

Grandview Heritage Group Suggestions for Heritage/Character Preservation in Grandview

Final Version — Monday 5 November 2012

The mandate of the Grandview Heritage Group (GHG) is to identify, preserve and celebrate the built, natural and cultural heritage of Grandview. The GHG is actively participating in the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process. Many GHG members have been attending plan events and five of our members are part of the Process Advisory and Community Engagement (PACE) Group.

The GHG is keen to see heritage/character preserved in Grandview as part of the Community Plan process and, to that end, would like to make a series of suggestions about preserving heritage/character. Please consider this letter and attachments as a formal submission to the plan process. We look forward to consideration of the suggestions by planning staff and adoption of them. As you will see, the GHG would like to see some of its suggestions adopted in the upcoming plan workshop on heritage and character, and also other workshops such as housing.

During the Community Plan process, the GHG would like to see the final plan document include the following:

1. Wording that frames Grandview as a heritage/character area and that heritage/character has an influence on other plan themes (such as housing) and on the development of policy about Grandview and its geographical subareas.
2. Retention of all existing land use and development zoning schedules, policies and guidelines that apply to Grandview (e.g., within RM, RT, RS, and C zones), since the heritage/character of the neighbourhood would be threatened by changes thereto, and increased development pressure from upzoning would threaten the loss of the large amount of existing affordable older housing and rentals within heritage/character buildings. The GHG also notes that the City has not demonstrated that existing zoning cannot serve anticipated growth.
3. Wording to ensure there is vigorous application of guidelines that apply to zoning in Grandview (notably, Britannia/Woodland and Broadway Station Area RM-4/RM-4N; RS-1, RT-4 and RT-5), especially regarding the heritage/character nature of buildings and streetscapes.
4. New “First/Commercial C2-C Guidelines” modelled on the Broadway/Commercial C2-C and C-3A Guidelines, covering Commercial Drive from Parker Street to East 6th Avenue.
5. The view that future growth in Grandview should be predominantly provided through the retention, adaptive reuse and/or upgrading of existing buildings with infill where appropriate, at a scale consistent with the existing heritage character of Grandview, to avoid speculative land inflation and to protect public/private views of the mountains and city centre.
6. Policies that encourage the preservation and discourage the demolition of existing heritage/character residential buildings in Grandview.

In addition, during the Community Plan process, the GHG takes the view that:

7. The implementation of city-wide policies that undermine the heritage character of Grandview (such as the Interim Rezoning Policy) should be suspended for the duration of the plan.
8. Zoned capacity information about Grandview should be introduced immediately into the plan process, with the raw data and assumptions about the data made available on the plan website, and publicity produced about the availability of the data.
9. Include the theme of heritage/character in events (such as workshops) about or including other themes, notably housing.
10. Maps by Bruce Macdonald and data and maps by Jak King should be immediately introduced into the Community Plan process and maps of theirs should be used in displays and other materials at plan events about heritage/character and housing, including workshops about these themes, and should inform the final document.

This document expands on some of the preceding suggestions.

