

Vancouver's Hong Kong-style Supermodern Aesthetic:  
the Architecture and Public Art of the Concord Pacific Place Urban Mega-Project

by

Menno Jacobus Stuart Hubregtse  
B.F.A., University of Saskatchewan, 2001

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History in Art

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University of Victoria

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Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb, Departmental Member  
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### ABSTRACT

Concord Pacific Place, a glass wall of tall, thin condominium towers lining the north shore of Vancouver's False Creek, is an urban mega-project being developed on the former Expo '86 lands sold to Hong Kong property magnate Li Ka-shing in 1988. This study examines the local, provincial, federal, and Hong Kong-based cultural, economic, social, and political conditions implicated in the production of Concord Pacific Place and how the mega-project's architecture and artworks refer to these conditions. This thesis argues that Concord Pacific espoused a high-tech self-image as a strategy to challenge the local perception of the mega-project as a Hong Kong-funded development for Hong Kong buyers. This study illustrates how the site's Supermodern architecture and some of its artworks overtly emphasize that the space is a high-tech community and also subtly allude to Chinese transnationality by using inconspicuous references intended to be detected only by Concord Pacific's Hong Kong consumers.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Christopher Thomas, for his insights, support, and help with my research and writing. My departmental committee members, Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb and Dr. Lianne McLarty, both provided valuable feedback and helped me develop the arguments and ideas in my thesis. I also wish to thank Dr. Lawrence McCann for his suggestions and ideas for future research. I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for providing me with financial assistance. I also wish to thank my friends, my family, and the faculty and staff at the University of Victoria's History in Art Department and the School of Work for supporting me throughout my graduate research.

## Introduction

Now the circle around False Creek is complete. Homes, parks, families and boats thrive on its shores, alongside galleries, theatres, specialty shops, restaurants, bistros and the city's two premier sporting venues, B C Place and General Motors Place. From its humble past, False Creek has now become the jewel in Vancouver's crown, setting the stage for our city's future.

– Concord Pacific, 'Sawmills to Sophistication', *Living Magazine*, 1994<sup>1</sup>

These glass towers strike many visitors as a key element of the city's character... To Vancouverites, these towers signify a few things: the power of global history to affect our lives, and the average citizen's alienation from the civic political process – they're large glass totems that say "F-you" to us.

– Douglas Coupland, 'See-throughs', *City of Glass*, 2000<sup>2</sup>

Since the late nineteenth century, the north shore of False Creek has changed from a rainforest, to a rail yard, to an industrial zone, to a fairground, and finally to "the jewel in Vancouver's crown" (Fig. 1). Enter Concord Pacific Place – a nearly completed privately-owned mega-project that encompasses approximately a sixth of the city's downtown peninsula. Concord Pacific's forest of pale blue and green glass towers dominates the vista of Vancouver seen from the south shore of False Creek (Fig. 2). The towers occupy a space that was deforested by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) during the late nineteenth century. The CPR developed the land for its rail yards and industry. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the factories slowly moved away from the north shore of False Creek, and the land was ultimately bulldozed to make way for a world's fair to be held in 1986.

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<sup>1</sup> Concord Pacific, 'Sawmills to Sophistication', *Living Magazine*, 1.1 (1994)  
<[http://www.concordpacific.com/livingmagazine/living1/volume1\\_issue\\_1.html](http://www.concordpacific.com/livingmagazine/living1/volume1_issue_1.html)> [accessed 27 July 2007].

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Coupland, 'See-throughs', *City of Glass* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000), p. 126.

The site's transformation into a high-density residential neighbourhood followed the provincial government's controversial decision in 1988 to sell 204 acres of the former Expo '86 site to Hong Kong property magnate Li Ka-shing. Li's purchase of the land was expected to draw a substantial amount of foreign investment into the city and was considered a key event that would transform Vancouver into a global city. Li's acquisition and development of the Expo '86 site coincided with the start of a growing wave of immigration to Vancouver. During the late 1980s and 1990s, many affluent Hong Kong Chinese people chose to immigrate to Vancouver because of anticipated political and economic uncertainties associated with Hong Kong's return to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Li's firm, Concord Pacific, marketed its condominium units primarily to middle- and upper-class Canadian residents and Hong Kong immigrants and investors. Concord Pacific's purchase of the Expo '86 lands was met with positive local reactions – supporters lauded the expected influx of investment into Vancouver and the city's growing popularity on the Pacific Rim – and negative local reactions – detractors worried about increased levels of immigration and expected rises in houses prices.

Concord Pacific Place contains low- to mid-rise brick-faced buildings, which were designed to respond to the older industrial and CPR structures in the area. Soaring above these lower buildings are tall, thin towers sheathed in metal and glass, built in an architectural style Hans Ibelings has named "Supermodernism." The Concord Pacific "point" towers all have small floor-plates and resemble skyscrapers built in Hong Kong. Concord Pacific has promoted and marketed its neighbourhood as "North America's first fibre optic community," "a high-tech village of the 21st century," and a "global village." Concord Pacific rarely emphasized its connections to Hong Kong and frequently

downplayed predictions that its condominiums would be purchased by Hong Kong investors.

The most extensive academic study of Concord Pacific Place appears in Kris Olds's *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects*.<sup>3</sup> Olds's investigation of Chinese transnational economic networks and property development includes an extensive case study of Concord Pacific and its mega-project on the north shore of False Creek. Olds discusses the economic, social, and political conditions that attracted Li to the site and how these conditions affected Concord Pacific's planning process. John Punter's *The Vancouver Achievement: Urban Planning and Design* devotes one chapter to the mega-projects under construction in the city's downtown.<sup>4</sup> Punter examines Concord Pacific Place's development plans and the zoning guidelines, which emerged from negotiations between the city's planning department and Concord Pacific's officials. Punter also provides a cursory overview of some of the buildings completed before 2001. Trevor Boddy has published a few articles in which he discusses the resemblance between Concord Pacific's point towers and the tall, thin skyscrapers in Hong Kong.<sup>5</sup> In *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination*, Lance Berelowitz briefly treats Concord Pacific Place as a quintessential project in Vancouver's longstanding history of private development, which began with the CPR in

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<sup>3</sup> Kris Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also Kris Olds, 'Globalization and the Production of New Urban Spaces: Pacific Rim Megaprojects in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century', *Environment and Planning A* 27 (1995), pp. 1713-43; and Kris Olds, 'Globalization and Urban Change: Tales from Vancouver via Hong Kong', *Urban Geography* 19 (1998), pp. 360-85.

<sup>4</sup> John Punter, 'Megaprojects on the Waterfront, 1987-2000', *The Vancouver Achievement: Urban Planning and Design* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), pp. 186-240.

<sup>5</sup> Trevor Boddy, 'Borrowed Places, Borrowed Times: The Rhetoric of the Visual in Vancouver and Hong Kong Photography', in *Vertical Cities*, exhib. cat. (Vancouver: Charles H Scott Gallery, 1999), pp. 48-55; Trevor Boddy, 'New Urbanism: "The Vancouver Model"', *Places* 16.2 (2004), pp. 14-21; and Trevor Boddy, 'Downtown's Last Resort', *Canadian Architect* 51.8 (2006), pp. 20-22.

1885.<sup>6</sup> Katharyne Mitchell has written extensively on the increase of Pacific Rim investment in Vancouver since the 1980s and has included Concord Pacific as a key example in her analyzes.<sup>7</sup> Her research has focused on the local reactions to immigration and foreign investment into Vancouver during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

My thesis examines Concord Pacific Place's architecture and public art works. I begin with a cursory overview of the region's history and a description of some of the mega-project's buildings and artworks. My analysis focuses on how the architectural styles and the art works' themes are indicative of the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions that produced Concord Pacific Place. The motive for this research objective is best described by Manfredo Tafuri's explanation of his methodology in

*L'Armonia e i conflitti*:

...the artistic object is to be questioned, rather than in its individuality, as a witness that can testify as to the roles that were assigned to it by the mentality (or mentalities) of the era to which it belongs regarding its economic meaning, its public function, the means of production incorporated in it, the structures of representation (= ideologies) that condition it, or of which it is an autonomous enunciator.<sup>8</sup>

I examine how universal trends, such as globalization, accelerated modernity, informationalism, and technological progress, were implicated in the development of

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<sup>6</sup> Unlike Victoria, British Columbia's capital city, Vancouver has been largely transformed because of private contracts rather than public works (see Lance Berelowitz, *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination* [Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005], pp. 89-115).

<sup>7</sup> Katharyne Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism, or the United Colors of Capitalism', *Antipode* 25 (1993), pp. 263-94; Katharyne Mitchell, 'Visions of Vancouver: Ideology, Democracy, and the Future of Urban Development', *Urban Geography* 17 (1996), pp. 478-501; Katharyne Mitchell, 'The Hong Kong Immigrant and the Urban Landscape: Shaping the Transnational Cosmopolitan in the Era of Pacific Rim Capital', in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, ed. by R. Wilson and A. Dirlik (Durham: Duke, 1995), pp. 284-310; and Katharyne Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Tafuri's *L'Armonia e i conflitti* is a study of the San Francesco della Vigna, a sixteenth-century Venetian church. Carla Keyvanian's analysis of Tafuri's methodology and politics includes this English translation of Tafuri's statement (see Carla Keyvanian, 'Manfredo Tafuri: From the Critique of Ideology to Microhistories', *Design Issues* 16.1 [2000], pp. 3-15 [p. 8]). See also Antonio Foscari and Manfredo Tafuri, *L'Armonia e i Conflitti: La Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del '500* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1983), p. 7.

