



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Committee

**From:** Mike Redpath  
Senior Manager, Parks

**Re:** Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan

**Date:** June 3, 2015

**File:** 06-2345-00/Vol 01

### Staff Recommendation

1. That the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan as described in the staff report "Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan," dated June 3, 2015, from the Senior Manager, Parks, be approved; and
2. That \$250,000 from the following completed projects, McLennan South (\$23,000), McLennan North (\$119,000), and Woodward's School (\$55,000), and Parks General Development (\$53,000) be transferred to fund the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan project and that this project be included in the 5 Year Financial Plan (2015-2019) amendment.

Mike Redpath  
Senior Manager, Parks  
(604-247-4942)

Att. 2

| REPORT CONCURRENCE   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>ROUTED TO:</b><br><br>Finance<br>Arts, Culture & Heritage     | <b>CONCURRENCE</b><br><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b><br><br> |
| <b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT /<br/>AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b> | <b>INITIALS:</b><br><br>   | <b>APPROVED BY CAO</b><br><br>                |

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## Staff Report

### Origin

In 2014 and 2015 work was completed relocating and transforming the Japanese Benevolent Society Building into a publicly accessible museum at the Steveston Town Square Park. A significant investment has been made locating the building, renovating the facility, programming and co-locating it with the Steveston Museum building. The concept design for the surrounding public open space known as the Steveston Town Square is the final piece required to connect the buildings together, and allow for both indoor and outdoor programming at the site.

The current Steveston Town Square park is dated and in poor condition. The City Building Committee for the Japanese Benevolent Society approached staff over a year ago to discuss the Steveston Town Square Park along the Steveston Greenway however it was too late to submit as a 2015 Capital Project. Since that time, the Committee has worked with staff to develop a concept that will enhance the site as a tourism destination, develop and enhance a cultural landscape commemorating past and present Japanese residents and add new accessible programmable space adjacent to the restored heritage buildings.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the funding and implementation of the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan and to secure funding for its implementation in 2015.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.*

2.1. *Strong neighbourhoods.*

2.3. *Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

2.4. *Vibrant arts, culture and heritage opportunities.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #6 Quality Infrastructure Networks:

*Continue diligence towards the development of infrastructure networks that are safe, sustainable, and address the challenges associated with aging systems, population growth, and environmental impact.*

6.1. *Safe and sustainable infrastructure.*

6.2. *Infrastructure is reflective of and keeping pace with community need.*

## Analysis

### Steveston Town Square Park

The Steveston Town Square Park is located at the corner of First Avenue and Moncton Street directly west of the Steveston Post Office, along the Steveston Greenway and adjacent to the recently renovated and relocated Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society Building (Location Map - Attachment 1). The Steveston Town Square Park has seen several minor improvements over the years including the installation of an exposed aggregate pathway, a wooden stage (now removed due to disrepair), several large trees, a small rose garden and a grassy area. The site has seen limited programming over the years and is in need of updating and repair.

With the relocation of Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society Building to the site, a concept plan for redeveloping the site has been prepared that will update the park area, improve circulation, tie in the park area to both the Steveston Museum and Japanese Building for programming and events, and create an opportunity to celebrate the Japanese historic connection to Steveston.

### Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan

The proposed Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan (Attachment 2) respects both design and programming consultations held with the Steveston Historical Society Building Committee. The Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan is built around the following general elements and ideas:

- Create a park area that is adaptable for a variety of year-round activities, with a variety of spaces and environmental exposure opportunities;
- Create spaces that allow for accessible, casual public use as well as adapt to programmed use and activities organized by the Steveston Historical Society;
- Accommodate sitting and display areas near Moncton Street for year-round use as well as during festivals;
- Accommodate tables of approximately 35 seats, or standing social gatherings of approximately 50 persons in a larger activity area; and
- With the relocated Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society (JFBS) building present, honor the Japanese heritage of Steveston by adapting a Japanese garden approach to materials, forms and built elements, including a Torii gate and a Suikinkutsu sounding-bell element.
- Enhance the Steveston Greenway.

