BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER:
"MONSTER HOUSES" IN VANCOUVER

By

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to the required standard

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Date  April 26, 00  
Abstract

Architectural housing styles have always been items of interest and comment in Vancouver, but recent times have seen new twists to old concerns. In the 1970s houses on Vancouver’s East Side were dubbed ‘Vancouver Specials’. These houses were described as ‘boxy’, ‘lot huggers’ and ‘ugly’. However, as the issue was relatively an “East Side problem” it was not highly visible in the media or elsewhere in Vancouver society. When large houses, of similar design to the ‘Vancouver Specials’, began to be built in Vancouver’s more affluent and whiter West Side in the 1980s, debate over ‘Monster’ houses was born. This controversy has continued through to this decade as builders, real estate agents, architects, neighbourhood lobbyists, and city planners debate the “normalcy” of landscape. This thesis considers the ramifications of “urban change” to the West Side neighbourhoods in Vancouver, particularly east Kerrisdale. In particular this project focused on the relationships of power, space and race. From what ethnic background do the owners of these so-called ‘Monster’ houses and non-'Monster' houses originate? What are the issues behind the design and landscapes of homes in this area? This project reviewed city by-laws, past and present. At the same time, newspaper coverage of this phenomenon was examined, looking in particular at both the content of articles and the actual titles of these articles. Finally, interviews were conducted to reveal what various people have to say about housing issues in Vancouver.
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I would also like to thank my thesis committee Dr. Neil Guppy, Dr. Lloyd Wong and Dr. Ken Stoddart for their input and support throughout the entire process.

Lots of Love
Joy
I would like to dedicate this thesis in loving memory of my sister
(Mary) Lee-Aune (Gibson) Theriau [July 8, 1962, - December 1, 1998] – my dearest friend!
A recently completed house on Vancouver's West Side.¹

¹ Photograph taken by the author showing one of the many variety of houses in Vancouver’s West Side.
This photograph shows the smaller older home in the foreground with the newer larger home of Vancouver’s West Side.¹

¹ Neal, Hall, "'Monster house' triggers a public brawl," Vancouver Sun, 30 June 1999, A2.
Introduction:

Debate over architectural styles in Vancouver has occurred for decades. For example, in the 1970s several older homes on the East Side of Vancouver were torn down to be replaced by houses dubbed "Vancouver Specials". These were "plain vanilla box[es] which could easily be adapted to include a separate suite but were designed to look like a single family home." ³ Stanbury and Todd argued that these houses caused an outcry from those neighbours who opposed them because they took up practically the entire lot and were ugly. ⁴ However, the issue of the "right" architecture did not cause a great deal of controversy. Media attention was light, and while immediate neighbours might have expressed concern, there was no public debate of any sustained duration. Only when large houses, of similar design to the "Vancouver Specials" began to be built in Vancouver's more affluent and whiter West Side in the 1980s was the debate over "Monster" houses born. This controversy has continued through to this decade as builders, real estate agents, architects, neighbourhood lobbyists, and city planners debate the "normality" of landscape.

The new houses are architecturally different from the Tudor homes and workers' cottages that lined many of the streets of the West Side until the early eighties under the influence of British imperial architecture. Already in the seventies, housing architecture had begun to change in the southern East Side of Vancouver; the part of the city commonly referred to as "Little India". These "Vancouver Specials" were linked to the East Indian community. However, only in the 1980s, when developers in the West Side began to buy houses for the purpose of demolition and replacement did the new house construction spark intense public concern. At issue was the practice of buying a lot, razing an existing house and replacing it with a new, larger house using more of the

⁴ Ibid.
existing lot. Outraged neighbours began to call these new houses, "'boxes on steroids,' ‘lot-line monsters,’ ‘mini-apartment houses,’ ‘totally out of character with the neighbourhood,’ or ‘ugly monsters’."^5 Residents claimed that these houses were ‘unneighbourly’, that they did not fit into the existing ‘street-scape,’ and that they had little or no ‘green space.’

Since this time, powerful neighbourhood organizations have organized, lobbied and continue to lobby the Vancouver Planning Committee to restrict the building of these houses. These lobbying efforts, supported by the local media (the papers of Southam Press, the Eaton owned television stations BCTV and UTV) have had varying degrees of success. In particular, these interests achieved an important victory in February 1996 when a “Good Taste” by-law (RS-6) was passed by the city of Vancouver affecting both new construction and renovations in a section of the West Side neighbourhood, Kerrisdale.

The restrictions required by the "good taste" bylaw were aimed at keeping Kerrisdale architecture close to its historical landscape, its colonial roots. “Good taste” required more landscaping, less concrete, smaller garages, smaller front doors, and it banned brightly colored or shiny roofs, while limiting the number of bay windows.\(^6\) The basic issue seemed architectural, a matter of urban design and taste. However, the argument put forth in this thesis is that the type of home and street that the defenders of tradition are promoting is what they perceive as reflecting a “true/normal” Canadian neighbourhood. In short, a ‘proper’ neighbourhood has streets that reveal Vancouver, as an extension of empire. The traditional control of the British Empire is maintained although Canada is an autonomous country. The argument in this thesis is that the reaction against the new urban landscape is an issue inspired by racism, as "Monster" houses are perceived to be an architectural design rooted in non-Canadian, Chinese (“bad” and thus “abnormal”) taste.

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^5 Ibid., 15.
A key test of this thesis is that the majority of new owners of "Monster Homes" are predominantly affluent Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong.\(^7\) Up until the 1970s and '80s, the neighbourhoods in the West Side have been fairly homogenous in their ethnic make up consisting largely of affluent Anglo Canadians or Anglo Immigrants. These neighbourhoods began as segregated areas where The Canadian Pacific Railway sold only to white residents. Subsequently these areas continued to be populated mainly by white upper class inhabitants. Only with the arrival of wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, immigrants who could afford the skyrocketing prices of real estate in Vancouver’s West Side, did the ethnic composition of these neighbourhoods change. It was coincident with this new Asian immigration that the residents of these neighbourhoods began to dwell upon design. Thus, it is argued in this work that racism plays a central role in the housing debates surrounding the West Side of Vancouver. As Li has recently argued, it is not really about unneighbourly houses, it is a matter of social construction.\(^8\) Further, it is argued that urban normalcy, the sense of a right architecture and landscape, is at issue here.\(^9\) The arrival of a new segment of wealthy Chinese Vancouverites, and their new tastes in landscape, reflect a challenge to the power of the white, apartheid oriented, middle and upper classes who live in the West Side of Vancouver. This thesis will address the “monster house” controversy from this perspective.

Chapter 1 will address the historical context of Canadian immigration policy, housing and racial attitudes in Vancouver. It will show that the Chinese were historically segregated and lived in


\(^9\) Edward, W. Soja, Postmodern Geographies The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social
the geographical area of the city which is today called Chinatown. At the same time, it will present the different classes of Chinese immigrants coming to Canada over the last hundred years. Chinatown is a western construct and is considered to be the “right” place for the Chinese. It has been transformed from the undesirable region of the city to the “exotic” by the dominant white class. It is only when Chinatown ceases to exist as the “right” place for the Chinese that architecture and location of certain groups in geographical areas of the city becomes an issue. That is, the principles of racism that created Chinatown remain in place. It is only the difference in power of the groups as the “Monster” homes represent an erosion of white power and the urban inscription of a new wealthier Chinese group.

Chapter 2 will present a brief literature review of the current literature on “Monster” houses. It will look at the writings of Li, Smart and Smart, Ley and Mitchell and describe how the research presented here adds to this literature. Following, a theoretical discussion focusing on the works of Foucault, Soja, Zukin and Haymes will be presented. It will be argued that what is at the core of the housing issues in Vancouver is power, space and class. The dominant white class of Vancouver’s West Side sees the “Monster” house as a symbol of difference and disorder.

Chapter 3 presents the research methods used to collect data for this project. The methods include face to face interviews, content analysis of newspaper articles, secondary data analysis of real estate listings in Vancouver, and qualitative visual images.

Chapter 4 describes the geographical boundaries of the West Side neighbourhoods, which include Kerrisdale, Shaughnessy, Kitsilano, Point Grey, Dunbar/Southlands and Arbutus Ridge. This section, while mainly descriptive, provides background information on the types of housing and ethnic composition of neighbourhoods and home owners which are important factors in the urban inscription of other.


Chapter 5 provides a basic overview and discusses the importance of Feng Shui which is a Chinese custom that influences the design and positioning of a house on a lot. As well, the data from content analysis of newspaper articles and interviews with key informants are presented. The importance of Feng Shui is also considered as an aspect of housing in Vancouver.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the content analysis of newspaper titles and articles. Articles were collected from the Vancouver Sun and The Province with a few articles from The Courier and The Globe and Mail. In this section, an overview of the types of articles found in researching this project, the manner in which they were presented in their perspective papers, will be discussed. As language has a very powerful influence on its audience both the titles of the articles and the content of the texts were examined. Therefore, in this section it will be argued that the racialized news discourses used to describe the issues surrounding housing in Vancouver’s West Side aids in maintaining conflict and racism between Chinese and Anglo Canadians.

Chapter 7 examines the zoning by-laws of the City of Vancouver that affect the single-family residential areas of the West Side. An overview of the zoning by-laws, in particular, RS-1, 3, 5 and 6 is presented. Using data from the content analysis of the newspaper articles and interviews with key informants the role of City by-laws in the housing debate in Vancouver’s West Side become much clearer in this section.

Finally, chapter 8 presents a discussion and conclusion. Here various themes presented in this thesis are drawn together.
Chapter 1 - Historical Context

Since the Asians were effectively hived off into their own neighbourhoods, Vancouver had the overall appearance of a relatively homogenous city in which Chinatown and little Tokyo were perceived as aberrations. To tourists they were an interesting curiosity; to residents, they represented a failure to check immigration, a source of cheap labour but a danger to the preservation of white society, specifically, an Anglo-Canadian society.  

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of the Chinese and Caucasian populations of Vancouver and the ever changing street-scapes of the city, particularly the residential West Side. Following this, the changing immigration policies of Canada that have influenced Chinese immigration are presented. Interwoven with this, the societal attitudes towards the Asian influx are described. These discussions set the historical context and will lead into a theoretical examination of the current issues surrounding “Monster Houses” in Vancouver.

The Chinese have had to contend with a racist Canadian society that has historically seen them as a threat to the very moral fabric of white society and dubbed them the ‘Yellow Peril’. Ward argues that prior to 1800 there was little or no contempt for the Chinese in BC. After 1800, the view of the Chinese changed considerably. The Chinese were considered to be “a truly backward people, suspicious of foreigners and ignorant of the West’s great achievements. Judged by all western standards, they were clearly inferior.” Ultimately Ward argues that there were several sources that fed the anti-Oriental consciousness in BC. “Among the more important were western images of Asia, continued migration from the Orient, recurrent economic rivalry, and intermittent conflicts of custom and of value.”

These racist attitudes were translated into many exclusionary policies against the

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13 Ibid., 4.
14 Ibid., 169.
Chinese. Chinese people were restricted access to certain types of employment such as the professional careers of law or pharmacy and, due to being disenfranchised, were unable to hold political positions. At the same time, for a good part of the early 1900s, the Chinese in Vancouver were forced to live in areas that are known as present day China Town or Strathcona, (see Figure 1 on the following page), a swamp area which was therefore an undesirable locale for Anglo Vancouverites. Furthermore, although Canadian Immigration policies have changed from being overtly racist to seemingly very ‘open door’, or some may say non-racist policies, these policies have not changed the general climate of white Canadians’ attitudes to an ever increasing Chinese population. The naming of large houses as ‘Monster Houses’ is another form of racism towards Chinese Immigrants. A working definition of ‘Monster Houses’ will be presented in the research methods section. The historical framework reveals a correlation between racism, immigration and geographies of exclusion in Vancouver. This connection, albeit a more subtle one, remains and has been translated into an issue of taste and architectural style in the West Side of the city as Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Canadians became affluent enough to settle in this area.
Vancouver's Chinatown is the largest in Canada, and in North America it is second only to San Francisco. The historic core of Chinatown is found along Pender and on both sides of Main Street. The broader district is generally located between Hastings and Union Streets and between Gore and Carrall Streets. Originally settled by Chinese labourers during the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1870's, the area has traditionally been the focus of the Chinese community. \(^\text{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Hand drawn map by the author.
\(^{16}\) Community Profiles, on line, available from Internet Explorer @ http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/community_profiles/downtown/dt_profile.htm
Li and Wong point out that Chinese immigration to Canada can be divided into three distinct time periods or waves, which correspond to the changes in Canadian Immigration policy. The first period or first wave of Chinese immigration began in the late 1800s (near the turn of the Century) and continued until the 1950s. During this period the majority of the Chinese immigrants came from mainland China and were of a working class or peasant background. "The typical Chinese migrant of the past was male, rural-born, with few skills, and little knowledge of English." The majority of the Chinese immigrants came from "the Sze-yap area in the province of Kwangtung southwest of Canton." Ward describes this region as very small covering a 30 mile radius and forming a culturally homogeneous group. "The great majority were peasants schooled in the intensive, wet-rice agriculture of the district."  