Concord Pacific Place. I also discuss how Canada's immigration policies attracted foreign investment and immigration to Vancouver and how this was a driving impetus behind Concord Pacific's development of a residential neighbourhood on the north shore of False Creek. I analyze how ethnic and cultural factors influenced the site's architecture and artworks. My thesis concludes with an examination of how local racist reactions to Concord Pacific's acquisition and development of the Expo '86 site may have influenced the developer's choice of architectural styles and public artworks.

My methodological approach – examining the social forces that helped shape Concord Pacific Place – also derives from Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space*.<sup>9</sup> Lefebvre's significant text discusses how space is both a product of a society's mode of production and a reproducer of the social conditions associated with (and that facilitate) the mode of production. In other words, capitalism produces spaces that reproduce the conditions that lubricate the gearwheels of the capitalist machine. My study of Concord Pacific Place centres on the socio-politico-economical conditions, which operated on local, national, and global levels, that helped produce the mega-project. I devote less attention to explaining how Concord Pacific Place reproduces these social conditions. The fundamental concepts of Lefebvre's spatial theory, which generally guided my methodological process, also appear indirectly in my thesis; in Chapter Two, I discuss

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<sup>9</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). David Harvey and Edward Soja provide helpful explanations and analyzes of Lefebvre's spatial theories (see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1989]; David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* [New York: Verso, 2006]; Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* [New York: Verso, 1989]; and Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1996]).

David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*, which was partially based on Lefebvre's analysis of space.<sup>10</sup>

I decided to write about Concord Pacific Place after my supervisor, Dr. Christopher Thomas, introduced me to Hans Ibelings's *Supermodernism*. Dr. Thomas and I discussed a few potential topics pertaining to Supermodernism, and we decided on the wall of glass towers lining False Creek. I first encountered Concord Pacific Place in the summer of 2001. I was visiting two friends who had recently moved to Vancouver from Saskatoon and were renting a one-bedroom condominium in the Landmark 33 tower (Figs 21 and 22). I was kindly offered an evening's rest on the futon in the unit's living room, which offered a splendid view of Vancouver's celebrated north shore mountains. After going out to buy a coffee the next morning, I wandered between the spectacular reflective towers and wondered what had influenced the site's architectural style and aesthetic. Little did I know that I would spend a few years researching and writing about these tall, thin glass skyscrapers.

Before I started my MA thesis, I knew only few details of the site's history. I had ascertained that the land was associated with Expo '86 because I encountered the street name Expo Boulevard and recognized the iconic Science World building that neighbours the mega-project. Only after I had started my research into False Creek's history did I discover that the site was sold to a Hong Kong investor. Perhaps if I had resided in British Columbia during late 1980s and early 1990s, I would have been aware of the local controversy that arose after the sale of the Expo lands to Li Ka-shing. I, however, was

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Lianne McLarty provided valuable insight and helped me with my research into Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity* in her spring 2005 HA 510: Seminar in Film Studies: Popular Film and Critical Theory.

attending an elementary school in Saskatoon when site was sold to Li, and I had little interest in Vancouver's civic politics.

As I delved into my research, I realized more and more that Li's acquisition of the Expo lands was significant for Vancouver. Likewise, as I read through the numerous Vancouver *Sun* articles that pertain to Concord Pacific and the Li family, I became conscious of the scope and severity of the local racist reactions to the site's sale and the local anxiety over condominium units being sold in Hong Kong. My initial intent was to discuss the site's architecture and artworks primarily in terms of its Supermodern aesthetic; however, after discussing my research topic with Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb, I realized that the analysis would be inadequate without a discussion of how ethnicity, specifically "Chineseness," has influenced the site's architectural style and some of the public artworks' themes.

### **Chapter Outline and Overall Objectives**

My first chapter begins with a summary of False Creek's history since the arrival of European settlers. Following a historical analysis, Chapter One examines the overall plans and guidelines for Concord Pacific Place and a description of some of the buildings. I also describe some of the Concord Pacific-commissioned public artworks and discuss the artworks' selection process. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how Vancouver's City Council and Planning Department both supported Concord Pacific's development of a high-density upscale residential mega-project.

In Chapter Two, I examine Concord Pacific Place's Supermodern architectural aesthetic. My aim in the second chapter is to refute Ibelings's thesis that Supermodern

architecture is symbol-free. I argue that the Supermodern architectural style is symbolic of globalization, accelerated modernity, informationalism, and technological progress. I examine how these socio-politico-economic conditions helped produce Concord Pacific Place's glass towers. I also discuss how the Supermodern architectural aesthetic is echoed by two of the mega-project's public artworks, which overtly proclaim that the mega-project is a high-tech community and a "global village."

My discussion in Chapter Two examines the impact of global and universal trends on the production of Concord Pacific Place. My analysis in Chapter Three, on the other hand, focuses on the ethnicity of Concord Pacific's patrons and how this influenced the development and marketing of the mega-project. I discuss how Concord Pacific reflects the qualities of Chinese capitalism and how the firm marketed its condominium units to Hong Kong investors and immigrants. I examine why Canada's immigration policies attracted affluent Hong Kong Chinese people to Vancouver and how these policies helped produce Concord Pacific Place. Chapter Three centres on my concept of a Transnational Chinatown and whether Concord Pacific Place can be partially considered a Transnational Chinatown. I use this construct to discuss how the mega-project's tall, thin towers subtly allude to Chinese transnationalism. The chapter concludes with a discussion of why Concord Pacific's historically-themed public artworks omit references to the region's Chinese communities.<sup>11</sup> For example, the artworks' historical narrative includes references to the CPR but excludes any mention of the Chinese labourers that helped build Canada's first transnational railway. My analysis in Chapter Three is

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<sup>11</sup> I use "Chinese" to refer to Chinese people residing in Canada with and without Canadian citizenship. My use of "Chinese" to refer to Chinese Canadians and Chinese people residing in Canada does not imply that Chinese Canadians are less "Canadian" than other Canadian citizens or that the cultural and social practices of Canada's Chinese people are strictly Chinese and uninfluenced by experiences of living in Canada.

preceded by a historical overview of Canada's policies regarding Chinese immigration and a summary of Chinese settlement patterns in Vancouver.

In Chapter Four, I discuss a few of the themes that I encountered in my research of Vancouver *Sun* articles pertaining to Concord Pacific printed during 1987 and 2001. I examine the *Sun*'s coverage of the competition between Li Ka-shing's bid and a local group's bid for the Expo '86 site. I discuss some of the racist responses to Concord Pacific's purchase and development of the Expo lands. I also examine articles that illustrate local residents' anxiety over Concord Pacific selling its condominium units exclusively in Hong Kong. My analysis of the local newspaper's articles includes an investigation of how Concord Pacific marketed and publicized its mega-project as a high-tech space. My final chapter concludes with an analysis of a discourse between heritage enthusiasts, who proclaimed that a historic CPR locomotive would be the defining characteristic of the site, and Concord Pacific, who declared that a proposed tall glass tower would be a "landmark" for both the mega-project and the city. My aim in Chapter Four is to discuss the rhetoric Concord Pacific used to promote its high-tech self image and to examine the scope of the local racist reactions to Concord Pacific's acquisition and development of the site.

My thesis has three overall objectives. The first is to examine the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions implicated in the production of Concord Pacific Place and how the mega-project's architecture and artworks refer to these conditions. I analyze the global and universal conditions in Chapter Two, the cultural and ethnic influences – namely "Chineseness" – in Chapter Three, and the local antagonistic conditions in Chapter Four.

The second objective is to challenge Ibelings's claim that the Supermodern style is symbol-free. I demonstrate how this supposedly "non-referential" style refers to globalization, informationalism, accelerated modernity, and technological progress. I also illustrate how the Supermodern towers lining the north shore of False Creek are symbolic of Chinese transnationality.

My third objective is to argue that Concord Pacific espoused a Supermodern self-image as a strategy to undermine the local perception of the mega-project as a Hong Kong-funded development for Hong Kong investors and immigrants. I contend that Concord Pacific marketed its development as a high-tech neighbourhood at least partially in response to the anti-Asian sentiment levelled at the firm during the late 1980s and early 1990s. I illustrate how some of the site's architecture and artworks functioned to meet Concord Pacific's aims to quell its development's reputation as a Hong Kong space while still maintaining its mega-project's appeal among its Hong Kong clientele: the point glass towers and two of the installed artworks overtly emphasize that the space is a high-tech community and also subtly allude to Chinese transnationality by using inconspicuous references only intended to be detected by Concord Pacific's Hong Kong consumers.

## Chapter One – A Brief History of False Creek and Concord Pacific Place

Within the last 125 years, the north shore of False Creek in Vancouver has changed from a lush Pacific northwest coastal rainforest, to an industrial space owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), to a fairground for Expo '86, and finally to Concord Pacific Place (Figs 1 and 2) – an urban residential mega-project containing Supermodern high-rise condominium towers and Postmodern structures that refer to the site's history.<sup>12</sup> Concord Pacific also commissioned numerous public artworks, some of which function to recall the place's historical narrative; the recollected memory, however, is a safe and chaste narrative that fails to mention False Creek's more sordid historical events. My aim in this chapter is to provide a brief summary of the site's history leading up to Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo '86 lands, an overview of Concord Pacific Place's overall plan, a description of some of the mega-project's architecture and public artworks, and a discussion of how local politics impacted the production of the space.

