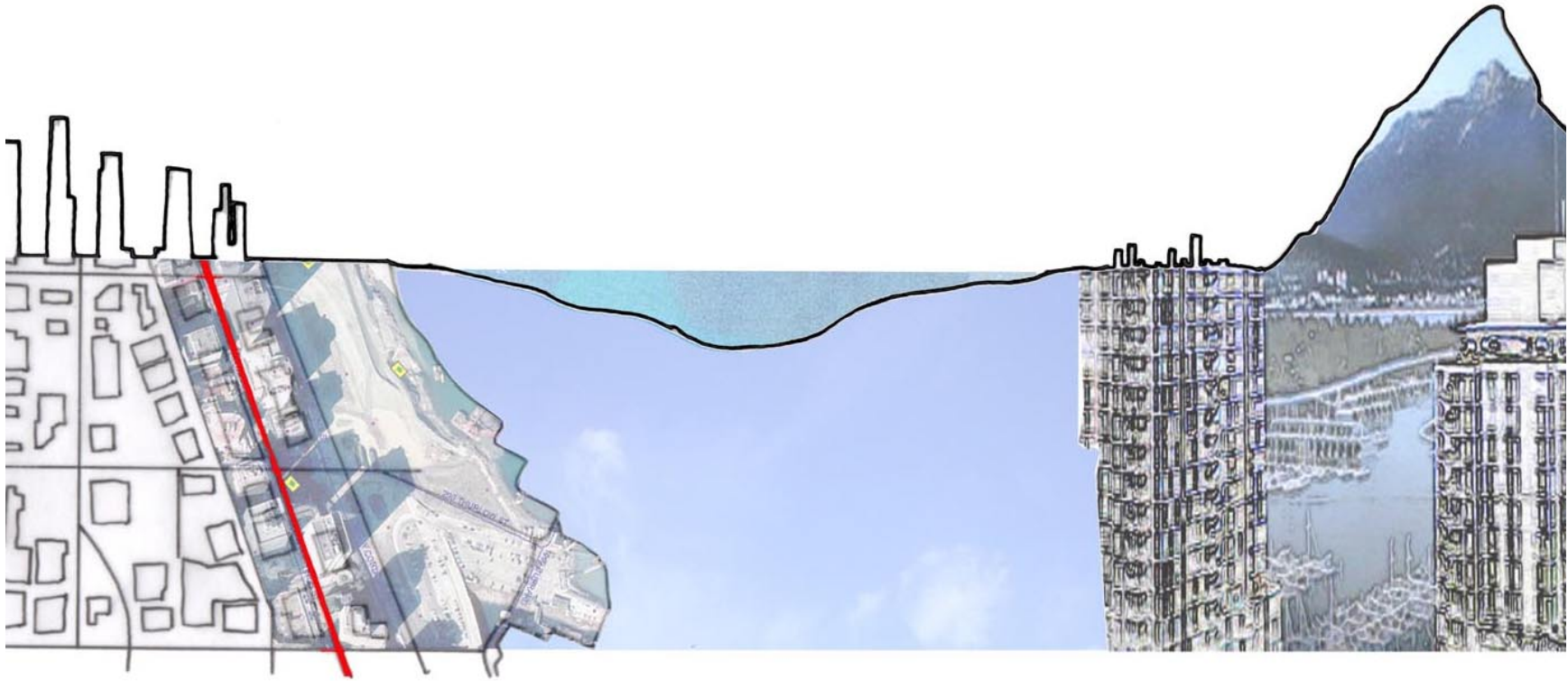


## THE CITY AND THE GARDEN – VANCOUVER

the motivation between the built and the natural





### Downtown

A walk along Hastings Street in the Downtown and Coal Harbour areas reveal that the experiential qualities of space are drawn outward, which is in contrast to the inward experience of space towards East Hastings. Numerous real estate advertisements in the Coal Harbour area emphasize a lifestyle that is reliant on the surrounding location. Thus, the architectural comfort of the buildings interior spaces from a human scale becomes secondary to the inherent natural qualities of the surrounding periphery.

Coal Harbour Community Center also provides the important visual connection between the city and North Shore Mountains. The actual concrete structure is generally underground and becomes secondary to the open green space of the park, which preserves the important interrelationship between the built urban space and the natural landscape. The interrelationship between Vancouver's urban built space and natural periphery is exemplified in the meaningful placement of visual corridors towards the ocean and North Shore Mountains. The park at the end of Hornby is an example of a visual corridor that functions as a pedestrian walkway but also enforces the important visual relationship between the built city and natural environment.

The agglomeration of glass and steel that created the financial district in downtown Vancouver has become a reflection of nature within itself. The ability of glass to reflect its surroundings and the arrangement of various skyscraper heights, create a cityscape that is reminiscent of the monumental North Shore Mountains. Trees aligning the financial district have created spaces that are at a human scale, in order to combat the feeling of vast homogeneous space.

