



To: Planning Committee

Date: April 23, 2008

From: Joe Erceg, General Manager
Planning & Development

File:

Re: Highlights: Proposed Steveston Village Design Guidelines

Staff Recommendation

That, as per the report (dated April 23, 2008, from the General Manager, Planning and Development) the "Contemporary Steveston Style", be included in the Steveston Area Plan and Conservation Implementation Program.

Joe Erceg, General Manager
Planning & Development

Attachment: 1

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY			
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Development Applications		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>D.W.Z.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

On July 23, 2007, Council passed the following resolution:

- (1.) *That the Steveston Village Conservation Program: Conservation Strategy (as per the report dated July 3, 2007, from the Manager, Policy Planning) be approved in principle subject to the preparation of an Implementation Program; and*
- (2.) *That staff be instructed to prepare a Steveston Village Conservation Program: Implementation Program.*

Why Discuss The Draft Steveston Village Design Guidelines Now

How Steveson Village is to look is very important. Staff are bringing forth highlights of the Steveston Village Design Guidelines for discussion now to ensure that Council's expectations are met. This report presents highlights of the findings to date, options and a recommendation regarding the Steveston Village Design Guidelines, for Council's consideration. The final guidelines will be integrated into the Steveson Area Plan (to be brought forward to Planning Committee in July 2008) and applied during the review of development applications (e.g., Development Permits). This will assist in preparing the *Implementation Program* and related documents.

Purpose

The 2007 approved-in-principle *Steveston Village Conservation Strategy* identifies what heritage resources are to be protected. The *Implementation Program* will recommend a design character that respects the Village's heritage character for both the public and private realms, as well as design tools and incentives.

The Steveston Village Design Guidelines will:

- Establish a desired and complementary range of architecture, landscapes and elements;
- Protect and conserve existing, identified heritage resources;
- Apply to sites where existing buildings are to be redeveloped, or torn down and replaced;
- Achieve desired, functional streetscapes and landscapes;
- Encourage a scale of development and intensity of use that is in sympathy with the historic building pattern;
- Identify opportunities and improvements; and
- Achieve an acceptable overall Village design that respects the Village's heritage character.

Background

Steveston is an historic site of prime importance in Canadian history, for its ability to convey the complex threads of its history with original resources. The integration of its natural landscape and resources, with human activity, have determined its form and character. Steveston is significant as a Fraser River settlement which is representative of British Columbia's natural resource-based development since the 1880s. It is valued as Richmond's earliest example of city planning. It is also valued for the extent of its historic character and intrinsic heritage resources which are seen less in individual buildings than in the cumulative effect. The Village site is an excellent representative example of the effects of boom-and-bust cycles in British Columbia's economic and cultural development since the late nineteenth century.

Analysis

The Village's design guidelines are very important to the community. The main Steveston Village heritage design components include:

- Landscape (e.g., a permeable pedestrian realm, dyke side slopes, residential gardens);
- Buildings (e.g., a variety of building styles, 3 storey buildings, simple building forms, building details);
- Elements (e.g., views of boats, wharves, boat repair areas, of the north shore mountains, the rough and unfinished nature, wood-frame components, detailed trims); and
- Village (e.g., human scale, grid layout, proximity of residential area).

Existing Architectural Design Periods

Steveston Village's architecture changed over the years, from the late 19th century to the 1980's, to address each period's need for functional and economical architecture. Steveston's historical design character periods can be categorized, as follows:

- *Early Frontier Commercial*: wood-framed and detailed gable-roofed, false-fronted building typical in frontier towns;
- *Mid Modern Commercial*: concrete block/metal-window modern commercial and industrial buildings;
- *Late Guidelines Commercial*: wood-framed and sided, slightly ornamented mixed-use buildings dating from the advent of the Sakamoto guidelines and the rise of tourism in the Steveston economy.