### **False Creek's History before the 1980s: from Rainforest to Industrial Wasteland to Residential Neighbourhood**

False Creek received its English name in 1859, when Captain George Richards sailed up English Bay and the Burrard Inlet to survey the area for potential defensive supports for New Westminster (Fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> He came across what he thought was a creek,

<sup>12</sup> I will discuss Supermodernism in Chapter Two.

<sup>13</sup> Robert K. Burkinshaw, *False Creek: History, Images, and Research Sources* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Archives, 1984), pp. 3-4. English Bay and Spanish Bank were named to commemorate the encounter between the English Captain George Vancouver and the Spanish naval officers Dionisio Alcalá Galiano and Cayetano Valdés on 22 June 1792 (See G.P.V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg, 'English Bay', in *British Columbia Place Names*, 3rd edn [Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997], p. 75; Akrigg and Akrigg, 'Spanish Bank', in *British Columbia Place Names*, p. 251; and John Kendrick et al., *The Voyage of Sutil*

discovering instead an inlet ending in mud flats; hence the name “False Creek.” This occurred more than a century after the first European forays into what is now British Columbia. In 1741, a Russian expedition had visited the northern coast of B.C., whereas Spanish explorers sailed from the south along B.C.’s coastline throughout the 1770s.<sup>14</sup> With the discovery of a lucrative fur and pelt trade, a number of French, British, U.S., and Russian merchant ships made their way to the Northwest Coast.<sup>15</sup> In 1792, Captain George Vancouver, an explorer surveying the Pacific coastline for the British Admiralty, passed by the current city site and named “Point Grey” and “Burrard Inlet” after his friends Captain George Grey and Sir Harry Burrard.<sup>16</sup> Although the captain’s survey of the coast was relatively accurate, False Creek was overlooked.

The Burrard Inlet did not see any substantial European intervention until seven decades after Captain Vancouver’s survey. Fur trading, the first major economic initiative by Europeans on the Pacific Coast, did not significantly affect the land between False Creek and the Burrard Inlet, but it did flourish both north and south of the peninsula. The first Europeans to have substantial presence within the mainland’s interior were the traders employed by the Montreal-based North West Company (NWC).<sup>17</sup> The NWC established a number of trading posts and formed relations with the Natives throughout the Pacific Northwest, primarily using overland routes from the east. In 1821, the NWC merged with its direct competitor, the London-based Hudson’s Bay

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*and Mexicana, 1792 the Last Spanish Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America*, Northwest Historical Series 16 [Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1991], pp. 17-22, 130-37).

<sup>14</sup> Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, rev. edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 18-20.

<sup>15</sup> Barman, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Akrigg and Akrigg, ‘Burrard Inlet’, in *British Columbia Place Names*, pp. 33-34; and Akrigg and Akrigg, ‘Grey, Point’, in *British Columbia Place Names*, pp. 99-100; and Burkinshaw, p. 3. Burkinshaw notes that Captain Vancouver initially named Burrard Inlet “Burrard’s Canal.”

<sup>17</sup> Barman, p. 32.

Company, launching a fur trading monopoly from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>18</sup> In 1827, the company, retaining as its name "Hudson's Bay Company," founded Fort Langley, a trading post near the mouth of the Fraser River, to further the company's trade along the coast and discourage Americans from trading in the area.<sup>19</sup> Although Fort Langley brought small numbers of European immigrants to the area, most of the Lower Mainland remained under Native control until B.C.'s gold rush in 1858.<sup>20</sup> Today's downtown Vancouver was a seasonal fishing and hunting ground for the Squamish and Musqueam peoples.<sup>21</sup> In the early summer, they would migrate to English Bay and the Burrard Inlet, the bodies of water that bracket what is now the downtown, in search of birds, fish, and shellfish. In 1858, when news of B.C.'s gold deposits broke in San Francisco, a mass migration occurred.<sup>22</sup> In the spring and summer of the same year, at least 20,000 miners passed through the Fraser River on their way to the goldfields further north. In the same year Queen Victoria named the new Crown Colony "British Columbia." With the formation of the colony, direct trading between Natives and Europeans started to diminish. British laws began to be enforced, and the Natives lost the rights to their own land.

The gold rush also had major effects on B.C.'s economic structure.<sup>23</sup> News of the colony's abundant resources had spread and gained the attention of industrialists. During the 1850s, there was a drive for westward expansion in what is now Ontario, due to land

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<sup>18</sup> Barman, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> Cole Harris, 'The Lower Mainland, 1820-81', in *Vancouver and Its Region*, ed. by G. Wynn and T. Oke (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), pp. 38-68 (p. 45).

<sup>20</sup> Harris, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> Harris, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup> Harris, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Harris, pp. 49-50, 60-65.

shortages for agriculture and to the potential for industrial expansion.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, British Columbia's economy shifted towards industry; the former trading systems were replaced with work camps; and fish canneries, logging camps, and sawmills were set up to process the resources for distribution on world markets. This industrial growth brought some migrants from Asia and many from Europe, but the predominant influx was from Britain. One such work camp, the Hastings sawmill, was established on the Burrard Inlet close to the Granville settlement, a place soon to be transformed into Vancouver.<sup>25</sup> This economic change coincided with a shift in economic policy in British North America; mercantilism, a policy that emphasized extracting raw materials primarily for British markets, began to fall out favour after 1840, when Britain started to emphasize free trade as the most viable economic policy for its North American colony.<sup>26</sup> With the abandonment of protected trading with Britain, British North America was forced to increase its trade with the United States and further develop its internal markets.<sup>27</sup> This shift towards a continental economy, which required a greater emphasis on finished products, prompted the growth of industrialism throughout British North America. Alongside the industrial growth was the development of the railway, a mode of transport that could span the continent and that was integral to the internal markets.

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<sup>24</sup> J.M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada*, 2 vols (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), I, p. 302.

<sup>25</sup> Graeme Wynn, 'The Rise of Vancouver', in *Vancouver and Its Region*, pp. 69-145 (p. 69).

<sup>26</sup> Bumsted, I, 281-82.

<sup>27</sup> The reciprocal agreement with the United States that ran from 1854 until 1866 applied to Canada, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia but not Vancouver Island or British Columbia (See F. W. Howay, W. N. Sage, and H. F. Angus, *British Columbia and the United States: The North Pacific Slope from Fur Trade to Aviation*, ed. by H. F. Angus [Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1942], p. 189; and Charles T. Tansill, *The Canadian Reciprocity Treaty of 1854*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 40.2 [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1922], pp. 79-80).

Vancouver's progress towards metropolitan status was due indirectly to British Columbia's incorporation as a province in the Canadian Confederation on 20 July 1871.<sup>28</sup> One anticipated economic benefit of joining the Confederation was a transnational railway, a project that would attract foreign investors.<sup>29</sup> In 1873, however, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald's vision of a transnational railway was temporarily squelched when the Pacific Scandal forced him to resign.<sup>30</sup> Re-elected as prime minister five years later, he promised to bring the transcontinental railway to fruition, though its western terminus remained unclear for some years.<sup>31</sup> In 1886, the site next to the Hastings sawmill was declared the CPR's terminal city; re-named Vancouver, it was incorporated as a city on 6 April 1886.<sup>32</sup> The city's status as CPR's western terminus brought tremendous speculation and growth. In seven years – 1884 to 1891 – the population grew from 900 to 14,000.<sup>33</sup> The city was essentially built and supported by the CPR. Not only did the company own nearly 6,500 acres, most of the city's property, but it was Vancouver's main employer.<sup>34</sup> The CPR placed its opera house, the Hotel Vancouver, and the railway station at the centre of its landholdings, designating the West End as its residential area. The hotel and opera house were amenities for passengers traveling across Canada and on in its steamships around the Pacific Rim.<sup>35</sup> A connection to Asia started early. In June 1887, a ship from Japan arrived in Vancouver's port, only three weeks after the first railcar's arrival. With the addition of its steamships to the

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<sup>28</sup> Barman, p. 99.

<sup>29</sup> Bumsted, I, 380-81

<sup>30</sup> The Pacific Scandal arose after Sir Hugh Allan donated more than \$350,000 to MacDonald's 1872 election campaign; in the following year, Allan's Canada Pacific Railway Company was awarded the railway contract that would connect British Columbia to rest of Canada. See Bumsted, I, 380-81.

<sup>31</sup> Barman, pp. 104-08.

<sup>32</sup> Barman, p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> Barman reports approx. 900 inhabitants along the Burrard Inlet in 1884 (see Barman, p. 108).

<sup>34</sup> Barman, p. 109.

<sup>35</sup> Barman, p. 109.

Orient, the railway became a connector for the British Empire (Fig. 3), allowing passengers to travel from Britain to the British colonies in Asia and Australia without setting foot outside the Empire.<sup>36</sup>

False Creek's north shore was right in the middle of Vancouver's growth. In 1885 and 1886, the 480 acres of forest were clear-cut by the CPR.<sup>37</sup> In addition to a railway line, the company had designated the area a site for rail repair shops and a roundhouse. During the next ten years, the land was also partly leased out, leading to industrial expansion along the north shore. The landmass south of False Creek was divided into a grid of streets and avenues, with lots sold periodically for controlled settlement and income. The explosive growth was not limited to Vancouver's early years as a city. By 1931, the population was 250,000, including Point Grey and South Vancouver, two municipalities recently incorporated into the city.<sup>38</sup> From 1931 to 1951, the population expansion occurred primarily in surrounding localities: Surrey, Richmond, North Shore, Burnaby, and Coquitlam experienced growth rates in that period of two to four hundred percent.

