

Dear Mayor and Council,

from Erika Simm, Richmond Monday, May 27, 2013.

first I would like to say that May is Canadian Asian Heritage month. So it is befitting that I speak to you about the creation of an official "China Town" in Richmond.

I had written a letter to you regarding a solution to the "Chinese only" signs issue, and I think this is a good solution. My letter quotes: In many major cities there are China Towns, like the one in San Francisco, which I visited years ago, and which is a fantastic tourist destination! Vancouver also has a very distinct and central China Town, enhanced by old buildings and open market places. It is a destination, has been upgraded and is very interesting. It and San Francisco's China Town are distinct and different places. And they are both excellent tourist destinations.

Richmond has a China Town in the making. However, it has no character whatsoever like the other two. It is generic, bland and modern. Modern is good, but not generic and bland. So it stands to reason that this area should be called what it is: Richmond's China Town. I would like to see Gates like in San Francisco, I would like to see Dragons and Lions, I would like to see colour, pocket parks with trees and plants like those in China, within walk- able distances. I would like to see a distinct cultural character, cultural festivals, dragon dances, and so on, on a yearly basis for the world to see. A tourist destination, only 5 minutes by Sky train from the Airport to Aberdeen!
If you call it what it is, and if you embellish it, then who cares if there are Chinese only signs. Then it is what it is: Richmond's China Town.

Did you know that there are already 8 prominent Chinatowns in Canada , depicted on a series of Canada Post stamps this month ? They are: Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa, Mississauga and Victoria. All are defined by a beautiful gate at the entrance. With Richmond's population of Chinese decent at about 68 percent don't you it is time that we become number 9 and also have a prominent China Town.?

Since I wrote my letter to you I have asked the opinion of probably 70 people of all backgrounds what they think about a " China Town " in Richmond. I asked several politicians, prominent persons in our community, a hotel CEO, lawyers, students, business owners, friends, neighbours and perfect strangers..

I received so much encouragement to pursue with this from everyone! Amazingly there was not one person who said no! There where wishes of good luck, and the response from a well known Chinese community leader was: its about time !
Some good ideas came forward from some of the people I asked, for instance: to include artists to participate in cultural art and architecture contests.

Where exactly would the boundaries of Richmond's China Town be?

The area that should be given the designation " China Town" should at this time border basically : No. 3 Rd., Cambie St., Hazelbridge Way to Alderbridge Way , and must

include Alexandra Road . (there could be expansions in the future.)

An affordable starting point to develop a theme to a cohesive China Town could be red street banners with golden dragons , to visually tie the different strip malls and streets together . Another could be to create wall murals of dragons, of lions and temple dogs.

The main feature however will be the Gate to China Town. It has to be visible from the sky train to attract visitors. Another focal point could be a centrally located several story high pagoda, in the middle of China Town. The juxtaposition between the modern architecture of the Aberdeen Mall and the Radisson Hotel, and the features of the ancient design of a Chinese gate creates an interesting tension, and accents both.

A cultural component of Richmond's China Town would include yearly festivals and dragon dances, Chinese New Years street parties, and so on. Everybody would be invited.. This is an opportunity for our Chinese community to reach out and invite us to participate. Its good for business, and its good for building relationships. This is also creating tourism at its best !

About costing: one idea is to find out how recent the last Chinatown gate in Canada was built, how much it cost, and where the funds came from. I think that some funding could come from a small percentage of DDC's from the future developments to the north of Richmond's China Town. Federal funds under arts and heritage could likely be made available through our MP in Ottawa, and the City of Richmond may be able to find funds from different departments. I think Aberdeen Centre and the Radisson Hotel would likely contribute, as both would profit by the increased tourism. I also think that Tourism Richmond and the Chinese business community would contribute as it is in their interest.

