



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

*TO GP-MCVR-18-2013*

**To:** General Purposes Committee

**Date:** February 28, 2013

**From:** Jane Fernyhough  
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage

**File:** 11-7000-09-20-139/Vol  
01

**Re:** Vancouver Biennale Proposal for Charles Jencks Land Form Public Art  
Project for Alexandra Neighbourhood Park

### Staff Recommendation

That staff be authorized to investigate the participation of American architectural theorist, landscape architect and designer Charles Jencks in the design of a permanent land based public art project for the Alexandra Neighbourhood Park for the 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale, including financial implications and terms of conditions and report back, as presented in the report from the Director, Arts, Culture & Heritage Services dated February 28, 2013.

*Jane Fernyhough*  
Jane Fernyhough  
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage  
(604-276-4288)

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>		<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Parks Services		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>[Signature]</i>
<b>REVIEWED BY DIRECTORS</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>	<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>
	<i>DW</i>		<i>GD</i>

## Staff Report

### Origin

On January 15, 2013, Barrie Mowatt, President and Founder of the Vancouver Biennale presented to the Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee (RPAAC) the upcoming directions for the 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale, including a proposal for a land based public art project by Charles Jencks. Following discussion by the Committee, the following motion was endorsed:

*That the RPAAC enthusiastically support the complete integration of the land form project by the architect Charles Jencks within the park design in the Alexandra area neighbourhood park for the 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale, and that staff present the proposal to Council as soon as possible.*

This report presents for Council's consideration a proposal to investigate the participation of Charles Jencks in the design of a permanent land-based public art project for the Alexandra Neighbourhood Park as part of the 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale.

This initiative is in line with Council Term Goal 9.1:

*Build culturally rich public spaces across Richmond through a commitment to strong urban design, investment in public art and place making.*

### Analysis

#### Background

On July 24, 2012, Council endorsed a proposal to participate in the 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale, consisting of three large scale sculptural installations, conditional on securing sponsorship funding. The deadline for securing these funds has been extended to summer 2013, as the Biennale is now scheduling the launch of major programming for May 2014.

In addition to the proposed large scale temporary installations, the Biennale presented a proposal (**Attachment 1**) for a permanent earth work form of public art, to be designed by the American architectural theorist, landscape architect and designer Charles Jencks. Local artists, landscape architects and the community would be invited to participate in the design process.

Examples of previous land form projects by Mr. Jencks (**Attachment 2**) and a brief biography (**Attachment 3**) are provided in the attachments to this report.

#### Land-based art

Land-based artworks are site-specific environmentally low-impact artworks using earth mounds, water and plants. By involving local artists and landscape architects on the design team, this is an opportunity to develop a unique "made in Richmond" project. In particular, the team would need to consider local plant species, soils and drainage conditions, programming for the park, maintenance costs and concerns, and a design that would be of interest to the local community.

### Public art and park concept plans

Before proceeding with this project staff will first need to prepare a public art plan for the Alexandra Neighbourhood. This public art plan will include an overview of the neighbourhood area plan and its historical, environmental and planning context, a thematic framework for the public art, guiding principles, site opportunities and constraints, selection processes, and budgets. An interdepartmental staff team will develop the public art plan in consultation with the development community and local residents. Staff will initiate this process prior to a workshop with Jencks. The public art plan will be presented to Council for approval by late Spring 2013.

Following the development of the public art plan, Parks staff will retain a landscape architect team to develop the park design concept. Included in the landscape architect's scope of work will be participation in a workshop with Jencks to determine the feasibility of including a land form artwork with the park. The workshop would be led by Parks and Public Art staff and include the development community, artists and local residents.

The Vancouver Biennale will pay the costs to bring Mr. Jencks and his daughter, landscape architect Lily Jencks, based in Scotland, to Richmond to participate in the park design workshop. The concept park design will be presented to Council for approval by Fall 2013.

### Financial considerations

Funding for the public art project would come from public art contributions collected from developers in Alexandra, that have been held in the Public Art Reserve or as letters of credit.

The Biennale has estimated a \$200,000 budget for the project. To date, approximately \$530,000 has been deposited to the Public Art Reserve from public art contributions in Alexandra, and an additional approximately \$252,000 is held as letters of credit. Staff have met with Polygon Homes, who has contributed these funds, and they have expressed enthusiastic support for this opportunity.

### Next Steps

If authorized to proceed, the sequence of steps would be as follows:

- Staff complete the Alexandra Neighbourhood Public Art Plan;
- A request for proposal for design services for the Alexandra Neighbourhood Park is issued, with participation in a design workshop included in the scope of work;
- Park design workshop is held, with participation from Charles and Lily Jencks;
- Public art plan and park concept design presented to Council for endorsement; and
- Implementation of park construction, either with or without the land art component as determined through the workshop, and as endorsed by Council.

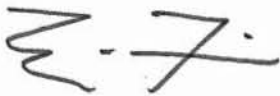
### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact for this initial scope of work. Development of the public art plan will be undertaken through the Public Art Program's 2013 Work Plan. All associated costs for the initial consultations with Charles and Lily Jencks are to be covered by the Biennale.

## Conclusion

The upcoming 2013-2015 Vancouver Biennale, a high-profile outdoor public art exhibition, will offer many opportunities to enrich the City's cultural fabric, promote tourism, and provide a legacy of community engagement. The exhibition of these artworks supports the goals of the Richmond Public Art Program, to spark community engagement, increase public awareness, promote cultural tourism, and to provide leadership in public art programming.