An analysis of heritage resources and community preference indicates that Steveston's heritage design character:

- Changed to meet new functional and economical needs;
- Across all periods, has been characterised by a utilitarian simplicity;
- Should not be frozen to reflect one particular period;
- Should address emerging needs and functionality;
- Should be moderately flexible, to achieve a desired style.

To maintain Village authenticity, integrity and a degree of flexibility, staff recommend establishing mandatory design guidelines called the "Contemporary Steveston Style" which emphasize:

- *Siting and Open Space*:
 - Narrow frontage relating to small lots;
 - Building fronts that contribute to continuous street walls;
 - Little or no manipulation of grade; and
 - Informal, site-specific open spaces
- *Buildings and Structures*:
 - Mostly windows on ground floor frontages;
 - Simple ornamentation of plain structures;
 - Modest materials used economically; and
 - Utilitarian physical infrastructure.

The Consultants recommend support for the Contemporary Steveston Style because it:

- Balances distinguishability and compatibility;
- Responds to contemporary market and lifestyle expectations;
- Demonstrates “best practice” in heritage conservation.

The Richmond Heritage Commission recommended that the Contemporary Steveston Style be supported, on Thursday, April 10, 2008.

An Opportunity For Discussion

To enable a discussion of these matters, including a review of the Sakamoto guidelines and the proposed Contemporary Steveston Style, staff propose to visually present information (e.g., boards) at Planning Committee. This information will highlight the main elements of this topic. (See Attachment 1.)

After discussion, if the proposed Village “Contemporary Steveston Style” design guidelines are acceptable, staff recommend that these guidelines be included in the Steveston Area Plan and Conservation Implementation Program.

Next Steps

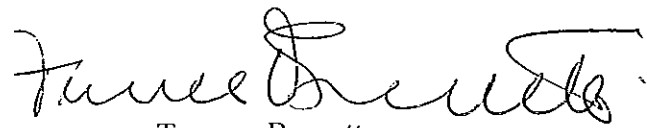
If acceptable, staff will integrate the Village “Contemporary Steveston Style” design guidelines, along with the appropriate existing guidelines, into a revised Steveson Area Plan and Conservation Implementation Program. It is anticipated that these will be brought forth to Planning Committee July 2008.

Financial Impact

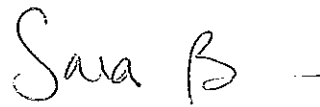
None

Conclusion

Staff recommend that the “Contemporary Steveston Style” be included in the Steveston Area Plan and Conservation Implementation Program.



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DRAFT



The need for a review of the development permit guidelines

4 issues with the existing development guidelines:

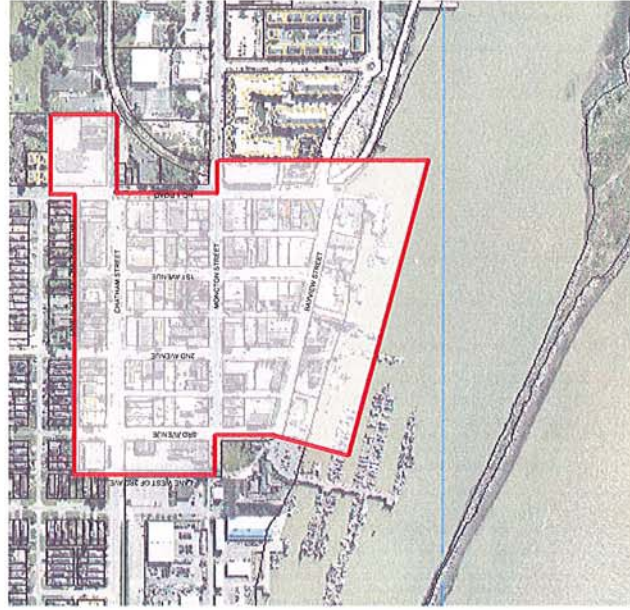
- 1.** Need to clarify what are the desired heritage characteristics.
Use the identified heritage characteristics in the Conservation Strategy (Part 1 of this study).
- 2.** Need to clarify how new buildings can support the identified heritage character of the Village.
New buildings need to both support the heritage character of Steveston and make economic sense for today's market and contemporary construction practices
- 3.** Eliminate contradictory development guidelines for new building design.
The existing regulations are a blend of the *Design Criteria for the Steveston Revitalization Area* (Sakamoto) and the *Steveston Area Plan* wording, and require more clarity.