The early Chinese immigrants were seen as a cheap source of labour for projects such as the construction of the CP Railway. In other words, the Chinese were used as labour that was relatively disposable for projects that were deemed to be of high risk or unbefitting of white folk. Although the Chinese were needed for the labour market they were sent a strong and clear
message by white Canadians through government policy that was passed to restrict the numbers of Chinese immigrants.

The Federal Government “imposed a head tax on Chinese in 1885 and gradually raised [it] to $500 by 1904.”23 The government’s restrictive policies culminated with the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 [essentially an Exclusion Act] which is “consistent with Canada’s history of veiled strategies on alien entry” even though the Act was not framed as such.24 The Head Tax policy was eliminated with the Exclusion Act; however this act did not end Chinese immigration entirely. Chinese could seek to immigrate to Canada “whereby entry was granted only to specified classes, subject to the discretion of the minister of immigration, who granted the final authority for admission.”25 So in other words, if one was well connected and had the financial means one could still immigrate to Canada. With the Exclusion Act the number of Chinese immigrants was kept under strict control.

Between 1891 and 1901 the Chinese population in Canada almost doubled, from 9,129 to 17,312, and in the next ten years it increased to 27,831. Although the head tax, which was raised to $100 in 1900 and $500 in 1903, did not reduce the number of Chinese entering Canada, it did slow down the rate of increase. Nevertheless, the number of Chinese continued to rise in every census until after 1931, when it began to decline. Undoubtedly this drop was brought about by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, which totally excluded the Chinese from entering Canada. The restricted opportunities in Canada for Chinese also prompted some of them to return to China. As a result the Chinese population shrank about 12,000 from 46,519 in 1931 to 34,627 in 1941, and it continued to decline slowly from 1941 to 1951.26

The beginning of the second wave was marked by the introduction of the Points System in 1967 by the then Department of Manpower and Immigration. Ottawa eliminated overtly discriminatory immigration policy based on race and ethnicity. With this change the number of

25 Ibid., 139.
Chinese in Canada increased, “[I]n the four years 1967-70, 28,440 immigrants from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan entered Canada, more than half the number that had arrived in the preceding twenty-two years.” Table 1 shows the early statistics of Chinese immigrant population up to and including 1971.

Table 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
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<th>1941</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
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<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>2,110,502</td>
<td>2,548,514</td>
<td>3,063,195</td>
<td>3,999,081</td>
<td>4,868,738</td>
<td>5,715,904</td>
<td>6,709,685</td>
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<td>1,298,929</td>
<td>1,649,371</td>
<td>2,061,719</td>
<td>2,452,743</td>
<td>2,927,990</td>
<td>3,483,038</td>
<td>4,319,167</td>
<td>5,540,346</td>
<td>6,180,120</td>
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<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>202,991</td>
<td>254,319</td>
<td>310,501</td>
<td>403,417</td>
<td>294,635</td>
<td>473,544</td>
<td>464,682</td>
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<td>23,731</td>
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<td>72,827</td>
<td>121,753</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>17,312</td>
<td>27,831</td>
<td>39,587</td>
<td>46,519</td>
<td>34,627</td>
<td>32,528</td>
<td>58,197</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>4,738</td>
<td>9,067</td>
<td>15,868</td>
<td>23,342</td>
<td>23,149</td>
<td>21,663</td>
<td>29,157</td>
<td>37,260</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>3,485,761</td>
<td>4,324,810</td>
<td>5,371,315</td>
<td>7,206,643</td>
<td>8,787,949</td>
<td>10,376,786</td>
<td>11,506,655</td>
<td>14,009,429</td>
<td>18,238,247</td>
<td>21,568,310</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The majority of Chinese immigrants in this second wave, came from Hong Kong “where many had acquired English-language education and lived a decade or more in an urban environment not altogether alien to the industrial West.” Unlike the first wave, then, second wave of Chinese immigrants were from a middle class background.

The third and present wave has been generated by Canada’s Business Immigration Program which targeted primarily Hong Kong and Taiwan (See Table 9, Appendix B). This program “was unceremoniously [initiated] in 1978 when immigration regulations officially recognized the categories ‘Entrepreneurs’ and ‘Self-employed’.” This allowed for a new class of people that differed dramatically from the first two waves. “[A] sizeable proportion of Chinese migrants”, during this period, “belong to the petit bourgeois and capitalist classes prior to, and upon entry into Canada.” With further changes “in immigration regulations in 1985 to expand recruitment of business immigrants many immigrants with substantial assets from Hong

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27 Ibid., 214.
Kong, and also Taiwan, began to establish themselves in Canada.\textsuperscript{31} The Business Immigration Program expanded in 1986 to "include an ‘investor’ category which required the immigrant to own capital which would be invested in Canada."\textsuperscript{32} This new class of Chinese immigrant has substantial capital, which in turn has changed the face of both Anglo-Canadian business and of the homogeneously white West Side community neighbourhoods. This change in the Canadian Immigration policy can be seen merely as targeting the wealthy immigrant to benefit the Canadian economy. However, it can also be seen as yet another form of racism as it has "an ironic echo of the turn-of-the-century head tax, [as] their Canadian passport has, after all, cost them at least Cdn $ 250,000 in a requisite business investment."\textsuperscript{33} Although this policy was not exclusively directed to the Chinese, the net effect was that Chinese from Hong Kong and Taiwan were the majority of participants in this program.

Along with selective immigration policies, Chinese in Vancouver have been spatially segregated or marginalized on the basis of race and class. "Chinatown" and Shaughnessy are two geographical areas of Vancouver which typify this segregation. As Mitchell states,

\begin{quote}
[t]he identities that have been constructed along racial lines for Chinese Canadians and Anglo-Canadians have been historically tied to place in Vancouver, with “Chinatown” and “Shaughnessy” exemplifying two contrasting neighborhoods with formerly rigid racial boundaries and class distinctions.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

Technically, if one were to examine today’s city map of Vancouver, Chinatown straddles the East and West Side of downtown. However, it is and has always been considered to be a part of Vancouver’s East Side, an area that has historically carried the stigma of lower-class status and poverty. “The distinction between east-side and west-side Vancouver, noted as early as 1891

(‘the West End is the home of the merchant and professional, the East that of the lumber King and mechanic’), clearly persisted as the suburbs developed.”\textsuperscript{35} And Shaughnessy, which began as a Vancouver suburb, has historically been inhabited by upper-class Anglo-Canadians.

Anderson argues that Chinatown, the ghetto where Chinese-Canadians were confined in Vancouver until some years after World War II, is a Western construct. For her, Chinatowns are “illustrative of a process of cultural domination that gave European settlers in North America...the power to define and shape the district according to their own images and interests.”\textsuperscript{36} She also examines the location and exclusion of the Chinese in Vancouver showing the political processes that have changed the architecture of the city.

Chinatown is bordered by Strathcona, which is considered by Atkin to be Vancouver’s first neighbourhood. “The Strathcona of today is bounded by Hastings, Campbell, Gore, Atlantic and Prior streets.”\textsuperscript{37} Chinatown has historically always been a neighbour to Strathcona, “and Strathcona is often seen as a Chinese neighbourhood. Streets signs are in both Chinese and English.”\textsuperscript{38} The Chinese settled mainly in this area for a good part of the 1900s as they were made to feel unwelcome if they tried to buy land and live elsewhere in Vancouver. The City Council of the day tried to appease the Anglo-populous from their fears of a Chinese invasion by trying to pass exclusionist by-laws such as the “Can’t Live Here’ legislation” to restrict where Chinese people could live.\textsuperscript{39} At one point, “when a young Chinese couple sought to buy a lot in West Point Grey, ‘a better class’ residential district, unhappy neighbours asked City Council to

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 47.
restrict Orientals to certain parts of the city.”  There have been and still are restrictive covenants on housing in Vancouver which will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter on Municipal By-laws. However, before concluding this section a personal anecdote illustrates that racism is still imbedded in Anglo-Canadian ideology.

When friends of the author were looking at real-estate in Vancouver in 1994 they were interested in purchasing an apartment in the Oakview Apartments. However upon looking at the “Memorandum and Articles of Association of Oakview Apartments Ltd.”, a legal document that sets out the rules for owners in this particular building, they came across an example of blatant racism. Point number 9 of this document states:

If a proposed transferee shall be a person who or whose immediate family is of [negro or oriental blood or extraction], the Directors shall not consent to any assignment of lease and transfer of shares in his or her favor, but shall immediately call a meeting of shareholders and the decision of the majority of the shareholders as to whether such application shall be permitted or not shall be that required in such case and they need not act upon any legal or other principle in so deciding, and if it develops that in fact there is such person of [negro or oriental blood or extraction] allowed in by the Directors, any shareholder may demand a general meeting to be duly called by the directors and the matter may then be dealt with as though in the first place an application had been properly made to the shareholders, and their decision shall be made and taken in the same manner and with the same effect as if the consent of the directors had never been given.  (Emphasis added.)

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40 Ibid., 138.
42 Crux and McMaster Barristers & Solicitors, Memorandum and Articles of Association of Oakview Apartments Ltd. (Vancouver: Crux and McMaster, 1947), 3.
Although this document was prepared in 1947, it was still being given to perspective buyers in the 1990s. Anti-Orientalism is not a thing of the past. The racist sentiment of Anglo-Vancouverites influences the housing issues in Vancouver.

As can be seen in the above, the history of Canada’s immigration with its underlying connection to race and class, along with societal attitudes, have aided in the maintenance of geographies of exclusion.

The following chapter will present theoretical orientations on the issue of “Monster” houses in Vancouver’s West Side. There will be an examination of the relationships of power, space, race and class with respect to the housing debates.
Chapter 2 – Thinking about space, place, and monsters

Before delving into the theoretical discussion of this chapter, the works of Ley, Li, Mitchell and Smart and Smart will be reviewed to provide background for the reader. Ley’s work presents the connection between the Anglo-elites of Vancouver’s West Side to the architecture and landscape of the British Empire.43

With the climate similar to the south of England, the young cities of Vancouver and Victoria were well located to give faithful expression to a variant of conservative English landscape taste in their upper middle-class gardens and streetscapes, a bucolic tableau of rural England as home, the countryside as the essential nation.44

The new architecture and landscape of the new Chinese elite in Vancouver has shaken the stability “of an established hegemony of Anglo-conformity.”45 At the same time he examines the changing borders of the world with the emergence of global citizens. With the changing immigration policies in Canada it has become easier for the wealthier Chinese people to set up business and residence in Vancouver. In other words, the new architecture and landscape of Vancouver’s West Side, “expresses the meeting of the local with the global, the collision of the past with the present, the conjunction of hegemonic blocs with roots in Europe and Asia.”46

Li on the other hand examines the public image of affluent Chinese immigrants.47 The Chinese are being linked to “Monster” houses or using Li’s terminology “unneighbourly houses”, and in this “process, social symbols and concepts take on racial significance to demarcate the difference between Caucasians and their Canadian heritage, and Chinese immigrants and their foreign culture.”48 This work “gives credence to the view of race as a social construct, and its shows how a projection of ‘race’ can gain wide social acceptance.

44 Ibid., 188.
46 Ibid., 185.
especially when it provides a rationale to a social problem.” And of course in this case it provides a rationale for the “Monster” house issues in Vancouver’s West Side.

Mitchell’s work discusses among other issues “the contemporary message of Canadian identity and nationhood [as] the message of multiculturalism. Rather than one culture (white) being identified with the essence of the nation, as in Britain, all cultures together will form the essence of what it means to ‘be Canadian’.” Along with presenting the problems of multiculturalism Mitchell reinforces the established racism in Vancouver. She also points out that the racial identities of Chinese Canadians and Anglo Canadians have been historically tied to place in Vancouver, “with ‘Chinatown’ and ‘Shaughnessy’ exemplifying two contrasting neighborhoods with formerly rigid racial boundaries and class distinction.”

Finally, Smart and Smart focus “on the meaning of [the] characteristic of ‘monstrosity’ and its implications for our understanding of processes of change in Canadian cities.” In understanding the changing face of a city they discuss three interconnected but distinct aspects of space.

There is, first, place as location, a specific spot in the world, where some things and people are near and others are far. Second, there is place recognized by participants as a distinct locale or setting (the men’s house or the private bedroom). Third, there is the sense of place, the meanings caught up with specific spaces, which users hold (Agnew and Duncan 1989: 2). These aspects are multiple, since location, locale, and sense of place may all vary according to the social position and daily undertakings of different users.

The above works have provided my project with the necessary tools to expand and provide a different perspective on the issues of “Monster” houses. My project moves beyond

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48 Ibid., 14.
49 Ibid., 14.
51 Ibid., 273.
53 Ibid., 35.
these works in so much as my theoretical orientation adds a new and different perspective by applying the work of Zukin, Soja and Foucault.