In summary: every group of immigrants have brought their traditions and influences with them, and they had tendencies to congregate in certain areas. When Germans came here in the 1950's and 60's they congregated around 33rd and Victoria Drive in Vancouver, around their German restaurant, dance hall and the German Catholic Church. . They had their own commercial area downtown on Robson Strasse, with German shops and restaurants. Their culture was celebrated with a yearly Oktoberfest which was held at the PNE. It was big, it had German music, traditional dances and costumes like lederhosen. Musicians and bands were imported from Germany.

Immigrants from India also congregated in certain areas of Vancouver and the lower mainland, often around their temples and in agricultural areas. They have their own shopping areas (Little India on Main Street) which now is moving to Surrey. They also successfully show off their traditions in colourful yearly festivals and parades like Divali and Vaisakhi, where everyone is invited to participate.

Now it's the turn of the immigrants from China. A majority have congregated in Richmond. People from China or that are of Chinese descent are more than 2/3rd of Richmond' s population, and they also have colourful and historic traditions. They already have created their own commercial part of downtown Richmond , in essence a "China Town" in the making. A major part to the successful development of a China Town here is the proximity to Sky Train and the Airport. I ask you to please make Richmond's China Town official! The timing is absolutely right!

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Permanent stamps / Timbres permanents Canada



LOWE-MARTIN
Design: Hélène L'Heureux, Remy Lantano, Gabe Wong, Janice Wu, Normand Cousineau, Albert Ng, Mark Hahn

Illustrated by regional artists, these eight gates stand watch over Canada's most prominent Chinatowns. On the cover, a temporary gate built in 1882, for visiting royalty and the Marquess of Lorne, 4th Governor General of Canada, adorns Victoria's Chinatown, one of Canada's oldest.

Huit artistes ont illustré les portails qui surplombent les plus importants quartiers chinois du pays. En couverture figure la porte du quartier chinois de Victoria, érigée temporairement en 1882 pour accueillir le marquis de Lorne, 4^e gouverneur général du Canada, et son épouse, la princesse Louise.

Canada's
most prominent
China Towns:

Toronto
Montreal

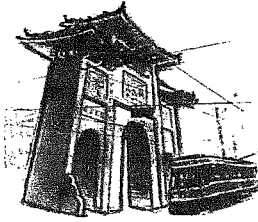
Winnipeg
Vancouver

Edmonton

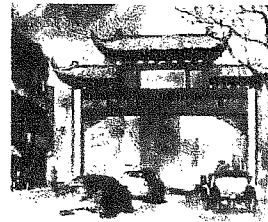
Ottawa

Mississauga

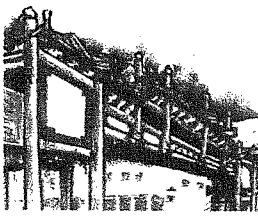
Victoria



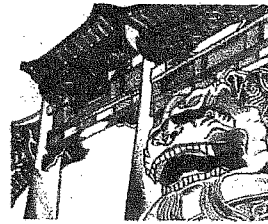
Toronto
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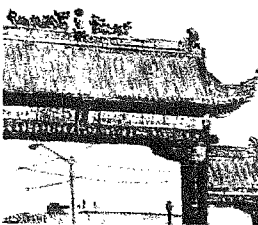
Montreal
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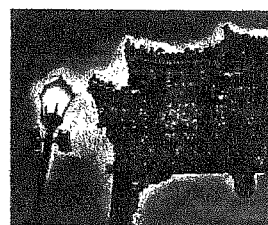
Winnipeg
溫尼辟 Canada



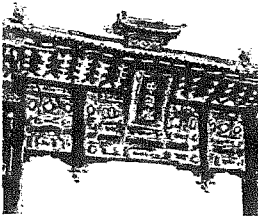
Vancouver
溫哥華 Canada



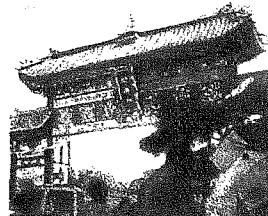
Edmonton
愛蒙頓 Canada



Ottawa
渥太華 Canada



Mississauga
密西沙加 Canada



Victoria
維多利亞 Canada