4. The existing development guidelines do not always support up-to-date practices in the conservation of a heritage character area.

Today's best-practices emphasize that new design is to be distinguishable from the heritage resources, while being compatible in an overall way.

The "Sakamoto Guidelines" generally support distinguishability, but the example imagery promotes an appearance that copies and promotes the early commercial building design.

Study Area

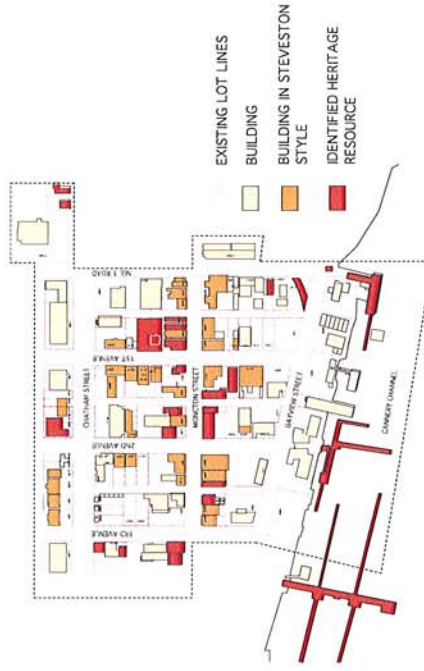


Character-generating resources

The heritage character of Steveston is generated by the cumulative presence of landscapes and elements, but most importantly by buildings that:

- contribute to diverse business activity and the working nature of the Village; and
- create strong street walls with their simply-detailed human-scaled facades.

Many of the buildings have been identified as heritage resources. Many more, while contributing to Steveston's character, can be changed or replaced; the replacement buildings should be able to support Steveston's character just as well.



Best-practices heritage conservation is already supported in parts (but not all) of the Sakamoto and Area Plan Guidelines

Best-practices for the design of new buildings or additions to heritage buildings has for decades stressed the need for compatibility and distinguishability between new and old. The general sentiments expressed in the Sakamoto Guidelines and the Area Plan support this need for new buildings to work well with nearby old heritage buildings by having a balance between compatibility and distinguishability.

For example, the Sakamoto Guidelines state:

"Finish materials for new or renovated buildings should be compatible with traditional materials, for example, wood or brick. The hand-made character of finish and decoration could be carried on the with careful detailing, and some modern and machine-made materials can be successfully incorporated. Finish materials, windows, doors, handrails and decorative elements can take up the form, character or rhythm of nearby older buildings without imitating them."

In the Area Plan Guidelines, the following general statement is relevant:

"The Village's historic buildings are humble structures. They are not characterized by ornate gingerbread details or grand architectural gestures, but by natural materials used in a simple, straightforward way. New development should aim to complement, rather than copy, the style of the Village's historic buildings. . . ."

Specific action needs to be taken to have both guidelines fully support the best practices for achieving a good balance of compatibility and distinguishability.

Action 1: Clarify the degree of prescription

The greater the degree of prescription, the greater the uniformity and certainty, when making and reviewing proposals.

Note that prescriptiveness can limit the ability to play with the variables of compatibility and distinguishability by predetermining its design.

Consider two streams of submissions:

- one for conformity to prescriptive guidelines, and
- a second to allow for the possibility of better solutions to particular circumstances.



more prescriptive, moderate staff design review



less prescriptive, considerable staff design review



less prescriptive, little staff design review

Action 2: Integrate guideline references

The words from the *Steveston Downtown Revitalization Area Design Guidelines 1987 (Sakamoto Guidelines)* do not precisely mesh with the wording of the *Steveston Area Plan*.

