

# PRICE TAGS

## *Issue 18*

February 5, 2004

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## The City Evolves

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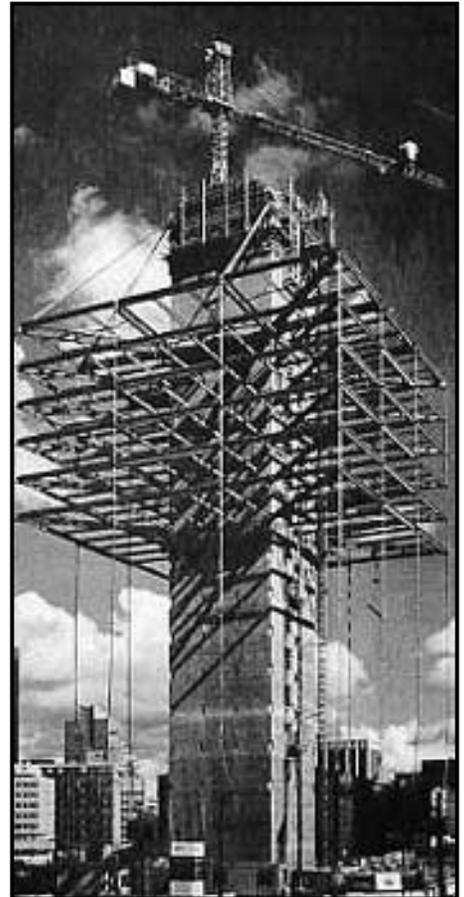
# QUBE



# Still cool after all these years

Sometime in the late 1980s (if memory serves) I had a meeting with a senior executive of Westcoast Transmission in their remarkable building at 1333 West Georgia. Everyone knows it: the glass box hung from straps, its central core evident in an open plaza at ground level. (Rhone and Iredale were the architects; Bogue Babicki was the structural engineer.)

The executive was concerned about the city's intention to rezone Triangle West – the lands west of Thurlow between Hastings and Georgia – to allow for highrise residential. When their building went up in 1969, Westcoast was some distance from the central business district, but they expected that office buildings would continue to migrate west. Now it looked as though they might be surrounded by condos, isolating them from the action.



And so it was to be. But neither of us at that time would have guessed that the Westcoast Transmission Building itself would eventually be consumed by this trend and see itself converted to residential. And so, with announcement of 'Qube' this week, that too has come to be.

Not everyone is enchanted. A recent Torode Realty Oncor International report was critical. The report lamented the disappearance of 1333 West Georgia, 600 Dunsmuir (at Granville) and others for eroding inventory that might be needed for offices in the future. "We as office-leasing professionals are alarmed that prominent core sites are being rezoned to allow residential uses," the report said, and called for a halt.

As architect Bing Thom has warned, is Vancouver doomed to be "a resort that looks like a city" rather than a real city that feels like a resort?

# So how do you explain this ?

	2002	2003	2002-03 % Chg.
Vancouver	568,807	568,442	-0.1
Surrey	378,173	390,145	3.2
Burnaby	203,665	205,261	0.8
Richmond	173,545	174,201	0.4
Abbotsford	124,627	127,451	2.3
Coquitlam	121,341	122,696	1.1
Saanich	107,919	107,964	0.0
Kelowna	101,708	103,421	1.7
Delta	100,901	100,571	-0.3
Langley, Township of	90,624	91,359	0.8
North Vancouver	85,645	85,839	0.2
Kamloops	80,749	80,416	-0.4
Victoria	76,987	76,387	-0.8

According to B.C. Stats, the provincial statistical agency, the population of Vancouver dropped by 365 in one year – at a time when the condo boom has been explosive and the population of Surrey went up by almost 12,000.

The City Planning Department doesn't actually believe these numbers, and will be working with the region to examine the assumptions behind the count.

But what could be the possible explanation for a flattening of the Vancouver population, much less a drop? Theories welcome: send them to Price Tags.

If the numbers for Vancouver are true, apparently we're not alone ....