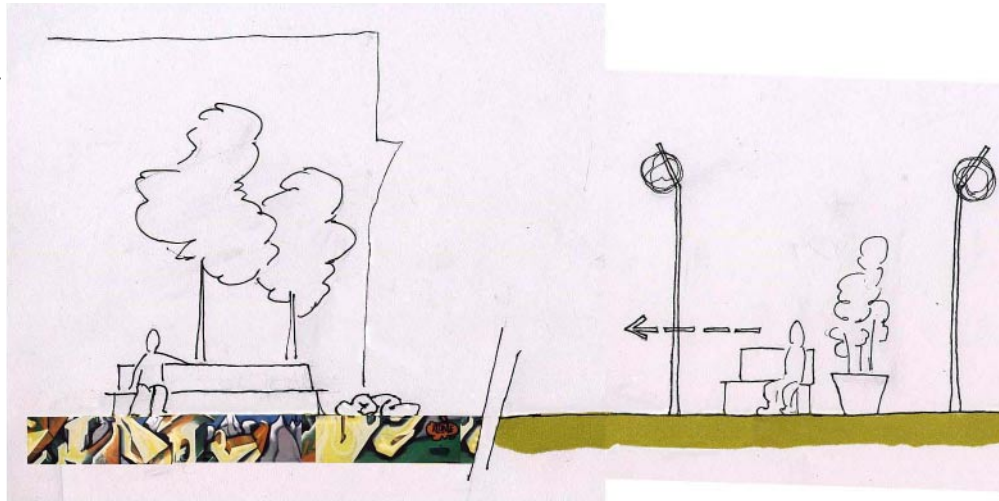
## scenes on hastings

From an advertisement on a realtor's website: "Top floor, located on the quiet, north eastern corner. Immaculate two bedrooms with solarium, gas fireplace and all appliances. Fantastic North Shore views. Secure, underground parking for apartment and guests. Great bus connection to Downtown and Chinatown. Trouble free complex." Source - [www.tonycikes.com](http://www.tonycikes.com)

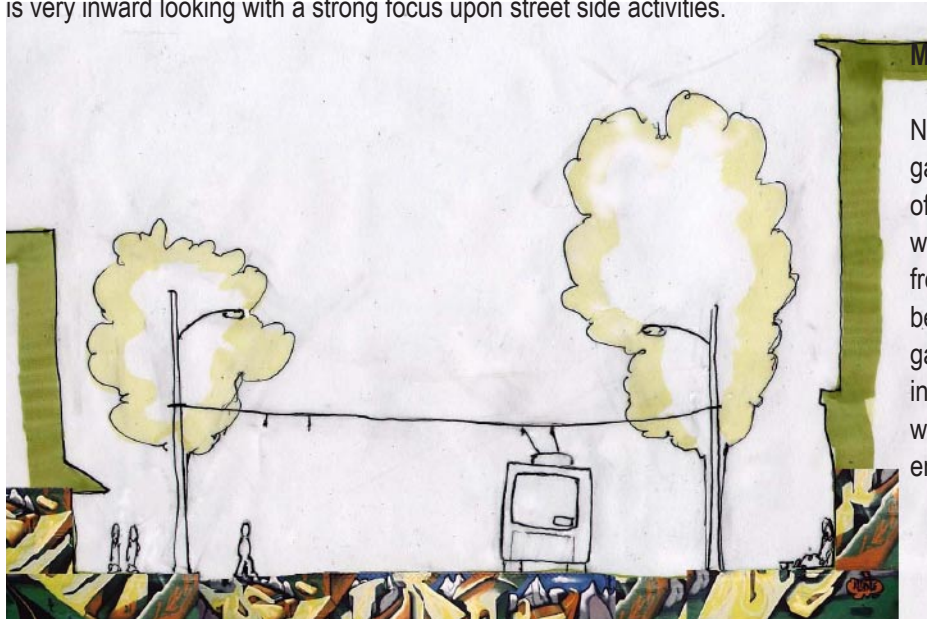
From the description on the Downtown Eastside website: "A typical SRO hotel room is nine square meters of living space, generally without bathroom facilities, refrigerator, or stove. If they are classed as housekeeping, linens are changed, usually weekly, while those classified as sleeping rooms are little more than places to fit a bed and usually, although not always, a sink." Source - [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca)

### Downtown Eastside Public Parks and Streets

Built and natural elements are integrated within the urban experience. Trees line the street in a regularized array becoming as much a part of the urban as light posts. The tree branches and transit cables act as an overhead canopy to define a void about the street and create an inward looking environment. In comparison with the surrounding regions such as Coal Harbour, downtown eastside Hastings is very inward looking with a strong focus upon street side activities.



Large natural elements (such as trees and bushes) are deployed very carefully and seem located almost as precisely as the fire hydrants. Smaller plants emerge with less precision and find life along the street periphery and rooves of poorly maintained buildings. The idea of an urban garden becomes inseparable from urban artwork and graffiti - all as means of expression through cultivation.



