in 1967.

APPENDIX THREE<sup>2</sup>

## PUBLIC FINANCE ASSISTANCE FOR PRESERVATION

In the U.S., tax exemption has been a useful tool in assisting in the preservation of historically or architecturally significant structures. Generally, it appears that if a public purpose is served by the preservation of historic property through the exercise of the power of eminent domain, then the same end may be accomplished through the taxing power. The following is an excerpt from the draft legislation, relating to preservation of historic sites in the State of Kentucky.

"Section 5. Classification for tax purposes.

In order to encourage restoration and preservation of historic sites and areas by private owners and pursuant to the authority conferred by S/s 171 of the Constitution of Kentucky, all property designated pursuant to 4(a) above shall be exempt from that portion of local city, county and school property taxes which is offset by a properly documented showing by the owner thereof of restoration, preservation and maintenance expenses thereon. Local city, county, and school property taxes shall be reduced by the amount expended for restoration, preservation

2 See Footnote 1, page 98.



and maintenance expenses each year and amounts expended in a given year may be carried forward to as many as ten subsequent years for application to property taxes thereon during the ensuing period. Provided, however, that if the designation of any historic site or area is for any lawful reason revoked, any unabsorbed tax credit accumulated by the owner thereof pursuant to this section shall immediately lapse."

The 1937 amendment to the Louisiana Constitution states the following:

"that the City is authorized to exempt from local taxes such buildings as the Vieux Carre Commission may designate as having historical and architectural value, provided the owners agree for themselves, their heirs and assigns never to alter or demolish them without the approval of the Vieux Carre Commission."

#### ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS OF PRESERVATIONS

The preservation of historic precincts in the U.S. has proven to be financially beneficial in two basic areas - increased tourism, and, increased real estate values.

##### A. Tourism:

Many communities in the U.S. have assessed the value of

their historic architecture, and found that its economic impact, from the tourist standpoint, is substantial - New Orleans, for example, estimates that the Vieux Carre is responsible for generating \$150 million, yearly, through tourism, while Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and St. Augustine, Florida, put the figure for their areas at \$10 million, annually.

In 1959, the Real Estate Research Corporation of Chicago studied the Vieux Carre district. Their findings were as follows: "The Vieux Carre represents the single largest day-in and day-out concentration of the out-of-town visitors that exists anywhere in the U.S. Almost 80% of the persons interviewed by us on certain streets in the area lived outside New Orleans primarily by the attraction which the French Quarter presents...its presence makes New Orleans one of the four most 'popular' convention cities in the U.S. ...the Vieux Carre is clearly influential in the location of regional and national offices in New Orleans ... It is, therefore, one of the single most important elements in the economic base of the city ... the extraordinary strength of New Orleans is again influenced favourably by the adjacency of the core area to the Vieux Carre."

The United States Department of Commerce reports, that if a community can attract an average of 24 tourists

per day throughout the year, it would be comparable to establishing a new industry with an annual payroll of \$100,000. As the New Orleans study has pointed out, one of the major factors in drawing tourists is their historic district.

B. Real Estate Value:

The Beacon Hill District of Boston provides a good example of the positive economic effects of preservation where real estate values were either stabilized or increased. In 1955, the Beacon Hill Civic Association was able to obtain legislation to establish the Beacon Hill Historic District, making it illegal to demolish, or alter, any existing buildings, or to build new structures, without the approval of an architectural commission. Seven years later, in 1962, real estate sales indicated an increase in real estate values of nearly 180%, even though assessed values in the Beacon Hill District were higher than in any other area of the city. In the Church Hill District of Richmond, Virginia, a programme of restoration commenced in 1958. Between 1958 and 1963, the assessed value of properties where restoration was encouraged rose 136%. During the same period, adjacent unrestored properties rose only 30%.

The same scale of increase in real estate values has

also been recorded in New Orleans, Charleston, and Santa Barbara.

It appears, then, that restoration and preservation can have a healthy effect on economic growth; and this growth means not only greater wealth for the individual, but, also, for the City, in the form of rising land, sales, and income taxes.

C. Other Considerations:

Increases in real estate values, and the expansion of market prices and the general economic activity which they reflect, could have harmful implications as well. More intense economic activity reflected by higher assessments normally produces a greater tax burden on the individual. Speculation could enter into the picture thereby driving the market value of the property further up, thus increasing assessments and causing even higher taxes. This could place hardships on the small merchant in the area concerned, and may eventually force him to bow out in favour of the large, more impersonal, retail outlet. However, it is the small operation which contributes so much to the total environment of a historic district. If the influx of large operations continued, the uniqueness of the area, which caused the growth in economic activity and assessments in the first place, would completely disappear. It should also be

noted, that speculation, eventually, could inhibit expenditures on improvements, as well.

Residents, existent or potential, as well as merchants, seem to be a necessity in the total environment of a historic district. However, if property values became over-inflated, lower, and even middle income groups could not afford to buy. Rents, barring rent control legislation, would also be inflated, driving out those who cannot afford to pay.

It would seem, therefore, that strong deterrents, as well as incentives, are required to ensure healthy economic development in any historic precinct.

APPENDIX FOURC O P YMINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Victoria

March 17, 1970.

Mr. H.P. Capozzi, M.L.A.,  
Vancouver Centre,  
Government Members Room,  
Buildings.

Dear Sir:

As I understand it the Provincial Government is willing to use Vote #197, Department of Municipal Affairs, for a proposal presented on the redevelopment of Gastown and Chinatown area in Vancouver. This would be a commitment in addition to the normal use to which these funds are put under the joint Federal-Provincial Program. My previous letter to you indicates what that commitment is. Therefore, as I understand it, this will serve to indicate that the Provincial Government is willing to enter upon a five-year partnership which would provide on a one-third matching grant basis a total sum in the amount of \$500,000.00. The Provincial Grant would be limited to approximately \$35,000.00 per year provided that a matching amount was forthcoming from both the Federal Government and the City of Vancouver. It may very well be that the City of Vancouver's commitment might be provided in part from private sources within the concerned area.

I would be pleased to take this along further when you have had an opportunity to work a proposal out in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,

(sgnd.) Dan Campbell

Minister.

APPENDIX FIVE<sup>3</sup>SELECTIVE ZONING

The guideline suggested for revising the existing City Zoning Ordinances as they apply to the area, should be considered as a temporary measure, until a more "selective" type of zoning can be recommended as part of a development plan for the historic area.

Zoning sections of a city for particular uses - i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, etc. - which are designed to control development of the "modern" environment when applied to a historic preservation area, can destroy essential ingredients of what should be preserved in historic areas. A major purpose of preservation is to ensure the continuation of the area's "identity, diversity, and authenticity."

In general, developing selective zoning would involve:

- A. examining the existing land usage of each half-block unit in the study area, and determining which characteristics constitute the essential quality of each half-block unit;
- B. relating existing uses to the desired land uses;
- C. developing a selective zoning schedule for each half-block unit to continue (or provide for) the existing or desired land uses.

3 See Footnote 1, page 98.

The same examination would provide information on the heights of buildings along block facings, which would form the basis for height regulations for each half-block unit. Density of use and mass of structure should be rigorously held to the 'traditional' level.

This method of zoning would be a viable part of the desired process of historic preservation "to accomodate the historic precinct to change while ensuring the continuation of the historic district's identity, diversity, and authencity."