



# City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

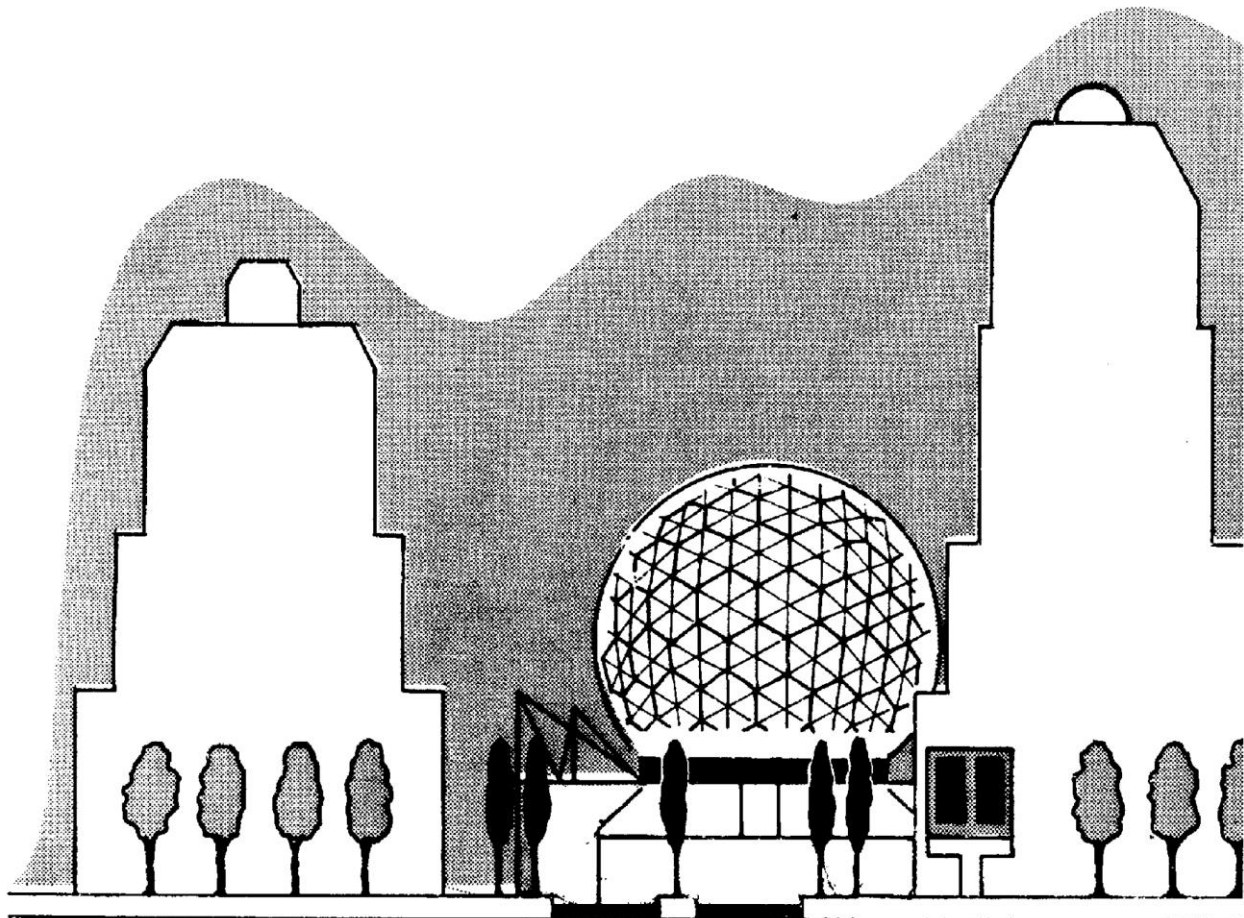
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## **EAST FALSE CREEK FC-1 GUIDELINES**

*Adopted by City Council on February 18, 1986*

*Amended April 4, 1989, February 4, 1992, September 10, 1996, October 31, 2017, and July 20, 2022*



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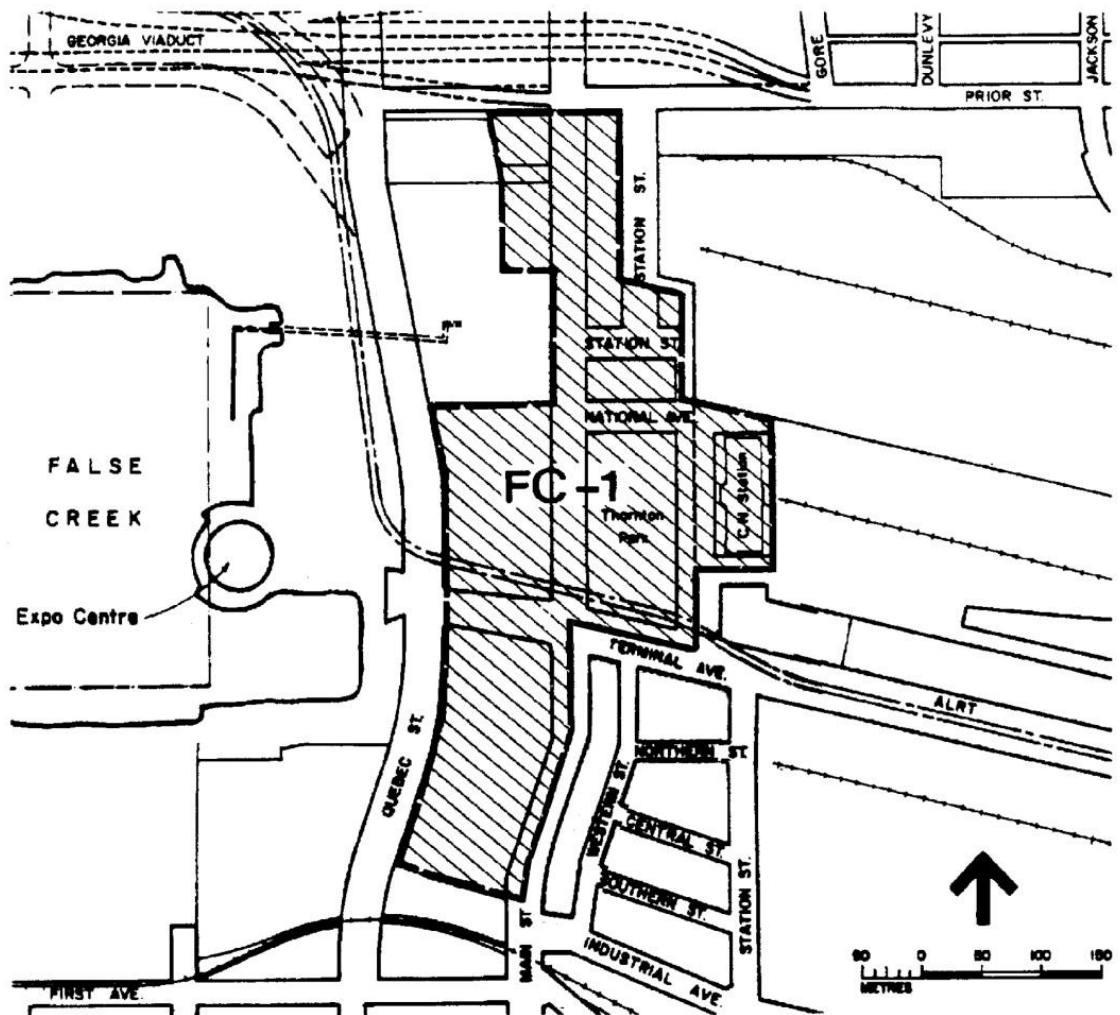
# 1 Application and Intent