Standardize the wording and the guidance. The timing is right to move all desired development guidelines wording into the *Steveston Area Plan*, and coordinate it throughout the Area Plan.

Action 3: Balance “Compatibility” with “Distinguishability”

Balancing the compatibility and distinguishability of new design with the heritage resources in the area is not an exact science. It involves a play between the various aspects that make up the design of a building.

In a situation where it seems correct to employ materials that are traditional, other variables such as materials detailing and window design may be needed to avoid confusing the viewer about the history of the place.

Conversely, there may be a situation where it seems correct to employ materials that are new. In that case, other variables such as massing, height, and window size, may be needed to make the new design compatible with the neighbouring older buildings' heritage character.

Some of the design variables that are available to balance compatibility and distinguishability are:

Settlement Pattern

Massing and Height

Architectural Elements

Appendages (canopies, awnings, signage)

Landscape Elements

Three Steveston Style Periods

1. **Pre-World War II: Frontier Commercial Style:**
 - small building size, usually 1 to 2 storeys
 - wood-framed
 - wood doors and windows
 - gable-roofed
 - front facade details such as cornices, trim, and brackets
 - usually false-fronted
 - typical in frontier towns



- ### The Steveston Style
- The buildings that contribute to Steveston's character share key characteristics:
- simple one- to three-storey structures, built from the 1920s to the present day
 - usually small frontages
 - typically commercial, industrial, or mixed-use residential / commercial buildings consistent across periods of time for their underlying simplicity



3. **1980-present: Guidelines Commercial Style:**
 - wood-framed and clad
 - application of ornamentation recollecting the construction details of buildings in the Frontier Style
 - mixed-use buildings (usually residential over commercial) dating from the advent of tourism as a major driver of the Steveston economy.



Streetscape character

The character of Steveston's streets are to varying degrees set by both identified heritage resources, and modestly sized buildings that contribute to the commercial liveliness of the Village:

- Moncton Street, the street that most people would say represents Steveston best, has a heavy proportion of heritage and character buildings
- The Avenues have a lighter proportion of these heritage and character buildings
- Chatham Street has a lighter proportion of these heritage and character buildings, which are almost exclusively from recent decades
- Bayview Street has almost no heritage or character buildings



MONCTON STREET BETWEEN 1ST AVENUE AND NO.1 ROAD



2ND AVENUE BETWEEN CHATHAM AND BAYVIEW

- ✓(H) heritage resource contributing to Steveston's street character
- ✓ character buildings contributing to Steveston's street character

Identifying the commonalities in the Steveston Style in the three periods

Settlement Pattern

- contributes to the formation of a continuous street wall at the front property line
- rare street-level interruptions in the continuous street wall
- informal lively building aspects facing the lanes
- shortcuts through properties between streets and lanes

Massing and Height

- maximum of two storeys along Moncton Street, three storeys elsewhere
- small buildings on narrow lots (50' or less)
- simple rectilinear volumes
- flat roofs, or pitched roofs hidden behind false fronts

Architectural Elements

- simple economical materials of the day
- clearly articulated base, middle section and top of buildings (excepting Modern Commercial Style)
- articulated cornices or tops of front wall
- first floor ceiling height in the 3 to 4 m (10 to 12 feet) range
- total height of single storey front walls approximately 5 m (16 feet)
- differentiate between windows on ground floor and those on floors above
- recessed ground floor building entries

Appendages (canopies, awnings, signage)

- simple delicate appendages that are subordinate to the massing

Landscape Elements

- little or no varying of ground plane
- simple ground plane paving or timber planking

Highlights: Contemporary Steveston Style

The Steveston for today should incorporate as many of the identified commonalities as possible, while responding to today's requirements for living and working. Taken together, the attributes can be called the Contemporary Steveston Style. New construction in the Contemporary Steveston Style will comfortably sit next to Steveston's identified heritage resources, and will support the heritage character of the Village.