Grandview Heritage Group

www.grandviewheritagegroup.org

1 Suggestion #1: Grandview as a Heritage/Character Area

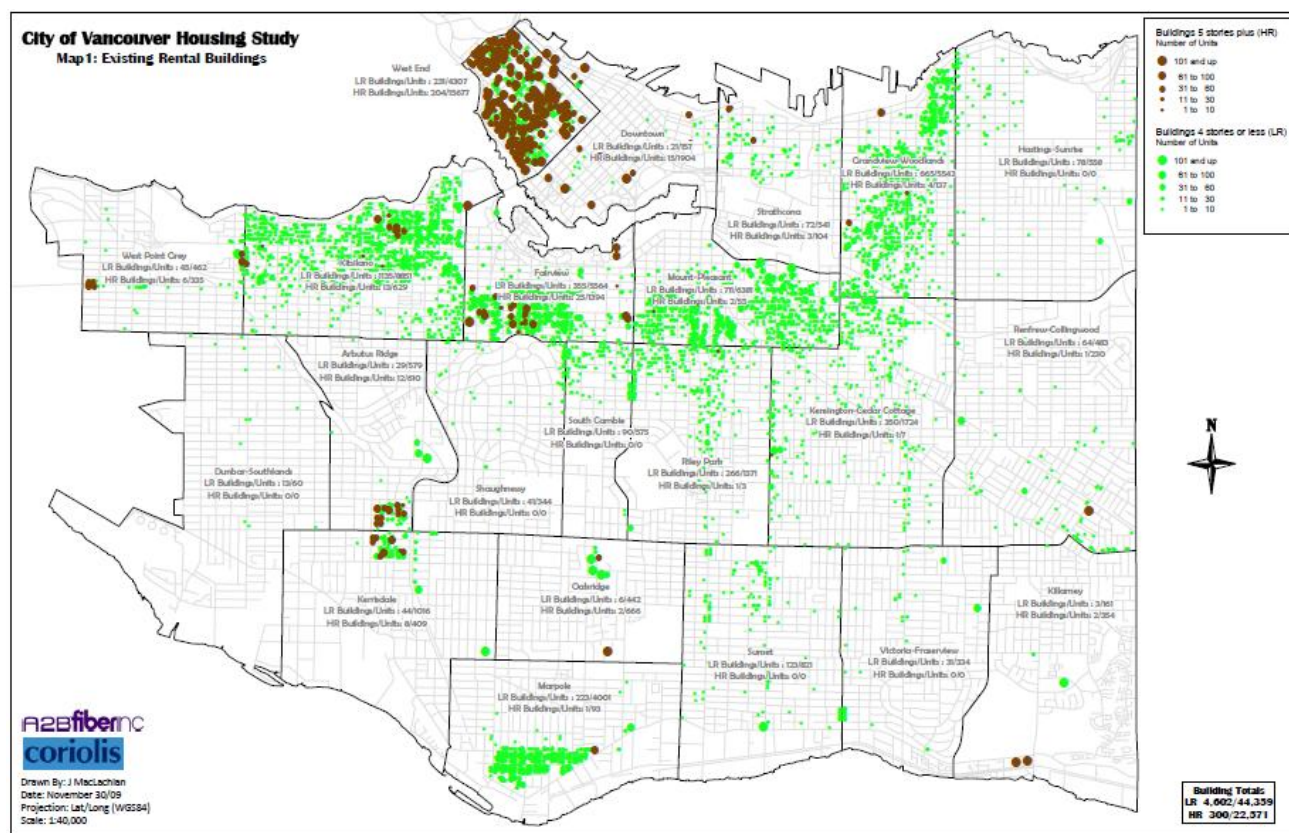
Maps by historian Bruce Macdonald from his 1992 book and recent data and maps by historian Jak King show the quantity and distribution of heritage buildings in Grandview and emphasize the need for heritage/character preservation in the neighbourhood. Their maps and data provide ample evidence that Grandview is a heritage/character area.

The GHG requests that the final Community Plan document contains wording that frames Grandview as a heritage/character area and that heritage/character has an influence on other plan themes (such as housing) and on the development of policy about Grandview and its geographical subareas.

2 Suggestion #2: Retain Existing Land Use/Development Guidelines for Grandview

Grandview is a very balanced neighbourhood that has been described as a model neighbourhood. It is not an area that should be wholesale re-planned or redeveloped. Grandview already has a large amount of rental housing, social housing, variety of stock, balance of incomes, ages, and housed predominately within existing heritage/character buildings that have further capacity for future growth within existing zoning.

The quantity of rental housing can be seen in the following map from page 50 of a 2010 report for the City of Vancouver about rental housing by McClanaghan & Associates (2010).



- RM District Schedules (Multiple Dwelling - apartments and townhouses): [RM-4 & RM-4N](#) and [RM-3A](#) (north of Hastings and west of Nanaimo).
- RS District Schedules (One-Family Dwelling - additional secondary suites and laneway houses): [RS-1](#) and [RS-7](#) (just west of Nanaimo)
- RT District Schedules (Two-Family Dwelling - duplex, conditional triplex and infill): [RT-4, RT-4A, RT-4N and RT-4AN](#) and [RT-5, RT-5A, RT-5N and RT-5AN](#).
- C District Schedules (Commercial - with residential apartments above): [C2, C-2C](#), and [C-3A](#).

The City web page “Land use and development policies and guidelines” (<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/land-use-and-development-policies-and-guidelines.aspx>) contains links to various guideline documents that concern heritage and character in Grandview:

- Britannia/Woodland RM-4 and RM-4N Guidelines (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/B008.pdf>).
- Broadway Station Area RM-4 and RM-4N Guidelines (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/B010.pdf>).
- RT-4, RT-4A, RT-4N, RT-4AN, RT-5, RT-5A, RT-5N, RT-5AN and RT-6 Guidelines (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/R012.pdf>).
- Broadway/Commercial C-2C Guidelines (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/B013.pdf>) to be used with the C2-C District Schedule.
- Broadway/Commercial C-3A Guidelines (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/B014.pdf>).

The guidelines, especially the Britannia/Woodland RM-4 and RM-4N Guidelines, but also notably the guidelines about RT-4 and RT-5 zoning, contain detailed information about extensive heritage/character areas in Grandview, including maps in the case of the Britannia/Woodland RM-4 and RM-4N Guidelines. Extracts from these guidelines are included in Appendix A of this document.

