

# PRICE TAGS

## *Issue 7*

October 6, 2003

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I promised you pictures of False Creek as it might have been. I lied. Maybe next time, after my research is complete. In the meantime, stuff has been accumulating in the PT file ....

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John Atkin, who passed on that great link to the City of Vancouver's web site showing the transformation of False Creek, reports that...

Your inclusion of the panoramas in Tags 2 has generated so much traffic on the city's web site that by noon on Monday last week the panorama page had received more hits than the entire site receives in a day!

In case you missed it:

[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/fade/fade.htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/fade/fade.htm)

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### *Frances Joins the Cult*

And just in case you missed Frances Bula's great piece in the Sun on how she gave up a car and somehow survived, check out ...

<http://www.canada.com/search/story.aspx?id=91b02bfb-89db-4a1b-8953-61b6b48638d5>

Here's a piece on Vancouver by a completely objective observer, by way of Seattle:

October 2, 2003

## Is Seattle ready to wear the Vancouver style?

*South Lake Union could be the next home of skinny towers*

By GORDON PRICE  
Special to the Journal

Could Vancouver be coming to a neighborhood near you?

In at least one West Coast city, it already has.

The so-called "Vancouver style" can be found in the Marina District of San Diego. In the 1980s, Nat Bosa, a Canadian developer of residential highrises, had one thought when he saw the potential of San Diego: "This is Vancouver — with better weather!"

Within a few years, along with the first successful Bosa project, another 60 condo developments were underway, many designed and built by Canadians. San Diego, in short, was being Vancouverized.

Today in Seattle, the Vancouver style is being considered for South Lake Union, in Portland for South Waterfront, and in San Francisco for South of Market on Rincon Hill.



Photos by Gordon Price

**Avila at Bauhinia, one of the first developments in Vancouver's Coal Harbour neighborhood, was built in the late 1990s.**

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Want to find out what the Vancouver Style is? Then read the whole DJC piece at:

<http://www.djc.com/news/co/11149498.html>

In fact, check out their Urban Development Special Section at:

<http://www.djc.com/special/development2003/>

and find out the story behind this cool new development in Fremont:



Fremont's Epicenter has a grocery store, coffee shop, sushi restaurant, ice creamery, home furnishings boutique, two live/work units and 128 apartments in the complex. Each building is named after a celestial body. The cover photo is Mars, draped with Fremont artist Mark Steven's 65-foot-tall stainless steel "Monsruang" — Thai for "Jewelry from Heaven."

Developer: Security Properties

Architect: Bumgardner

Contractor: Rafn

*Photo © 2003 Randall J. Corcoran*

The DJC issue also discusses the difficulties and delights of building in the urban Seattle area. Difficulties like [squeezing more housing downtown](#) and filling an [affordable housing gap](#). Delights, as in creating [more open space in the urban environment](#). Parking is always an issue - such as how to [house more cars](#) when space is at a minimum, or how to control [stormwater runoff](#). We even tackle the issue of the [sprawling waistline](#).

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## *The Other Vancouver Style*

Don't like Vancouver Style highrises? Then you might want to check out these slabs in the *other* Vancouver:



<http://www.vancouvercenter-usa.com/condos1.htm>

There's a reason why their buildings look like slabs. Fire codes require the exit staircases to be significantly separated. (Technically, at least half the distance of the diagonal of the floorplate – got that?)

In Vancouver (B.C.) we have scissor stairs: two separate exit stairwells that cross each other in a shaft, generally in the core of the building next to the elevators. That means the building can be very slender (the so-called point tower) with a high efficiency ratio (usually above 85 percent) - a nice combination of aesthetics and economics.

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Okay, just one more piece on how the Vancouver Style is catching on ...



Week of September 29, 2003

## **Residential on the rise**

### **35 years of S.F. growth policy is being turned on its head**

**James Temple**

Cities like Vancouver and Seattle have presented developers, architects and city planners with new models for highrise housing: Tall, slender, well-spaced towers that minimize impacts on views and light, with narrow, pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks below.

The examples have shown, in short, that what was wrong with highrises like Fontana Towers wasn't the height or the bulk itself, but the urban design and architecture.

#### **The inner Vancouver**

In San Francisco, the Vancouver model is infiltrating the psyche of city planners just as many long-term planning projects areas, like Rincon Hill, Transbay Terminal and Octavia Boulevard, are moving ahead.

The Transbay Terminal plan is the most conspicuously reminiscent of Vancouver -- even though most of the actual buildings are years away from the blueprint stage -- because the land-use plan never allows more than one tower per block, and insists that they are tall and narrow. The redevelopment agency performed extensive -- and expensive -- 3-D modeling to understand how towers placement would affect light, shadows, views and wind.