Naturally, the rapid population growth was matched by substantial expansion of the economy. By 1900, Vancouver controlled the province's coastal shipping industry and replaced Victoria as the main port of entry.<sup>39</sup> Vancouver became the centre of the province's export-import trade, banking, insurance, and services. Vancouver also

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<sup>36</sup> The CPR had also anticipated that this link between Europe and Asia would acquire some of the transport going through the Suez Canal (see Barman, p. 107).

<sup>37</sup> T.R. Oke, M. North and O. Slaymaker, 'Primordial to prim order: A century of environmental change', in *Vancouver and Its Region*, pp. 147-170 (p. 162); and Wynn, pp. 87-88.

<sup>38</sup> Wynn, pp. 69-70. Formed in 1892, the District of South Vancouver was bounded between 16<sup>th</sup> Ave, the Strait of Georgia, the Fraser River, and today's Boundary Road. Point Grey, a municipality that separated from South Vancouver in 1906, comprised the land to the west of Ontario Street. South Vancouver and Point Grey became part of the City of Vancouver in 1927. See H. Kalman, R. Phillips and R. Ward, *Exploring Vancouver: The Essential Architectural Guide* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), pp. 163-65, 193.

<sup>39</sup> Barman, pp. 112-13.

became the centre of the province's lumber industry, which had received a large boost from American investment.<sup>40</sup> Sawmills lining Burrard Inlet, the Fraser River, and False Creek were the city's main source of employment. The mills along False Creek's shore included "sawmills, planing mills, sash and door manufacturers, shingle mills, lime kilns, brickyards, cement works, building suppliers, breweries, tanning works, ironworks, foundries, metal works, machine shops, a cooperage, slaughter houses, a crematorium, and (later) shipyards and a gas works."<sup>41</sup> By 1930, Vancouver's port had the greatest tonnage of harbour exports in Canada.<sup>42</sup> Although a great deal of lumber left the port, grain – mainly prairie wheat en route to Britain – comprised the majority of the shipping and elevated Vancouver to the status of a worldwide export capital.

Although the growing economy had positive effects, it certainly had a negative impact on the city's environment; in less than half a century, False Creek had been transformed from a forested inlet with abundant wildlife to a polluted dumping ground overhung by clouds of smoke (Fig. 4).<sup>43</sup> The shore was lined with heaps of wood scraps and metal, while the soil and sediment were contaminated by chemicals and industrial by-products. The area covered by water had been drastically reduced as well. A number of dredging operations attempted to deepen the waterway for shipping, and the property along the shoreline was extended with the recovered sediment. False Creek's industry diversified during the Second World War, as the city became a manufacturing centre for ships and munitions.<sup>44</sup> Growth in manufacturing did not continue after the war, however,

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<sup>40</sup> Wynn, p. 107.

<sup>41</sup> Oke, North and Slaymaker, p. 162.

<sup>42</sup> Wynn, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> Oke, North and Slaymaker, p. 164.

<sup>44</sup> Robert N. North and Walter G. Hardwick, 'Vancouver since the Second World War: An economic geography', in *Vancouver and Its Region*, pp. 200-33 (p. 200-06).

leaving Vancouver with more facilities for production than the city required. At the end of the war, the few tall buildings in Vancouver were “occupied by doctors, dentists, insurance agents, brokers, bailiffs, and accountants.”<sup>45</sup> This changed, however, with the Canadian government’s push for a “laissez-faire market economy”, which accelerated economic growth in major centres.<sup>46</sup> This free market transformed the business structure of the province’s resource industry from a large number of small firms to a handful of corporations. In the decades after the Second World War, large resource corporations opened head offices downtown, transforming the urban core. The industrial changes also prompted smaller mills and warehouses along False Creek and the Burrard Inlet to shut, while larger industrial operations accessible to truck and container traffic expanded in the suburbs.

By the early 1960s, Vancouver was suffering economically, and planners feared that the downtown would fall into decay, a problem already occurring in many U.S. cities.<sup>47</sup> Urban planners consulted with their American counterparts and devised a revitalization program for the downtown core. The program included “publicly financed commercial revitalization, city-subsidized parking, and new cultural facilities.” One project built to these guidelines was the Eaton/Cemp development on Granville Street, where the city leased space for a low price to permit the building of a department store, a hotel, and office space. The American planners also suggested that a freeway should traverse the urban core, facilitating truck access to the waterfront, and in 1967 plans were

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<sup>45</sup> North and Hardwick, pp. 200-01

<sup>46</sup> Although there was a substantial growth in Vancouver’s economy, it was a small fraction of the growth experienced in Montreal and Toronto (see North and Hardwick, p. 203-6).

<sup>47</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 208.

formulated for a freeway that would run through Chinatown and Gastown.<sup>48</sup> The destruction building the freeway would entail proved highly unpopular with the public, whose protests stopped the project dead and led to Gastown and Chinatown's designation as heritage sites. Vancouver is still an anomaly, the only North American city without an urban freeway.<sup>49</sup> By the late 1960s, city council started to discourage further industrial development in the city and to promote Vancouver as a financial, business, and tourist centre.<sup>50</sup>

In this period, planning for future development on False Creek took a drastic turn, as well. In 1950, the development of unsightly False Creek had been a key issue tackled by candidates in the city election.<sup>51</sup> The victor, Frederick J. Hume, proposed to fill in the waterway, opening the space gained to further industry and city parking, which would also cancel the proposal for a new Granville Street Bridge. Hume's plan was never realized, being far too expensive; instead, the city opted for "general cleaning and tidying up of the Creek" and partial land reclamation from the waterway, mainly the channel between Granville Island and the land to its south.<sup>52</sup> This and subsequent plans for False Creek, however, maintained a vision of the space as an industrial area until 1967, when Parks Board Commissioner J.E. Malkin offered a controversial proposal.<sup>53</sup> Malkin suggested that the space be converted to parkland, an idea already conceived by a University of British Columbia professor, Wolfgang Gerson, and a group of architecture

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<sup>48</sup> Kalman, Phillips and Ward, pp. 33-34.

<sup>49</sup> Trevor Boddy explains that in Canada freeways are built based on transportation necessities. This contrasts with the US Interstate system, which was subsidized by the Department of Defense. He also notes that the development of freeways at the expense of existing downtown neighbourhoods is a "uniquely American phenomenon" (see Boddy, 'New Urbanism', p. 14).

<sup>50</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 208.

<sup>51</sup> Burkinshaw, pp. 45-46.

<sup>52</sup> Burkinshaw, p. 48.

<sup>53</sup> Burkinshaw, pp. 53-56.

students. The plan, immediately denounced as a “beautiful pipe dream,” remained vastly unpopular with the city council, but five months later its mind was changed by wide public support for the Parks Board plan and a study concluding that higher tax revenues were generated from residential than industrial areas. In addition, False Creek’s viability as a port had declined, because of Roberts Bank, a superport under construction south of Vancouver that was far better equipped for modern maritime shipping and freight handling.<sup>54</sup> These economic changes and public support influenced the 26 March 1968 council vote, which changed False Creek’s designation as a separate industrial area to that of a commercial, residential, and parkland space incorporated into downtown.<sup>55</sup> The main landowner on the False Creek’s north shore, the CPR, moved its rail yards to a larger site in Port Coquitlam, that allowed smoother processing of freight cars.<sup>56</sup> The empty landmass on False Creek was then slated for redevelopment to be managed by the CPR’s property subsidiary, Marathon.<sup>57</sup>

In 1969, Marathon submitted a proposal for a development mimicking Le Corbusier’s “Radiant City” set between the False Creek shore and Pacific Boulevard, a roadway that was expected to become a major artery. In 1974, Marathon submitted another proposal outlining four neighbourhoods in the area. Both the city and Marathon had reached agreement on the first phase of the development; however, Marathon reneged on the deal when the city insisted that low-income housing be included, subsidized by Marathon. The new emphasis on affordable housing was a direct result of

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<sup>54</sup> Transportation proved to be far more economical on vast tracts of land with single level warehouses. False Creek’s limited space and multi-story warehouses were no longer a viable option in the transportation industry: see North and Hardwick, pp. 213-14.

<sup>55</sup> Burkinshaw, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 213.

<sup>57</sup> Punter, p. 187.

changes in the city's political environment. In 1972, Vancouverites elected The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) over the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), a pro-development group which had dominated the council since 1937.<sup>58</sup> TEAM recognized that Vancouver was headed towards a post-industrial future, where city residents held fewer "jobs in the port and in primary industry," and the downtown would be organized "around management and service activities, from producer services to finance, tourism, and the information industries."<sup>59</sup> This economic shift did increase the number jobs in the downtown core and subsequently increased the need for high-density housing surrounding the downtown<sup>60</sup> – certainly an impetus for the residential development along False Creek. While the plans for residential development on the north shore of False Creek were not finalized for some time, the plans for south shore were approved in 1974, beginning with the low- and medium-rise Spruce and Heather neighbourhoods, whose designs were derived from the controversial plan of 1965.<sup>61</sup> A geographer who had worked on the 1965 plan, Walter Hardwick, was a TEAM alderman when the plans were approved. The two neighbourhoods focused on social mixing and incorporated vast amounts of parkland, a conscious attempt to avoid the higher densities experienced in the downtown West End. The later developments along False Creek, however, did not maintain the same low densities, since the planners were swayed by market forces rather than by the earlier "utopian" ideals embodied on the south shore.