### Middle-Income Park

Nature becomes separated and confined within a gated, protected zone. Solitary gardens are created that float out of reach of harmful elements and create points of observation to the outside. Across from Pigeon Park, a defensible gated park was developed upon an ex-CPR rail route. The park acts as a viewing platform from which to view the street inhabitants and other scenery. Other people's lives become the spectacle and monument for viewing. Interestingly, the surrounding gate also acts as a cage to display those fenced within. Such parks address the inhabitant's need for security as well as the desire to feel somehow connected with life on Hastings. However, there is a striking contrast between this exclusive environment and the open, community feeling found elsewhere along Hastings.





## Strathcona

The road pulls back and widens as you walk along this section of Hastings Street. The regularity of the planted trees begins to falter and occasionally stops altogether as the natural elements give way to the built industry. The result is a less urban, more suburban, wider, more open street. The speed of the cars increase as the street focuses more on car transportation and less on the pedestrian. In most realty listings, "High traffic" is the first selling point.

The result becomes so that the focus is on the commercial frontage of the buildings as it shifts from retail to light industrial. The transecting streets allow for a new perspective with a view towards the north. Beyond the commercial buildings, the view shifts to include the Vancouver Port and train yards. The Port is a built structure which dominates the visual corridor towards the subservient North Shore Mountains.

Industry and the Port become the fabric, which surround Hastings Street. The natural becomes secondary to the built even as the view of Hastings Street becomes wider. Any views towards the North Shore Mountains are not planned but rather circumstantial.



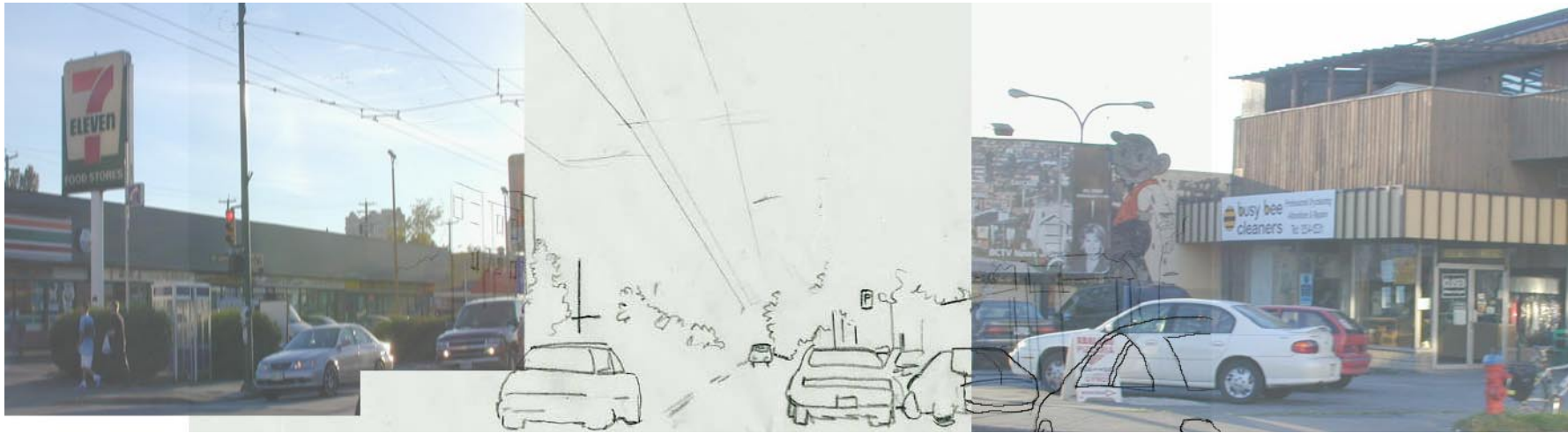
## Grandview Woodlands

*"This isn't just any street!! It's a diverse pocket of commerce and lifestyles, with restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops for all tastes, some of the coolest shopping in Vancouver, and a full spectrum of recreation and entertainment . . . it's an **Urban Adventure!**"* So gushes the home page of [www.thedrive.net](http://www.thedrive.net), a website devoted to Commercial Drive, the heart of the Grandview-Woodlands district. Yet all these amenities are absent from the intersection of The Drive and Hastings. While Commercial Drive represents the possible, the reality of Hastings Street as it transects Grandview is very different.

*It's All About Driving...*Grandview encompasses the low point of Hastings. Topographically, the street comes as close to sea level as it does anywhere along its length. A small stream once fed into Burrard Inlet near what is now the north end of Victoria Drive. But where enormous cedars towered a century ago, Cubist Space reigns supreme. Car dealers, garages, convenience stores, strip malls, a funeral parlor, a slaughterhouse – big boxes squat among acres of pavement

along this section of Hastings. Pedestrians find little to sustain everyday life in this landscape that revolves around the automobile. Don't come here unless you want to buy a car, a slurpee, an adult video, or a coffin.