Bruce’s Macdonald’s maps and Jak King’s data and maps demonstrate the need for retention of guidelines applying to Grandview.

3 Suggestion #3: Ensure Vigorous Application of Development Guidelines

Application of the guidelines is not a transparent process. If a development proposal comes forward that violates certain guidelines, all a concerned person can do is write a letter to the point person at the planning department. There is no process akin to a public hearing. As such, the GHG asks that the final Community Plan document includes language that planning staff vigorously apply the development guidelines and take seriously correspondence from concerned citizens about development proposals violating any guidelines.

4 Suggestion #4: New “First/Commercial C2-C Guidelines”

There are guidelines for the C-2C and C-3A zoning south of East 6th, but no C-2C Guidelines covering Commercial Drive north of East 6th. (Extracts from those guidelines are included in Appendix B of this document.) This is an obvious gap given the heritage/character of Commercial Drive shown in Jak King’s books (King, 2011, 2012). There should be C-2C Guidelines covering Commercial Drive north of East 6th and south of Parker Street, perhaps called the First/Commercial C2-C Guidelines.

5 Suggestion #5: Growth through Building Retention, Adaptive Reuse, Upgrades

Grandview has a majority of existing older heritage/character buildings that contain embodied energy of thousand year old growth wood and materials. Retaining, upgrading and adapting them for current and future growth can house more people while preserving this embodied energy and reducing the requirement for new resources of new

construction. The retention of older buildings strongly addresses the City's Greenest City 2020 goals and is a more desirable, sustainable approach to housing.

Existing buildings are also more affordable than new construction and in Grandview older buildings often contain multiple secondary suites which are some of the most affordable rentals in the city.

6 Suggestion #6: Preserve/Discourage Demolition of Heritage/Character Buildings

Policies that encourage the preservation and discourage the demolition of existing heritage/character residential buildings in Grandview, as well as preserving heritage/character, will also protect affordable rentals that are multi-family conversions of existing heritage/character buildings, and also protect social cohesion.

More vigorous application of existing guidelines should help to preserve heritage/character buildings and discourage their demolition.

No amount of city policies or zoning changes will save older housing stock from benign neglect if homeowners are not provided with economic incentives of some kind to maintain and upgrade their homes. In order to ensure retention, the economics for retention must be the "highest and best use," meaning most economically advantageous, rather than new construction.

Existing grandfathered and secondary non-strata rental suite conversions are a very important source of affordable rental housing and their retention should be encouraged. The conversion of multiple suites within houses, without stratification, should be facilitated as a way to create more affordable and flexible rental housing stock. The building code should be updated to allow for more flexibility and equivalencies with renovation of older buildings. A separate and less onerous building code should be designed for older buildings so that adding suites or upgrading does not require radical and expensive changes. Currently the code is based on new construction and often forces too much of existing buildings to be stripped rather than retaining more of the original construction and finishes.

Another economic incentive is to change the rules on capital gains tax exemption on an owner's principle residence and allow an owner to have more than one or two suites, say up to four, as long as the owner lives in one and the rest were non-strata rental. This would be an incentive for both heritage/character retention and rental housing, but will need cooperation from senior government.

Incentives should be made for homeowners to upgrade their homes such as the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) that CMHC used to provide. There should be tax incentives and/or subsidies to rehabilitate, restore, upgrade and maintain existing buildings without displacing existing tenants.

7 Suggestion #7: Suspend City-Wide Policies Undermining Heritage Character

City-wide objectives of affordability, environmental sustainability, transportation can be achieved in different ways in different neighbourhoods. One size should not fit all. The scale and character of different communities should be considered.

Blanket city-wide policies often do not consider the context of what currently exists. That needs to change. Especially when a Community Plan is in process, city-wide policy that would override current zoning should not be considered.

Generally, city-wide objectives should not be imposed on a community where it would undermine heritage character. Instead, the community should be allowed to find local solutions that fit the context and scale of their neighbourhood.

8 Suggestion #8: Make Zoned Capacity Information Available Immediately

Vancouver City Council passed the "Current Zoned Capacity for Housing in Vancouver" motion on 14 February 2012 at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting. The meeting agenda can be found at <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20120214/cfsc20120214ag.htm>. Meeting minutes (including the text of the motion) can be found at <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20120214/documents/regu20120214min.pdf>. The BE IT RESOLVED part of the motion is as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council request staff to report back, at a meeting open to the public, with the following information:

1. The current total existing zoned capacity for residential housing in the City of Vancouver at a macro-scale with total numbers updated from previous work done under Regional Context Statements;
2. The current total existing zoned capacity in the City of Vancouver for residential housing broken down by land use zones and showing total capacity in number of additional dwellings and additional population;
3. Explanations of how net figures of "potential homes" are calculated and what factors may lead to unused zoned capacity.

