

# PRICE TAGS

## *Issue 10*

November 2, 2003

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Vancouver as it might have been

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Rendering by J. Veerman

*Edifice Complex:* “An irresistible impulse among politicians to construct publicly funded monuments to themselves in the form of government office buildings.”

Well, not just politicians .... Ever since human beings could build tall buildings, there has been a universal urge to do so.

In the late 1960s, W.A.C. Bennett was British Columbia’s longest serving Premier. Though monuments to the Social Credit administration could be found throughout the province, particularly in the form of highways and dams, the provincial government had little distinct presence in Vancouver. Hence the idea of building a 55-storey black tower just south of the existing Court House.

Whether the rendering above represents an actual design or the artist’s interpretation of what might be built, it certainly demonstrates the impact the tower would have had on the city.

But it was not to be. Bennett’s 20-year reign came to an end in 1972 with his defeat by Dave Barrett and the NDP. Reflecting the anti-highrise spirit of the time, the Barrett government commissioned Arthur Erickson to design what we have today: Robson Square.

Ironically, the complicated construction required the iron hand of Gordon Shrum, a favoured builder of the Socialists (he did SFU), to get the job done.

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**British Columbia's biggest city is building a sleek, innovative present atop its charming, traditional past**

***Gush from California*** - Via **VIA**, the Magazine of the California State Automobile Association

.... the city is far enough north and distant enough from the urban centers of eastern Canada that sometimes—and especially when the lowering sun throws the glinting glass facades of downtown into relief against the craggy escarpment of the surrounding Coast Mountains—it feels like an exotic glittering island afloat at the end of the earth....

Raise your eyes to look back from Stanley Park and you will be reminded that all this tradition coexists with daring modernity.... The city is a garden of glass, the most architecturally adventurous of its skyscrapers so tall and (by code restriction) so narrow that they seem like crystal splinters, a bristling convocation of space-age stalagmites.

Residential towers are proliferating in Yaletown, the city's most delicately "balanced" neighborhood (think warehouses being converted into hip restaurants and shops). The newer skyscrapers are still going up—building cranes perch above them like storks atop Dutch chimneys.



[Click here for full text of story](#)

## *Home-grown gush...*

If you just haven't read enough about Yaletown, check out the October issue of BC Business. (Not on the web site as of Nov 2, 2003.) But you know the gush by now: "The redevelopment Expo lands are home to the hippest, sexiest neighborhood in Vancouver. All by design."

The photos by Brian Howell are lively, and Frank O'Brien's update on real-estate prices should provide a little Shock and Awe. Or if you think maybe Vancouver is Over-Rated, try Down Under.

## *Sydney Rising*

**"Modernity is our hallmark and modernity becomes us. There is a breeze of optimism over Sydney somewhat akin to the refreshing salt breeze off the harbour at the end of a spring day.**

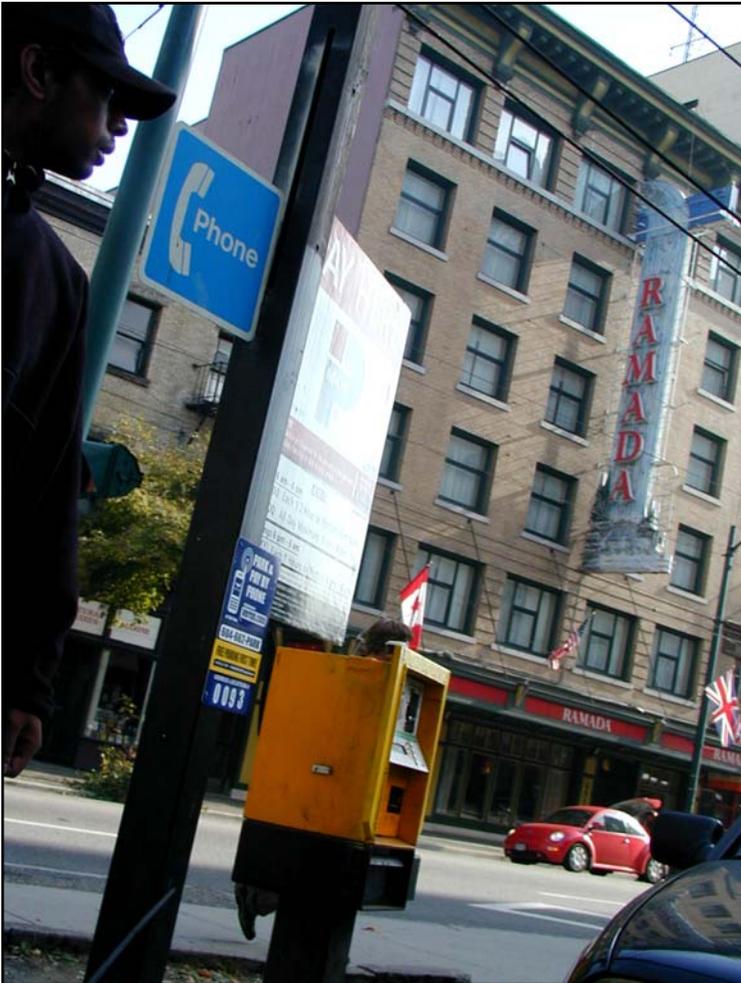
**"I think this could be seen as our best time."**