*Fuel for a New Vision...*Life waits in the wings, poised for an invitation to assert itself more strongly. Residential neighborhoods to the south promise customers for future greengrocers, boutiques, restaurants, and other retail. Vacant lots await parks and other infill that add vitality to the urban experience. The northshore mountains stand ready to be framed and celebrated, as do the monumental structures of the Vancouver Terminal along the waterfront. The façade of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre establishes an emphatic sense of local identity. And here and there, a surprise. On the day we visit, a chicken breaks free from the slaughterhouse and makes a beady-eyed calculation of its next move. We urge her, Run chicken! Run!



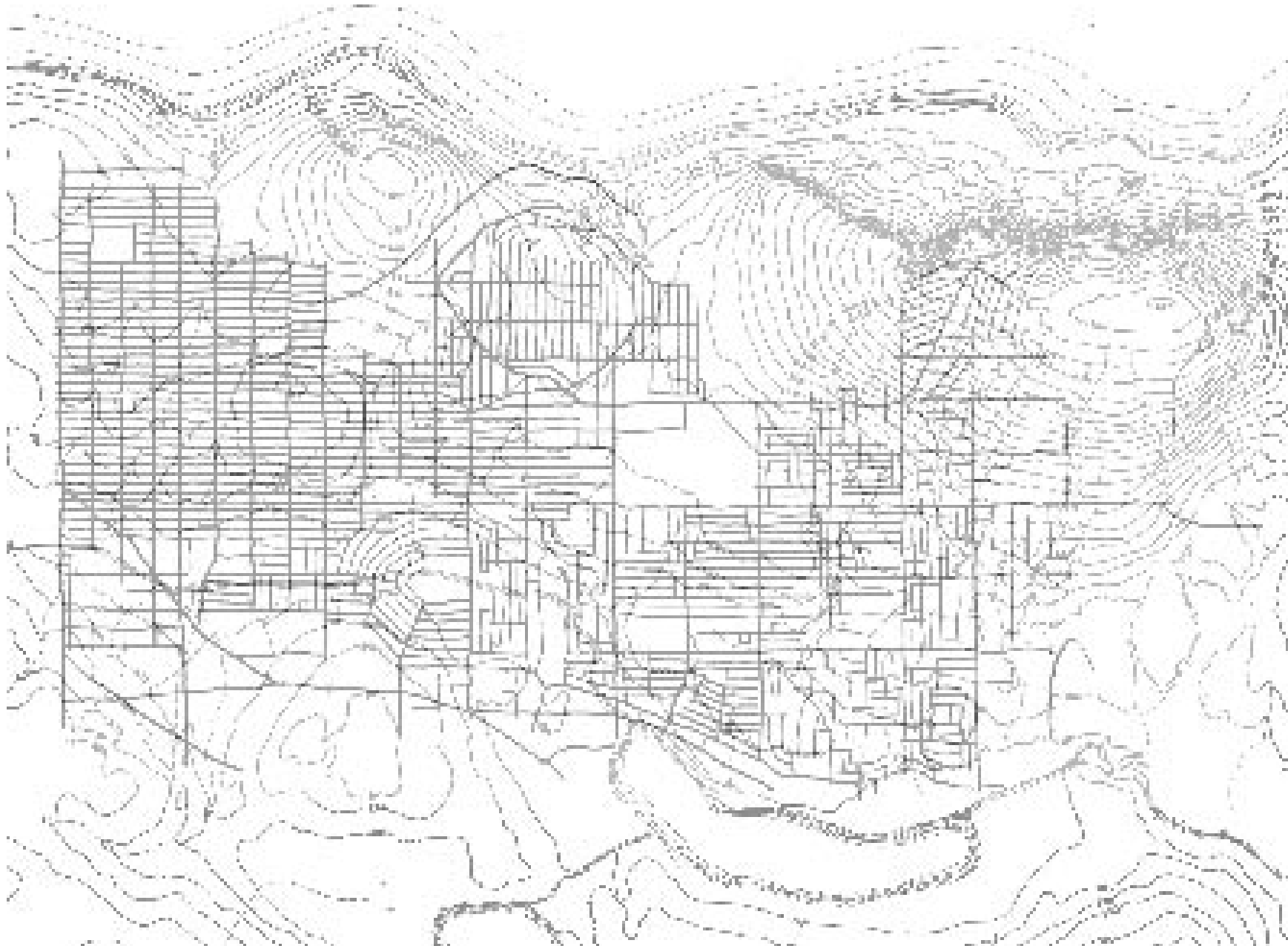
## Hastings Sunrise

Once upon a time, horse-drawn carriages transported vacationers to the New Brighton Hotel in Hastings-Sunrise. There on the shores of Burrard Inlet, the travellers relaxed and contemplated the views of the north shore mountains. But as the city grew and the district built up, the ocean and mountains faded in importance, and urban life surged to the forefront. What we see today is a record of this urbanization and the changing fortunes of the district. Nanaimo Street and Boundary Road respectively mark the eastern and western borders of Hastings-Sunrise, with Hastings Street serving as a major east-west thoroughfare. Travellers making their way along this stretch of Hastings experience a variety of spaces from those that can be described as cubist to those that are volumetric in nature.