This thesis will add to the body of existing literature as it is more specifically examines the power, space and race relations between the new wealthy Chinese immigrants and the established Anglo-elites in Vancouver's West Side. It is very important to study the Chinese in Vancouver as this group is the largest immigrant group in BC and in Vancouver in particular. It is anticipated that findings from this research project will contribute to the field of Sociology in several ways. First, the theoretical analysis will contribute in providing a better understanding of racism and power relations in Canadian Society in part and in the city of Vancouver in particular. This will in turn, foster better relations between Chinese immigrants or new Canadians and the Anglo Canadians who lay claim to a long heritage in the West Side neighbourhoods. Second, these data will explain and clarify the linkages between the different levels of government in constructing policies and by-laws and those who have the power to make the changes. Finally, by examining the role of the media, the thesis will show the power of the media in exacerbating racism/discrimination and its connection to power.

**Theory**

At this point the theoretical discussion will be put forth keeping in mind space, place and monsters.

...culture is ... a powerful means of controlling cities. As a source of images and memories, it symbolizes "who belongs" in specific places. As a set of architectural themes, it plays a leading role in urban redevelopment strategies based on historic preservation or local "heritage". 54

In recent years, culture has also become a more explicit site of conflicts over social differences and urban fears. Large numbers of new immigrants and ethnic minorities have put pressure on public institutions, from schools to political parties, to deal with their individual demands. 55

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55 Ibid., 2.
The look and feel of cities reflect decisions about what – and who – should be visible and what should not, on concepts of order and disorder, and on uses of aesthetic power. In this primal sense, the city has always had a symbolic economy.\(^{56}\)

Zukin shows that the economic, social and political power constructs and shapes the urban landscapes.

In a narrow sense, landscape represents the architecture of social class, gender, and race relations imposed by powerful institutions. In a broader sense, however, it connotes the entire panoramas that we see: both the landscape of the powerful-cathedrals, factories, and skyscrapers-and the subordinate, resistant, or expressive vernacular of the powerless-village chapels, shantytowns, and tenements. A landscape mediates, both symbolically and materially, between the socio-spatial differentiation of capital implied by market and the socio-spatial homogeneity of labor suggested by place.\(^{57}\)

Have Anglo-residents of Vancouver used their power, which is inherent in their affluence, to control the so-called “Monster” houses of the West Side? Is the core of the housing issue in Vancouver a question of power, space, race and class? Is the “Monster” house a symbol of difference and disorder for the dominant Anglo group? With the racialization of space/geography in the past, the Chinese immigrants were “hived” off in Vancouver’s Chinatown as they were seen as lower-class, dirty, unworthy citizens. They did not have the economic means to buy homes in the established Anglo neighbourhoods. However, the new affluent Chinese immigrants have equal or greater economic power which enables them to settle in predominantly Anglo neighbourhoods, which is seen as a threat to the established elite. The racialization of space is not as easily controlled today as it was in the past. In this section the theories underlying the social processes hypothesized to be at work here will be discussed.

In Vancouver’s West Side, the traditional “British” influenced landscape represents the power of the long established Anglo-elite. With the changing landscape and street-scapes of

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 7.

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these West Side neighbourhoods, this white power is being shaken to its very core. Linking public cultures

...to commercial cultures has important implications for social identity and social control. Preserving an ecology of images often takes a connoisseur’s view of the past, re-reading the legible practices of social class discrimination and financial speculation by reshaping the city’s collective memory.  

The architectural changes in housing in Vancouver’s West Side could be considered as reflecting the new culture of the new affluent Asian immigrants. Are the Anglo-elites, who are opposed to change, trying to maintain a utopian ideal of the past which includes openly racist sentiments against Orientals? Albeit however, their apparent racist actions today are much more subtle.

In regards to the concepts of space and place, Zukin claims that space

…structures people’s perceptions, interactions, and sense of well-being or despair, belonging or alienations. This structuring quality is most clearly felt (and most visible) in the built environment, where people can erect homes, react to architectural forms, and create—or destroy—landmarks or individual and collective meaning.  

She suggests that commercial based restructuring of urban spaces offer models for people to follow in the search of utopian landscapes which for her could be Disneyworld. At the same time, “we are used to thinking of place as a geographical location, a point on a well-bounded map.”  

Place in that respect refers to territory however, “place in a third broader sense is a cultural artifact of social conflict and cohesion.”

Culture “is also a powerful means of controlling cities. As a source of images and memories, it symbolizes ‘who belongs’ in specific places.”  

60 Ibid., 12.
61 Ibid., 12.
plays a leading role in urban redevelopment strategies based on historic preservation or local ‘heritage’.”

Zukin proposes that the city has always had a symbolic economy.

Building a city depends on how people combine the traditional economic factors of land, labor, and capital. But it also depends on how they manipulate symbolic languages of exclusion and entitlement. The look and feel of cities reflect decisions about what—and who—should be visible and what should not, on concepts of order and disorder, and on uses of aesthetic power.

This presents the problem of what is “right”, “beautiful”, appropriate architecture which is an essential aspect of the housing issues in Vancouver’s West Side.

This analysis raises the question of whether the “Monster House” is imagined, not as a development or revitalization or renewal, but rather as destruction, devastation and abnormality?

Weak voices of dissent have emerged as Ley explains:

Two Chinese-Canadian home owners in South Shaughnessy made their view of new residential forms as progressive, evident in a letter to City Council: ‘We must grow out of the toys and clothing of our youth. We must allow some things to die before we can have a new life.... We are undergoing change and change itself will provide the new forms and new concepts of beauty in the future’. Condemning ‘antique’ ideas, another correspondent claimed ‘Vancouver is a modern progressive city. The world is changing all the time, so will this city’.

In effect then, “the home is an important opportunity to demonstrate one’s appropriation of progress, one’s purchase upon modernity.” In other words, the immigrants who live in these expansive homes “wish to project a successful, forward-looking modern identity.” So indeed then the house itself, “becomes a hybrid for, retaining certain traditional values but also proclaiming the restless modern commitment to growth and change.”

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63 Ibid., 1.
64 Ibid., 7.
66 Ibid., 192.
67 Ibid., 192.
68 Ibid., 192.
merely seen as symbols of a new wealth – changing times. Do the established “Old Guard” view these “Monster” houses as a threat to their homogenous neighbourhoods?

Those who are in positions of power – white middle/upper class people of Vancouver’s West Side influence housing in Vancouver. The language of public policy is written in such ways as to exclude certain groups from building certain types of houses in Vancouver’s West Side. These statements show the “symbolic economy”, according to Zukin, that exist in Vancouver. Soja offers a postmodern gaze to these comments.

Soja’s and latter works have helped this thesis to incorporate new textual ways of looking at the city, particularly Vancouver’s West Side. He sees cities as text. He criticizes Marxist approaches that are not interested in space but rather only in time. His intention is to:

…tamper with the familiar modalities of time, to shake up the normal flow of the linear text to allow other, more lateral connections to be made. The discipline imprinted in a sequentially unfolding narrative predisposes the reader to think historically, making it difficult to see the text as a map, a geography of simultaneous relations and meanings that are tied together by a spatial rather than a temporal logic. …spatialize the historical narrative,…..

Moreover, Soja develops Foucault’s concept of heterotopias an idea central to the argument in this theoretical approach. Haymes work was chosen to provide a useful explanation and application of heterotopias as he is strongly influenced by Soja. Haymes uses Soja’s interpretation of Foucault’s concept of ‘heterotopies’, “…which is useful for understanding how some spaces get portrayed as ‘normal’ and ‘ordered’ at the expense of constructing other as ‘abnormal’ and ‘disordered’.”

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73 Ibid., 4.
Essentially, the British view inscribes in the city, and in the case of Vancouver’s West Side, the “Normal”- old and established versus the “abnormal”- the new, that which is disruptive. In addition, Haymes puts forth the argument that “race”, as a social construction is one of the most powerful categories for constructing urban mythologies, and in his case mythologies of black people in New York. He is concerned with the “racializing of urban space from the standpoint of white supremacist ideologies that primitivize and pathologize black bodies, that discursively constitute black urban populations through jungle metaphors and racist myths surrounding the exotic black subject.” In Haymes’s opinion “the white supremacist thinking and attitudes that undergrid urban mythologies about blacks have resulted in their spatial regulation and control in cities.” This process occurs within the rules and regulations of the dominant culture. As Haymes puts it, “the principle of racial exclusion was practiced through restrictive covenants and deeds employed by neighbourhood ‘improvement associations and social pressure applied to realtors, property owners, and public officials.’” Which is the case with “Monster Houses” in Vancouver. The Chinese have been pathologized historically in Vancouver and have been forced to live in specific areas such as Chinatown because of restrictive covenants.

At this point in the discussion a further elaboration on the powers of space and spatiality by examining Foucault’s original works will be presented. “Every Foucauldian scholar acknowledges the power-knowledge link, but for Foucault himself the relationship was embedded in a trialectic of power, knowledge, and space. The third term should never be forgotten.” Space for Foucault as is quoted in Soja “is fundamental in any form of communal

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75 Ibid., xi.
76 Ibid., 5.
77 Ibid., 5.
life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power." Space itself has "a history in Western experience and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space." The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.

In other words these sites are unique. Foucault argues that all sites can be broken down into two main types – utopias and heterotopias.

Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.

In the case of Vancouver’s housing, this author argues that, the idea of an unchanging streetscape that maintains the British ideologies of style and power are a form of Foucault’s utopia-type site.

The second type of sites which Foucault discusses is heterotopias. These sites are...probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.

Foucault clarifies his idea of heterotopia in the following example:

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once

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79 Ibid., 149.
81 Ibid., 23.
82 Ibid., 24.
83 Ibid., 24.
absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.  

There are two main categories of heterotopias which Foucault identifies, “one of ‘crisis’ and the other of ‘deviation’.”  

The ‘crisis’ heterotopia can be defined as sites that “are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.”  

“Whether these cover all heterotopias is left unclear.”  

Foucault argues that these 

...heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced, [he believes] by what we might call heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons; and one should perhaps add retirement homes that are, as it were, on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation since, after all, old age is a crisis, but is also a deviation since, in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation.  

Through such forms of spatial regulation the heterotopia takes 

...on the qualities of human territoriality, with its conscious and subconscious surveillance of presence and absence, entry and exit; its demarcation of behaviors and boundaries; its protective yet selectively enabling definition of what is the inside and the outside and who may partake of the inherent pleasures. Although not mentioned explicitly in “Of Other Space,” implicit in this heterotopian regulation of opening and closing are the workings of power, of what Foucault would later describe as “disciplinary technologies” that operate through the social control of space, time, and otherness to produce a certain kind of “normalization”.  

The “Monster” house has become the site of “otherness”. Space, power, race and class are indeed at the core of the “Monster” house debate in Vancouver.  

84 Ibid., 24.  
85 Ibid., 24.  
86 Ibid., 24.  
Only a small fraction of the Chinese immigrant population is affluent and living in Vancouver's West Side. There is still a large number of poorer, low-class Chinese people living in Vancouver's Chinatown, and the so-called new Chinatown - Richmond, and Vancouver's East Side. However, the threat of a “Chinese Invasion” is real to those in power - the Anglo-Elite. This group perceives that their space – the traditional architecture - and wealth is being shaken to its core by the new affluent Asians who are settling into their neighbourhoods.

The next chapter will present the research methods used to collect the data for this project.
Chapter 3 - Research Methods

The research methods used for this project are varied yet they are not without flaws. In this chapter not only will the methods for this project be discussed but also a rationale will be provided as to why they were chosen. As well, a critique of the methods will be discussed in order to provide some suggestions for future research.

The basic question for this project is the following: What roles do ‘race’, class and power have, if any, with respect to housing design/construction, zoning by-laws and the changing streetscapes of Vancouver’s West Side?

As a sociologist prior to discussing the methods used for this project it is imperative to not assume that everyone has the same interpretation of ‘race’ or ‘racism’ so a definition is essential for my argument. It is safe to say that ‘race’ and ‘racism’ are extremely complex terms. For the purpose of this project when the term ‘race’ is used it is referring to a group of people. Racism on the other hand is attitudes and actions which are directed towards certain groups particularly minority groups. A more specific term for the type of racism that is referred to in this thesis is cultural racism. Cultural racism “consists of the tacit network of beliefs and values that encourage and justify discriminatory practices”. At the same time, cultural racism is reflected in everyday language – whiteness is associated with overwhelmingly positive connotations, while blackness, in Roget’s Thesaurus, has no fewer than 60 distinctively negative synonyms, 20 of which are related to race. It is reflected in the images generated by mass media (racial minorities are often portrayed as problems) and by arts (literature, poetry, and visual art).

Cultural racism creates a “we and they” mentality, that is, one’s own racial group is considered to be better than other groups.