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the FC-1 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law for developments in the East False Creek area (see Figure 1). They deal with criteria that should be considered in the planning and design of commercial and mixed-use buildings. The guidelines should be consulted in seeking conditional approval. As well as assisting the applicant, the guidelines will also be used by City staff in the evaluation of projects.

The intent of the guidelines is to help achieve good quality development in the East False Creek area, and to ensure the compatibility of different uses (including residential) in a high-density mixed commercial use neighbourhood.

Wherever reference is made in these guidelines to residential uses, the provision also applies to Artist Studio, - Class A, Artist Studio - Class B and the associated residential unit.

Figure 1. East False Creek FC-1 Zoning District



## **2 General Design Considerations**

### **2.1 Neighbourhood Character**

The East False Creek area is located at the eastern end of the False Creek basin. To the north, it is bounded by the Georgia Viaduct (and north of this, the Chinatown and Strathcona districts). To the east and south, it is bounded by industrial uses. To the northwest is the Pacific Place comprehensive redevelopment area. To the west is the False Creek water area, and industrial uses on the south shore west of Quebec Street.

It is intended that East False Creek redevelop as a mixed-use area, primarily commercial in character but with compatible industrial and residential uses where appropriate. A variety of commercial uses would be focussed on Main Street, around Thornton Park and the Main and Terminal SkyTrain station location. Visitor and residential hotels are also encouraged. The proximity of the area to the False Creek waterfront and future B.C. Place eastern residential neighbourhood, and excellent views of the North Shore mountains and downtown, make certain locations desirable places to live.

Within the FC-1 zoned area, transition in built form will occur between the small-scale of lower buildings on the northerly part of Main stepping up to higher elements near Terminal. On Main, the street will be defined by four to six-storey buildings with predominantly retail uses at grade and either mixed-use or residential use above. West of Quebec, the openness of the waterfront park will provide strong contrast to the continuity of built form provided by four to six-storey buildings from the near perspective and higher tower elements from the distant perspective.

On the City-owned waterfront land, a new character has been provided by the Science Centre dome. This 45.8 m high spherical structure creates a dramatic visual presence from nearby neighbourhoods and establishes a focal point from False Creek and from Terminal Avenue. High rise buildings should be developed in the FC-1 area on either side of this structure to frame it and reinforce its function as a focal point.

### **2.2 Street Character**

The area is dominated by the three major arterial streets of Main, Terminal, and Quebec. These vary in right-of-way allowance from 30.5 m to 36.6 m in width. Terminal and Quebec both have centre median areas which are landscaped and treed to some extent.

Along Main Street, north of Station Street, there is a continuity of built form, generally three to four storeys in building height built to a consistent street wall line. On Main Street south of Station Street there is more openness created by the open space and mature trees of Thornton Park, and south of Terminal, by landscaped setbacks each side of the street in front of existing auto-oriented uses.

Buildings should create a strong, dual sense of enclosure for the eastern False Creek water body with continuous medium scale street wall buildings along the eastern edge of Quebec Street to visually define the open space from the near perspective and towers set back above to provide a visual backdrop from the distant perspective.