The plan proposes to create two general activity areas, casually delineated to allow for a natural separation of activities and uses. The street-side area retains the white picket fence and seasonal planting edge space. Inside the gate, a paved area irregularly patterned concrete, interspersed with stone paving slabs and stone sitting blocks, will create a multipurpose sitting area. This area will be close to the street activity, and the paving pattern and materials establish the Japanese garden-inspired design approach.

The stone blocks and conventional wood-backed benches allow for a variety of sitting opportunities. The existing flagpole is retained and the two commemorative plaques are relocated within the park.

### Central Path

The central path, also of patterned concrete and stone slabs, leads to the larger activity area. The sides of the street-side area are renovated lawn areas, allowing for play and lounging contemplating outdoors. The central path leads to a Japanese-style Torii gate. This gate directly recognizes the Japanese heritage of Steveston and, at the same time, creates a natural and appropriate transition into the larger, but more secluded main activity area.

### Interior Activity Area

The interior activity area is set to meet the grade established by the relocated JFBS building steps and sloping walk. The area is sized to accommodate approximately six tables of six seats, or 50 persons standing in a social group. In this way, it suits casual use and is adaptable for organized school activities, adult gatherings or private parties that may rent the space. Examples of activities could be weddings, private rentals, and events coordinated with the JFBS or Steveston Post Office indoor spaces. The concrete and stone paving is used again, along with the stone slab benches and conventional wood benches. The west side of the park is kept open to allow for movies or images to be projected onto the east-facing wall of the adjacent building.

### Suikinkutsu

A key feature of the park is anticipated to be the Suikinkutsu feature, set along the north edge of the park. This is a Japanese garden element that speaks to the sacred nature of a secluded garden corner. Water drips from a stone basin and then into a hidden bell-shaped urn, underground. The sound of the drops of water are amplified and create a surprise as well as a feeling of serenity. The Suikinkutsu is planned to be 'activated' manually, with a bamboo ladle. Very importantly, the basin has been sourced from Wakayama City, Richmond's sister City in Japan, the home of the first Japanese settlers to Steveston and Richmond.

This traditional Japanese garden feature (suikinkutsu and Torii gate) are typically located in a place of tranquility and quiet and the Steveston Town Square site has been specifically selected as a place suitable for its location. Staff are working with Japanese gardeners from UBC and will coordinate with the local Japanese community.

The Suikinkutsu element is proposed to be set in a raised area, surrounded by flagstone, low, stacked basalt stone retaining and overlapping Japanese-inspired fence panels. The gravel paving is appropriate for multiseason use, and suits the low-light conditions. It also reinforces the Japanese garden feel of the interior, main activity area.

### **Next Steps**

If approved, implementation of the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan is proposed to commence in 2015 with a targeted completion for October 2015. A concept sign would be installed at the site and construction would commence in the summer of 2015.

### **Funding Strategy**

Since the concept plan for the Steveston Town Square Park project was not considered as part of the 2015 Capital Program, staff are recommending that \$250,000 from the following completed projects, McLennan South (\$23,000), McLennan North (\$119,000), and Woodward's School (\$55,000), and Parks General Development (\$53,000) be transferred to fund the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan project and that this project be included in the 5 Year Financial Plan (2015–2019) amendment.

### **Financial Impact**

Implementation of the Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan is estimated at \$250,000. There is no additional operating budget impact expected as existing operational funding is in place.

### **Conclusion**

The restoration of the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society Building and co-location of the building with the existing Steveston Museum at the Steveston Town Square Park has presented a unique opportunity to create a cultural landscape. This report details a concept plan that will connect the surrounding buildings to the Steveston Town Square Park, revitalize the area and present many opportunities for extended programming at the site for community use.