Although the above definition is limited it provides a basis for this project. However, let it be reiterated that ‘race’ and ‘racism’ will be terms that will be constantly examined in sociology and

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91 Ibid., 48-49.
the meanings will often be contested.92

So keeping in mind the research question, it was decided that several research methods were needed to uncover the issues behind the basic question, including content analysis of newspaper articles and face to face interviews. The first step was an extensive literature review which quickly uncovered the fact that although there is not much written under the guise of sociology, with the exception of Li, Smart and Smart and Zukin, that geography or rather human geography has grappled with these issues more extensively.93 Ley, Duncan, Holdsworth, Majury, Pettit, Mitchell, are geographers who have discussed the various issues of "Monster" houses.94

One can not talk about "Monster" houses without trying to define this term for the readers. This proved to be a most difficult task as it has both a straightsforward definition of size and at the same time has a negative meaning as the following quote so aptly puts it:

The act of naming something a monster - ...an enormous house in the neighborhood - is the act of demonizing the inhabitants. Are the immigrant occupants of large houses diabolically scheming to eat us alive?

My [dictionary] tells me that a 'monster' is an evil and sub-human creature; a dangerous, destructive and uncontrollable force. Moving from malevolent monster to the merely monstrous offers no relief from ascribing monster traits.

I turn to 'monstrous' and find that it's villainous, satanic, diabolical. Yet it also means enormous, even tremendous, neither of which accurately conveys the derogatory meaning intended in naming monster ... houses.

92 For further reading and discussion of 'racism' see Robert, Miles, Racism (London: Routledge, 1989).
We are challenged to examine our targets for monstrosity in a society where the demonization of certain ‘monster houses’ resides alongside our deification of ‘bigger is better’ ....

It must be noted that “Monster” is not always demonized. For example, when it is referring to things such as Monster Truck Rallies, Monster Burgers and other things of the like it is a positive image. However, it is important to deal with the issue of “Monster” as negative as it is often connected to the Chinese population when it is used not only in general discussion but also in various media coverage. Historically the Chinese have been demonized as the “Yellow Peril” bringing disease and corruption to North America.

At the same time I wanted to come up with an actual size at which a house becomes a “Monster” house. Essentially a “Monster” house is a house that uses the maximum allowable building area on a lot. However, if one were to look at the square footage of a “Monster” house it is approximately 3,000 square feet to over 8,000 square feet. Also, particular architectural features such as red tile flat roofs and double wide doors have been associated with “Monster” houses. This definition of “Monster” house will be broadened later in chapter 7.

After coming up with a working definition the next step in the research process of this thesis was the content analysis of the media coverage of “Monster” houses, specifically in the newspaper print media over a ten year period from 1986 to 1996. Approximately ten articles per year were analyzed, primarily from the Vancouver Sun and the Province although, a few articles from the Courier and a national paper, the Globe and Mail were included. A sample of just over a hundred articles was obtained by using the U.B.C. library and the Vancouver Public Library. The standard news indexes available at both libraries as well as the CD ROM which has limited access to the Vancouver Sun and the Globe and Mail were used to aid in collecting the articles. As well, the Vancouver library’s Fine Art Floor has kept an extensive file of clippings on Architecture in the

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City of Vancouver which was invaluable as it had many articles pertaining to the “Monster” house debate. Articles where chosen on the basis of having words in the titles such as; “Monster” house, City By-laws, housing, design, architecture, beauty, Asian, immigration etc.

After finding what became an overwhelming number of articles the daunting task of what to do with them was begun. In the end, it was decided that by putting the titles into workable tables it allowed a qualitative and, to some extent, a quantitative analysis of the words and their meanings. At the same time a content analysis on the articles themselves was conducted.

The newspapers chosen for this project were selected because they are the local papers of Vancouver. Articles from one of Canada's national newspapers were included as they were uncovered in the research process and they articulated the sentiments of the local media. These papers were also chosen because they are controlled by the white, mostly conservative, power elite. Analyzing the content of these articles and the titles was a difficult task. To provide a broader picture of media and its influence on the issues of “Monster” houses further research would have to include Chinese media.

To round out the research face to face interviews were conducted. Real estate agents, builders, architects, activists and city planners were chosen to get a workable number of subjects. Approximately two to three interview subjects in each category was the target goal. It was hoped that this would be a base for a Ph.D dissertation in which a larger number of interviews could be conducted that would include homeowners in the West Side neighbourhoods. To comply with UBC ethics procedures introductory letters describing the research project were sent out. The letters included a self-addressed, stamped return envelope asking for people willing to be interviewed. The mailing list was generated from many different sources including real estate lawn sign boards, the yellow pages, the web site for Vancouver City Hall and finally word of mouth. A few letters at a time were mailed out to obtain a sample in each category giving the project only a month to come up with approximately ten interviewees.
Approximately twenty-one letters were mailed out to real estate agents. Out of that a sample of both males and females and of both Chinese and white respondents was desired. In order to try and capture Chinese respondents fifteen of the twenty-one letters, were sent to those names which appeared most likely to be of Chinese origin. With the other groups eight letters were mailed out to architects, three to city planners, four to activists, and four to builders. The sample did not achieve the original goal set out by this project, however, the data collected supports the thesis. The final sample included one white male, two white females and one Chinese female real estate agents; one white male and one Chinese male architect; one white female and one white male city planner; one white male building association representative; and one white male activist.

For each interview the interviewee chose the location, time and date. While a structured interview schedule was prepared the interviews were essentially unstructured as the interviewee expressed his or her own feelings on what they perceived were the issues surrounding the “Monster” house debate in Vancouver. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for qualitative analysis.

Face to face interviews are indeed an important method of qualitative research and future research on “Monster” houses it should include interviews with builders. Unfortunately this project was unable to come up with a sample of builders. To capture this group, a mail survey, guaranteeing anonymity, might yield a sample for analysis. Another possible improvement for research would be to narrow the field of interview subjects but have a greater number of subjects to provide a broader perspective.

Visual data, in the form of photographs, were also gathered. As representations of the neighbourhoods in the West Side of Vancouver these photographs compare houses for size, location and proximity, as well as illustrating the principals of Feng Shui.

City by-laws pertaining to single family residential zoning and the West Side of Vancouver were also examined. RS 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 zoning by-laws were investigated and discussed in the
interviews with the City Planners to determine how they were written and passed. This analysis attempted to determine if ‘race’ was a factor in the regulation of size and design of houses.

Secondary data were also generated from the Current Active Listings of the Multiple Listing Service, Vol. 12, No. 98066, March 26, 1998 published by the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. A sample of homes and their owners in the West Side of Vancouver was used to try to determine the ethnic origin of homeowners. Owners were categorized in to either “Asian or Caucasian” based on the last name of the owner which is a common practice in Sociology. However, determining one’s ethnic origin based on surnames is not without fault as many different groups have Anglicized their names to “blend” into North American society. The research for this project did not uncover any hard evidence that Chinese immigrants changed their surnames. However, speaking with a friend of mine who’s family are Chinese immigrants he felt that it happened only on rare occasions. When considering the fact that many recent Chinese immigrants are affluent and self-assured I would argue that the possibility of these immigrants changing their surnames is not very likely.

At the same time, the Vancouver City Hall’s world wide web site was used to add more descriptive information about neighbourhoods in the West Side from their neighbourhood profiles. Vancouver is a city which the Planning Department has divided into 23 neighbourhoods. For planning and administrative purposes the City defines the boundaries of these neighbourhoods. Initially Kerrisdale, a West Side neighbourhood, was chosen as the research site because it was the neighbourhood that I heard discussed the most when I first began this project. However, after the available literature was read and upon completing a few interviews the physical area was broadened to include the West Side of Vancouver as the phenomenon of “Monster” houses is not only in Kerrisdale. It was broadened to include the neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy, Arbutus Ridge, West Point Grey, Kitsilano and Dunbar-Southlands. The geographical location of Vancouver’s West Side was chosen primarily as it was the focus of the media attention and the public outcry. Figure 2,
on page 32, is a map of these neighbourhoods. In retrospect a narrower geographical area would have been a more manageable area for this project.

The following chapter provides geographical and descriptive information on these neighbourhoods which includes number of houses, mother tongue spoken and ethnic origin of homeowners based on surnames. Essentially the next chapter provides background information of these neighbourhoods.
Chapter 4 Urban Inscription of the Other – Neighbourhoods and Home Owners in Vancouver’s West Side

This chapter establishes a link between the ownership of “monster” houses and Chinese ownership by using data collected from the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. As well this section presents the geographical descriptions of Kerrisdale, Shaughnessy, Arbutus Ridge, West Point Grey, Kitsilano and Dunbar-Southlands as these six neighbourhoods make up the majority of Vancouver’s West Side and, at the same time, they have dealt with the issues surrounding “Monster” houses. As well, other descriptive statistics that have been gathered from the City of Vancouver’s Web Site will be presented. The following figure shows how the City planners have divided up Vancouver.

Figure 2
Vancouver’s Neighbourhoods

96 Community Profiles, on-line, available from Internet Explorer @
Kerrisdale

As Kerrisdale is the major focus of this project it will be presented first. This fairly affluent neighbourhood covers the area from Blenheim Street to Granville Street and from 41st Avenue to the North Arm of the Fraser River.\(^97\)

**Figure 3**

Kerrisdale\(^98\)

Kerrisdale is a neighbourhood with small areas that have been zoned for commercial properties, agriculture, two-family dwellings and multiple dwellings. The majority of this neighbourhood is zoned for single-family dwellings. Approximately 62% of the dwellings in this area are owned by the inhabitants, as the following table shows.

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http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/community_profiles/index.htm

\(^97\) Ibid.

\(^98\) Ibid.
Table 2
Dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kerrisdale</th>
<th>Arbutus Ridge</th>
<th>Shaughnessy</th>
<th>Kitsilano</th>
<th>West Point Grey</th>
<th>Dunbar-Southlands</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of dwelling units</td>
<td>5,065</td>
<td>5,420</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>18,850</td>
<td>5,055</td>
<td>6,760</td>
<td>199,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings owned</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings rented</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling units per hectare</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of Kerrisdale residents that listed English as their mother tongue in 1991 was 74.8%. However, “[t]he number of residents with Chinese as their mother tongue increased from 0.7% in 1971 to 14.1% in 1991. Chinese is listed as the second largest mother tongue group” in this neighbourhood. The following table shows the mother tongues listed in the West Side neighbourhoods.

Table 3
Mother Tongue: Per cent of total single responses, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Kerrisdale</th>
<th>Arbutus Ridge</th>
<th>Shaughnessy</th>
<th>Kitsilano</th>
<th>West Point Grey</th>
<th>Dunbar-Southlands</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ethnic makeup of Kerrisdale is changing and can no longer be considered an area exclusively for the Anglo-elite.

In 1971 when the British-origin population of the city of Vancouver had fallen to 53 per cent, it remained as high as 69 per cent in Shaughnessy and 76 per cent in Kerrisdale. With few exceptions until the 1980s non-English speaking newcomers followed a well-worn immigrant corridor.
through the less costly districts in Vancouver’s eastside, leaving the westside Anglo-Canadian districts stable and frozen in their memories.\textsuperscript{102}

One of the questions that I started out with in my research project was that of, ‘Who were the owners of the so-called ‘Monster’ houses?’ Based on homes for sale in March of 1998 in the Kerrisdale neighbourhood, out of 89 homes for sale, 59.6\% were Asian owned with 29.2\% owned by Caucasians as is seen in the following table.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Makeup (Based on Last Names)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Asian\textsuperscript{103}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data support the general comments made by my interviewees. One interview subject in particular, Mr. Smith, a real estate agent said that 75 - 85\% of homes over 1 Million dollars were owned by Asians and that not all homes would be listed under a person’s name but rather under some sort of holding company or corporation.\textsuperscript{105} This realtor seems to be almost on the mark as 60.6\% of the homes listed for $ 900,000 plus in Kerrisdale were owned by Asians and 9.1\% were owned by corporations as the following table 5 shows.

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Makeup (Based on Last Names)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Asian\textsuperscript{106}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 60.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the homes that were listed for sale in Kerrisdale that were $ 900,000 plus, 31 out of 33 ranged in square footage between 3,000 and 6,999 feet. Table 6 below shows the

\textsuperscript{103} Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Current Active Listings of the Multiple Listing Service 12, No. 98066 (March 26, 1998).
\textsuperscript{104} The term “Asian” for purposes of this author’s arguments is interchangeable with the term “Chinese”
\textsuperscript{105} Interview #1, [Mr. Smith, alias in thesis.], a white real estate agent. Telephone Update Interview with the author, April 7, 1998.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
breakdown of square footage for these large homes in Kerrisdale. Although these are all large houses, not all of them would be considered “Monster” houses as some of them “blend” into the traditional Tudor street-scape of Kerrisdale.

Looking more closely at this sample of 33 homes and not considering the square footage of the homes, 11 homes would be considered to be “Monster” houses based on features such as red tile roofs, double doors, a square appearance and that the finished structure consumes a large area of the lot. Nine more homes could be considered to be “Monster” houses based on features such as wok kitchens and home theatres and that they use the maximum building envelope on the property. However based on appearance and taking the fact that these 9 homes are a year old or younger their exterior design fits more closely to with the “Good Taste” By-law which allows for larger square footage of a home providing it is fitting with the traditional “Tudor” style of architecture of Kerrisdale. The final eleven homes of this sample would be considered traditional Kerrisdale homes.