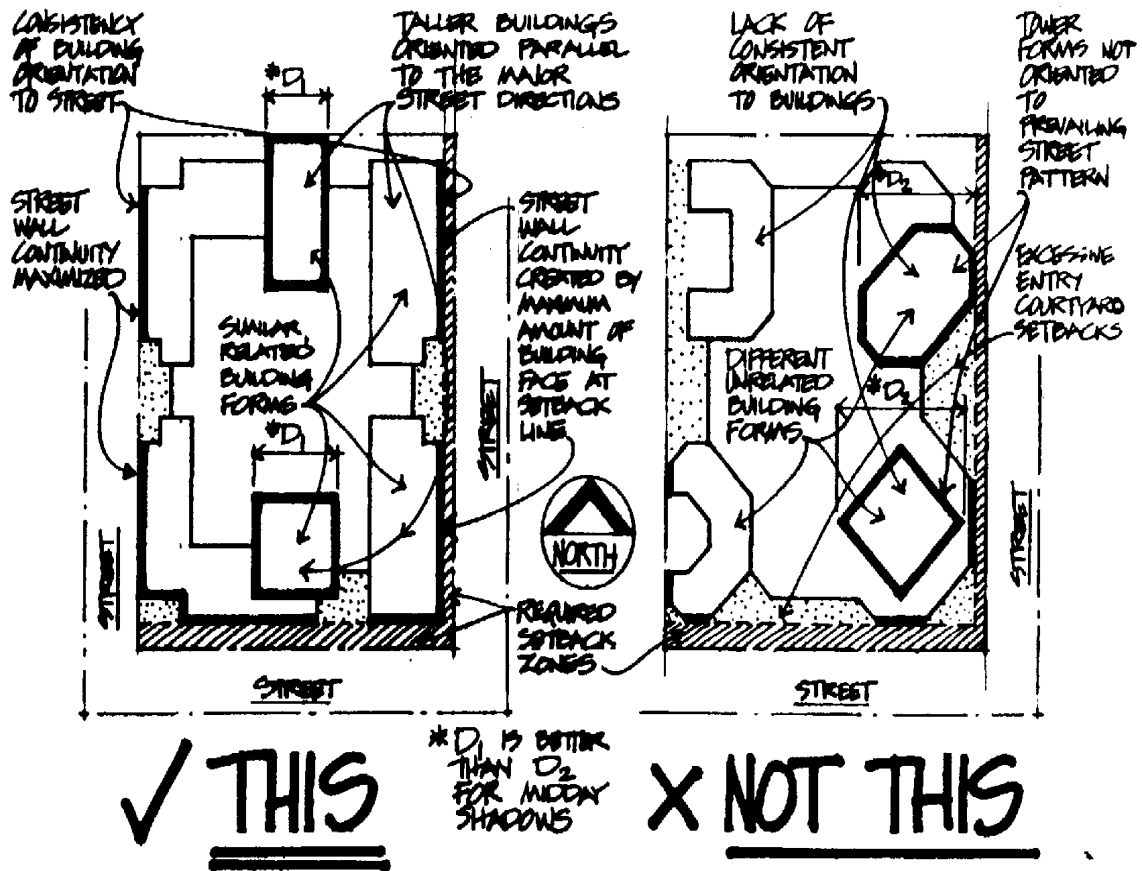
### **2.3 Orientation**

Except for Terminal Avenue, the major streets in the area are oriented in a generally north-south direction. Main Street south of Terminal has a slight jog in alignment, but north of Terminal it is straight. Older buildings on Main Street and the C.N. Station on the east side of Thornton Park all are strongly oriented to the north-south streets.

As illustrated in Figure 2, new development should respect the predominant east-west orientation of older buildings in the area for urban design consistency as well as to reduce the amount of shadowing during mid-day hours. Buildings to the west of Thornton Park should relate to the strong axial focus of the C.N. Station to the east of Thornton Park.

Buildings along the east side of Quebec should orient to the waterfront amenity potential to the west.

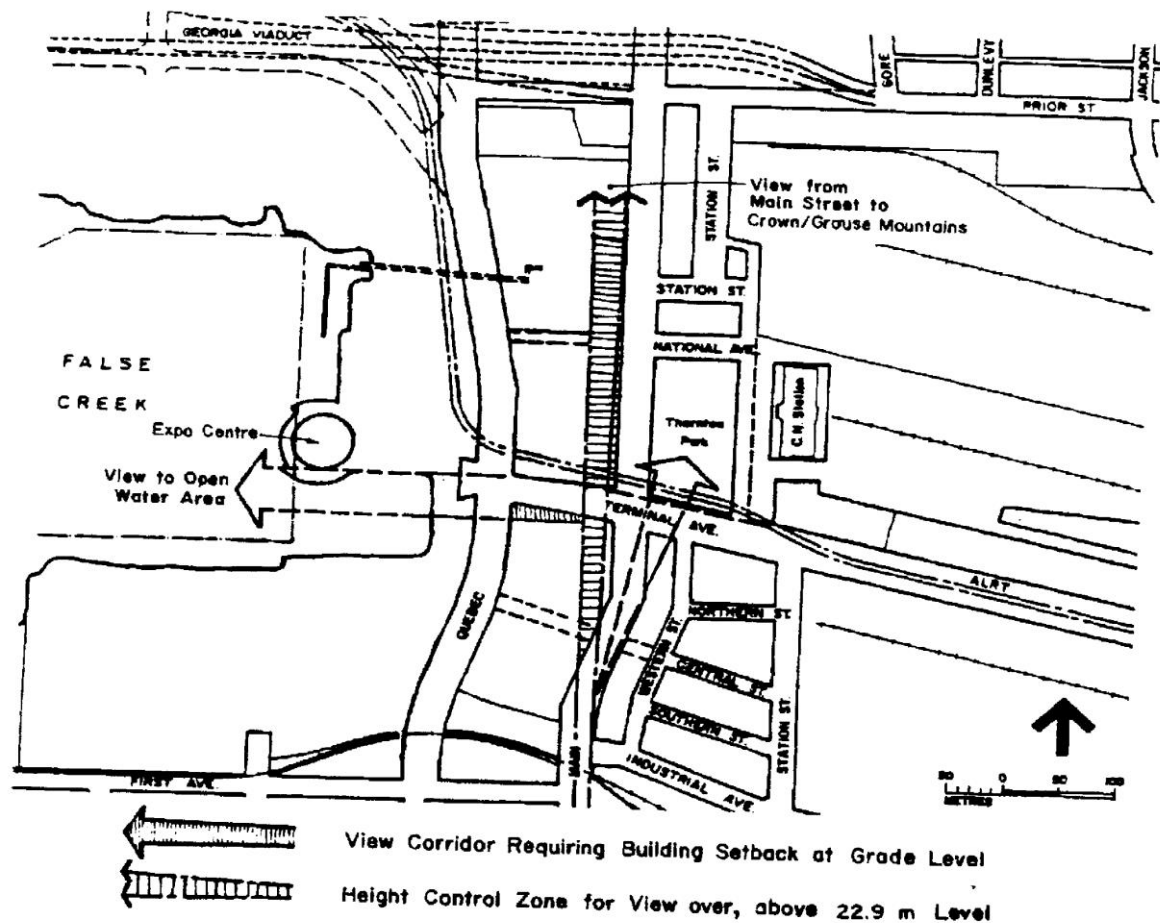
Figure 2. Building Orientation



## 2.4 Views

Important public views from and to the East False Creek area should be protected and enhanced. These include views of False Creek, the North Shore mountains, the downtown, and significant landmark features from the major arterial streets of Main, Terminal and Quebec, and from future street alignments and other public area vantage points, both within and outside of the East False Creek area. For SkyTrain system users as well as the high volumes of vehicular traffic approaching the downtown area via Terminal Avenue, this street-end location offers the first partial view of the False Creek water area, the Stadium, and associated B.C. Place development.

Figure 3. View Protection Corridors



### Public Views

Important view corridors down extensions of Main, Terminal, and Quebec Streets should be preserved through appropriate development setbacks and building height restrictions, as illustrated in Figure 3.