FURTHER THAT the data be further broken down by neighbourhood with the four neighbourhoods currently entering into Community Plan processes as a priority (Grandview Woodland, West End, Marpole and the Downtown East Side);

AND FURTHER THAT this work should be completed in a timely way so that:

1. Each of the four neighbourhoods entering into Community Plan processes receive macro-scale information as well as detailed information by land use zones for their neighbourhood as base information for the development of their plans;
2. the detailed breakdown of information by land use zone for the city as a whole be available to inform other upcoming planning processes such as the development of a new Regional Context Statement for Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy.

Note that the motion states that "this work should be completed in a timely way so that [e]ach of the four neighbourhoods entering into Community Plan processes receive macro-scale information as well as detailed information by land use zones for their neighbourhood as base information for the development of their plans."

As such, the GHG calls for zoned capacity information about Grandview to be introduced immediately into the Community Plan process, with the raw data and assumptions made about the data made available on the plan website, and publicity produced about the availability of the data.

9 Suggestion #9: Include Heritage/Character Plan Theme in Events about Other Themes

There will soon be a series of thematic and geographical workshops in the Community Plan, starting with a transportation workshop. These workshops will likely be important to generating policy within the plan. The GHG would like the suggestions made in this document to be part of the workshop on heritage and character, and also have heritage/character considered in other workshops such as housing.

10 Suggestion #10: Improved Use of Available Data

GHG members have produced data and maps that are a significant improvement on the maps in document "Grandview-Woodland Community Profile 2012 — Version 1" (<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/gw-community-profile.pdf>) for showing heritage and character in Grandview. For example, Jak King has produced a map containing layers showing zoning boundaries and existing buildings by the decade when they were constructed. This map is a versatile and interactive tool unlike anything provided so far in the Community Plan. It can, for instance, show the distribution of the significant number of existing buildings that were constructed before 1920. Bruce Macdonald has also produced maps relevant to Grandview heritage/character. Some examples of the materials GHG can produce are attached as an annex to this document. The GHG asks that these materials be immediately introduced into the Community Plan process and the maps and other materials be used in displays and other materials at plan events about heritage/character and housing, including workshops about these themes.

11 References

King, Jak R. (2011). *The Drive: A Retail, Social and Political History of Commercial Drive, Vancouver, to 1956*. Vancouver, BC: The Drive Press.

King, Jak R. (2012). *The Encyclopedia of Commercial Drive*. Vancouver, BC: The Drive Press.

Macdonald, Bruce (1992). *Vancouver: A Visual History*. Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks.

McClanaghan & Associates (2010). City of Vancouver Rental Housing Strategy Research and Policy Development Synthesis Report, Final. Prepared by McClanaghan & Associates for City of Vancouver Housing Policy, Social Development Department, Community Services Group. August 2010.
<http://vancouver.ca/docs/policy/housing-rental-housing-strategy-synthesis.pdf>

12 Appendix A: Extracts from Grandview Residential Zoning Guidelines

Here is the intent section of the Britannia/Woodland RM-4 and RM-4N Guidelines.

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the RM-4 and RM-4N district schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law for developments in the Britannia and Woodland areas zoned RM-4 and RM-4N (Figure 1). The guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for conditional dwelling uses or for the relaxation of regulations. They may also be helpful in designing developments involving outright approval. As well as assisting the applicant, the guidelines will be used by City staff in the evaluation of projects.

Part of the Britannia area (sub-area 1) was zoned RM-4 in 1983 and since that date an earlier version of these guidelines has been used to guide development. In November 1989 the balance of the area (sub-areas 2 and 3) was zoned RM-4 and RM-4N, and the guidelines have been amended and updated.

The intent of the earlier guidelines, to ensure that redevelopment was compatible with the traditional character of Britannia sub-area 1, has been successfully achieved in much of the new development, and is re-emphasized.



Sub-areas 2 and 3 contain older houses of various eras, and apartment development of a wide variety of styles. However, since much of the area is still developable it is still possible to create a unified character area. The intent of the guidelines in these sub-areas is to use sub-area 1 as a precedent and to encourage an extension of this character means of knitting the whole neighbourhood together. At the same time, development on specific sites in these areas may also need to respond to specific adjacent developments.

Below is the intent section of the RT-4, RT-4A, RT-4N, RT-4AN, RT-5, RT-5A, RT-5N, RT-5AN and RT-6 guidelines.