Vacant lots on the north side of Hastings and also parking lots that face Hastings street dot the west end of this neighbourhood. These lots are remnants of buildings and create empty spaces for people to programme as they see fit or to act as a temporal cue. These open spaces provide views to the north shore mountains and the industrial waterfront but this view is not formally acknowledged through built and natural form. Areas that exhibit cubist space include small 'strip malls' set back from the street and lined with parking in the front. These places are easily accessible by car but not a comfortable space to access as a pedestrian.

The 2500 block of Hastings is one of the only encapsulated or volumetric spaces in this neighbourhood. Here you find mixed use commercial and residential and buildings that span in height from two to four storeys creating a comfortable street scale for the pedestrian. Subsequently this area is the most lively of the neighbourhood. Here you will find street trees uniformly lining the streets and when you wander of Hastings the residential side streets are also lined with trees throughout this neighbourhood. The PNE grounds and the adjacent community centre are the first overwhelming green presence in this area. The street here seems wider but this is due to there not being any parking lanes or buildings along the street to create a comfortable street scale. The park and the community however seem inaccessible to the person travelling down Hastings. The east end of the PNE grounds is bordered by Cassiar Street which connects Highway 1 to the Second Narrows Bridge. The City of Vancouver ends shortly after this at Boundary with the only visible cues being the end of the electrical wires of the bus.

THE CITY AND THE GARDEN - BURNABY

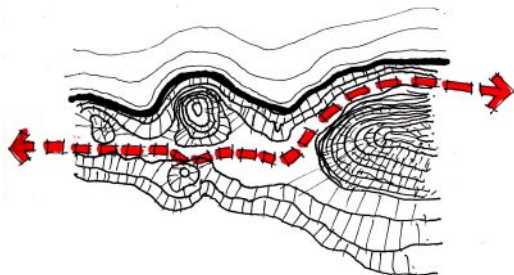
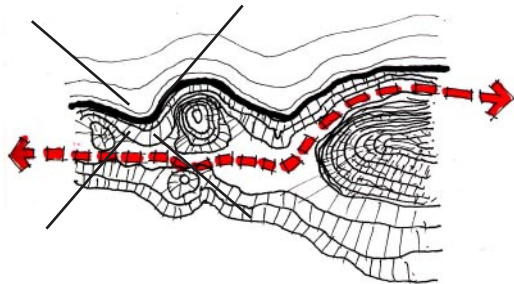
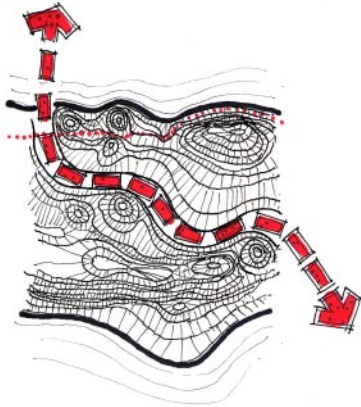


Site Analysis: The City and the Garden – Burnaby



## Topography and Burnaby

The topography of Burnaby has greatly influenced the development of its settlement and infrastructure as demonstrated by the location and design of the Trans-Canada Highway along the contours of the valley that divides the city into two regions. This natural feature, reinforced by the placement of Greater Vancouver's major vehicular route, affects local perception of space along Hastings St. insofar that many people believe it to be the boundary between Vancouver and Burnaby when, in fact, the true border lies further east at Boundary Rd.



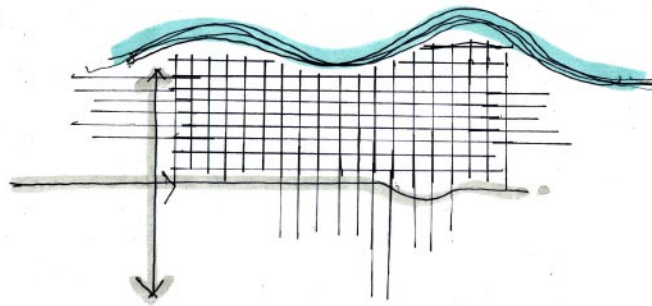
## Topographical Focal Points

Natural focal points are also created as a result of topographical elevation changes. Historically, features such as these have been held in high regard as places of reverence and, thus, treated as such in every respect. Capitol Hill, located along Hastings St., is one such area. Second only to Burnaby Mountain, this land feature can be seen from points throughout the Lower Mainland making it a significant element in the Greater Vancouver landscape worthy of close attention

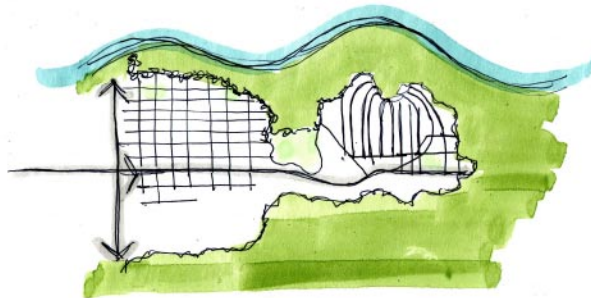
## Hastings as Topography

Slight curves along Hastings St. clearly shows how topography has influenced its physical implementation over and above typical abstract principles of lot distribution and urban design (i.e. the grid). Additionally, Hastings' placement along the highest ridge of North Burnaby's hill terrain must not be overlooked. Topographically, this endows the street with elevational prominence with regard to views, drainage, solar exposure, and fresh air.