Want to read the whole thing? Go to:

<http://sanfrancisco.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/stories/2003/09/29/focus1.html>

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## *What's happening in the West End?*

I saw something in the West End last weekend I had never seen before; something I bet hasn't been seen in decades. Almost every building has a vacancy sign out front.

What's happening? One realtor believes there is just so much investor-owned housing being rented out in Downtown South and Yaletown that renters can get a much better deal - new appliances, en-suite laundry, parking! - for not much more than what they would pay in the West End. Other renters are taking advantage of low interest rates to buy, and there isn't much for sale in the West End.

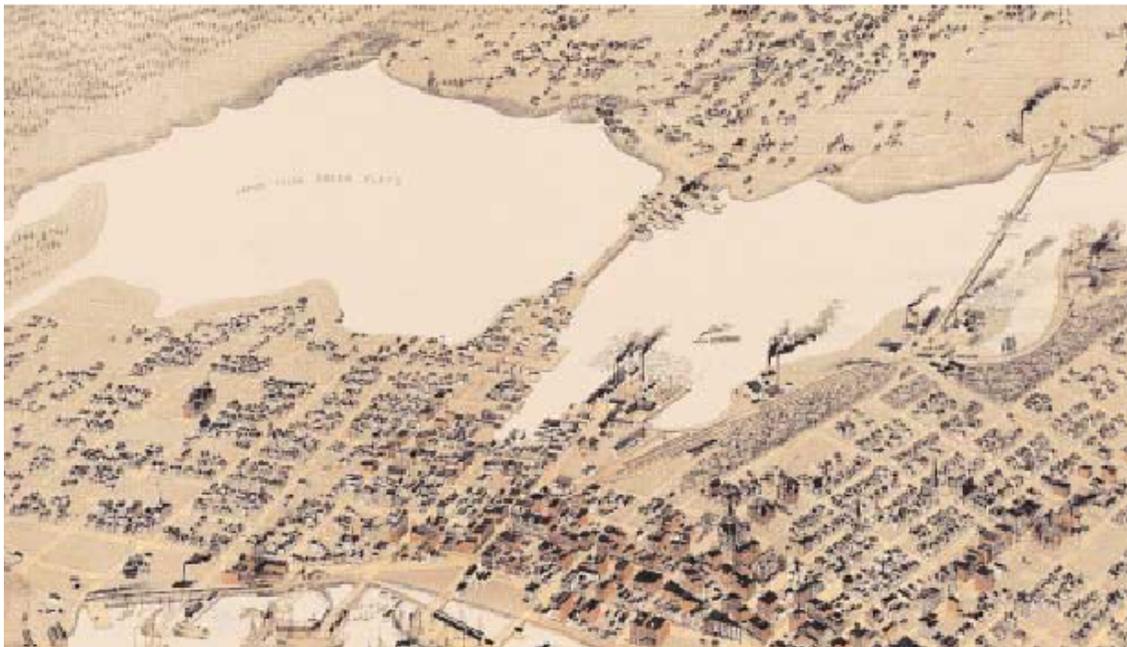
There's a danger here, he says. Landlords may cut back on maintenance, even allowing some of the older three-storey walk-ups to run into the ground if they can't get the rents they're used to. Since it's almost impossible to redevelop or convert a rental building for a condominium in the West End, there's a danger of 'slumification.' A steady deterioration might come on top of some of the social issues related to drugs, panhandling and crime that are becoming more prevalent in the neighbourhood.

Or maybe something else is happening, maybe this is just a short-term aberration, and the vacancy signs will soon disappear.

Any other theories, anyone?

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# FALSE CREEK URBAN HERITAGE TRAIL GUIDEBOOK



The New City Institute unveiled its long-awaited False Creek Heritage Trail. Researched and developed over seven years, it provides walkers, cyclists and motorists an opportunity to explore Vancouver's hidden history.

Consisting of fifty locations, stretching from Hadden Park and the Maritime Museum to the site of the former shipyard where the last wooden steam tug on BC's coast was built, the Trail covers First Nations' sites, ecology, labour and industrial history, struggles against racism, planning and urban design history, and community development.

Check it out at: [http://newcity.ca/Pages/false\\_creek\\_trail.pdf](http://newcity.ca/Pages/false_creek_trail.pdf)

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### *Quote of the Day*

“With new road-fare technology, we can levy charges targeted at the problem that causes gridlock -- too many single-occupant cars during the rush hours. Reducing their numbers just a little would restore free traffic flow. Higher charges at these times could divert drivers to transit or to other times of day and still allow off-peak travel at a lower rate or for free. The huge cash flow generated would be enough to make public transit a viable alternative.”

Joe Berridge, vice-chair of the Toronto Board of Trade, is a partner in Urban Strategies Inc., an urban planning and design consultancy.

Question: Would we hear a similar strategy advocated by Vancouver's Board of Trade?