The building heights of tower form buildings adjacent to the Main/Terminal location should be limited to maintain the continuity of the North Shore mountain skyline as viewed from points higher than the 5th Avenue elevations on Main Street to the south and the Mt. Pleasant residential area to the southeast.

Without compromising the above view objectives, a new landmark view should be created for the area by the new building(s) proposed adjacent to the Main and Terminal location appearing significantly higher than adjacent development.

### Private Views

The terracing of moderate height buildings above the 6th storey level is encouraged to allow views down streets and from interior courtyards. Tower forms should be limited in number, width and location to allow private views between them.

The utilization of building design features such as bay windows and articulated facades is encouraged to facilitate private views from residential units.

## 2.5 Light and Ventilation

New development built adjacent to existing hotels and rooming houses can seriously affect the liveability of units which face interior side yards by blocking off light and air. Measures should be taken to ensure the liveability of these units is maintained, particularly the amount of air and light which can penetrate windows on interior side yards and three-sided interior lightwells.

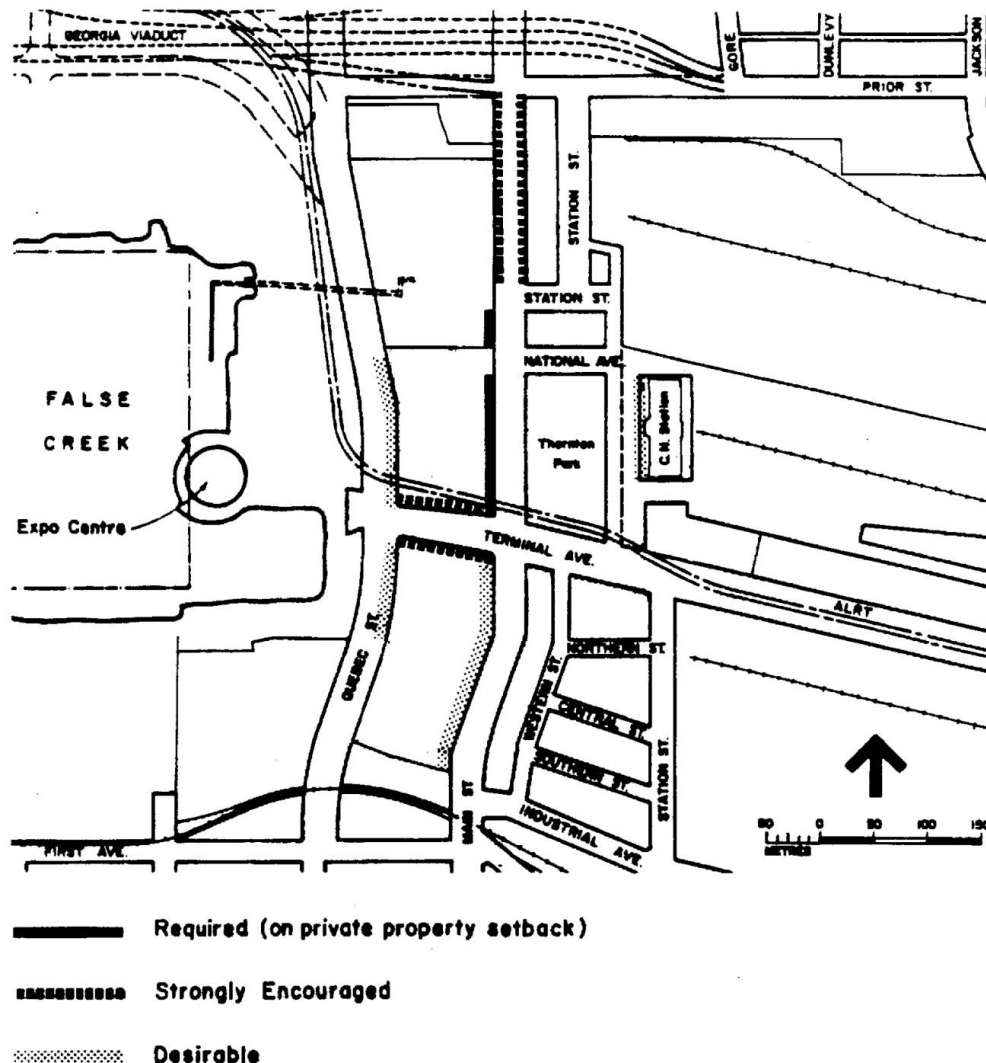
New development adjacent to existing hotels and rooming houses should comply with the Council-approved document entitled Guidelines for New Development Adjacent to Hotels and Rooming Houses.

## 2.6 Weather

The Vancouver climate is mild and wet for extended periods of the year. Bright sunny days are relatively few and occur mostly in the spring and summer. Therefore it is important that pedestrians be adequately protected from the frequent occurrences of inclement wet weather, and that the availability of sunshine to public and private living areas be maximized in new development. Excessive wind conditions along pedestrian areas arising from new higher buildings also need to be ameliorated.

In areas of high pedestrian traffic, the provision of weather protection from the rain is encouraged, in the form of awnings, canopies, or arcades along sidewalk areas or where buildings are set back on private property, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Streets Where Pedestrian Weather Protection is Encouraged



For residential development, buildings should be located and shaped to maximize sun penetration to outdoor areas and living rooms.

Higher buildings in new development should be located and shaped to minimize shadowing impacts on adjacent public and private open space areas.

Buildings, particularly those over 45.8 m in building height, should be designed to minimize downdrafts on usable outdoor areas and adjacent sidewalks by providing breaks at or near ground level.

## **2.7 Noise**

East False Creek is affected by noise produced by vehicular arterial traffic cutting through the area, rail traffic along the eastern boundary, and certain heavy industrial uses (e.g. Lafarge Concrete) located within or adjacent to the area. The elevated SkyTrain line also runs along Quebec Street and Terminal Avenue, with a station at Main Street. For new mixed-use development, the impact of noise must be recognized and minimized to the greatest extent possible to ensure acceptable residential liveability.

All residential buildings should meet CMHC acoustic standards for noise within buildings, and between buildings and the outside environment (i.e. 55 decibels for outdoor spaces and 35 decibels for interior bedrooms).