The highlights include:

Settlement Pattern

- front facade at the front property line
- may have inviting smallish passageways to lanes behind
- informal lively building facades facing lanes
- retail and commercial uses at grade, visible through generous glazing

Massing and Height

- maximum of two storeys along Moncton Street; three storeys elsewhere
- small buildings on narrow lots (50' and less) or show the lines of the 1892 survey in the building's design and massing
- simple rectilinear volumes

- flat roofs for outdoor living a discreet distance back from building face

Architectural Elements

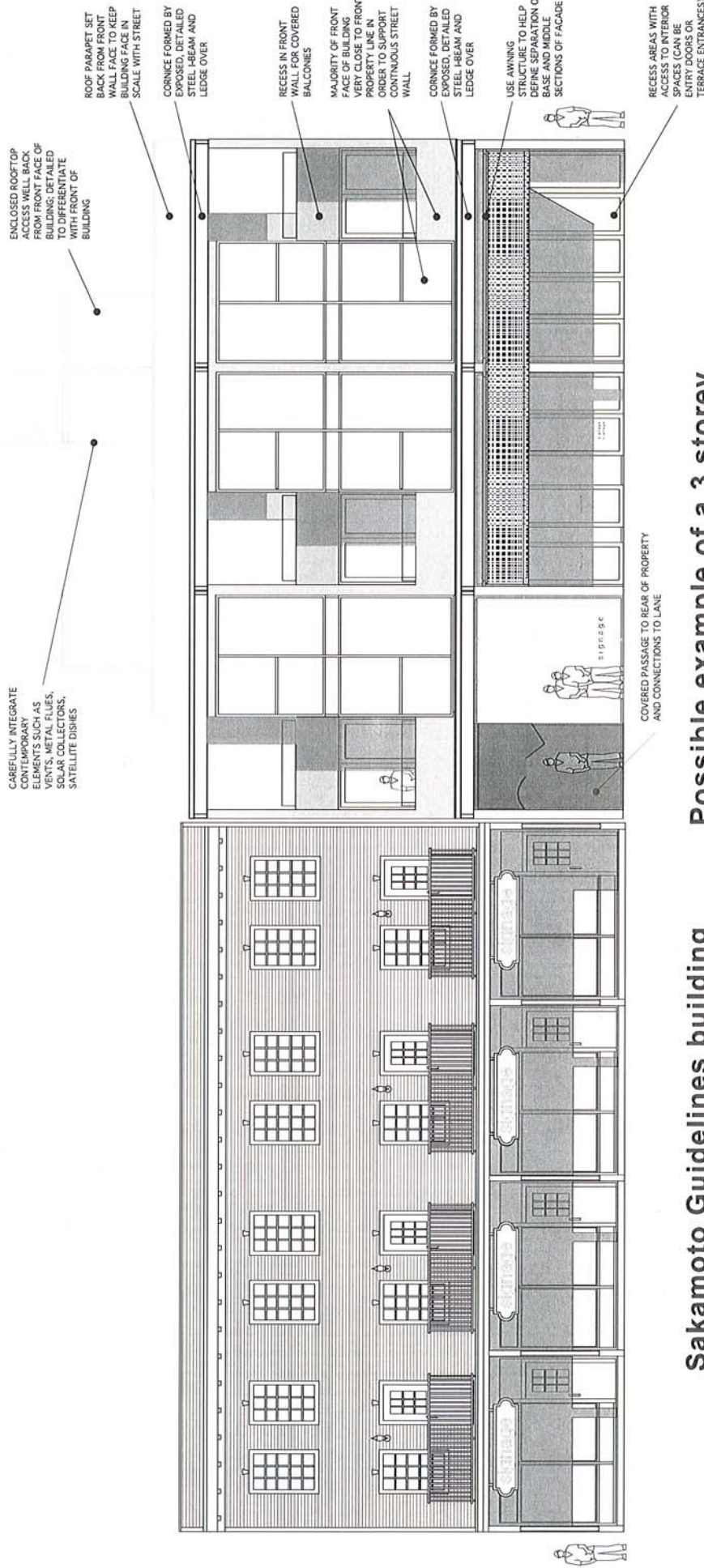
- use simple durable materials of today (e.g. no vinyl siding)
- good quality wood or metal doors and windows
- clearly articulated base, middle section and top of buildings
- articulated cornices or tops of front wall using non-traditional means
- first floor ceiling height in the 3 to 4 m (10 to 12 feet) range
- single storey front walls of a total height of approximately 5 m (16 feet)
- differentiate between windows on ground floor and those on floors above
- recessed ground floor at building entries and terrace entries