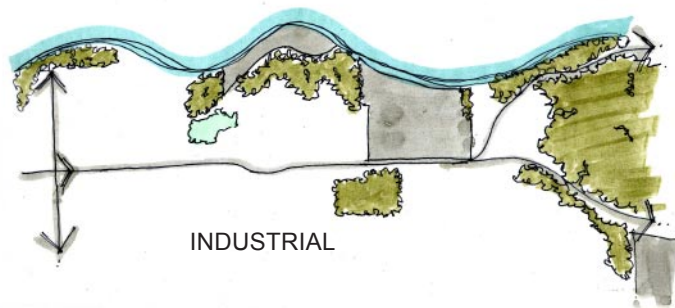




POLITICAL



ECONOMIC



INDUSTRIAL

## Value of the Vancouver Image

The political image speaks about the value that was thought to be inherent in the 1909 Vancouver urban form. After landowners capitalized on the sale of timber that was once ubiquitous across the northern Burnaby landscape, their next venture was in development. In 1909 the present Burnaby Heights was to be designated Vancouver Heights in which the Vancouver city grid was to be extended east of Boundary Road to Capital Hill. Hasting street was to be extended as the major connector and its name maintained in order to blur the threshold between the two cities. No provisions were made for parks and no developmental considerations were given to the natural topography.

## Landscape Embraces Urban Form

By early 1914 the first recession hit. Huge parcels of land were relinquished by the municipality of Burnaby as landowners forfeited on their property taxes. In 1919 Burnaby established the Conservation of Assets and dedicated massive land parcels, such as the ravines along Burrard Inlet and Burnaby Mountain, to green lands. Various parks were also dedicated in which Confederation Park was the largest of 97.85 acres. The Acquisition of green lands by the municipality of Burnaby was a vital factor that led to a significant change in the way the built form was to shape the new landscape. Now the natural landscape and its topography became important considerations as a result, a continuous landscape of green flowed along the ravines to Burnaby Mountain embracing the urban form along its

## Fragmentation of Landscape by Built Form

In 1935 the municipality was looking for strategies to alleviate the economic burden of the 1930 depression. It was this time that the green lands along the Burrard Inlet where once again considered valuable from an economic standpoint. Commissioner Hugh M. Fraser recognized this potential and sold off large parcels of green land to industry leading to the fragmentation of the natural landscape, which once embraced the urban form.

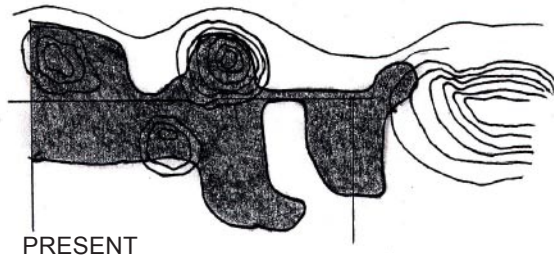
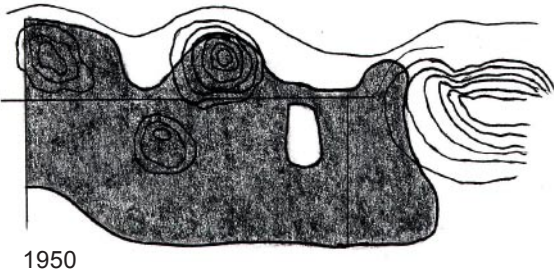
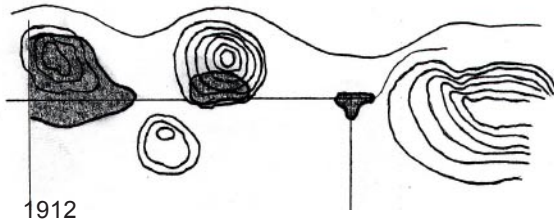
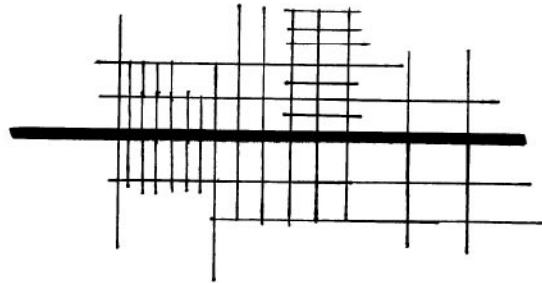
## Evolution

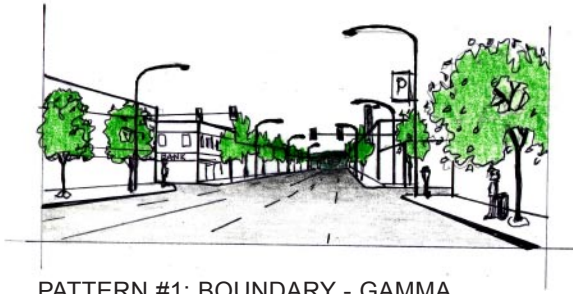
The evolution of the Hastings corridor parallels the cultivation of a garden. Many actors, including speculators, governments, planners and citizens, planted 'seeds' and cultivated the patterns of urban form and space we see in the corridor today.