In order to provide a good quality acoustic environment, careful attention should be given to siting, orientation, design, and construction. The following list provides some indication of possible noise attenuation procedures and design features:

- (a) Orienting outdoor areas and bedrooms away from noise sources;
- (b) Sheltering doors and windows (especially openable ones) from noise sources;
- (c) Providing glass or high walls around outdoor decks and patios;
- (d) Utilizing glass block walls; or acoustically rated glazing;
- (e) Using alternate ventilation (to minimize opening windows)
- (f) Managing interior noise levels (e.g. use of sound-reducing materials).

## **2.8 Privacy**

Uses at the boundary with different zoning should be compatible with that zoning. For example, adjacent to continuing industrial areas, appropriately designed office or other commercial uses should be provided so that they buffer new residential development in the mixed-use FC-1 zoning area.

In order to maximize privacy for residents in new mixed-use development, office uses should not overlook directly into residential units and private open spaces. This can be done by building orientation and design, trees and planting buffers and other screening devices and walls.

## **2.9 Security**

Security is an important concern in the East False Creek area because of its relative isolation from adjacent neighbourhoods, its proximity to an area of high crime potential (e.g. Main-Hastings-Cordova beer parlour belt), and its potential for relatively high-density mixed-use development centered around the Main and Terminal location.

For new, major development, underground or above-grade parking facilities should meet those standards contained in the City Council-approved document entitled Parking Facility Design Guidelines and Standards.

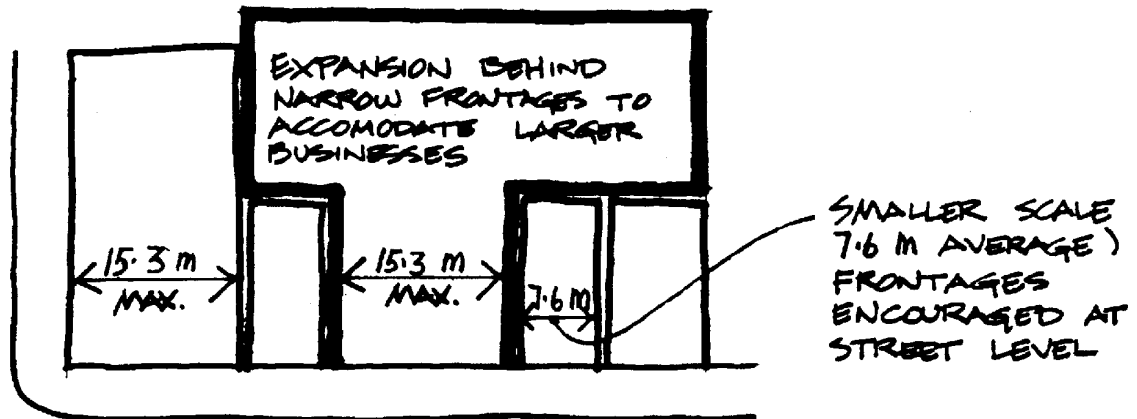


### 3 Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law

#### 3.1 Frontage

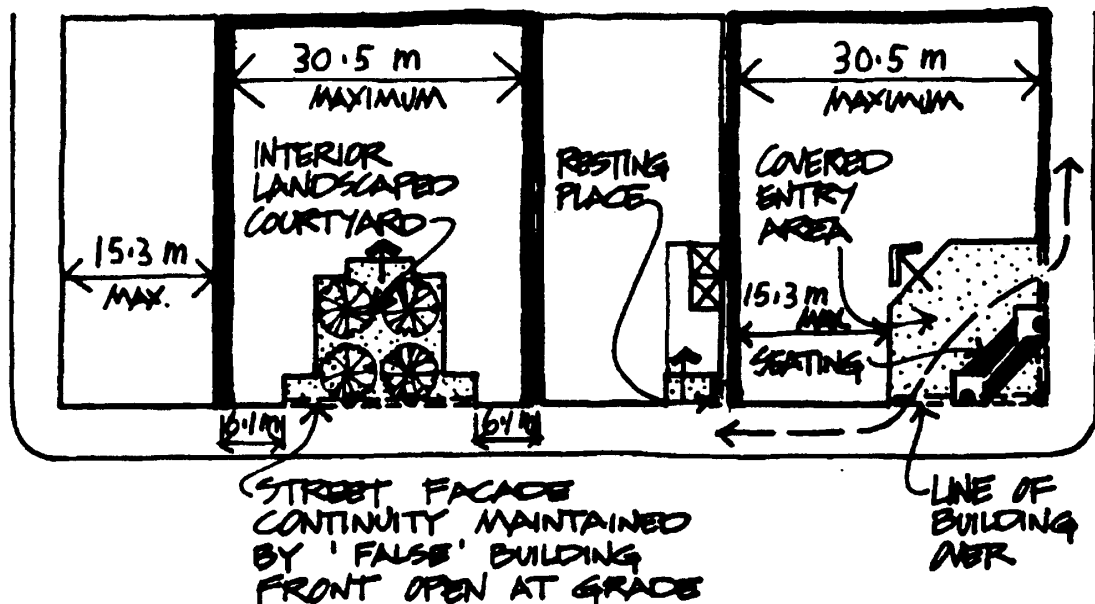
By limiting shopfront widths to a maximum of 15.3 m, with an average of 7.6 m preferred, smaller-scale commercial uses and visual diversity are encouraged along the Main Street area, from Prior to Industrial. To accommodate larger businesses, expansion of ground floor space behind the restricted street frontage areas is permitted as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Street Frontage Restrictions for Outright Approval Uses



Where pedestrian amenities such as courtyard, covered entry area, resting place or other features of pedestrian interest are provided, the maximum frontage regulation may be increased up to a 30.5 m maximum, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Examples of How Frontage May Be Increased