The intent of this Schedule is to encourage the retention of neighbourhood and streetscape character, particularly through the retention, renovation and restoration of existing character buildings. Redevelopment is encouraged on sites with existing buildings of style and form which are inconsistent with the area's pre-1920 architecture. Emphasis is placed on the external design of additions to existing buildings and new buildings to encourage the preservation of the historic architectural character of the area. Floor area incentives are included to achieve the creation of affordable housing and the rehabilitation of original buildings which are important to the neighbourhood's character.

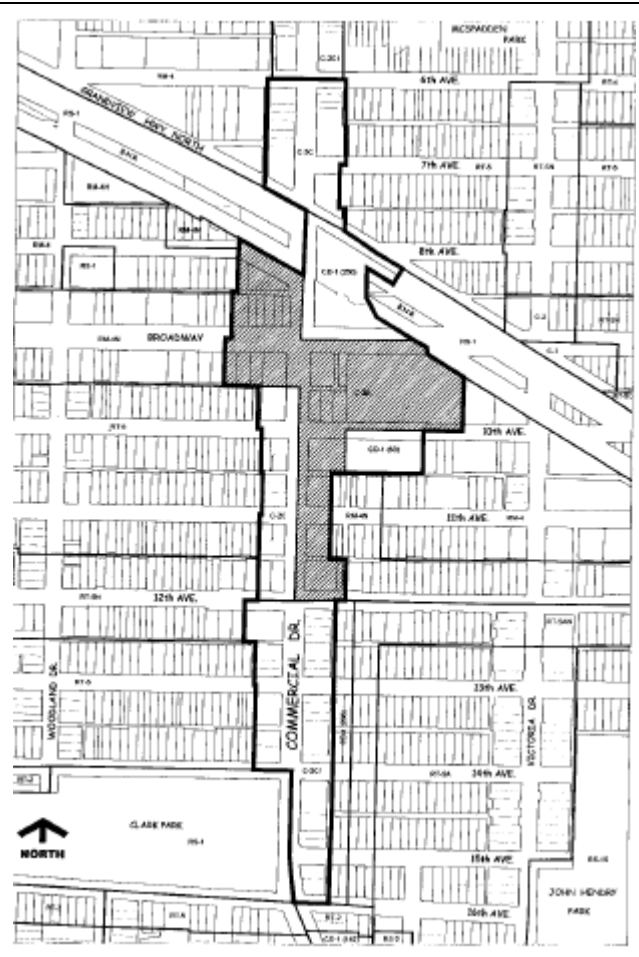
13 Appendix B: Extracts from Grandview Commercial Zoning Guidelines

Below are maps of the C-2A and C-3A districts from the C-2C Guidelines and C-3A Guidelines documents. Note that the maps extend only to East 6th:

Figure 1. Broadway and Commercial Station Precinct C-2A District (shaded), within the context of the overall commercial precinct



Figure 1. Broadway and Commercial Station Precinct C-3A District, within the overall commercial precinct



Here is the “Neighbourhood and Street Character” section from pages 2-3 of the C-2C Guidelines.

Several architectural styles exist in the Broadway/Commercial area, however, most buildings have been built since the late 1960s in a relatively non-descript modern commercial style. This has led to an uneven character on each block with a variety of one-storey older buildings interspersed with three to four storey newer buildings. The historical character of the commercial strip, now largely gone, is still visible on Commercial Drive north of 6th Avenue and in photographs of the Solo Market, which was demolished to make room for the Broadway SkyTrain station. Many of the traditional architectural elements of scale, transparency, outdoor display, masonry cladding and detailing were or are present in these old commercial buildings (Figure 3). Contemporary interpretations of this character should be pursued on new development sites.

Within the C-2C district there are two sub-areas, each with different conditions:

- (a) Between 6th Avenue and Grandview Highway North, parcel sizes are generally 25 to 50 ft. in width, and with conventional depths with a lane behind. with a mix of building heights. The most recent development is from the 1970s; and
- (b) Between the lane south of Broadway and 12th Avenue, frontages are wider but lots are generally shallower, which affects potential redevelopment. Most buildings are one and two storeys, again with little recent development.

Figure 3. Examples of traditional character. (Left) Solo Market, (right and centre) older commercial buildings on Commercial Drive north