Table 6
Square Footage of Homes in Kerrisdale Listed for $900,000.00 +

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2,000 - 2,999</th>
<th>3,000 - 3,999</th>
<th>4,000 - 4,999</th>
<th>5,000 - 5,999</th>
<th>6,000 - 6,999</th>
<th>7,000 +</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Home Owner’s in Vancouver’s West Side with Homes Listed for Sale
Ethnic Makeup (Based on Last Names)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>728</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident by table 7 on the previous page, out of 1243 homes for sale in Vancouver’s West Side, as of March 1998, 58.6% of the owners are Asian and 9.8% are owned by corporations while 25.6% are owned by Caucasians.

\[107\] Ibid.
\[108\] Ibid.
\[109\] The evidence for ownership of “Monster Houses” is based on homes for sale in Vancouver’s West Side. Further evidence of ownership could be obtained by doing property searches through the City of Vancouver or by

38
Shaughnessy

"Built on the heights overlooking Vancouver's Downtown core, Shaughnessy has always aspired to be the city's most prestigious area." This neighbourhood is bound by 16th Avenue and 41st Avenue and stretches out from West Boulevard to Oak Street.

Figure 4

This land was granted to "...the Canadian Pacific Railway by the federal government as a condition of extending the railway to the Pacific Coast." Richard Marpole, the general superintendent and executive assistant of the CPR was the man who in 1907 proposed the development of Shaughnessy as an "...exclusive and prestigious residential area to lure the city's elite from the West End."

The CPR took great pains to protect the character and design of Shaughnessy. Trying to establish it as a separate municipality was among the many tactics used by the CPR. As well,
zoning by-laws have historically been contested to maintain single-family dwellings. However, due to the Depression and World War II the "...housing shortage eroded the Property Owners' gains as the federal government opened many districts including Shaughnessy, to more multiple conversion dwellings."115 Yet, the majority of the zoning does remain as single-family dwellings. (See Table 2, Page 36)

Again as in Kerrisdale, the majority of people, 72.6%, list English as their mother tongue. As well, "[a]t 14.3%, Chinese was the second most common language group increasing 12% since 1971."116 (See Table 3, Page 36)

**Arbutus Ridge**

The next neighbourhood is Arbutus Ridge. This neighbourhood "...stretches from MacKenzie and Puget Drive to East Boulevard and Maple Crescent, and from 16th to 41st Avenue."117

**Figure 5**

![Arbutus Ridge Map](image)

115 Ibid.  
116 Ibid.  
117 Ibid.  
118 Ibid.
This neighbourhood has "...a variety of housing types, from high-and low-rise apartments to duplexes and single-family homes. In 1991, about half of the housing stock were single-family homes...."\textsuperscript{119}

Once again, the majority of people in Arbutus Ridge list English as their mother tongue, with Chinese following as the next most listed mother tongue. (See Table 3, Page 36)

**West Point Grey**

The fourth neighbourhood is West Point Grey. "It stretches from the English Bay waterfront to 16\textsuperscript{th} Avenue, and from Alma Street to the University Endowment Lands."\textsuperscript{120}

**Figure 6**

The majority of homes in this area are single-detached houses.\textsuperscript{122} However there are some apartments and commercial areas. "There are clusters of low-and high-rise apartments west of Alma Street from 5\textsuperscript{th} to 8\textsuperscript{th} Avenues, as well as on 4\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} Avenues."\textsuperscript{123}

West Point Grey is also known for its beaches such as Locarno and Spanish Banks and its park areas such as Jericho Beach Park and West Point Grey Park.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
As with the previous mentioned neighbourhoods, English is listed by 82% of West Point Grey’s population as their mother tongue with Chinese being the second most listed mother tongue at 6%. (See Table 3, Page 36)

**Kitsilano**

The next neighbourhood that is Kitsilano. This neighbourhood “…stretches from the English Bay waterfront to 16th Avenue, and from Burrard to Alma Street.”124

![Figure 7](image)

This neighbourhood is generally seen as a trendy area for the “Yuppies” to live. The housing types vary as they did in Arbutus Ridge. However, in this area to maintain and save the “old character” houses the city is trying to re-zone this area “…allowing the conversion of large, old homes into multiple suites in designated areas…”126 At the same time the city is “[o]ffering bonuses for sensitive new building designs as well as for the renovation of heritage buildings.”127

Again as in the previously mentioned neighbourhoods, the majority of residents, 83.2%, list English as their mother tongue. But as “Kits” seems to be unique in its housing so to is it

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124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
unique in the mother tongues listed by residents. Chinese, German and Greek are the next most listed mother tongues at 2.4%, 2.3% and 2.2% respectively. (See Table 3, Page 36)

**Dunbar-Southlands**

The final neighbourhood that I will present is Dunbar-Southlands. "It stretches from 16th Avenue to the Fraser River, and from Camosun Street to Puget Drive and MacKenzie Street, west along 41st Avenue to Blenheim Street and then to the Fraser River."\(^{128}\) This neighbourhood consists of two communities each with their own uniqueness. "Dunbar Heights, south of 16th Avenue to Southwest Marine Drive, is a long-settled, quiet suburb of well kept, single-family homes."\(^{129}\) Whereas, "Southlands, south of Southwest Marine Drive in the low lying flatland of the Fraser River floodplain, is an area of country living within a 15-minute drive of Vancouver's downtown."\(^{130}\)

**Figure 8**

The majority of residents in both Dunbar Heights and Southlands live in single-family houses. "In 1991, 97% of all dwelling units were single detached homes as compared to 44.2%
of dwellings city wide.” However, “[t]here are several small pockets of two-family dwellings adjacent to Dunbar Street’s retail strips, and secondary suites or additional units are allowed in single-detached homes in the neighbourhood’s northern section.”

English is once again the mother tongue that is listed by the majority of Dunbar-Southlands residents at 78.3%. With the exception of West Point Grey and Kitsilano, Chinese is listed by over 10% of residents as their mother tongue, in the West Side of Vancouver. “Chinese replaced German as the next most commonly identified mother tongues increasing from 1.5% to 10.2% between 1971 and 1991.” (See Table 3, Page 36)

This chapter illustrates that the Chinese are indeed owner’s of “Monster” houses based on the data uncovered by the Current Active Listings of the Multiple Listing Service. At the same time this chapter presented a physical description of the research area. Not only is it important to understand the physical areas in the housing debate in Vancouver’s West Side it is essential to understand the cultural belief of Feng Shui. The following chapter presents a brief overview of Feng Shui. At the same time, it presents data from interview subjects and content analysis of print media to show the varying degrees of influence that Feng Shui has on the positioning and style of houses.

132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
Chapter 5 - Feng Shui

The Chinese custom of Feng Shui plays a role in the architectural style of houses in many areas of Vancouver, particularly the West Side. How big a role Feng Shui does play is yet to be fully determined. However, this section, illustrates the importance of Feng Shui in the housing issues of Vancouver.

Feng Shui is essentially translated to mean wind and water - geomancy. In other words, it is a system of good and evil spirits or influences that are taken into careful consideration by many Chinese when buildings are designed:

[a] sloping ceiling brought bad luck, so roofs had to be flattened. Trees near the front door divided the family, so these had to be removed. After buying a Victorian home, the new owners often converted it into a box-like, multi-story dwelling, complete with a four-or five-car garage, that filled almost the entire lot. Thick walls and high hedges marked the borders of what were promptly dubbed “monster houses”.

The previous quote illustrates some of the changes made to capture the basic nature of Feng Shui. Feng Shui is a very complex system which entails the significance of numbers and colors, and the shape and positioning of the house.

Numbers and colors play a significant role in Feng Shui. The numbers eight, nine and six are considered to be lucky numbers. Eight is a favorite number because its pronunciation in Cantonese is similar to the word prosperity. Whereas the number “nine represents the fullness of heaven and earth. It is the luckiest of all numbers, in part because of its apparently mystical qualities: when you multiply 9 by any single-digit number, the sum of the two digits of the product is 9.” As well, according to Gutstein, it “…signifies the beginning, the birth.” Finally six is a
lucky number as the word for six in Cantonese sounds like the word for deer, "...a symbol of long life." So in this light, street addresses are important as numbers have magical powers.

With respect to color, red is a lucky color. Red is the color of women's wedding dresses in China. It is also the color of envelopes that contain lucky money or treats that are given to friends and loved ones, particularly during Chinese New Year celebrations, as symbols of good wishes. Red "...is associated with fire, life, happiness, and warmth." Some of the roofs of houses on the West Side of Vancouver have bright red tile. Those who hold Feng Shui to be important would consider these houses to be full of life, fire, warmth and happiness. However, housing by-laws in the City of Vancouver have regulated against the use of red tile on new houses in some areas on the West Side. The inherent racism of this public policy is discussed in further detail in the section on by-laws.

Others colors of significance are yellow and white. White is not used for wedding dresses; rather it symbolizes both purity and mourning. White is also considered to be a yang color "...yang corresponds to the masculine and has hardness and brightness among its qualities...." Yellow, on the other hand, is a word in Cantonese that sounds like the word for royal. In the past, yellow was a color that only the imperial household was allowed to use. "Under pain of death, no Chinese person except the emperor was permitted to wear any shade of yellow or gold." However in today's society, "...yellow is also thought to bring nobility and high honors, especially to a family."

Shape and position of one's house is also an aspect of Feng Shui. The shape and placing, or rather the position of one's house on a street, is of great importance when considering Feng Shui. Houses should be square or rectangular with large, preferably double-doors for the entranceway that

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140 Ibid.
141 Ibid, 19.
142 Ibid, 20.
143 Ibid.
allow good chi or energy to flow through the house and give the occupants great fortune. "A square shape denotes Earth.... The shape itself expresses the supportive, secure, and stable quality of Earth." Houses should be placed in relation to chi, which is considered to be the "...cosmic breath." They should not be at the end of cul-de-sacs which are fast-flowing conduits for notorious killing [chi]. ..... Residents of houses skewered by straight road [chi] might fall sudden victim to strange accidents and unexpected illness. Hill-top houses are problematic because money and luck can flow out. Driveways should be broad, especially at the street end.

As well as the importance of placing your house on a street it is important to note that if a house’s front door(s) are blocked in any way by either trees or other objects such as light standards, these must be removed or shifted in order for the good energy to flow unhindered through the household. Similar to the red roof tile, double-doors have also been legislated against in city by-laws which will be discussed further in chapter 7.

**The Role of Feng Shui in West Side Housing**

Data from content analysis of newspaper articles and interviews with key informants will be discussed in this section. The data from approximately 130 newspaper articles and ten interviews, show that Feng Shui is an aspect of housing in Vancouver.

Out of the ten interviews conducted some of the respondents commented on Feng Shui with varying opinions. Six interviewees’ comments will be presented in the following.

Mr. Smith, a white Realtor, informed the interviewer that he has taught courses in Feng Shui and has studied under a well known Feng Shui expert, Dr. Joseph Ip. When asked whether or not Feng Shui has a role to play in housing on Vancouver’s West Side he basically responded that Feng

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146 Donald Gutstein, *The New Landlords Asian Investment in Canadian Real Estate*, (Victoria: 47
Shui influences both Caucasians and Asians. He shared an example of a listing that his office had lost. The clients who listed their house with his office, took their listing to another office, stating that the house was on a T intersection and could not be sold to Asian clients due to their belief in Feng Shui. So, it influences Caucasians in as much as whether or not their property has “good” Feng Shui and is suitable for the Asian buyer that is influenced by this belief – an interesting reversal of power. At the same time, he reinforced the point about lucky numbers such as eight and confirmed that the number four is unlucky because it is often mispronounced in Chinese. When four is said incorrectly in Chinese, it sounds like death. Although Mr. Smith didn’t go into great depth he did show that Feng Shui does influence housing in Vancouver.148

Mr. Jones, a white City Planner and architect, states that the Vancouver City Planning Department does not formally take Feng Shui into account. However, as an architect, he has read a fair amount about Feng Shui and has consulted Feng Shui experts occasionally for his clients and for himself. He even went so far as to renumber his house. He finds “…the parts to do with the natural environment are very convincing. Its obviously another approach to environmental or ecological sensitivity.”149

Mr. Gray, a white architect, points out in his interview that Feng Shui is probably rooted in very practical solutions from the past that, when used by the Chinese immigrants, provides them with something from their home country that makes them feel more comfortable in their new country or environment. However, he states that he doesn’t “…think Feng Shui has any impact or at least very, very minimal impact on the ‘Monster House’ issue” in Vancouver.150

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147 Ibid.
148 Interview #1, [Mr. Smith, alias in thesis.], A white real estate agent, interview with the author, 11 March 1997.
149 Interview #2, [Mr. Jones, alias in thesis.], A white city planner, interview with the author, 13 March 1997.
150 Interview #3, [Mr. Gray, alias in thesis.], A white architect, interview with the author, 13 March 1997.
Mr. Low, a Chinese Architect, says that only about one out of ten clients would be very, very serious about Feng Shui. When he was asked if he would have a Feng Shui expert look over his designs he stated, “No, no, I – they, [his clients] just tell me what they don’t want. Because [....] it depends on which Feng Shui, so called expert, you consult because usually it is in the Chinese saying that if you want to find a liar you find a Feng Shui expert.”