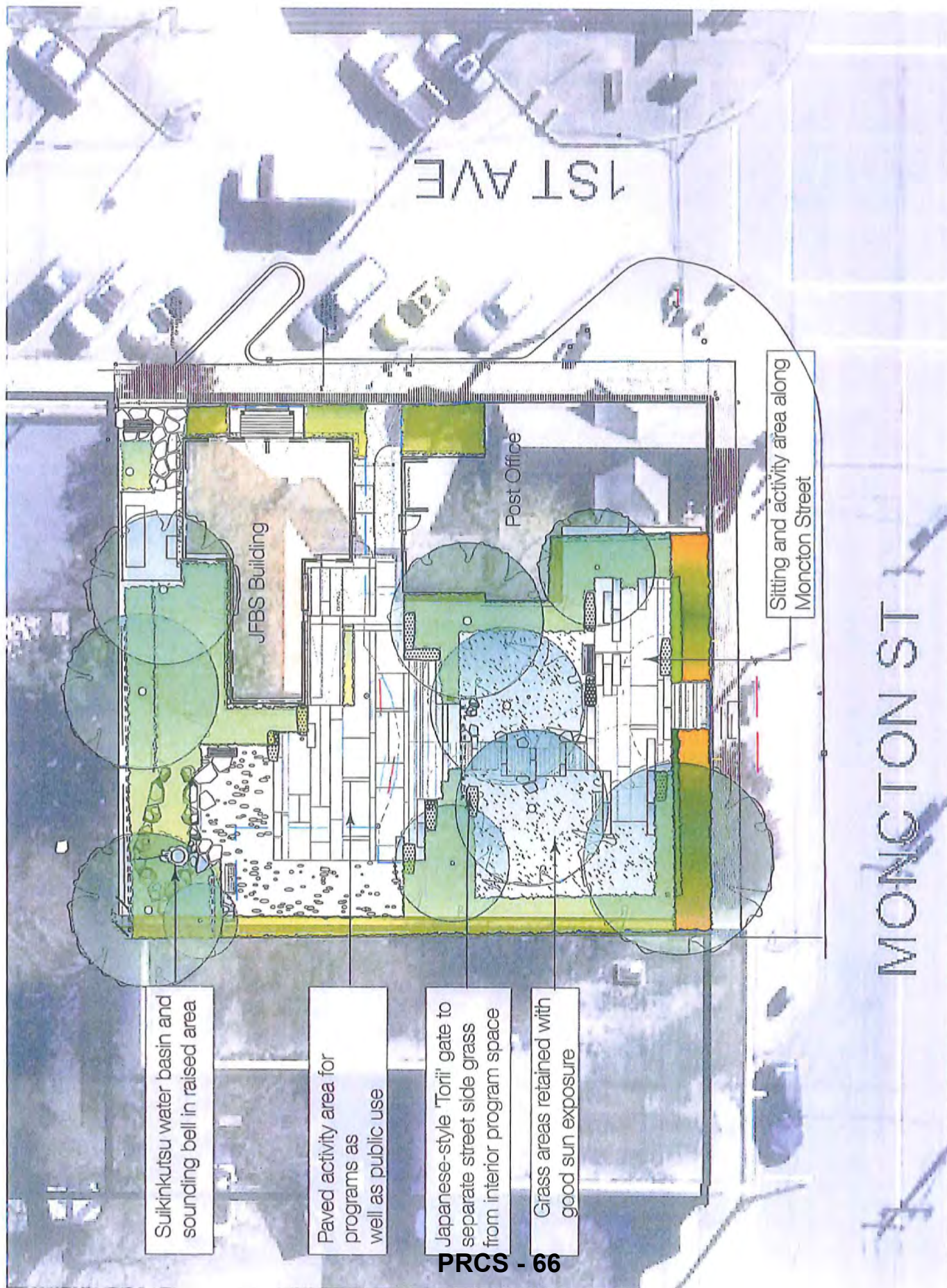


Mike Redpath  
Senior Manager, Parks  
(604-247-4942)

- Att. 1: Location Map - Steveston Town Square Park  
2: Steveston Town Square Park Concept Plan

STEVESTON TOWN SQUARE PARK





Suikinkutsu water basin and sounding bell in raised area

Paved activity area for programs as well as public use

Japanese-style "Torii" gate to separate street side grass from interior program space