### Historical Overview: 1890 – Present

The first seeds of development were sown when Hastings Ridge was subdivided in the 1890s, and the provincial government planted completed Hastings Street from Vancouver to the Barnet Mill in 1903. This spurred the development of the Heights and Capitol Hill subdivisions, which reflected a gridded nature based on Victorian ideals of placing order upon Nature and speculators seeking profits by maximizing lots. Dense lotting and short blocks, which created a pedestrian environment of many paths, also anticipated the transportation mode of the time - the street tram. Only modest development was witnessed in Lochdale at this time, involving a few farmsteads.

The arrival of the tram in 1912, traveling through the Heights to Capitol Hill, accelerated residential development. Commercial uses appeared along Hastings Street, servicing tram users walking to and from the tram and their single detached homes. Zoning by-laws in 1927 and 1946 reinforced this land use pattern. However the development of the Lochdale area following World War II involved larger lots and longer blocks, reflecting development without a street tram, planners favouring large-lot single detached homes and segregated land uses, and the public embracing the automobile and lower density suburban living. Since the 1950s these original nuclei have grown and coalesced into the patterned form we see today.





PATTERN #1: BOUNDARY - GAMMA



PATTERN #2: GAMMA - HOLDOM



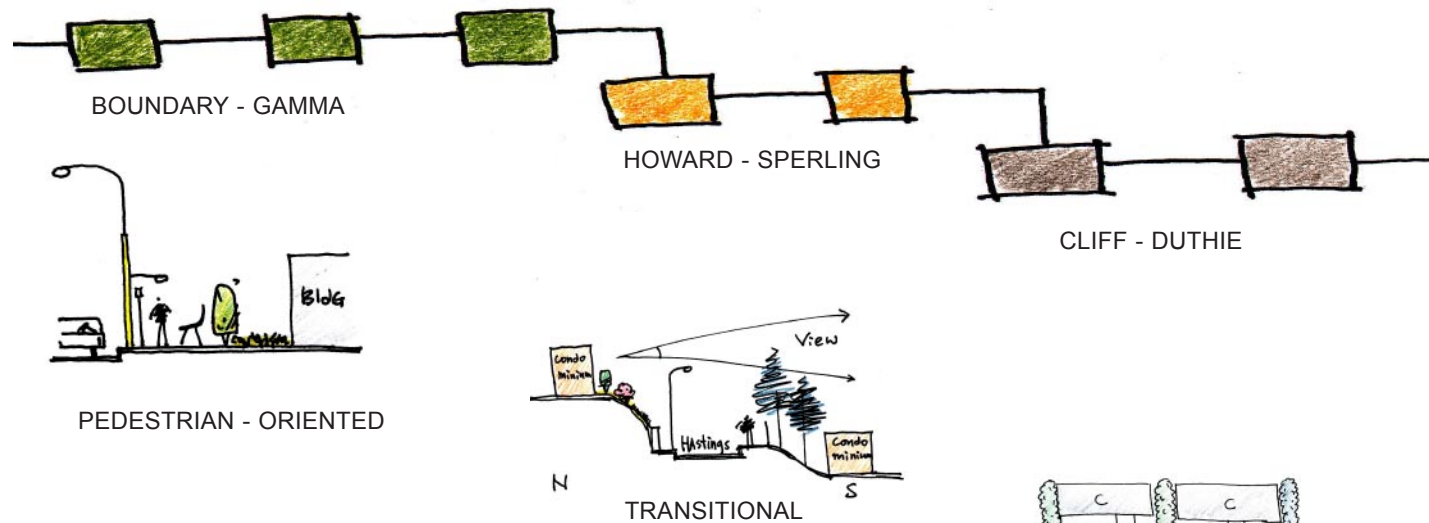
PATTERN #1: HOLDOM - INLET DRIVE

### Pattern Change – East to West

One pattern, found between Boundary Road and Gamma Avenue, reflects an urban, mature feeling, where space is well defined. Stores and homes fronting streets, well-defined green spaces and dense residential areas effectively create outdoor rooms.

Another pattern, between Gamma and Holdom Avenues, is similar, yet is mostly residential. Here, walls of trees create spaces of isolation between residences and the noise of Hastings Street.

Yet another pattern found between Holdom and Inlet Drive indicates a transition to a more suburban pattern. The outdoor room of the streetscape flattens into poorly defined edges and a sprawling landscape of residences, retail strips and plazas. This pattern was cultivated in the absence of the street tram, and within a context of planning and development ideals which embraced heavy automobile use.



### Detail Group 1: Pedestrian Orientated

Consistent street trees, street lights for pedestrians, frequent bus stops, garbage boxes and benches make this area pedestrian friendly.