Ms. White, a white Realtor, says that Feng Shui plays a big, big part in housing in Vancouver. However she also says that “Feng Shui plays a big part unless the price is really fabulous and then the Feng Shui goes straight out the window and they’ll buy [the house].” At the same time, she states that in order to be a successful realtor, especially if you are working with Asian clients, one must know at least a little bit about Feng Shui.

Ms. Lee, a Chinese Realtor, said that she felt Feng Shui was important to some people but that for the majority it would only be taken into account up to a certain point. She also pointed out that younger people wouldn’t care that much except for certain things such as having a tree blocking the front door or having a house on a T junction. Ms. Lee, herself a young woman, would not buy a house on a T junction. When she was asked if Feng Shui was part of her life growing up she said that she knew about it but didn’t really pay that much attention to it.

As is shown in the above comments, according to realtors, architects and planners, Feng Shui is something that does influence Vancouver’s housing issues in varying degrees. At this point, the discussion will now turn to an examination of the coverage of Feng Shui that was found in local, Vancouver, newspapers.

Out of the approximately 130 newspaper articles that were examined, there were only a handful of articles that discussed Feng Shui. This was most likely due to the search parameters as...

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152 Interview #6, [Ms. White, alias in thesis.], A white real estate agent, interview with the author, 21 March 1997.
153 Interview #9, [Ms. Lee, alias in thesis.], A Chinese real estate agent, interview with the author.
initially the topic of “Feng Shui” was not specifically identified. The article titles that were found included titles such as ‘Valuable Vibes’, ‘Good Advice Hard To Find’, and ‘The Gospel According To Master’. The titles in and of themselves suggest that Feng Shui is of great importance - of course to whom is not clear in just a title. The content of the articles provide a basic overview for the readers, one very similar to the previous section. They also show that Feng Shui is an important Chinese belief that can be incorporated into Western culture and the articles argue that Feng Shui can benefit both Asians and Caucasians by teaching these groups a respect of earth’s natural forces.

As to whether or not there is a specific link to Feng Shui and “Monster” houses the verdict is still out. Based on the preliminary research in this project Feng Shui is linked to “Monster” houses with respect to architectural features which bring good fortune such as red tile roofs and double doors.

In summary, the newspaper articles and the interviews show that Feng Shui is something that should be researched in more depth with respect to housing in Vancouver. Siu Kwong Sung, considered Hong Kong’s most respected Feng Shui master was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that “…in Hong Kong [Feng Shui is] a science combining design, ecology, architecture and mysticism. And its gospel.”154 (See Photographs in Appendix A)

The following chapter presents a content analysis of the print media and titles of the articles to show how new affluent Chinese immigrants are portrayed. As well, the following chapter illustrates the print media portrayal of the battle against so-called “Monster” houses.

11 April 1997.
Chapter 6 – Racialized Newspaper Coverage of “Monster Houses”

By the 1980s, ... the nature of civil society and the composition of the Chinese Canadian population had changed dramatically. The [Vancouver Sun] expected to speak to the entire population of the city, yet it did not do so. Racialized, gendered, and classed discourses framed news so as to produce a Chinese Other; an object, not a subject, of news reporting.155

The research of the media focused primarily on printed matter and principally on the Vancouver Sun and The Province with a few articles from The Courier and The Globe and Mail over a ten year period from 1986 to 1996. In this section an overview of the types of articles found and the manner in which they were presented in their respective papers is presented. As language has a very powerful influence on its audience both the titles of the articles and the content were examined. It will be argued that the racialized news discourses used to describe the issues surrounding housing in Vancouver's West Side aids in maintaining conflict and racism between Chinese and Caucasian Canadians. In other words Asians are portrayed in a demeaning fashion by connecting them to derogatory language used in newspaper articles. It also should be mentioned at this point that the Chinese press was not examined for this thesis primarily because it was not the focus of the argument. The focus in this research was on demonstrating the racism of the white press as they have considerable power and influence in Vancouver. However, it can be acknowledged that the Chinese press would be a source of further research.

The title of a newspaper article is there for many reasons. First and foremost, it is there to capture a reader’s attention and at the same time, it is included to convey to the reader what is to come in the article. The title also conveys many meanings of so-called societal norms that put forth representations of people, places and things. In other words, as Creese and Stasiulis write “...the persistence of the white, Eurocentric, middle class, male gaze that values capital

accumulation but rejects the ethno-racial community that aids in fostering it” is what comes across in the titles of newspaper articles.156

Although people of Vancouver, particularly those in positions of power, espouse a multicultural attitude to encourage foreign investment, particularly Hong Kong money, this does not come across in printed media. In the sample used in this study of newspaper articles, approximately 24 per cent of the titles used the word “Monster” and one article used the word “Demon”. (See Table 10, Appendix B) These words are heavily laden with meaning that I argue can be seen as extremely negative. Although these words are not directly tied to an ethnic group, it will be shown that the use of these words encourages the reader to think about a group of people negatively and in this case it is the Chinese population, particularly people from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

When looking at the balance of titles that had to do with the housing issues in Vancouver’s West Side, 17 per cent referred to design, policy, and City planning. Approximately 12 per cent mentioned size with words such as ‘Oversize’, ‘Big’ and ‘Thin’. 11 per cent of the titles used the words ‘Hong Kong’, ‘Asian’, ‘Money’ and ‘Property Values’ to describe the forthcoming article. Actual titles included in this project are as follows: “Buying up their new world: Hong Kong Immigrants drawn to City’s West Side”, “‘Monster’ house tells story of a social schism”, “Investment anger confuses Hong Kong”, “Monster Houses – Block-Buster Battle”, “Monster house issue overblown, real estate head tells Hong Kong”, “Students say racial barriers growing”.157 All of these words predispose the reader to a particular point of view, which comes out even stronger in the body of the articles: that of a dominant white Eurocentric gaze which is apparent in the ownership of the papers.

157 For a complete list of articles please see Table 8, Appendix B.
Southam Press a subsidiary of Hollinger Inc., who owns the papers studied for this thesis, and the reporters, perpetuate the more conservative standpoint of its owner Conrad Black.

Due to the chain ownership and the concentration of ownership by Conrad Black, it has been evident that one group is consistently dominant across a range of issues. The conservative-elite world view influences not only what is written, but how it is currently written in most daily newspapers in Canada. Black has established a hegemonic monopoly in the Canadian newspaper world. He has strong views and values, and intends to express them through his papers. In 1981 Black enforced the printing of a column by the right-wing Fraser Institute in all Southam dailies. Southam donates large blocks to this institution that promotes a corporate world view to the detriment of women, immigrants, minorities, welfare recipients, workers and other groups that are not part of dominant ideology in Canada. This appears to be a conflict of interest; newspapers should be committed to unbiased coverage, but by helping to finance and further the agenda of the far-right-wing organization, Southam has disregarded this tenet of the newspaper world. Hegemony combines persuasion from above with consent from below. The extreme concentration by Conrad Black in the Canadian newspaper industry creates a hegemony of ideology: he is free to advertise his conservative-elitist views throughout his papers as if it were fact.¹⁵⁸

The majority of the articles’ content reinforces the white Euro-centric gaze. The following is an opinion put forth by Mays to influence the reader:

...the curious blankness of the monster house – its indifference to the street and the neighbourhood – can be linked to the barren silence and social blankness created by television, which gathers the family around it each evening, then forbids conversation, discourages evening callers and regiments life by the clock with a rigidity hitherto known in few places outside Trappist monasteries.¹⁵⁹

Mays is essentially saying that the house itself is preventing a cohesive and harmonious neighbourhood but in actual fact the underlying message is that the owner’s of these homes – who appear to be Asian/Chinese which has been shown in chapter four of this thesis bases on homes listed for sale – are different and therefore do not belong in these homogenous white neighbourhoods.

¹⁵⁸ teena aujla, “Is Conrad Black Canada’s most powerful man?”, in The Peak, 94, 2, 9 September, 1996 Op/Ed.
¹⁵⁹ John Bentley Mays, “Monster houses/ A silence precipitated by the introduction of new technologies has finally found its typical expression in a new architectural style, that of the monster house: Air-conditioning be darned!” Globe and Mail, 1 July 1992, Metro Edition, C2.
There is a fear, or the feeling of the loss of control, over the West Side neighbourhoods, as the

...comfortable little exclusive Anglo-Saxon World is gone forever, replaced by a thriving Chinese community from Hong Kong sporting BMWs and Mercedes Benzes; seeking political stability and the opportunity to live in what has been rated by the UN as the best country in the world.  

As with the titles of newspaper articles, the content of the articles use strong language and in this case language which alienates difference.

The newspaper articles show that there is a constant attempt by the Anglo-elites to lobby for changes to the municipal by-laws that control the city’s housing designs.

It’s the city planning department’s job to make sure offensive houses are not built. By offensive, I mean houses that are not neighborly – those that dominate smaller, older houses around them and brazenly demand attention.

The content of the articles, particularly Balcom’s, sets up for the reader the impression of what is a “proper” house – one that fits into the existing neighbourhood.

The articles in this research have shown that the affluent Asians who are settling in Vancouver’s West Side have to face the racism that is rooted in Vancouver’s history.

Living in the belly of a monster is no picnic, some Hong Kong immigrants say. Some have had eggs pelted at their new homes. Others have been accused of hating trees. They’ve been victims of racial slurs. Their children have been taunted. And they’re mystified why buying a new home in Kerrisdale or South Granville should upset so many people.

The Anglo-elites are unleashing anti-Chinese sentiments via attempts to regulate and control “monster houses”.

Although Asians immigrants have been encouraged to come to Canada through the Canadian Business Immigration Policy as their capital is wanted to strengthen the local

161 Susan Balcom, “Builders have to be a good neighbor,” Vancouver Sun, 20 February 1988, C1.
economy, nevertheless they themselves must be “invisible” and contained in a geographical area separate from the Anglo-elites. Cox quotes Eric Wong, a school board race-relations counselor as saying;

Unfortunately there’s going to be a sense that there are hordes of them [Asians] out there. The yellow peril again and all that. It’s a double standard in the sense that we want to increase business with Pacific Rim countries but we don’t want them [Chinese] living in our neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{163}

Not only the newspaper articles but also the City by-laws have been used as the main forum for the Anglo-elites of the West Side of Vancouver to stop the invasion of the new “yellow peril” – the “Monster” houses. This will be apparent in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{163} Sarah Cox, “Buying up their new world: Hong Kong immigrants drawn to city’s West Side,” \textit{Vancouver Sun}, 27 February 1988, A1.
Chapter 7 - Municipal By-Laws: Combating and Regulating “Monster Houses”

Besides racialized media coverage as previously discussed, a second and perhaps even more important part of the racist backlash towards the new affluent Chinese immigrants is the lobbying by Anglo Canadians to have municipal by-laws amended to control and ideally eliminate “Monster” houses. This section examines the zoning by-laws of the City of Vancouver that affect the single-family residential areas of the West Side. An overview of the zoning by-laws, in particular, RS-1, 3, 5 and 6 will be presented first. Following with a brief history and description of each by-law, a discussion from interview data, newspaper clippings and the literature review will be presented to provide a more rounded perspective of how these by-laws or rather the role that these by-laws play in the “Monster House” issue in Vancouver.

Zoning by-laws are essentially a system of controls that are passed by, in this case a municipal government, which govern development on private properties. These by-laws restrict matters such as the square footage of a house and the proportion of lot that a house can occupy. So in other words there is not necessarily a certain square-footage that means “Monster House”. As the following states: “Zoning by-laws have been in effect in Vancouver’s residential neighbourhoods for over sixty years. These by-laws have been altered or added to by successive City Councils as planning objectives and residents concerns change over time.”

RS-1 historically was the original by-law which enforced building regulations in Vancouver’s residential areas. However over time, with demands being made by the predominantly Anglo-public, RS-3, 5 and 6 were brought in to try and control the rather rapid change of the architectural style of houses - the “Monster” houses - in the West Side that started to emerge in the mid 1980s. “In the 1980’s, City Council responded to the concerns of residents in RS-zoned neighbourhoods about the impact of new houses on existing neighbourhood character and on the

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livability and privacy of adjacent older homes.”\textsuperscript{165} Included with these demands to “tame” the architecture of these “Monsters”, was the issue of landscaping. The by-laws examined here have extensive measurement guidelines that have been set out by the City; however, they will not be discussed in detail here. Only the essence of each by-law will be examined.