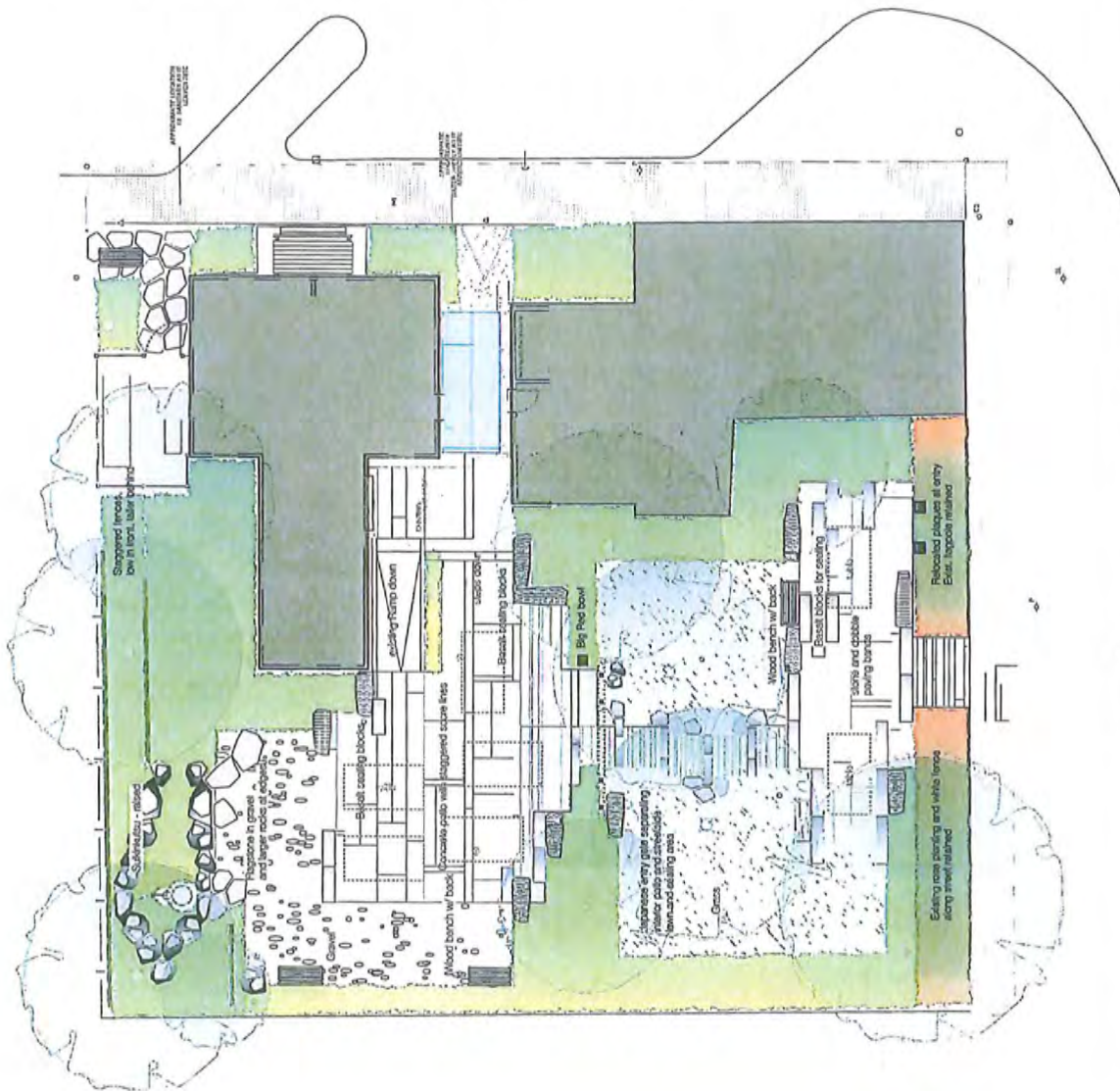
Grass areas retained with good sun exposure

JFBS Building

Post Office

Sitting and activity area along Moncton Street

MONCTON ST



- The Stevenson Square Park Design is built around several organizing objectives:
1. Create areas for casual and organized uses and activities
  2. Preserve street character and relationship to the Post Office
  3. Apply some principles of Japanese garden design in material choice and application, in enhancing the relocated Japanese Echizen Ceramic Society Building
  4. Create sitting and activity areas that serve casual use and programmed activities as well as events
  5. Incorporate a Suiyinkusu feature or similar element in the park.

The proposed concept retains the white picket fence and rose planting along the street and the entry alignment. A new entry area accommodates space for tables or display for public events and seating on located benches as well as local block elements.