#### 3.2 Building Height

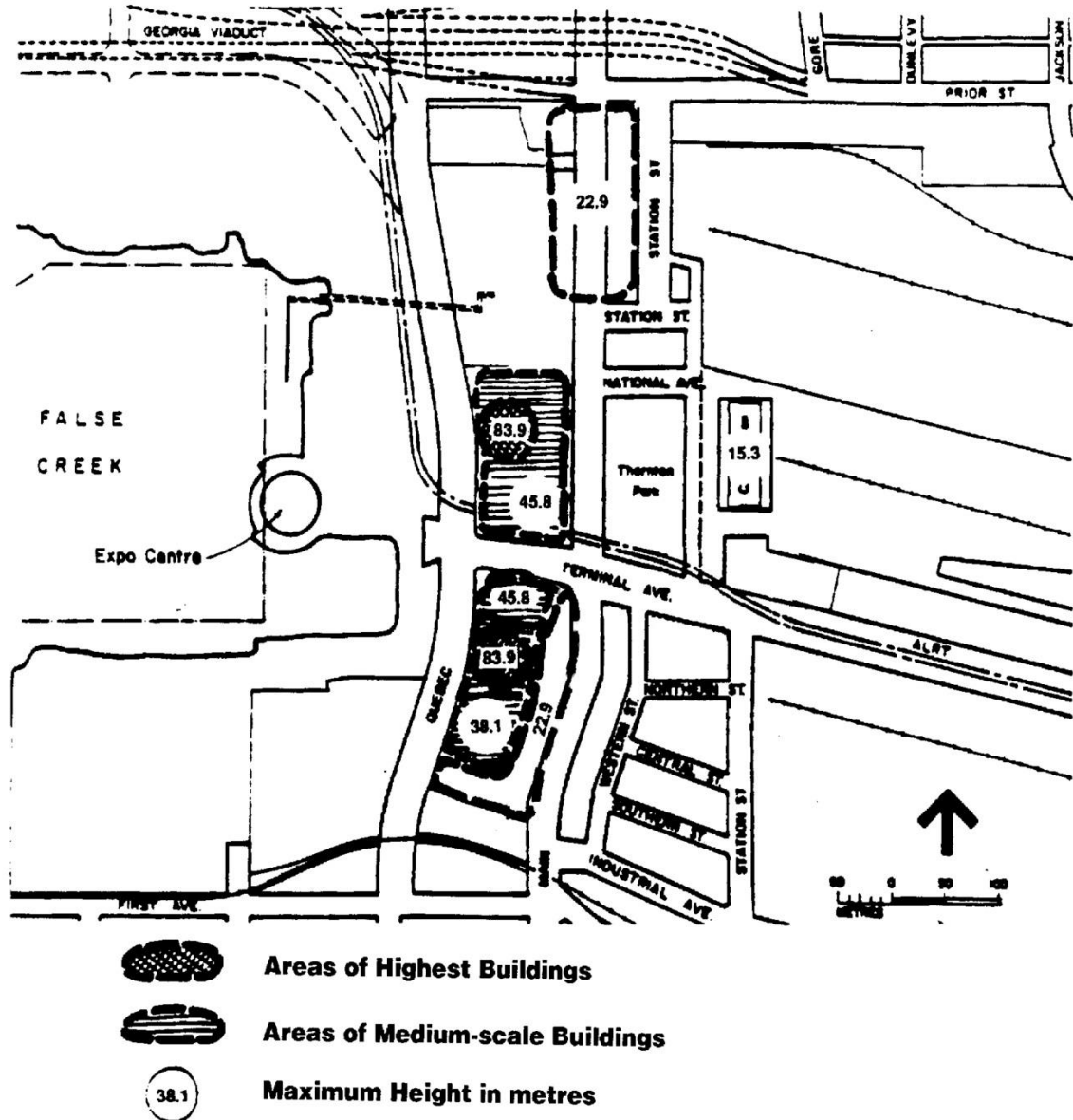
Building height limits for East False Creek are based on:

- Minimizing impacts on North Shore mountain and downtown views from Mount Pleasant, and areas to the east;

- (b) Developing a dual sense of enclosure for the waterfront open space with medium height buildings along Quebec Street and towers set back above;
- (c) Providing a suitable transition in scale from existing lower-scale buildings on Main Street and around Thornton Park;
- (d) Emphasizing the Science Centre dome as a focal point by framing it with high buildings on either side.

Buildings should not exceed the building heights indicated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Building Height Limits



However, some discretion in building heights is provided for architectural features such as cupolas, decorative roofs and gables where these contribute to visual interest or the provision of landmark elements. An increase in these building height limits may also be permitted where it can be shown that the roof silhouette or unusual shaping of the upper storeys of the building creates visual interest, landmark elements, or interesting building tops.

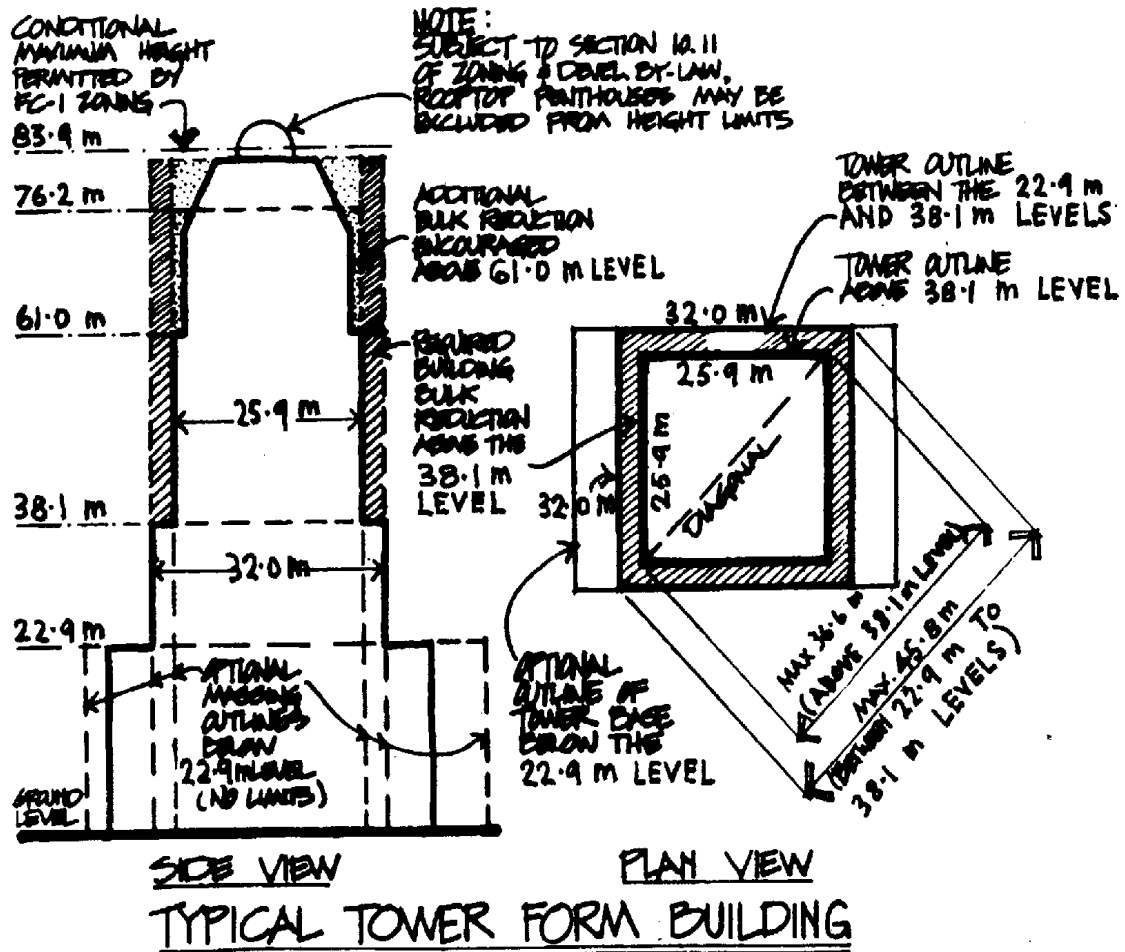
For higher buildings, bulky shapes should be avoided that lack articulation and visual interest. For higher buildings allowed to exceed the above building height limits, the added bulk should