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<sup>58</sup> With mounting public concern over the NPA's push for downtown freeways and its disregard for historic sites, the public elected TEAM in its stead. TEAM had formed in 1968, focused on protecting transit, heritage sites, social housing, and neighbourhood planning (see Punter, pp. 18, 25-27).

<sup>59</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 208.

<sup>60</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 219.

<sup>61</sup> Punter, pp. 34-41; and pp. 19-20.

### **“An Invitation to the World”: Expo ’86, Foreign Investment, and Li Ka-shing**

A decisive moment for False Creek North’s future occurred in 1979, when the province, driven by a plan to hold a world fair,<sup>62</sup> purchased seventy-one hectares of the shoreline for “30 million in cash and an equivalent sum of downtown properties, along with other undisclosed assets.”<sup>63</sup> In January 1980, Premier William Bennett unveiled the plan for Expo ’86, a world transportation fair celebrating Vancouver and the CPR’s centennial. Bennett also unveiled a proposal for B.C. Place, a sports stadium that would be “the focal point of our great province.”<sup>64</sup> The idea was that once the fair had run its course, the False Creek North property would be developed into residential and office space, with profits to be spent on other projects throughout B.C. The motives behind Bennett’s announcement of Expo ’86 were political: he was attempting to bolster his faltering Social Credit party in Vancouver, and prospects for increased investment in the city were expected to garner support for it. Social Credit managed to sway popular opinion in its favour by fifteen percent and secure another election victory.

In *The Vancouver Achievement*, a study and celebration of the city’s urban planning, John Punter calls Expo ’86 “a resounding success.”<sup>65</sup> He notes that a press survey of two thousand Expo visitors was “overwhelmingly favourable”: “for most Vancouverites the positive experiences of friendliness, happiness, excitement, partying, and meeting people were the dominant memories of Expo ’86.” It may be presumed, however, that Vancouver residents who opposed the fair would not have been among those surveyed, and perhaps it is safer to assume that the Expo was a resounding success

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<sup>62</sup> In 1975, the minister of recreation “commissioned a concept study for a second-rank world fair” to celebrate Vancouver’s centennial (see Punter, p. 187).

<sup>63</sup> Punter, p. 187.

<sup>64</sup> Punter, p. 187.

<sup>65</sup> Punter, p. 190.

with a select stratum of Vancouver residents. Not only did the fair's projected \$12-million-dollar-deficit balloon to \$315 million by 1985, but the Expo development also cleared a great deal of low-income housing from the area; the province issued over one thousand evictions prior to the fair.<sup>66</sup> The B.C. premier applauded the Expo for purging the land of its "slums". A plan for social housing after the fair was of little concern to the provincial government and the Expo '86 Corporation: both rejected a proposal submitted by the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA), the First United Church, and the Chinese Benevolent Association outlining the development of 450 rental units for Expo use, later to be converted to non-profit housing. The nearest housing developed by Expo '86 was student housing at the University of British Columbia, ten kilometres from the site! The evictions from the Expo site remain a sore spot for the DERA, which sought to protect social housing in Vancouver and prevent the total gentrification of the city.<sup>67</sup> The thousand evictions that cleared the path for Expo '86 was a story repeated in 1994 during the Association's fight to protect its neighbourhood from the Seaport development along Burrard Inlet, a proposed cruise ship terminal, hotel, and casino. Evidently the fair was not a resounding success for everyone.

The province expected Expo '86 to be a "loss leader": although hosting the festival would run a substantial deficit, the province argued that Expo's stimulus to the local economy would generate net future profits. The fair, advertised as "An invitation to the world," was touted as a catalyst for increased tourism and foreign investment in

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<sup>66</sup> Punter, pp. 190-92.

<sup>67</sup> A DERA activist, Jim Green, noted, "Expo was certainly the cardinal event in the Downtown Eastside in the last 80 years, I would say nothing else has touched it like that, the Depression and nothing else has been as catastrophic" (Jim Green cited in Nicholas Blomley, 'Landscapes of Property', *Law & Society Review* 32 (1998), pp. 567-612 (p. 587n22)).

A tragic story that remains in the memory of residents is that of Olaf Solheim, an 87-year-old retired logger, who died soon after being evicted from his hotel room where he had lived for thirty years (see Blomley, p. 588).

Vancouver.<sup>68</sup> Significantly, in 1978, the federal government had implemented a business migration programme that favoured affluent foreigners.<sup>69</sup> “Entrepreneurial immigrants” had to invest at least \$250,000 directly into Canadian business ventures that promised to create new jobs and spur local economies. Coincidentally, in the same year as Vancouver’s fair was held, the federal government added the “investor” category, another form of “economic citizenship.” By the mid-1990s, the minimum monetary value to qualify as an “investor immigrant” was a net worth of \$500,000 and ability to invest \$250,000 to \$500,000 over three to five years.<sup>70</sup> Not surprisingly from 1986 onwards, Vancouver saw a marked increase of affluent Chinese immigrants, predominately from Hong Kong, which was looking with some trepidation towards its return to the Republic of China in 1997. Furthermore, a rise in commodity prices in 1985 helped boost the city’s resource-based economy, and a substantial investment into the Whistler ski resort spurred international tourism.<sup>71</sup> So, although Expo ’86 did influence Vancouver’s prosperity in the late 1980s, it was not the only impetus.

Expo ’86 did indeed bring foreign investment to Vancouver; in fact, the entire Expo site was bought with funds coming from Hong Kong. In 1988, the province sold the site to property developer Li Ka-shing, the wealthiest man in Hong Kong.<sup>72</sup> Li Ka-shing, the son of a schoolteacher, was born in 1928 in Chaozhou, China. In 1940, his

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<sup>68</sup> David Ley, Daniel Hiebert and Geraldine Pratt, ‘Time to grow up? From urban village to world city, 1966-91’, in *Vancouver and Its Region*, pp. 234-66 (p. 239).

<sup>69</sup> Lloyd L. Wong, ‘Taiwanese Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Canada and Transnational Social Space’, *International Migration* 42.2 (2004), pp. 113-52 (pp. 122-23); and Ley, Hiebert and Pratt, p. 254. In Chapter Three, I will discuss the Business Immigrant Program in further detail.

<sup>70</sup> The minimum amount required for investment and timeframes varied throughout the nation.

<sup>71</sup> North and Hardwick, p. 221.

<sup>72</sup> Donald Gutstein, *The New Landlords: Asian Investment in Canadian Real Estate* (Victoria: Porcépic Books, 1990), p. 136. In 1992, Li Ka-shing’s real estate holdings were worth 2.83 billion US dollars, comprising fifteen percent of the Hong Kong stock market (see Anthony B. Chan, *Li Ka-shing: Hong Kong’s Elusive Billionaire* [Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1996], p. 65).

family fled to the British colony of Hong Kong to escape the brutalities committed by the occupying Japanese forces in China.<sup>73</sup> But Hong Kong also succumbed to the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941, prompting Li's father to send his wife and three of his children back to the family home in China. Li Ka-shing was to stay in Hong Kong with his father, but his father's death in 1943 left the fifteen-year-old Li with no inheritance and a family in China that needed his financial support.<sup>74</sup> He stayed in Hong Kong and managed to find work at a plastics company as a salesman.<sup>75</sup> By the age of twenty he had reached the top of the company as its general manager. In 1950, wanting to take on the plastic industry, Li started his own company, Cheung Kong, which soon specialized in plastic flowers, a market that was booming in North America.<sup>76</sup> Though Li made a substantial profit from his plastic flowers, he realized the industry could crash at any time if the flowers fell out of fashion in North America; so, Li used his profits to buy property – his next major business venture. Perhaps Li's smartest business decision occurred during the Chinese "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in the late 1960s.<sup>77</sup> The revolution had a negative effect on the Hong Kong economy, driving many of its investors to look overseas. Li Ka-shing responded to the crisis in two ways. On the one hand he diversified his property holdings by acquiring a Vancouver shopping mall; on the other, suspecting that the revolution's implications would be short-lived and that the market in Hong Kong would soon rebound, he purchased a great deal of property in Hong Kong at low cost and was able to propel himself to the forefront of the nation's property tycoons.

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<sup>73</sup> For details on the Japanese occupation of China prior to the Second World War, see Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 19-30.

<sup>74</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, p. 45.

<sup>75</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 50-53.

<sup>76</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>77</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 72-74

Leading up to the Expo '86 land deal, Li had already acquired a number of properties in Canada, including numerous apartment blocks in Vancouver and the Harbor Castle Westin hotel in Toronto.<sup>78</sup> Li Ka-shing expanded his connections in Canada by forming a partnership with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in 1975.<sup>79</sup> The arrangement was of mutual benefit, for the CIBC was looking for a high-ranking Asian businessman to help it expand its business ventures in Hong Kong, while Li secured a solid relationship with a respected financial institution. CIBC was one of his partners, along with Cheng Yu-tung of New World Development and Lee Shau-Ke of Henderson Land, in the Expo land deal, reported to be worth \$320 million Canadian dollars.<sup>80</sup> Critics of the bargain argue that the figure was much lower, suggesting Li had secured the 204 acres of land for a sum closer to \$125 million Canadian dollars.<sup>81</sup>

Pundits in both Hong Kong and Vancouver agreed that Li had received an incredible deal, a guaranteed “gold mine” for Li.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the conditions of the sale have raised a number of questions regarding the relationship between him and the B.C. government<sup>83</sup> – questions as to why the province abruptly chose to sell the site instead of conducting its own development, and why the province decided to sell the land as one

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<sup>78</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, p. 123.