Appendages (canopies, awnings, signage)

- simple delicate appendages that are subordinate to the architectural massing

Landscape Elements

- little or no varying of ground plane
- simple ground plane paving or timber planking

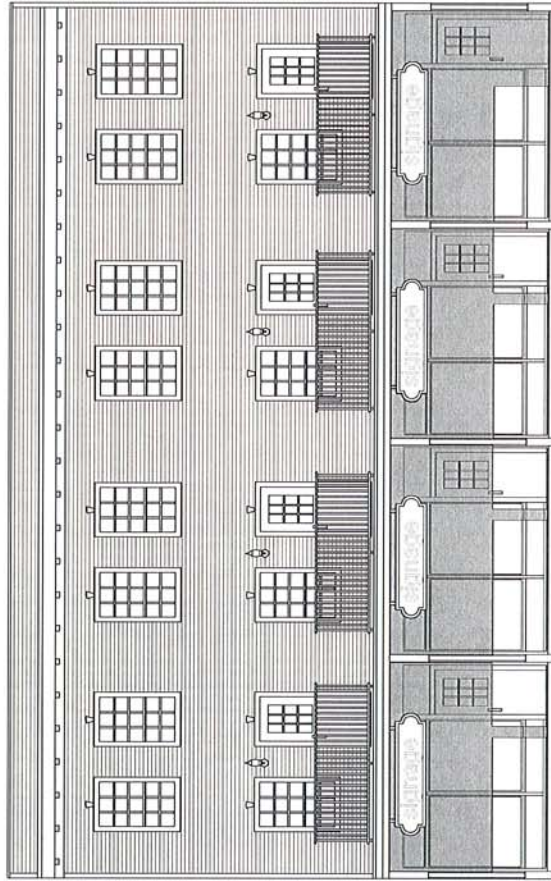


Sakamoto Guidelines building

An example of an approved development using the Sakamoto Guidelines

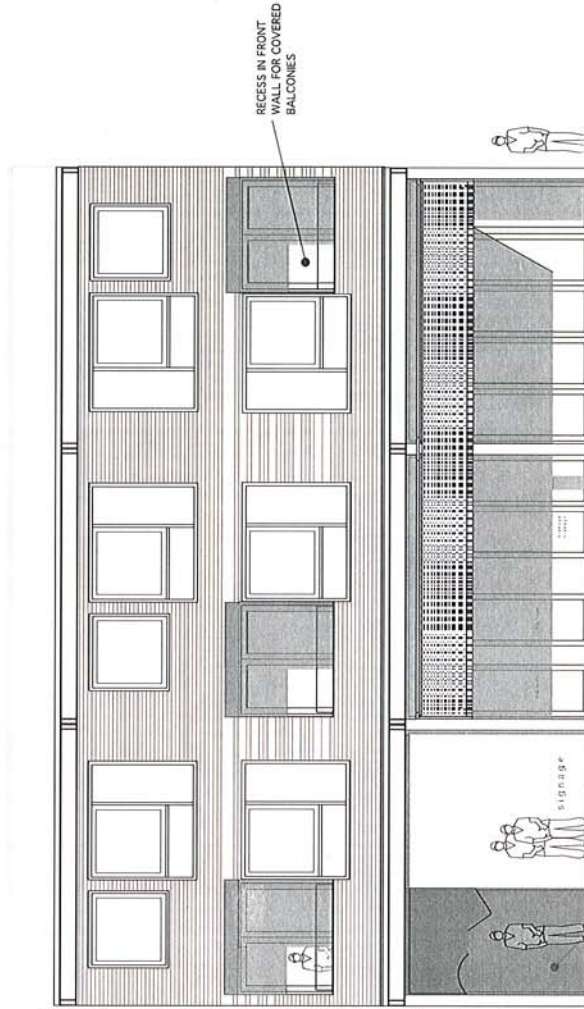
Possible example of a 3 storey Contemporary Steveston Style building