be compensated by improved articulation of the tower mass to create a light, graceful effect, and by tapering or terracing of the building form below the variable building height limit.

To limit visual bulkiness, the diagonal dimension of the floor plan of higher buildings above the 22.9 m level, but less than the 38.1 m level, should not exceed 45.8 m. For tower form buildings above the 38.1 m level, the diagonal dimension of the floor plan should not exceed 36.6 m. The highest building(s) above the 61.0 m level should be further shaped and articulated so as to appear increasingly slender.

These criteria for higher buildings are illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Criteria for Higher Buildings Permitted Above 22.9 m Height Level



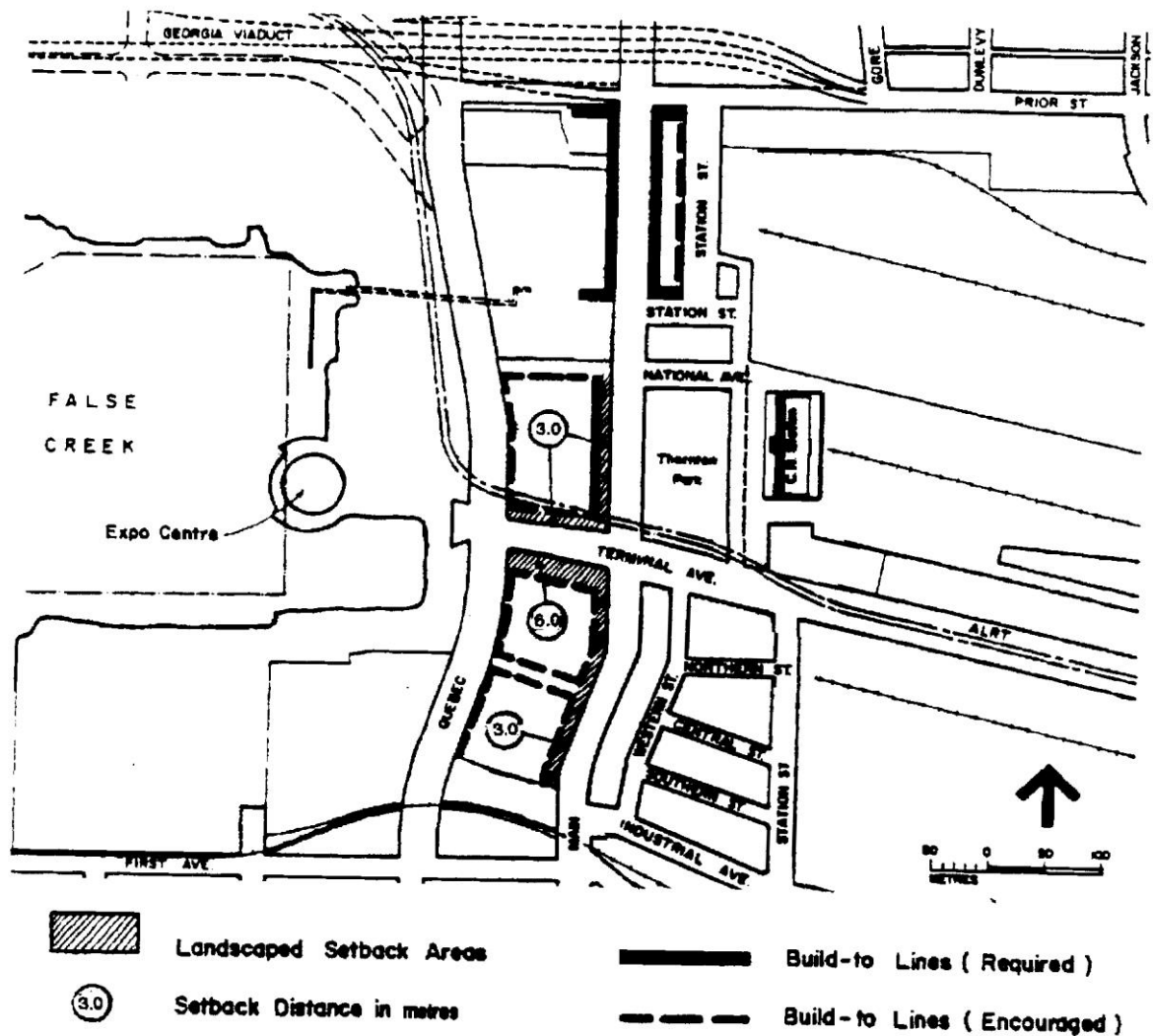
### 3.3 Front Yard

In order to achieve a strong spatial definition along major streets in the area, and around Thornton Park, moderate height buildings should be located along a continuous build-to line along or adjacent to the street property lines or required setbacks for a building height of at least 7.6 m, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Exceptions to continuity of build-to lines may be permitted for small entry lobbies, pedestrian access points or covered arcades or gallerias, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Portions of buildings above 22.9 m should be stepped back a minimum 6.1 m from the build-to lines in order to avoid an overwhelming scale on the street, as well as to admit more light.