<sup>79</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 76-77, 125.

<sup>80</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, pp. 71, 126-27.

<sup>81</sup> Gordon Hamilton reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, “Concord Pacific will have paid a total of \$320 million for the land by the year 2003 but most of that accounts for interest, as the company actually delivered only \$50 million down and is obligated to make no further payments until 1995. Its schedule of payments is: \$10 million payable in each of the years 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999; \$20 million in 2000, \$40 million in 2001, \$60 million in 2002 and \$100 million in 2003, when the project is expected to be completed and totally sold. Once interest costs are deducted, the price Concord Pacific paid - the market price - is \$125 million, according to the Appraisal Institute of Canada, a figure Grace McCarthy, former minister responsible for the lands, accepts as accurate” (see Gordon Hamilton, ‘How much did government get for Expo lands?’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 28 April 1990, sec. A, p. 2). See also Gutstein, p. 136.

<sup>82</sup> Gutstein, pp. 136-37. Gutstein speculated in 1990 that Li had “already earned a paper profit of nearly \$500 million dollars...” (see Gutstein, p. 137).

<sup>83</sup> Gutstein has noted that Grace McCarthy, the B.C. minister of economic development, met with Li in his Hong Kong penthouse shortly after the offers were submitted for the site. Gutstein questions the business ethics of the meeting, which suggests a conflict of interest on McCarthy’s part (see Gutstein, p. 138).

large mass, since it could have secured a greater profit by selling it off in smaller parcels, given that the sale of the site as a whole would attract fewer buyers than the sale of a number of smaller land parcels.<sup>84</sup> What is clear is that the province's Social Credit government, led by Premier Vander Zalm, was driven by an ideology that emphasized privatization; Vander Zalm argued that the provincial government should not be in the "development business."<sup>85</sup> Both Vander Zalm and Grace McCarthy, the B.C. minister of economic development, wanted to sell the site as soon as possible because they believed the site would slowly lose the appeal it had gained from Expo '86. The most plausible rationale for the under-priced sale of the land seems to be that it would foster a surge of investment from Asian markets into Vancouver's real estate and economy as a whole.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, this anticipated investment continued to cost the province dearly after the sale of the land, for it agreed to pay for the eighty-four-million-dollar cleanup of contaminated soil on the site.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Brian Calder, the vice-president of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, was critical of the government's decision to sell the entire Expo site to one developer. He suggested that the province should have sold the site in parcels to different developers, a strategy that would have generated more money for the province than the single price paid for the entire site (see Gordon Hamilton, 'Expo site pieces eligible for sale', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 13 May 1988, sec. A, p. 11; Sarah Cox, 'Expo's legacy: Falling out over False Creek', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 24 March 1988, sec. B, p. 1). I discuss the *Vancouver Sun*'s coverage of the bidding process and the interested developers in Chapter Four, pp. 141-47.

<sup>85</sup> Daphne Bramham, 'Li's social housing land price a bargain for city, experts say', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 31 August 1989, sec. B, p. 1; and Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 107-08.

<sup>86</sup> Since Li Ka-shing commanded a great deal of respect in Asian financial circles, if he saw potential in Vancouver, other Asian investors would follow suit. See Olds, 'Globalization and the Production of New Urban Spaces', p. 1726.

<sup>87</sup> Neal Hall, 'Cleaning up Britannia Mine site to cost \$99 million', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 10 June 2006, sec. A, p. 3. For an analysis of False Creek's contaminated soil and the remediation processes used to remove the hazardous waste from the site, see John Scott Kelman, 'Hazardous Legacy: Urban Grey Zones and Vancouver's False Creek Redevelopment' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Victoria, 2006), pp. 118-84.

### **Concord Pacific Place: The Plans and the Completed Buildings and Artworks**

Bids for the Expo '86 site were based not only on financial agreements, but on proposals for the site's development. Li Ka-shing created the company Concord Pacific Developments specifically for the property bid.<sup>88</sup> Li Ka-shing was not only shrewd in seeing the development potential in a site, but he was very adept in hiring the right people for his firms. A key member in Concord Pacific was Stanley Kwok, a former president of B.C. Place.<sup>89</sup> Kwok had worked on a development plan for North Park, seventy acres of land located to the east of the B.C. Place stadium, while the Expo was taking place; however, the plan was abandoned in 1989, when contaminated soil was found on the site. Kwok served as Concord Pacific's director and senior vice-president from September 1987 until April 1993.<sup>90</sup> Also, Li's public relations director was Craig Aspinall, a former media relations representative for the Social Credit party, who had helped it win the 1983 and 1986 elections. Aspinall's connections with Social Credit party members and his knowledge of the party's workings was a valuable asset for Li.<sup>91</sup> Concord Pacific's president was Li Ka-shing's eldest son, Victor. Li Ka-shing wanted his son to have his own portfolio and development project to foster respect for himself through his own business dealings as opposed to merely carrying the family name.<sup>92</sup>

There was more to the Kwok story. Li officially hired him in September 1987; yet the duo had already worked together before the announcement of the Expo site's sale.<sup>93</sup> Kwok proved invaluable to Concord Pacific, for he knew a number of details

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<sup>88</sup> Gutstein, pp. 138-39.

<sup>89</sup> Kwok was an architect with fifteen years of experience in Vancouver when he was hired on with B.C. Place in 1983 (see Punter, pp. 189-90).

<sup>90</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 102.

<sup>91</sup> Chan, *Li Ka-shing*, p. 124.

<sup>92</sup> Olds, 'Globalization and Urban Change: Tales from Vancouver via Hong Kong', pp. 374-76.

<sup>93</sup> Gutstein, p. 139; and Punter, p. 194.

regarding the site and was also familiar with the city's planning processes, something that drew some local criticism since he would have had access to privileged information about the site, giving Li an unfair advantage in the bidding process.<sup>94</sup> Kwok expanded the development team to include Rick Hulbert's architectural practice, which in turn approached Downs/Archambault and Davidson & Yuen for further input.<sup>95</sup> Hulbert's plan called for land to be excavated so that water flowed between Pacific Boulevard and the development site, creating an archipelago of towers accessible only by bridges. Reconfiguring the site would not only increase the amount of waterfront property but would increase the *ch'i* in the area: proximity to slow-moving water is believed to increase a location's positive energy, or *ch'i*.

When Aspinall made a grand presentation of the proposal for the media, the *Sun* described the \$40,000 model and accompanying video as "breathtaking."<sup>96</sup> Despite the grandiose presentation, the City refused the plan. Not only did it compromise the False Creek waterway, a shoreline that was to be preserved in its current state,<sup>97</sup> but concerns were expressed about the "moat [set] between the development and the rest of the city"<sup>98</sup>. The site had already earned a controversial reputation as a refuge for the elite, and a physical boundary would only emphasize that.

Although the plan was rejected, Kwok maintained his team of architects and developers and consulted with city planners on improvements to the plan to suit the city's guidelines.<sup>99</sup> Instead of continually reworking and submitting a development plan until it

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<sup>94</sup> Gutstein, pp. 138-39.

<sup>95</sup> Punter, p. 194.

<sup>96</sup> Gordon Hamilton, 'Bouquets for \$2 billion Pacific Place: 'Breathtaking'', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> City planners wanted to maintain the False Creek shoreline at the 1987 level (see Punter, pp. 192, 196).

<sup>98</sup> Gutstein, p. 140.

<sup>99</sup> Punter, p. 196.

received a passing grade, however, Kwok formed a partnership with the city to finalize the plan. In August 1989, after a series of meeting with the public and Concord Pacific, the city council completed the False Creek Policy Broadsheets, which outlined issues, facts, past policies, and current policies for planning the site, including discussion of the shoreline, sea wall, residential densities and income mixes, industry, retail, urban design, and transportation.<sup>100</sup> The broadsheets were used to define the planning principles in the False Creek North Official Development Plan (FCNODP), passed in 1990.<sup>101</sup> The plan divided the site into nine sub-areas, each described by a one-paragraph summary illustrating its appearance, layout, transportation options, and function (Fig. 5). The plan also outlined protected views, marinas, parkland, schools, daycare centres, library, and limits on the type and amount of retail space.<sup>102</sup> Buildings were to be “point” towers – tall and narrow – instead of slabs and were limited to ninety-one meters in height, except for a 110-meter limitation for the southwest corner of Pacific Boulevard and Homer Street. These height restrictions were for the topmost habitable space and did not include the “capping elements complementary to the design of the building.”<sup>103</sup> For each location the maximum building height was to be determined by five factors:

- “(a) public and private views, including views created by the development form;
- (b) shadowing of public and private open spaces and streets;
- (c) privacy;
- (d) effects on the scale and character of open spaces; and
- (e) form relationships to nearby buildings”<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek Policy Broadsheets*, Approved 30 August 1988 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1989).