No setback of commercial buildings and approximately 3m setback of residential areas with soft landscape balance and keep this area interesting.

### Detail Group 2: Transitional

Wider road resulting in greater distances between bus stops.

Street trees become sparse, very few trash bins and no pedestrian dedicated lamp standards.

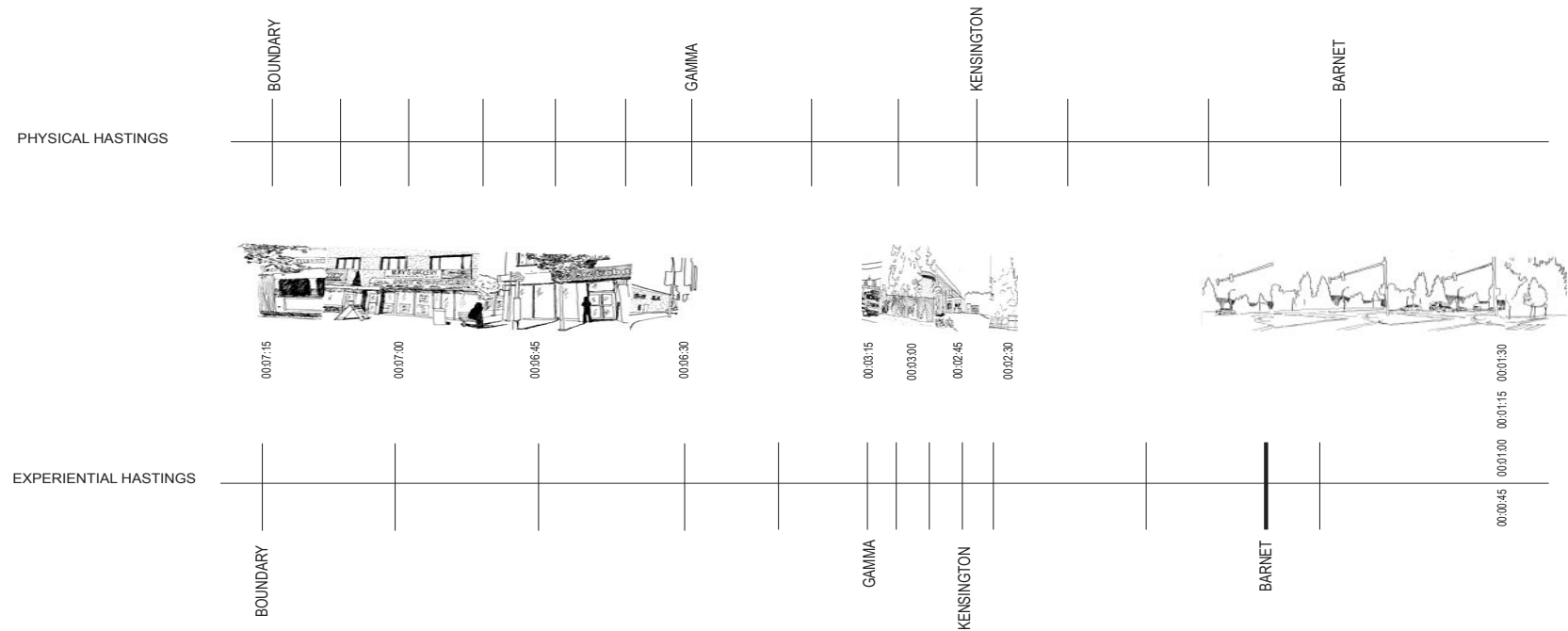
Larger condominiums with formal lawns and fences, lawned boulevards, narrow side walks with views to Kensington Park and large oil tanks.

### Detail Group 3: Car Oriented

Medium density residential areas with formal lawns and natural landscaping.

Commercial buildings have “private” entrances and signage is large and placed high above the street.





### The Commuter (Monday, 2PM Eastbound)

This graphic is an attempt to translate the physical layout of Hastings Street, between Boundary Street and Barnet Street, to a layout which may more accurately relate how one experience the cross streets of this area to Hastings Street.

Here, a time-lapse study was performed in order to document how a car commuter would experience the Hastings strip in terms of elevation, and how this experience might transform the plan of the street arrangement. Beginning at the base of Burnaby Mountain photographs were taken every 15 seconds as we proceeded west. Also, times were recorded as each major

intersection was crossed. Afterwards, the intersection data was coordinated with the photos as a way of indicating how fast we were moving through the corridor and precisely where we were every 15 seconds.

Next sketches of photos were done in order to distill the images to their most basic level of discernable detail. Essentially, the arrangement of physical streets affected the rate at which we could travel, thereby altering our perception of the arrangement of streets. A direct translation of the physical to the ephemeral.



## The City

The patterns of the city do not come into being by chance. Instead they do so by human ambitions, society and the constraints and/or opportunities provided by the native landscape.

## The Journey

We move through space and time, all the while our surroundings stay still.....or do they?

## The Dialectic

Relationships exist between ourselves and nature, and what we both create - this is the dialectic.