The path to the main activity area uses a series of stepped modules that combine concrete with multiple stone lines, granite paving slabs and bluestone flagstones.

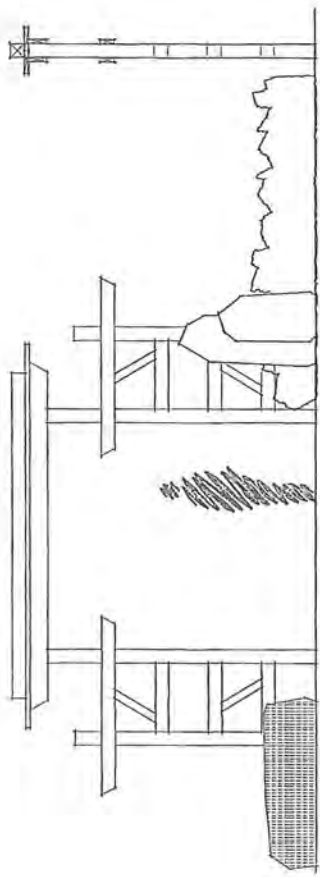
The main patio area will accommodate 30 persons for social gatherings or 5 tables for seating or other activities. The southern half, with the best sun exposure, remains as lawn.

The activity area will be concrete with frequent, irregularly spaced stone lines, and inset slabs of granite. Basalt bench blocks as well as conventional benches are available here.

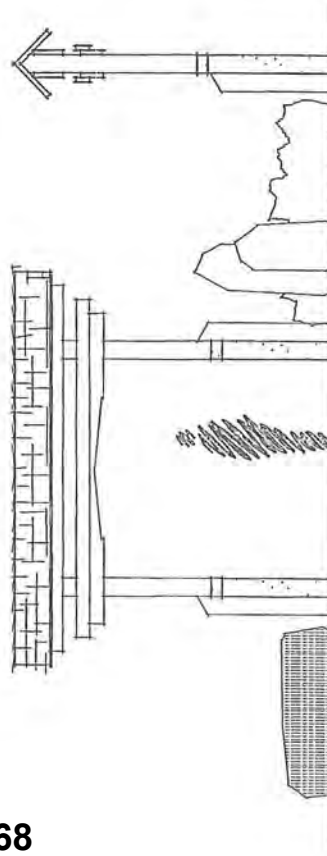
The back area of the park will be gravel, and will connect the patio to the Suiyinkusu area. This area would be built up with basalt columns or low, rustic walls. Flagstone would be used to edge this area. Wood fences of varying heights will be set so as to increase the sense of depth, using a layering of fence, stone and planting elements.

#### Spatial Standards for Public Areas - Jan Gehl, Cities for People

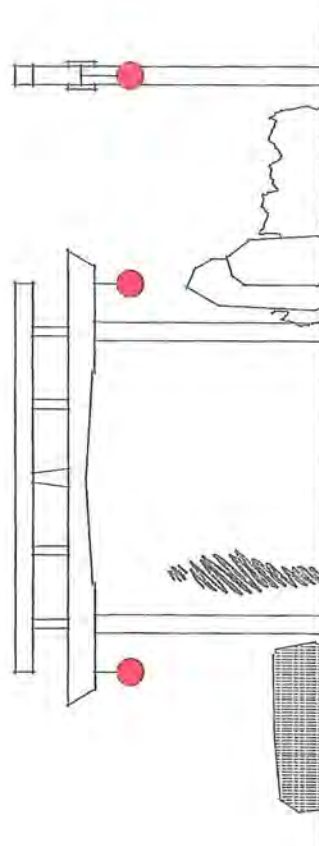
|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Intimate Distance | 0.0 - 0.45 sq. m. |
| Personal Distance | 0.45 - 1.2 sq. m. |
| Social Distance   | 1.2 - 3.7 sq.m.   |
| Public Distance   | 3.7 + sq. m.      |