<sup>101</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, Adopted by By-law No. 6650, 10 April 1990 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 2004; first published 1990).

<sup>102</sup> The protected views are sightlines that run through the downtown core. “The development of False Creek North shall preserve views and also create views, including views of designed focal points” (see City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 11, sec. 3.5).

<sup>103</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 11, sec. 3.6.

<sup>104</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 11, sec. 3.6.

The site's integration into the city space, a principle fundamental to the FCNODP, was to be achieved by orienting the buildings according to the downtown grid. This would maintain a smooth transition between the city and the site and would preserve some of the existing views. The Quayside neighbourhood was an exception, since its buildings were to conform to the shape of the adjacent bay.<sup>105</sup>

After the official development plan had been accepted, the architects of individual buildings were able to start their designs.<sup>106</sup> However, the proposals still had to conform to further zoning regulations specific to each sub-area before the building designs could be approved by the city council. The first phase of the development on the False Creek North site was the Yaletown Edge neighbourhood (Fig. 5, area 3). The FCNODP required that this three-city-block space respond to historic Yaletown by incorporating buildings of lower height.<sup>107</sup> The developers adhered to the criteria by lining Pacific Boulevard with four- to eight-storey buildings with brick façades that mimic the place's historic buildings (Fig. 7). The developers built residential towers ranging from twenty-seven to thirty storeys at street-corners, but recessed from the lower-level buildings at the street-edges.<sup>108</sup> This strategy, of placing a point tower on top of a wider base, has been repeated in subsequent developments on the False Creek North site.<sup>109</sup> By not allowing high-rise buildings to abut the sidewalk, the guidelines created a streetscape that would be less overwhelming, a design strategy expected to create a friendlier open environment and to entice social mixing in the public spaces fronting the buildings. The Yaletown

<sup>105</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 11, sec. 3.7.

<sup>106</sup> Punter, pp. 200-02.

<sup>107</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 13, sec. 5.3.

<sup>108</sup> Punter, pp. 203-04.

<sup>109</sup> This point tower and wider podia combination derives in part from New Urbanism design principles (see Julie Bogdanowicz, 'Vancouverism', *Canadian Architect* 51.8 (2006), pp. 23-24). For a detailed overview of New Urbanism, see John A. Dutton, *New American Urbanism: Re-forming the Suburban Metropolis* (Milano: Skira, 2000).

Edge neighbourhood had to integrate the development site into the downtown in its use of materials too. The bases of the buildings are predominately brick, while the towers are a mixture of brick with glass, a blend of materials that smoothes the transition towards the sea-green glass towers along the water's edge. In 1994, the Urban Development Institute (UDI) judged the Parkview Tower (Fig. 8), located on southwest corner of the 1200 block of Pacific Boulevard, "the best new highrise residential development in B.C."<sup>110</sup> The UDI stated that the development, designed by Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects and completed in 1993, "extends the historic Yaletown district into a lively chunk of the city that pulses during the day and night." The Parkview Gardens, completed in 1994, is located on the southeast corner of the same block (Fig. 9).<sup>111</sup>

The second phase was the Roundhouse neighbourhood (Fig. 5, area 2), named after an 1889 CPR engine turntable and maintenance building located on the site (Figs 10-12).<sup>112</sup> The surviving portions of these industrial structures had been restored by Hotson Bakker Architects in 1985 for an Expo '86 pavilion that showcased Engine 374, the original locomotive that completed the final segment of the first trans-Canadian rail journey. The zoning guidelines defined the area as a family neighbourhood that included a school and a community centre.<sup>113</sup> Concord Pacific commissioned Baker McGarva Hart to plan an expansion to the historic maintenance building to include a community

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<sup>110</sup> 'Briefly: Concord's Tower Judged the Best', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 22 June 1994, sec. D, p. 3. The Parkview Tower is located on the corner of Drake Street and Pacific Boulevard. For more details, see Emporis, 'Parkview Tower, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=parkviewtower-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 19 October 2007].

<sup>111</sup> The Parkview Gardens is located on the corner of Davie Street and Pacific Boulevard. For more details, see Emporis, 'Parkview Gardens, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=parkviewgardens-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 19 October 2007].

<sup>112</sup> City of Vancouver, *Vancouver's Urban Design: A Decade of Achievements* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1999), pp. 4-5.

<sup>113</sup> City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines (1200 – 1300 Pacific Boulevard)*, Adopted by By-law No. 7156, CD-1 No. 297, 29 July 1993 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1993), p. 3, sec. 2.

centre and a gymnasium (Fig. 13). Baker McGarva Hart also designed a glass-walled pavilion with a timber support structure to house Engine 374 (Figs 14-16). The addition abuts the eastern side of the 1889 maintenance building, a structure that was initially constructed to house up to seven locomotives. The FCNODP passed in 1990 does not refer to Engine 374 nor does it specify where the locomotive would be located.<sup>114</sup> After Expo '86 had ended, Engine 374 remained outside on the turntable, covered with a tarpaulin.<sup>115</sup> The apparent deterioration of the engine raised the ire of heritage conservationists, and the public outcry convinced Concord Pacific and the city's parks board to move the locomotive into the maintenance building in 1992.<sup>116</sup> The Roundhouse, however, was only a temporary shelter since the locomotive would be evicted once the building was converted into a community centre. Guidelines for the corner of Pacific Boulevard and Davie Street in the Roundhouse Neighbourhood zoning by-laws passed in July 1993 specify, "If funding for an addition to the Roundhouse can be secured, this element should be an enclosed pavilion to house Engine 374 which would be sympathetic in scale with the Roundhouse, but distinct in character from it."<sup>117</sup> Concord Pacific did not subsidize the construction of the glass and timber pavilion; rather, the Vancouver Lions Club organized a \$250,000 fundraiser to help pay for the \$560,000 addition, while the city's parks board paid the remaining \$310,000.<sup>118</sup> I will revisit the controversy surrounding Engine 374 in Chapter Four.

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<sup>114</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*.

<sup>115</sup> 'Engine roof in works', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 13 January 1987, sec. A, p. 3; and J. E. Powell, 'Historic engine ignored', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 27 July 1991, sec. B, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Alan Daniels, 'Concord Pacific puts engine under cover', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 26 May 1992, sec. D, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines*, p. 15, sec. 4.1.4.

<sup>118</sup> 'Engine 374 must stay, backers say', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 18 May 1995, sec. B, p. 6.

According to zoning by-laws for the Roundhouse neighbourhood, lower-rise buildings were to line the street with unit entrances facing the street or the waterfront walkway.<sup>119</sup> Similar to the guidelines set for the Yaletown Edge neighbourhood, towers were to be set back from the streetscape with low-rise buildings surrounding the base.<sup>120</sup> The guidelines determined that for this section concrete and glass were the primary materials, while brick, metal framework, stone cladding, and pre-cast concrete were to be used as well.<sup>121</sup> They also stressed that brick should be used prominently in the lower buildings close to the Roundhouse, reflecting the historical context of the site. Closer to the waterfront walkway, building materials had to evoke a “more contemporary expression,” and the architecture had to be “characterized by a generally horizontal emphasis of the low-rises and the streamlined vertical form of the towers.” This design character has been maintained: the buildings surrounding the Roundhouse are primarily red brick and the high-rise towers are enveloped in white metal and green glass. A combination of brick, stone, glass, and metal is integrated into the townhouse designs further from the Roundhouse. The tallest building in the Roundhouse neighbourhood, the thirty-two-storey Peninsula tower (Figs 17 and 18), completed in 1996, is located on the northwest corner of Marinaside Crescent and Davie Street.<sup>122</sup> The northwest side of the low-rise podium upon which the Peninsula stands has a brick façade (Fig. 19), which responds to the adjacent Roundhouse complex. Across the street, at the south corner of

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<sup>119</sup> City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines*, p. 3, sec. 2.

<sup>120</sup> City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines*, p. 6, sec. 3.4.2.

<sup>121</sup> City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines*, p. 10, sec. 3.5.

<sup>122</sup> The Peninsula’s address is 1201 Marinaside Crescent. See Concord Pacific, ‘Peninsula’, *In Our Homes* <<http://www.concordpacific.com/inourhomes/peninsula/peninsula.html>> [accessed 19 October 2004]. See also Emporis, ‘Peninsula, Vancouver’, *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=peninsula-vancouver-canada>> [Accessed 20 October 2007].

Davie and Marinaside, is the Crestmark II, a twenty-two-storey tower set upon a six-storey podium completed in the summer of 1997 (Fig. 20).<sup>123</sup>

In 1998, Concord Pacific completed the Waterworks/Beatty Mews project in the Quayside neighbourhood (Fig. 5, area 5A).<sup>124</sup> The development is on a triangular block bounded by Nelson Street, Pacific Boulevard, and Cambie Street. Designed by Downs Archambault & Partners, the project contains two high-rise residential towers, a seven-storey building, and a number of three-storey townhouses. The most visually prominent structure, Landmark 33, is in fact a thirty-four-storey building with a rounded triangular tip facing west (Figs 21 and 22). Sheathed in glass and metal, the building has a form which responds to the shape of the city block, a requirement set out in the sub-area's zoning guidelines.<sup>125</sup> The rounded triangular tip, which consists of cantilevered concrete balconies for each floor, refers to the rounded street corner where Cambie and Pacific Boulevard meet; the slight curve of the southern wall derives from a similar curve on Pacific Boulevard. The guidelines also maintained that the building should be unique, since it would function as a landmark visible on the axial view of Pacific Boulevard (Fig. 21). A leaf-shaped pool (Fig. 23), designed by landscape architect Harold Neufeldt, is situated in front of the building's western tip and is accompanied by Barbara Steinman's sculptural glass wall, *Perennials* (Fig. 24). The development also included a series of

<sup>123</sup> The Crestmark II is located at 1228 Marinaside Crescent. See Concord Pacific, 'Crestmark I', *In Our Homes* <<http://www.concordpacific.com/inourhomes/crestmark1/crestmark1.html>> [accessed 19 October 2004]; City of Vancouver, *Vancouver's Urban Design*, p. 10; and Emporis, 'Crestmark II, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=crestmarkii-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 20 October 2007].