Staff seeks Council approval to proceed with discussions with the Biennale and Charles and Lily Jencks on the creation of a permanent land-based artwork within the Alexandra Neighbourhood Park, and to report back to Council on the park design, financial implications and terms of conditions, as outlined in this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Fiss'.

Eric Fiss  
Public Art Planner  
(604-247-4612)

EF:ef



VANCOUVER  
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February 5, 2013

Jane Fernyhough, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage  
Kim Somerville, Manager, Arts Services  
Eric Fiss, Public Art Planner  
City of Richmond  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC  
V6Y 2C1 Canada

Dear Jane, Kim and Eric,

SUBJECT: CHARLES JENCKS ARTLAND PROPOSAL

The Vancouver Biennale transforms Metro Vancouver into an open air museum with outdoor exhibitions of contemporary art, new media and performance works by some of the world's most renowned and breakthrough artists of our time.

Charles Jencks, a distinguished American architect, historian and artist based in England, and friend of the Vancouver Biennale, has proposed to create a land art project in Richmond. Jencks' projects, known as Artlands, have won many awards and are known for creating and gently enhancing natural landscapes and for engaging communities. He currently is planning a major project in Korea and completing work in Scotland (Jupiter Park). He has a recent publication on the idea of earth art as sculpture park.

In discussion with City staff, we have identified a possible site in the future Alexandra Neighbourhood Park. A greenway runs through the site, and a geothermal station serves existing and future developments planned for the surrounding area.

Unlike previous Biennale projects in Richmond, this would be a permanent site specific land based art project. Jencks and his daughter, landscape architect Lily Jencks, would be the lead artists. Funding for the project, including artists' fees, would be from private developer contributions for the Alexandra Neighbourhood and would meet their obligations for creating public art associated with their developments. The Biennale will pay for the Jencks' travel expenses, including the cost to bring the Jencks to Richmond for an initial planning session with staff to determine the interest, feasibility and parameters for the project. The Biennale will oversee the publicity, hotel accommodation and public speaking arrangements.

Working with the landscape rather than installing a free-standing sculpture, the project will help to create a new park rather than interrupting an existing one. Land art evolves over time instead of just 'appearing'. This is truly a green project, promoting Richmond's image as the Garden City.

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An integral part of the project is the involvement of local artists and the local community. The project would include mentorship opportunities for local artists and leave a legacy for the community.

Thank you again for your consideration and I look forward to working with you and your team to realize this exceptional opportunity.



Barrie Mowatt  
Founder and President



Jupiter ArtLand, Edinburgh



## CHARLES JENCKS BIOGRAPHY

### MY STATEMENT

To see the world in a Grain of Sand, the poetic insight of William Blake, is to find relationships between the big and small, science and spirituality, the universe and the landscape. This cosmic setting provides the narrative for my content-driven work, the writing and design. I explore metaphors that underlie both growing nature and the laws of nature, parallels that root us personally in the cosmos as firmly as a plant, even while our mind escapes this home.

Charles Jencks designs landscapes and sculpture and writes on cosmogenic art. He is known for his books questioning Modern architecture and defining its successors - Late, New and Post-Modern architecture, and is the co-founder of Maggie Cancer Caring Centres. He is married to Louisa Lane Fox who published an Anthology of Letters and Diaries from Parents to Children: *Love to the Little Ones* in 2009.

### EDUCATION

Harvard University, BA English Lit., 1961.

Harvard Graduate School of Design, BA and MA Architecture, 1965.

London University, PhD, Architectural History, 1970.

### ACTIVITIES

1968-88 Architectural Association, London; 1974-1992 UCLA, Los Angeles visiting professor;  
Memberships: AA, London; Royal Society of Arts, London;  
Distinctions: Fulbright scholarship (London University), 1965-67; Melbourne Oration, Australia, 1974;  
Bosom Lectures, Royal Society of Arts, London, 1980; Opening Lecture in RIBA series Modern Architecture vs the Rest, 1983; Selection Committee, Venice Biennale, 1980; Juror for Phoenix City Hall 1985 and Paternoster Square, London 1987; Curator of Exhibition, The Architecture of Democracy, Wight Art Centre, Los Angeles and Berlin 1987. Tamblyn Lectures, University of Western Ontario, 1992; Cochran Lecture, Baltimore Foundation for Architecture, 1992; Aga Khan Awards for Architecture, Master Jury 1992-5, Steering Committee, 1995-8; Olympic Keynote Address, Lausanne, 1996; Soane Museum Annual Lecture, 1999; Chairman, Jerusalem Seminar, June 2000; AICA Inaugural Lecture, National Gallery, September 2000; RIBA Annual Discourse, October 2000; Juror for CCTV HQ, Beijing 2002; Fellow, Royal Society of Edinburgh 2002; Juror, V&A Museum, Garden Competition, 2003/2004; Juror, The Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, June 2005.

Has lectured at over forty universities throughout the world including Peking, Shanghai, Paris (École des Beaux-Arts), Tokyo, Milan, Venice, Frankfurt, Quebec, Montreal, Oslo, Warsaw, Barcelona, Lisbon, Zurich, Vienna and Edinburgh; and in US at Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Yale and various public museums.