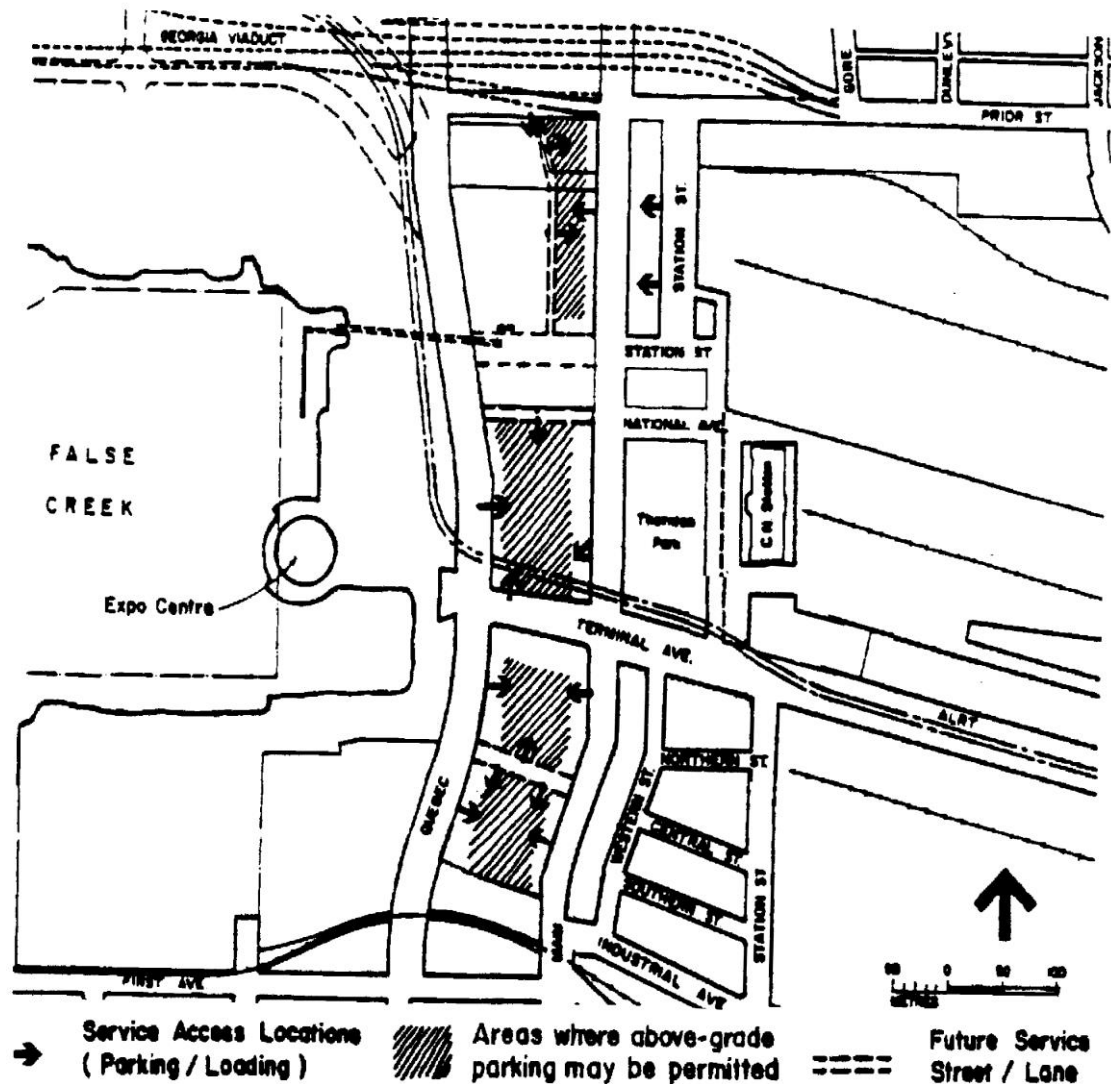
Figure 9. Build-to Lines and Setbacks



### 3.4 Off-Street Parking and Loading

Adequate parking and loading access should be provided for each development, preferably from secondary/local streets or lanes. Where developments face only onto arterial streets, they should provide convenient, easy access and egress so as not to disrupt adjacent arterial traffic movement, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Parking and Service Access



Parking should be provided in out-of-sight locations, preferably underground. Where parking can only be provided on grade, it should be located behind buildings, that front onto the street, or heavily screened with landscaping or low walls. For large development sites having a depth exceeding 36.6 m, above-grade parking may be permitted provided that it is located a minimum 6.1 m from the required build-to lines on the major arterial streets of Main, Terminal and Quebec, as illustrated in Figure 10.

## 4 Architectural Components

### 4.1 Entrances

Main entries to shops and building lobbies should open onto the street sidewalk or adjacent courtyard as directly as possible. Where lobbies are set back from the property line they should be highly visible, clear-glazed, and easily recognisable from the street.

#### **4.2 Exterior Walls and Finishing**

Building design should recognize the high degree of visibility the area will have. Quality of design will be extremely important in this location. The facade treatment and materials of new development along Main Street north of Terminal and around Thornton Park next to the C.N. Station should be related to the existing older buildings in the area. Small-scale brick masonry and stone wall-facing materials are encouraged in this area.

- (a) Clear-glazed windows through which retail and business activity, or display of merchandise, is visible;
- (b) Individualization of frontages;
- (c) Small-scale frontages;
- (d) Landscaping, lighting, and signage.

#### **4.3 Awnings, Canopies, Recesses and Arcades**

Weather protection features provided by new development should comply with the City Council-approved document entitled Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection (except Downtown South) (Part 9 - Design Guidelines).

#### **5 Open Space**

New development should be shaped to create usable courtyard spaces that are ‘formed’ by buildings and/or landscaping rather than spaces that surround a building.

Private open space for residences should meet CMHC standards and utilize features such as patios, balconies, roof decks and terraces. These should be oriented to capture sunlight, take advantage of views and reduce noise impacts.

#### **6 Landscaping**

New boulevard tree-planting should be related to established landscaping features, provided they are considered suitable for the urban environment of the area. Trees should be of a size at the time of planting to satisfy visual impact objectives and minimize potential vandalism problems that could necessitate continuing tree replacement.