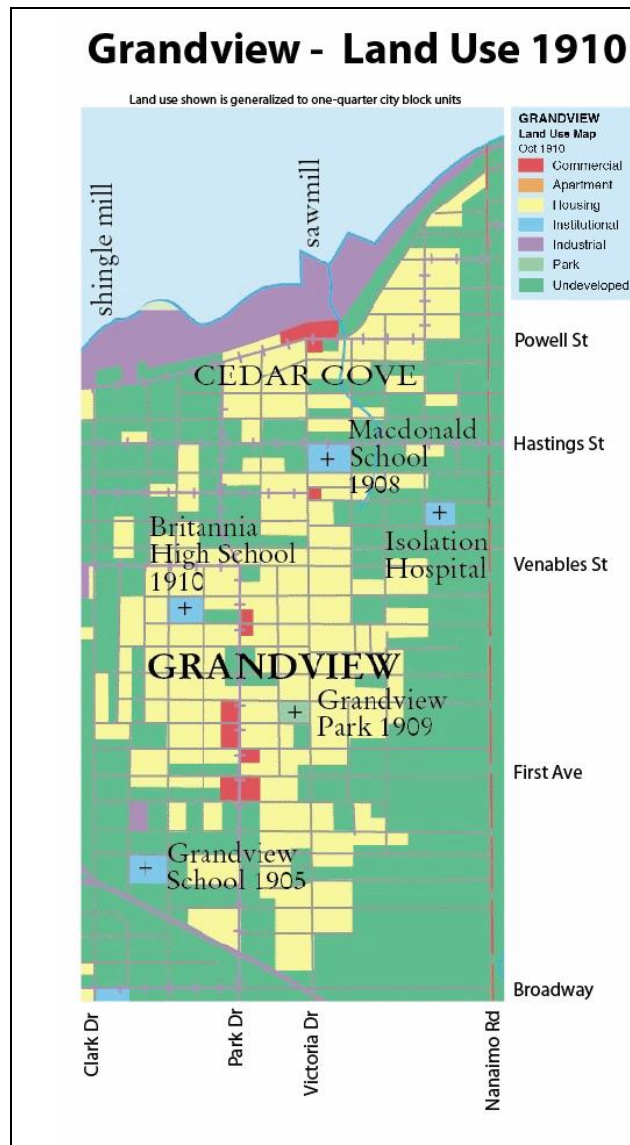
Here is the “Neighbourhood and Street Character” section from page 2 of the C-2C Guidelines.

The C-3A zone is generally located at the intersection of Broadway and commercial, and on the east side of Commercial Drive adjacent to the elevated Expo SkyTrain guideway, with the RM-4/4N apartment zone to the east.”

14 Appendix C: Heritage and Character Maps by Bruce Macdonald and Jak King

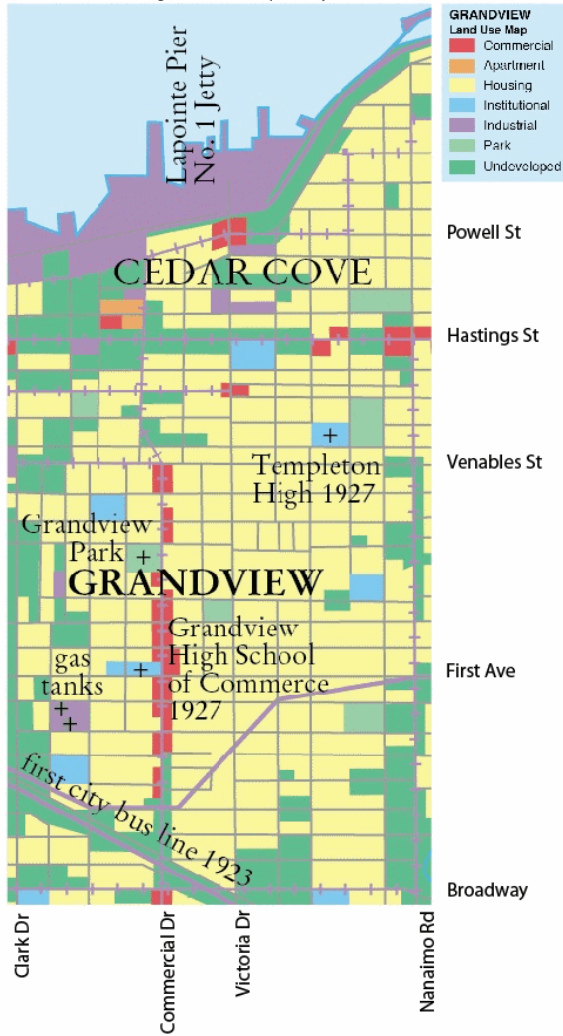
14.1 Historical Maps

The following three maps by Bruce Macdonald show how the neighbourhood of Grandview (and Cedar Cove) developed.