Premier Bob Carr, New South Wales

[Click here for full comments from this unbiased observer](#)



# Vancouver Declining ...?



Lately, I've been working at a job site near the corner of Richards and Pender in Vancouver. And every day, all day long, I see these three guys selling crack. I walk by them to get a cup of coffee in the morning and at 10 a.m. they are there with people smoking crack on the corner.

When I go get a piece of pizza for lunch I sit outside and watch them and, unbelievably, I watch the police drive by. They don't seem concerned with them in the slightest.

I'm sure everyone knows we have a big problem in this city with drug use and I've been told that it's better to go after the hive and not just the using bees. But, why do the police do nothing about this?

I've been at this job site for a week now and it's the same three guys selling crack everyday.

Is it policy to ignore these people? ....

Travis Bangham

This drug market has emerged in the centre of a thriving student district where thousands of young people attend English-language schools, BCIT, SFU and VCC. The foreign students are here in part because of Vancouver's reputation as a safe place.

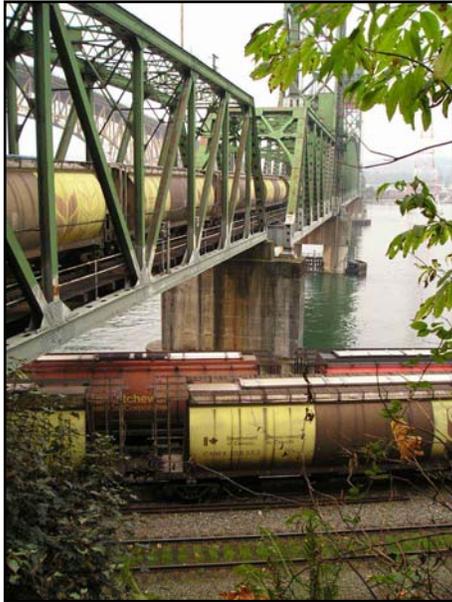
It is probably only a matter of time before reporters from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, South America or Europe discover what is happening and report back to their readers.

And ask us why we let this happen.



Want to update your Vancouver IQ? Try ....

## ***KEN WUSCHKE's* URBAN BRAINTEASERS**



**What is the specific body of water that this bridge crosses? And name the railway company that owns the bridge?**

1. This bridge is the third one at this location - the first built in 1925, the second in 1934, and this one opened in 1969.
2. The first two structures had a road deck that remained open until 1963. The road deck was made obsolete when the highway bridge, in the background, opened in 1960.



**This place of rest lies beside which street?**

1. Prior to 1929 this little space was in the Municipality of Point Grey.
2. The space was intended for cars.
3. The street in front of the space began as a road but changed to a street. Regardless of being a road or a street it has almost always recalled a Crimean battle.

For the answers to these and more puzzles in the future,  
go to Ken's Website at:

[http://www3.telus.net/transportationchoices/vancouver\\_mysteries/03-10-28.htm](http://www3.telus.net/transportationchoices/vancouver_mysteries/03-10-28.htm)