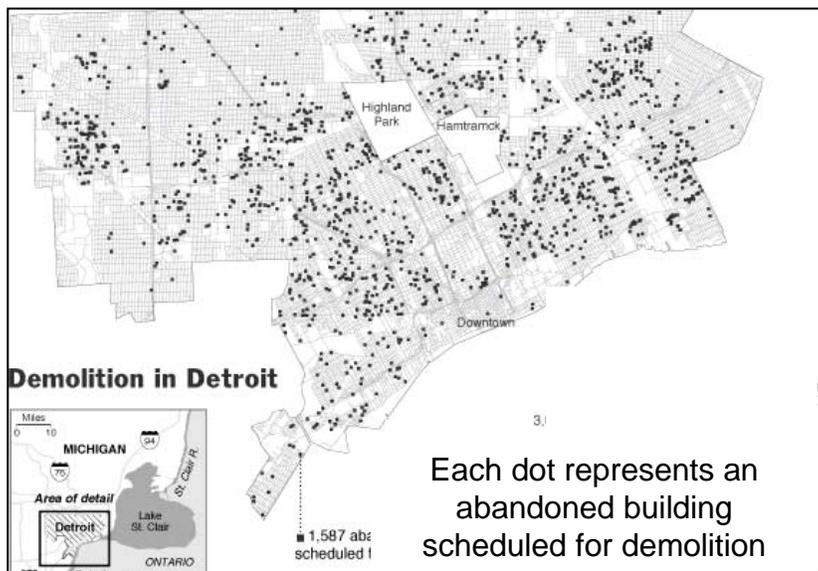
# The New York Times

ON THE WEB

## Shrinking City Syndrome

A DECADE ago, the prevailing wisdom was that cities grow, sprawling ever wider. As the world population hit six billion, experts warned of explosive overcrowding in the megacities of the developing world. Shrinking cities were considered an anomaly, the result of isolated economic upheaval or traumatic political events. "Smart growth" became a rallying cry.

In fact, while city dwellers make up nearly half the world's population, new research by the United Nations and other demographers has shown that for every two cities that are growing, three are shrinking.



More than 450 cities with populations above 100,000 have lost 10 percent or more of their populations since 1950, including 59 in the United States alone, the project found.

[Click for the full story. Registration may be necessary.]

# Regurgitant



Robson at Seymour

February 4, 2004

The San Francisco infatuation with Vancouver continues. SF Weekly writer **Matt Smith** conveys his enthusiasm following a trip here last year, prior to SF's Mayoral election. And then **Trevor Boddy** weighs in with a more acerbic look at how the Rincon Hill Plan and highrise proposals presumably based on Vancouver models may be getting it wrong.



*sfweekly.com*

November 26, 2003

# According to Plan

Over the past two decades, Vancouver, British Columbia, has become famous for an urban-design experiment. Planners there drafted strict guidelines that sought to create dense, cosmopolitan neighborhoods around slender, high-rise condominium buildings. And the planners succeeded marvelously.

On a recent reporting trip to Vancouver, I was pulled along as if by electromagnetic force through endless, gorgeous parkways, past block-size fountain playgrounds, beside community centers, along miles of a raised, split-level, park-lined pedestrian bicycle path – all funded by developers. The sliverlike towers above me were designed in unison, using sophisticated computer models to eliminate shadows and create views.

[Click for full story.]

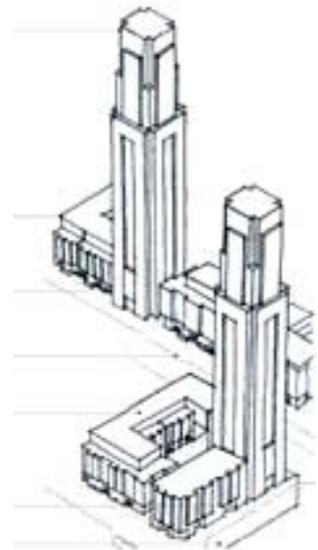
RINCONoitering:

## How Vancouver Ideas Do - and Do Not Help - in Shaping San Francisco's First High Density Neighborhood

by **Trevor Boddy**

... I feel the proper application of the Vancouver experience to its near-downtown neighborhoods is the best possible solution to San Francisco's pressing housing and livability issues.

This makes it all the more important to not only set the record straight, but also for San Francisco to avoid some of our mistakes, even do us one better to regain its status as the West Coast's most enlightened center of city-building.



[Click for full story.]

# The City Program

Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre

www.sfu.ca/city • email city@sfu.ca • telephone 604.291.5254/5079



## Old Friends:

### Revisiting Heritage Conservation in Vancouver

Thursday, February 12, 7–8:30 pm

SFU at Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street

**Gordon Price**, a 15-year city councillor in Vancouver, looks back at heritage conservation during his time in office—the buildings, the people, the issues—and draws some conclusions. Not surprisingly, he found the people were as interesting as the buildings they were trying to save. The changing perspectives of the community—politicians, developers, and community groups—towards heritage made the evolution of policy a constant challenge.

*Co-sponsored by the Heritage Branch, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.*

As seating is limited, **reservations are required.**

Call 604.291.5100, fax 604.291.5098 or email city@sfu.ca.

# Creative Class War

How the GOP's anti-elitism could ruin America's economy.

Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, argues that places like Vancouver are getting an edge on U.S. cities because of the Right's cultural hostility and contempt.

“What should really alarm us is that our capacity to so adapt is being eroded by a different kind of competition--the other pincer of the claw--as cities in other developed countries transform themselves into magnets for higher value-added industries.

“Cities from Sydney to Brussels to Dublin to **Vancouver** are fast becoming creative-class centers to rival Boston, Seattle, and Austin. They're doing it through a variety of means--from government-subsidized labs to partnerships between top local universities and industry. Most of all, they're luring foreign creative talent, including our own.”

[Click for full story.]

# PT Recommended

**The Seattle-based Housing Partnership prepared this guide – a common-sense, detailed and applicable approach for a common issue. Click on the document to connect.**



## **Filling in the Spaces: Ten Essentials for Successful Urban Infill Housing**