Gate 1, Scale 1:20



Gate 2, Scale 1:20



Gate 3, Scale 1:20



**DAMON ORIENTE LTD.**  
landscape architects

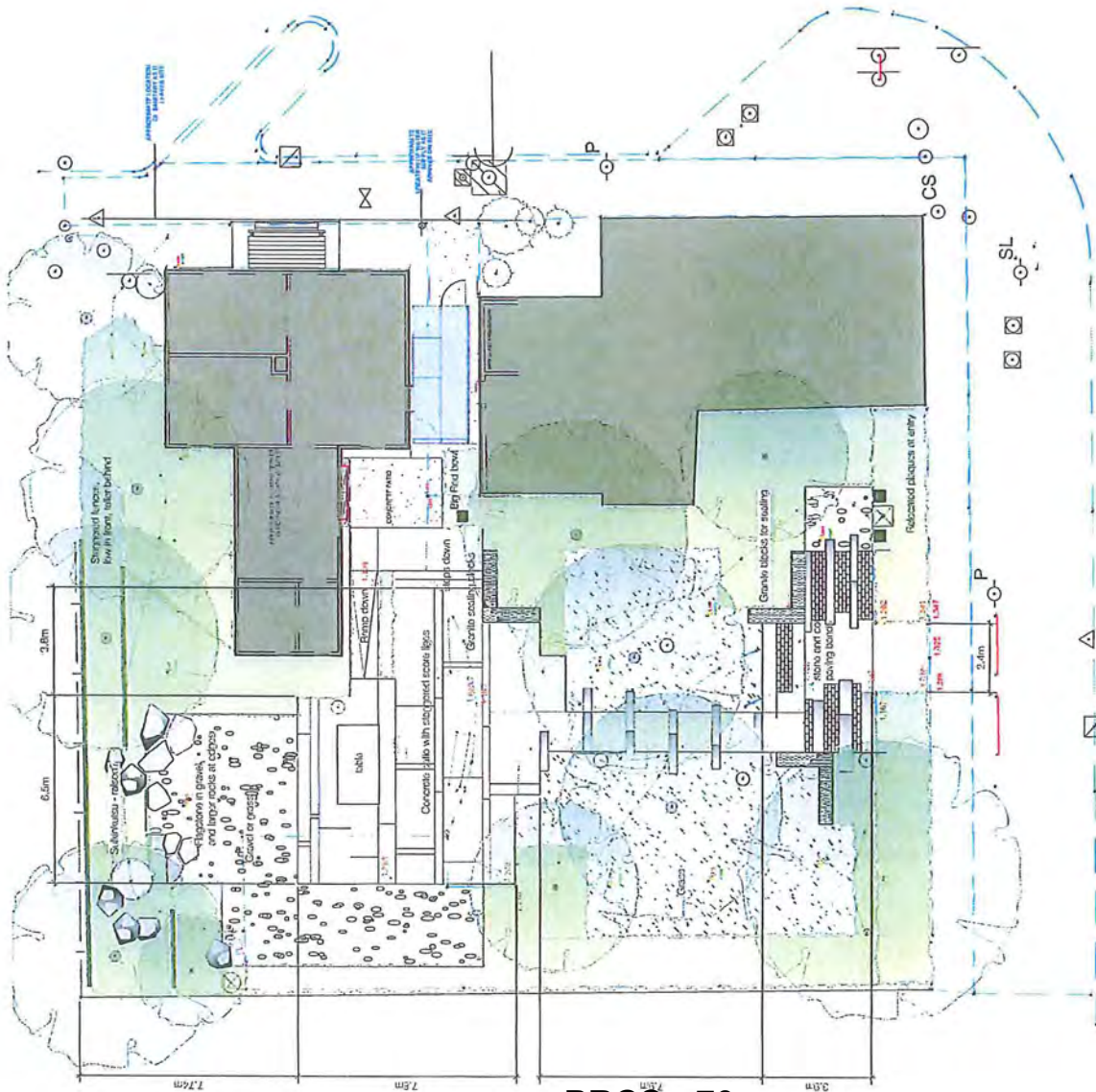
**Project**  
**STEVESTON TOWN SQUARE PARK**

Drawing  
ZONING

Issue:

Author: 150  
 Date: Feb 2015  
 Project Name: 2014-2015

L1.01



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**STEVESTON TOWN SQUARE PARK**  
Association and East Avenue

**DESIGN CONFIRMATION CONCEPT**

Scale

Scale: 1/2"  
Date: Feb 2015

Project Number: 2015-215

Sheet

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