RS-1, which was brought into being sometime in the 1930s, allows for a one-family dwelling that does not exceed 9.2 meters or 2 ½ storeys.\textsuperscript{166} At the same time, the site area must be 334 meters squared and the front yard must have a minimum depth of 20 per cent of the depth of the site. So in other words, each by-law enforces how much of the lot can be built on – the building envelope. “A building envelope defines a volume within which a building can be designed but does not dictate the actual form of the building. The building envelope is the three-dimensional representation of all provisions of the by-law combining height with all other required setbacks.”\textsuperscript{167}

RS-1 allowed for a variety of houses in Vancouver’s West Side. However, as this area was predominantly inhabited by a homogeneous Anglo-elite population, the houses tended to have conforming styles – mainly Tudor and British influenced styles. Most houses built with RS-1 guidelines prior to the mid ’80s did not use the maximum building envelope. Around the mid ’80s, housing styles and landscaping began to change drastically – large houses, using the maximum building envelope allowable by RS-1 began to appear. The appearance of larger houses coincided with the increasing numbers of affluent Asian immigrants. These houses were labeled “Monster” houses by Anglo-elites and the media and were predominantly owned by Asians/Chinese which has been shown previously in chapter 4. So, to counter and resist the changing street-scapes of their neighbourhoods, Anglo-Vancouverites began to lobby City Hall

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{166} Interview #2, [Mr. Jones, alias in thesis.], A white city planner, interview with the author, 13 March 1997.
\textsuperscript{167} “General Explanation of the Interim Zoning Program and the Available Rezoning Options for RS-1 and RS-1S Neighbourhoods,” City of Vancouver Planning Department: February 1997, 1.
to amend RS-1. This lobbying was an attempt by the dominant group to control the tastes of the new Asian home owners. John Pitts, a concerned neighbourhood resident of 1742 West 40th Avenue took it upon himself to make change with a by-law that was called the “Pitts by-law”.

The “Pitts by-law” when it was brought to City Council was changed in name only to RS-3 when the City of Vancouver adopted the restrictions that were driven by this concerned neighbourhood resident. Pitts’ neighbourhood consisted largely of 1920s and 1930s Georgian and Tudor style houses. So, “[at a cost of $15,000, [of his own money], Pitts hired two architects [Paul Ohannesian and Neill Cumberbirch, members of the Architectural Institute of BC] and a lawyer to draft the document, which would substantially reduce the size of new housing in his neighbourhood.”\(^{168}\) This document is one that “planners have privately dubbed the Pitt-Stop by-law, [which] marks the first time a private citizen has drafted a zoning by-law at his own expense, sent it to City Hall, had it approved for public hearing and ultimately had it adopted.”\(^{169}\) As a City Planner said when interviewed, “John Pitts, … was very keenly interested in protecting the character of his neighbourhood.”\(^{170}\) So essentially in the “war” or the attempt to control the so-called “Monster” houses – the Asian “threat”, by-laws have become the weapon.

After the Pitt’s by-law lobbyists in other West Side neighbourhoods wanted to prevent change from occurring in their neighbourhoods. Two additional by-laws which affect the West Side are RS-5 and 6, First Shaughnessy Design Guidelines. Ironically both of these by-laws allow for a larger house than RS-1 does. As another City Planner said when interviewed,

...both RS-5 and RS-6 allow slightly bigger houses as a trade off. In RS-6 the trade off is for providing some landscaping. And why we’ve [City Hall] done that – we’ve included all the design regulations in the body of the regulations but we don’t have authority from the Province to regulate landscaping in a clear and defined way – anything that’s in the regulation

\(^{170}\) Interview #2, [Mr. Jones, alias in thesis.], A white city planner, interview with the author, 13 March 1997.
must be clearly defined - like yes, no, you can do this, you can’t do this.
And so we need to then attach to the regulations a set of design guidelines
that basically deal with landscaping. And then to encourage people to use
those guidelines we offer them an increase in floor space to offset the
longer processing [of their design approval] as a form of encouragement to
do it.  

RS-5 again came into play to fight against the supposed invasion of “Monster” houses
that were deemed to be of “poor taste”. This by-law requires that a person who wishes to build
in neighbourhoods zoned R-5 must submit a design that follows the guidelines to a panel at City
Hall for a design review – a process that takes upwards of four months. This by-law was
developed so that newly built houses would “fit” into the neighbourhood street-scape. “Policing
the guidelines is a 14-member volunteer design panel comprising architects, landscape architects
and area residents, who comment on projects” who report their findings to the director of City
Planning on the suitability of the design and whether or not it will “fit” into the existing street-
scape. One of the members of this panel is a group called the Shaughnessy Property Owner’s
Association, a group of predominantly Anglo-elites, who want to maintain their power of control
of their surroundings – their city. RS-5, has become synonymous with “[t]he First Shaughnessy
Design Guidelines, [which were] adopted by City Council in 1982, [and] devised to maintain
‘…the English park-like context of Shaughnessy’”- the British heritage of their ancestors. The
final decision on the design of the new house to be built is made by the director of City Planning
and the planners, “but it may be appealed to the board of variance, and then to the courts”.  

Several years later with the intent of preserving the sense of the “British”, RS-6 was
passed on February 27, 1996, and was touted as the “Good Taste By-law” by the media, in

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171 Interview #4, A white female city planner, interview with the author, 20 March 1997.
172 Elizabeth, Godley, “Shaughnessy sets a stern design challenge,” Vancouver Sun, 19 November
1988, D2.
173 Shannon, Rupp, “Meeting the ‘special’ Shaughnessy style guide,” Vancouver Sun, 16 April
1988, C1.
174 Elizabeth, Godley, “Shaughnessy sets a stern design challenge,” Vancouver Sun, 19 November
1988, D2.
particular UTV. This by-law was drafted by Bob McGilvray, senior City Planner and architect.

In essence, this zonning

...put in place very specific rules for house design, including how much yard can be paved, what roof colors will be banned, how much window trim there should be, how much landscaping, and the design of third storeys. The new zoning was developed by city planners and a 16-member residents’ committee that spent a year trying to figure out how best to improve house design.175

Again as with RS-5, subscribers of RS-6 are rewarded with additional floor space if your design is passed by the Design Panel or in other words if your design “fits in” or is similar to the surrounding neighbours’ houses. Although the City Planners that were interviewed both said that RS-6 is not designed to discriminate against any cultural group and in this case, Asians, it is argued that it is a racist policy as it targets particular aspects of taste that are favoured by Chinese people – red tile roofs, double doors, double kitchens, or as one realtor interviewed pointed out, Wok Kitchens, and flat roofs. As Fralic states, “[i]ts no accident that many of the double-kitchen houses sprouting up on urban landscapes are built by ..., Chinese Canadians and other ethnic cultures whose cultural support systems are built on a tradition of extended families.”176

The idea of the extended family is “not an idea whose time has come. It’s an idea whose time is lost, historically familiar but out of sync with a modern society that cultivates singularity and encourages privacy.”177

The municipal by-laws are indeed a forum for the Anglo-elites to fight a battle against the so-called “Monster” houses of Vancouver’s West Side. Only time will allow us to see how the many issues of this debate will completely unfold.

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177 Ibid.
Conclusion

As this discussion and conclusion section is being written it is apparent that the housing issues on Vancouver’s West Side is far from over as is apparent in the print media. On June 30, 1999 in the Vancouver Sun yet another article on “Monster” houses appeared. Hall titled his article “‘Monster house’ triggers a public brawl” and wrote on the problems between two neighbours; one with a traditional Tudor style home and the other with a so-called “Monster House” who wanted to do renovations which would enlarge the house.178

Many issues surrounding “Monster” houses in Vancouver have been presented in this thesis. The architecture of the contested houses in the West Side is only one of the issues – it is not only an issue of “Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder”. The established Anglo-elite Canadians are in fear of sharing or losing the power they have to control the British-like atmosphere of their traditional neighbourhoods. Power, place, class and race are the essential theoretical aspects of the housing debate.

In Vancouver, place has always been connected to cultural groups. Historically the Chinese were hived off in Chinatown and the Anglo Canadians inhabited areas such as Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale in the West Side. Chapter 1 provided the historical context of the Chinese immigrants in Vancouver, showing how Chinese Canadians have had to, and still have to, deal with persistent racism from Anglo Canadians. The “Yellow Peril” associated with Asian immigrants is not a thing of the past. The “Monster” in the term “Monster House” can be linked to the “Asian”ness of their owners. This racism has and continues to manifest itself in geographies of exclusion through restrictive covenants such as those still being handed out to perspective buyers at Oakview Apartments.

Chapter 2 provided a look into thinking about space, place, and monsters. Place as Zukin refers to it, is “a cultural artifact of social conflict and cohesion” as is seen with the conflict
between the establish Anglo-elites of the West Side and the new affluent Asian immigrants.\textsuperscript{179} The traditional neighbourhood as place is transforming and this change is being met with strong opposition.

The research methods outlined in Chapter 3 provided the reader the basis for understanding the strengths and limitations of this research project. Drawing upon a narrow field of interview subjects has made this project more manageable and puts it into the scope of a Masters Thesis project. At the same time it has opened up the endless possibilities for a much more in depth look at the issue of “Monster Houses” in Vancouver and other metropolitan centers.

“Urban Inscription of the Other” – Chapter 4 provided a physical and visual descriptive geography of the area under study. As well it provided statistical information on the ever changing demography of Vancouver’s West Side.

Feng Shui as a concept was examined in Chapter 5 including the role that it plays in Vancouver’s housing issues. This chapter was included because the concept of Feng Shui was brought up in several interviews. While Feng Shui is not directly related to “Monster” houses it has some indirect links. This chapter provides the reader with a brief description of Feng Shui and shows that it plays a minor role with respect to the subjects interviewed.

The analysis of newspaper articles in Chapter 6 showed that the print media reinforces the “Eurocentric” gaze that defines “the other” and shapes the ideology of our city. Chapter 7, examined how city by-laws, were used by the Anglo-elites to change policy. The most poignant of course was the example of Pitt’s By-Law in which a citizen, John Pitt, put up $15,000 of his own money to ensure that his neighbourhood would maintain the “British” style of housing and landscape design.

\textsuperscript{178} Neal, Hall, “‘Monster house’ triggers a public brawl,” \textit{Vancouver Sun}, 30 June 1999, A1, A2.  
Finally, this thesis shows that there is still research to be done in the area of architecture, place, power, class and race in order to foster better relations between all groups of people in our ever shrinking world—"...as markets have been globalized, place has diminished."\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{180} Sharon Zukin, \textit{Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World} (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 12.
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1987
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Parton, Nicole. “It’s the thin end of the wedge in a Dunbar neighborhood.” Vancouver Sun, 26 October 1987, B7.

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Sun, 20 February 1988, D1.


Godley, Elizabeth. “Shaughnessy sets a stern design challenge.” Vancouver Sun, 19 November 1988, D2.

1989


“City hall rally hears complaint on ugly houses.” Vancouver Sun, 19 April 1989, B7.


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1991


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1993


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Aird, Elizabeth. “Students from Asian have say on megahouses.” Vancouver Sun, 23 October 1993, A3.

1994


1995

Bates, Linda. “Say what you will, the Ho building is a great conversation piece.” Vancouver Sun, 18 March 1995, C10.


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Chow, Wyng. “Asians to bolster housing market, builder says.” Vancouver Sun, 19 January
1996, D5.


“When a MONSTER is NOT a MONSTER.” *Vancouver Sun*, 14 June 1996, B1, B3.

Morton, Brian. “Big-home bylaw plan abandoned: West Vancouver council will continue in its attempt to control building size, but will consider a design-review process instead.” *Vancouver Sun*, 17 July 1996, B2.


1999

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Downtown A Community Profile. On-Line. Available from Internet Explorer @ http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/community_profiles/downtown/dt_profile.htm

Interview Subjects

Interview #1. [Mr. Smith, alias in thesis.]. A white real estate agent. Interview with the author, 11 March 1997.

Interview #1. [Mr. Smith, alias in thesis.]. A white real estate agent. Telephone Update Interview with the author, April 7, 1998.

Interview #2. [Mr. Jones, alias in thesis.]. A white city planner. Interview with the author, 13 March 1997.


Interview #7. A white male president of a builder’s association. Interview with the author, 1 April 1997.


Interview #10. A white female real estate agent. Interview with the author, 27 April 1997.
Note: All photographs in this section were taken by the author unless otherwise documented.
The house on the preceding page is finished except for the final touches of landscaping and shows the variety of housing found in Vancouver’s West Side. Below you can see the beginning of construction in 1991 of the same house which made it look more like the construction of a condominium with the steal framing. This 16,000 square-foot house is located in Kerrisdale on West Boulevard. The Architect of the home Dan White, says that it contains “an underground four-car garage, a swimming pool on the entrance level, an elevator and an outdoor waterfall.”