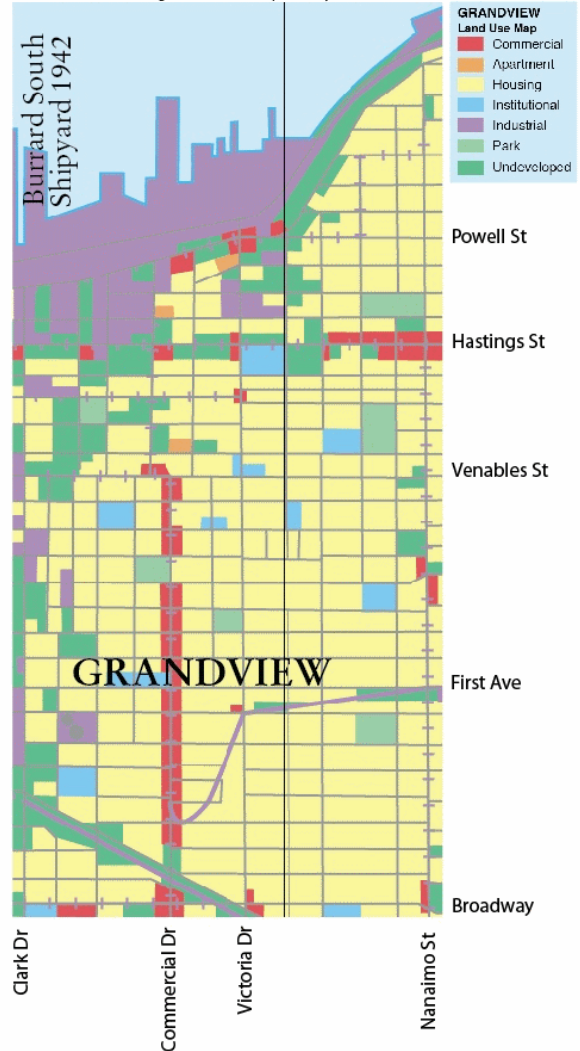
Grandview - Land Use 1929

Land use shown is generalized to one-quarter city block units



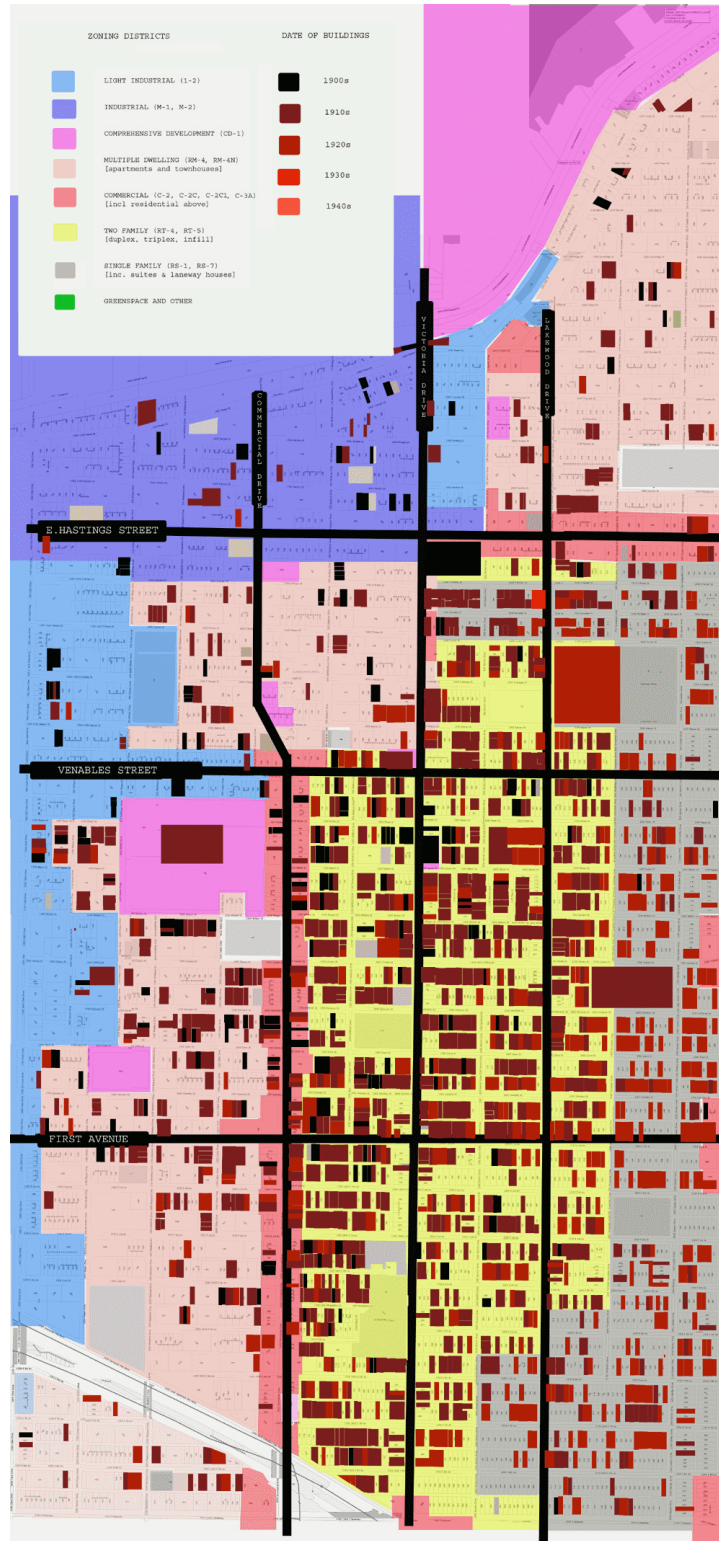
Grandview - Land Use 1949

Land use shown is generalized to one-quarter city block units

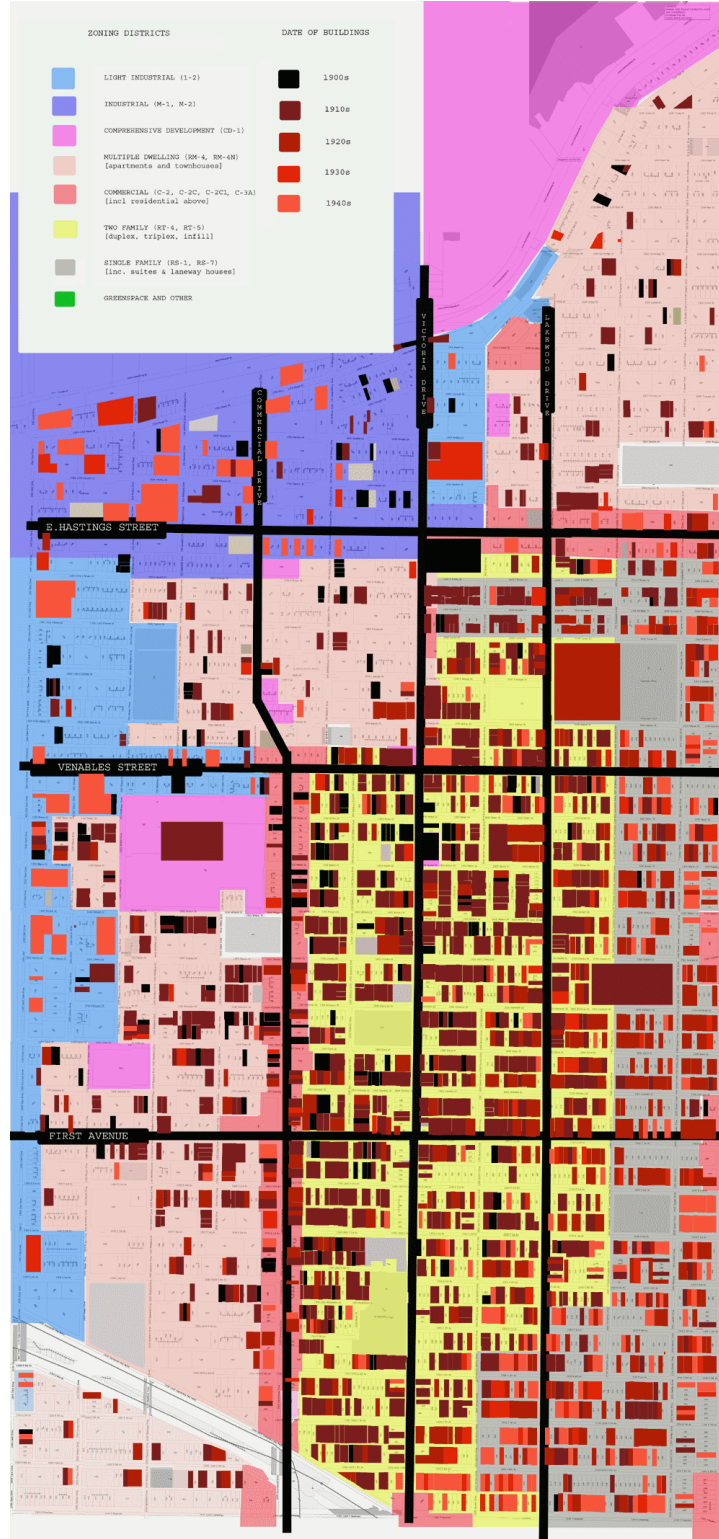


14.2 Current Building Stock with Zoning

The following two maps by Jak King show, by zoning schedule, current older building stock in Grandview.



Map, by zoning schedule, of current building stock in Grandview that was built before 1929. Compare this map with Bruce Macdonald's map of Grandview land use in 1929.



Map, by zoning schedule, of current building stock in Grandview that was built before 1949. Compare this map with Bruce Macdonald's map of Grandview land use in 1949.

The following graph shows the decade of construction for the current building stock in Grandview based on data collected by Jak King.

Grandview: Current Housing Stock, Number of Buildings By Decade of Construction