Notes tagged to the drawing highlight the main ways in which the attributes of the Contemporary Steveston Style apply to the example given.



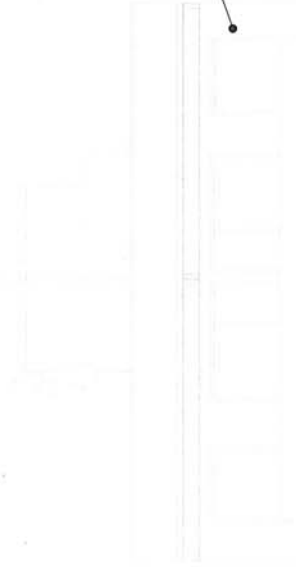
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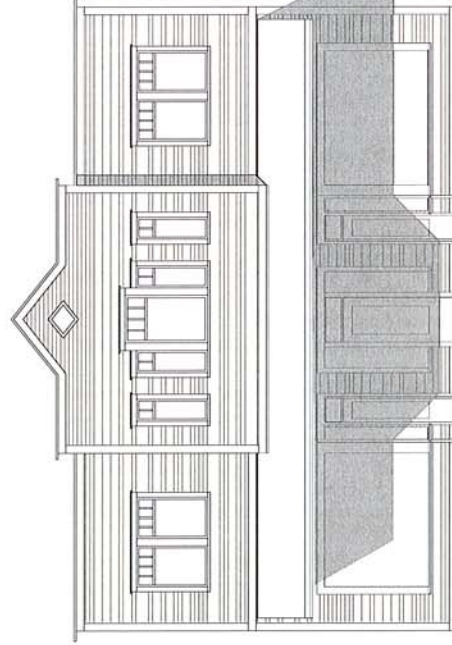


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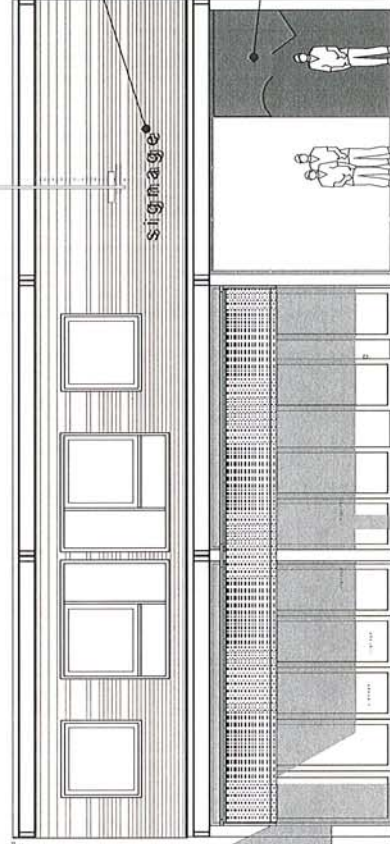


3RD FLOOR SET FAR ENOUGH BACK TO NOT INTERFERE WITH SENSE OF MAXIMUM 2-STORY STREET WALL FOR MONCTON STREET



Sakamoto Guidelines building

An example of an approved development using the Sakamoto Guidelines



SIGNAGE SUBORDINATE TO ARCHITECTURE

COVERED PASSAGE TO REAR OF PROPERTY AND CONNECTIONS TO LANE

Possible example of a 3 storey (2 at street) Contemporary Steveston Style building

Notes tagged to the drawing highlight the main ways in which the attributes of the Contemporary Steveston Style apply to the example given.