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182 Pamela, Fayerman, “It looks like a condo, but its just one big house,” Vancouver Sun, 2 March 1991, A5.
The photograph below is of the house that is located directly across the street on West Boulevard to the 16,000 square-foot house showing the contrast in housing.
This 7 bedroom and den, 3,550 square-foot Kerrisdale home shows the red tile roof which has been opposed by neighbours as well as city by-laws. This house also shows some of the properties of feng shui starting with the color of the tiles on the roof; red being a lucky color. At the same time no trees block the front doors and the double doors which "allows good chi or energy to flow through the house and give the occupants great fortune."^183

This photograph is of a house that sits across the street from the preceding house. This shows the striking difference in the size of homes in Kerrisdale as well as the amount of landscaping.
This 6,009 square-foot house in Kerrisdale has a “gourmet kitchen with wok room [and] indoor swimming pool.” As one interview subject said “the Caucasian buyer doesn’t give a sweet toot about a Wok kitchen.” When this interviewee was asked if she could define so-called Asian characteristics she stated:

Well the kitchens one of the big things – huge kitchen and really high end stuff in it you know granite counters. And the recreational leisure centre in the basement with a TV viewing room and a Karedoke set up. And also an indoor pool and an exercise room.

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184 Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Current Active Listings of the Multiple Listing Service 12, No. 98066 (March 26, 1998), 153.
185 Interview #6, [Ms. White, alias in thesis.], a white real estate agent. Interview with the author, 21 March 1997.
186 Ibid.
This 4,733 square-foot Kerrisdale house is another example of the newer and larger houses being referred to as "Monster Houses".
This 4,655 square-foot house in Kerrisdale includes a “home theatre, wok-kitchen, air conditioning and more latest features.”

187 Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Current Active Listings of the Multiple Listing Service 12, No. 98066 (March 26, 1998), 156.
This photograph shows the house across the street from the preceding photo. This architectural style is more in keeping with the traditional Tudor style or British style.
This 4,021 square-foot Kerrisdale house has the double doors which is an important aspect of feng shui which has been previously mentioned in this section.
In contrast to the previous photograph this photograph shows the house next door. Although the square footage of this house was unavailable to the author it visually seems to be the same size if not larger. It is stylistically more in keeping with the Tudor tradition yet it is obviously a new home. With the new zoning by-laws such as RS-5 and RS-6 this house was most likely rewarded with a larger square footage as it is more in keeping with the traditional look. Of course one of the arguments surrounding “Monster Houses” is that they do not respect the traditional design ideals.
Again this large Kerrisdale house with 7 bedrooms and 7 bathrooms has a granite entrance with 20 foot ceilings. Along with spiral stairs that open to the second floor skylight. Finally the main kitchen has granite countertops attached there is a wok-kitchen.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, 127.
Again to show the contrast of houses in Kerrisdale this photograph shows the house that is beside the previous house.
Table 8
Article Titles from Newspapers for the years 1986 to 1996

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Oversize house up for sale”</td>
<td>Feb. 26/86</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Neighborly homes urged in city”</td>
<td>March 5/86</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Property values stir crowd”</td>
<td>March 12/86</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Twilight for Zone Change?”</td>
<td>March 26/86</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<td>“Zoning rules and regulations set out”</td>
<td>March 26/86</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<td>“Architect fears dull housing”</td>
<td>June 18/86</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“‘Monster’ house tells story of a social schism”</td>
<td>March 24/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Citizens helping to build policy on large houses”</td>
<td>July 30/87</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Monster-house solution offered”</td>
<td>Sept. 23/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thin house din sparks move for city ban”</td>
<td>Oct. 3/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thin not in, council says as house bylaw readied”</td>
<td>Oct. 7/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It’s the thin end of the wedge in a Dunbar neighborhood”</td>
<td>Oct. 26/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“B.C. office welcomed in Hong Kong”</td>
<td>Nov. 3/87</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Feng Shui: The gospel according to master”</td>
<td>Aug. 21/88</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Feng Shui: Valuable Vibes”</td>
<td>Aug. 21/88</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Good advice hard to find”</td>
<td>Aug. 21/88</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Planner’s proposal spells doom for Vancouver Specials”</td>
<td>Feb. 10/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Builders have to be a good neighbor”</td>
<td>Feb. 20/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Preserving the Past: The battle to save our beautiful old buildings”</td>
<td>Feb. 20/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Buying up their new world: Hong Kong immigrants drawn to city’s West Side”</td>
<td>Feb. 27/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Speak out on monster houses”</td>
<td>March 23/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Meeting the ‘special’ Shaughnessy style guide”</td>
<td>April 16/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Shaughnessy sets a stern design challenge”</td>
<td>Nov. 19/88</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>“The Hong Kong connection: How Asian money fuels housing market”</td>
<td>Feb. 18/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“A neighborhood in transition”</td>
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<td>“Kerrisdale land flips spark anger”</td>
<td>Feb. 27/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Investment anger confuses Hong Kong”</td>
<td>March 18/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Resident raps Vancouver Specials”</td>
<td>March 21/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Forum lauds immigrants: See change as challenge, mayor urges”</td>
<td>April 14/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“First immigration session created some local magic”</td>
<td>April 14/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“City hall rally hears complaint on ugly houses”</td>
<td>April 19/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Monster Houses: BLOCK-BUSTER BATTLE”</td>
<td>May 28/89</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<td>“Immigrants face abuse”</td>
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<td>“Anger Builds”</td>
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<td>“Multicultural education camp teaches ethnic students trust”</td>
<td>Oct. 10/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Students say racial barriers growing”</td>
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<td>“Residents fight to save 30 cedars from developer”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“B.C. real estate keeps attracting Asian investors”</td>
<td>Nov. 14/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Asian real-estate force expected to remain”</td>
<td>Nov. 14/89</td>
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<td>“Curbing monster houses”</td>
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<td>“Canadian homes star attraction at Hong Kong show”</td>
<td>Nov. 15/89</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Neighbors fight demolition”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Lower Mainlanders buy most Vancouver housing, study says”</td>
<td>Dec. 13/89</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Change for the bigger”</td>
<td>Dec. 30/89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Saving the neighborhood”</td>
<td>Jan. 13/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Housing hottest topic on agendas of Lower Mainland municipalities”</td>
<td>Jan. 13/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Stopping the monsters from settling in”</td>
<td>Jan. 24/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Draft bylaw designed to make humbler homes”</td>
<td>Jan. 25/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Council approves new restrictions on big houses”</td>
<td>Jan. 26/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“City urged to plan growth”</td>
<td>Feb. 12/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“City has ‘No Vision’: Vancouver aimless, say new planner”</td>
<td>Feb. 18/90</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Neighbors protest tree-cutting”</td>
<td>March 9/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“City council debates ‘monster house’ bylaws”</td>
<td>March 16/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Threat of tree-preservation bylaw has many hurrying for axe or saw”</td>
<td>March 22/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Bloated boxes on council table”</td>
<td>March 26/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Neighbors stump redwood fallers”</td>
<td>April 3/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“City moves to tame monster houses”</td>
<td>April 4/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Who needs a monster house?”</td>
<td>April 4/90</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Shorn Giants Await Fate”</td>
<td>April 5/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Ways to save giant redwoods available, alderman says”</td>
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<td>“Council unsure if house bylaw will tame the monsters”</td>
<td>April 11/90</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Vancouver council unsure if new house bylaw will tame the monsters”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“City supports monster moratorium for small area of South Shaughnessy”</td>
<td>April 11/90</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Hong Kong Media Feast on Local Fallen Tree Story”</td>
<td>May 2/90</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>“One man wields unique sword at ‘monster’ houses”</td>
<td>May 25/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Burnaby man to sue over view”</td>
<td>June 6/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Monster house issue overblown, real estate head tells Hong Kong”</td>
<td>June 10/90</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Days of the ‘monster’ house are numbered experts say”</td>
<td>June 15/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Shaughnessy gets zoning law to control size of new houses”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“How we saved Shaughnessy from monsters”</td>
<td>June 23/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“No payout for city’s error: Court”</td>
<td>July 11/90</td>
<td>The Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>“4 Independents seek civic seats in fight over monster houses”</td>
<td>Oct. 25/90</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“MONSTER MASH: ‘Wedding cake’ design replacing huge boxes in many neighborhoods”</td>
<td>Feb. 15/91</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Builders now face stronger opposition”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Heritage conservation a matter of respect”</td>
<td>Feb. 16/91</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It looks like a condo, but it’s just one big house”</td>
<td>March 2/91</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thinking Small: Innovative architects seek livable solutions to the Manhattanization of our cities”</td>
<td>May 11/91</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Let’s fight these monsters: Neighborhoods have to take action - before huge new houses are built”</td>
<td>Jan. 16/92</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Vancouver specials tomorrow’s charmers?”</td>
<td>?/92</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“House prices remain steady as sales surge”</td>
<td>March 17/92</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Young home buyers fewest in Vancouver, survey says”</td>
<td>March 17/92</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Monster houses/ A silence precipitated by the introduction of new technologies has finally found it typical expression in a new architectural style, that of the monster house: Air-conditioning be darned!”</td>
<td>July 1/92</td>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
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<td>“Developers urge calm in monster house debate”</td>
<td>Oct. 13/92</td>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>“A monster problem in Shaughnessy: Changing face and changing character of old neighborhood stir deep passions as residents debate the past and the future”</td>
<td>Nov. 17/92</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Shaughnessy: a neighborhood torn between the old and the new”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“District aims to trim height of monster houses”</td>
<td>Jan. 6/93</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“There’s a ‘monster problem’ on the street where they live”</td>
<td>Oct. 2/93</td>
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<td>“Don’t sidestep issue of neighborhood racism”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Students from Asian have say on megahouses”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The real price of mega-houses includes tonnes of garbage”</td>
<td>Feb. 19/94</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Vancouver housing still so dear”</td>
<td>Dec. 23/94</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Money talks as millionaire’s mansion replaces a piece of old Vancouver”</td>
<td>March 4/95</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Say what you will, the Ho building is a great conversation piece”</td>
<td>March 18/95</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Alas, poor Kerrisdale, and those who loved it”</td>
<td>June 14/95</td>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Many immigrants realize monster homes are ‘ugly’”</td>
<td>Sep. 11/95</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Such an ugly bylaw”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Giant houses a self-fulfilling prophecy for builders and buyers alike”</td>
<td>Nov. 2/95</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Shaughnessy’s new zoning law proves some more equal than others”</td>
<td>Nov. 4/95</td>
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<td>“Don’t blame race entirely for housing disputes, expert says: How design affects taste”</td>
<td>Nov. 10/95</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Big houses will always be with us. But Vancouver is looking at new zoning to minimize the bad effects: Building a better big house”</td>
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<td>“Zoning: a recipe for better houses”</td>
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<td>“What RS 6 means”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Architects fight new rules on house design”</td>
<td>Jan. 18/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Asians to bolster housing market, builder says”</td>
<td>Jan. 19/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Hearing on housing design needs to go back to drawing board”</td>
<td>Jan. 20/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Asians buying most $1-million homes in city”</td>
<td>Feb. 7/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Chinese scapegoats for ‘monster houses’”</td>
<td>May 10/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“West Van seeks end to ‘big, ugly houses’”</td>
<td>June 7/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“West Van targets fortress homes”</td>
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<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“When a MONSTER is NOT a MONSTER”</td>
<td>June 14/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Big-home bylaw plan abandoned: West Vancouver council will continue in its attempt to control building size, but will consider a design-review process instead”</td>
<td>July 17/96</td>
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<td>“Tree’s company”</td>
<td>Sept. 7/96</td>
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<td>“Tax fight shows differences between Asian, Caucasian communities”</td>
<td>Sept. 30/96</td>
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<td>“The demons within”</td>
<td>Oct. 24/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“Concrete paves way for dispute”</td>
<td>Nov. 6/96</td>
<td>The Courier</td>
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<td>“Design restrictions shroud the city in banality”</td>
<td>Dec. 11/96</td>
<td>The Vancouver Sun</td>
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<td>“The homely house that $100,000 built”</td>
<td>Dec. 18/96</td>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Huge houses squeeze into tight spaces”</td>
<td>Dec. 26/96</td>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
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Table 9

Vancouver - Top Ten Source Countries

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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>1994 Rank</th>
<th>1995 Rank</th>
<th>1996 Rank</th>
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<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15,663</td>
<td>37.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,607</td>
<td>10.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,680</td>
<td>8.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>China-mainland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td>6.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>490</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea South</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>2.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Africa Rep</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam Soc. Rep. Of</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>1.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for Top Ten only</td>
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<td>34,280</td>
<td>81.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Other Countries</td>
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<td>7,640</td>
<td>18.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>41,920</td>
<td>38,166</td>
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<tr>
<th>Title Words</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monster, Demons</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
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<td>Designs, Kerrisdale, Citizens</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td>build policy, City planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size: Oversize, Big, Thin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong, Asian, Money, Property Values</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees, landscaping</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Immigrants, Race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
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<td>Preservation of Past,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Change, Saving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhoods, Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vancouver Specials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feng Shui</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ugly Houses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who Buys Houses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight Demolition</td>
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<td>0.8%</td>
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<td>Land Flips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Sources: The Vancouver Sun, The Province, The Courier, and The Globe and Mail