<sup>124</sup> The FCNODP refers to area 5A in Fig. 5 as the Cambie-Beatty neighbourhood; however, the City of Vancouver's Planning Department has identified the area as part of the Quayside neighbourhood in the CD-1 zoning guidelines and *Vancouver's Urban Design: A Decade of Achievements* (see City of Vancouver, *Vancouver's Urban Design*, p. 2-3; and City of Vancouver, *Quayside Neighbourhood CD-1 Guidelines*, Adopted by By-law No. 7248, CD-1 No. 324, 30 November 1993 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1993).

<sup>125</sup> City of Vancouver, *Quayside Neighbourhood CD-1 Guidelines*, p. 4, sec. 3.2.

three-storey brick-faced townhouses, some of which line Beatty Mews, a pedestrian walkway that extends westward from Beatty Street.

The next phase of development in the Quayside neighbourhood is east of the Roundhouse, on a city block between Davie Street, Pacific Boulevard, and Marinaside Crescent. The Aquarius project, designed by James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc. and completed in 1999, has four residential towers set upon a two to three-storey podium that has retail space on the exterior and a courtyard with townhouses on the interior (Figs 11, 25-33).<sup>126</sup> The twelve-storey Aquarius Villas building is on the southeast corner; the thirteen-storey Aquarius III is on the northwest corner; the thirty-three-storey Aquarius I is on the south-southwest corner; and the Aquarius II, also thirty-three-storey storeys, is on the northeast corner.<sup>127</sup> The north and southwest sides of the podium are faced with red bricks, clearly added to complement Yaletown Edge to the north and the Roundhouse to the west. The eastern and southern faces of the podium and the towers are primarily clad with white metal framing and sea-green glass. The retail spaces located at the ground level include cafes, restaurants, banks, and an upscale grocery store. Prior to the Aquarius's completion there were few retail amenities in the vicinity.<sup>128</sup> The southern façade, running along Marinaside Crescent, is curvilinear, since both the street and project have responded to the adjacent bay. Referred to as the "luxurious lagoon" in

<sup>126</sup> City of Vancouver, Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel, Minutes of Meeting, 13 January 1997 <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/planning/dpboard/1997/dpbmja13.htm>> [accessed 19 October 2004].

<sup>127</sup> Emporis, 'Aquarius Villas, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=aquariusvillas-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 21 October 2007]; Emporis, 'Aquarius III, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=aquariusiii-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 21 October 2007]; Emporis, 'Aquarius I, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=aquariusi-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 21 October 2007]; Emporis, 'Aquarius II, Vancouver', *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=aquariusii-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 21 October 2007].

<sup>128</sup> Wyng Chow, 'Architect builds in community plan', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 20 February 1997, sec. D, p. 1.

promotional materials, the bay has a multi-use pathway running along its shore and a marina in its waters.<sup>129</sup>

A number of public art works and monuments are situated throughout Concord Pacific Place. One monument installed before Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo site is the *Cambie Bridge Ring Gear Monument* (Fig. 34); on 16 October 1987, it was erected on Pacific Boulevard's centre meridian directly south of Landmark 33. A plaque located beside the *Ring Gear* explains that the gear formed part of the second bridge that spanned False Creek at Cambie Street, a swing-span bridge in operation from 1911 to 1984 that had a rotating centre span to allow for passing boats. The plaque declares, "This monument commemorates the swing span bridges that once crossed False Creek and the industries that once thrived on its shores."

The majority of the artworks on the site were commissioned by Concord Pacific. In 1990, Vancouver's municipal government drafted a policy that required developers rezoning at least 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> (161,463 square feet) of floor space to contribute ninety-five cents per square foot of constructed floor space to the city's Public Art Program.<sup>130</sup> Developers were able to choose whether they wanted to participate in the artworks' selection through a juried public process or contribute the entire funds to the city's public art reserve. In 1994, the city added a third option that allowed developers to make their own selections of artworks but they had to donate at least forty percent of their required

<sup>129</sup> For the Aquarius project's promotional material, see Concord Pacific, 'Aquarius', *In Our Homes* <<http://www.concordpacific.com/inourhomes/aquarius/design.html>> [accessed 20 October 2004].

<sup>130</sup> City of Vancouver, *Public Art Policies and Guidelines*, Adopted 23 June 1994 and 22 November 1994 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Community Services, 1994); and City of Vancouver, 'Private Development Program' <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/oca/publicart/private.htm>> [accessed 4 October 2007].

public art contribution to the city's public art reserve. Concord Pacific was required to contribute eight million dollars to the Public Art Program.<sup>131</sup>

In my investigation of Concord Pacific Place, I examine the following Concord Pacific-sponsored public artworks: Bernie Miller's and Alan Tregobov's *Streetlight*, Henry Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light*, Buster Simpson's *Brush with Illumination*, and Al McWilliams' *Untitled (Fountain)*. *Streetlight*, *Welcome to the Land of Light*, and *Brush with Illumination* are all located in the Roundhouse neighbourhood. Concord Pacific opted to commission these four artworks through the juried public process option, which required the developer to hire a public art consultant.<sup>132</sup> Concord Pacific appointed Art Management for Public Spaces (AMPS) as the firm's public art consultant for the Roundhouse neighbourhood. The public art consultant managed nearly the entire process, working with the developer to create a master plan, liaising with Vancouver's Public Art committee and municipal staff for guidance with the city's regulations and zoning requirements, and selecting the jury members who ultimately decided on the commission's artist. Although this juried public process was intended to prevent a developer from directly commissioning artists for their projects, it appears that the developer largely influenced the planning and selection of the artworks. For instance, the jury selecting the artworks for the Roundhouse neighbourhood contained "developer representatives and art professionals."<sup>133</sup> Concord Pacific's public art consultant, AMPS's Nina Dunbar, comments on the relationship between the consultant and the developer:

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<sup>131</sup> Jeff Lee, 'Drawing the line on public art', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 17 September 1991, sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> City of Vancouver, *Public Art Policies and Guidelines*; City of Vancouver, 'Current Public Art Projects...', *Panorama* 1 (1996), pp. 2-4 (p. 3); and City of Vancouver, 'Public Art Consulting, Focus: Nina Dunbar', *Panorama* 7 (1997), p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> City of Vancouver, 'Current Public Art Projects...', p. 3.

I call it a consulting partnership, in that I put together teams of professionals to collaborate in the design and construction of public spaces. ...I don't represent artists. My clients are civic and corporate developers and my job is to match the interests of my clients to those of an artist. ...My strategy is to involve the developer and the designers, to make them part of the project, so I have a representative from both management and the design team on the selection panel. These juries have to be balanced (they usually also include an artist, an art professional, and a community member) but they are not granting programs for local artists. Juries need to remember that the art is not for them alone. The developer also has to live with the art work. Because if the developer is not ready for the jury's selection then it is the artist who suffers.<sup>134</sup>

The master plan for the Roundhouse neighbourhood called for two separate public art sites.<sup>135</sup> The first is located at the southern end of Davie Street on the sea wall. Miller and Tregobov were selected from a group of artists that were each contacted directly to compete for the \$680,000 commission. *Streetlight*, completed in 1997, is constructivist in appearance (Figs 20, 32, 35, and 36). The fourteen-meter-tall sculpture is constructed out of I-beams with concrete bases and scaffolding supporting metal panes that are illustrated with images depicting False Creek's history. The images on the panes are grainy, since the panes have been perforated in such a way that the images would also be replicated in the cast shadows.<sup>136</sup> On the rotunda facing *Streetlight* there is a light fixture to illuminate the sculpture. The images range from the CPR's foundations in the 1880s, shacks in the 1930s, and bridges in the 1950s, to the Expo in the 1980s. Descriptions of the images are engraved on the concrete bases of the sculpture. For example, "Expo Centre Opens May 2 1985: The joy of the occasion is expressed in the spontaneous dance of three young girls."

<sup>134</sup> City of Vancouver, 'Public Art Consulting, Focus: Nina Dunbar', p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> City of Vancouver, 'Current Public Art Projects...', p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Josephine Mills, 'Reconsidering the Risks of Civic Public Art Funding', in *Money, Value, Art: State Funding, Free Markets, Big Pictures*, ed. by S. McKay and A. Patterson (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2001), pp. 159-69 (pp. 166-67).

The Roundhouse public art master plan also called for the Illuminations site. This was an open competition divided among three projects. The competition's theme was light, and it asked artists to work with "light either literally or as a metaphor."<sup>137</sup> The \$325,000 allocated to the Illuminations site was used to commission Henry Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light*, Buster Simpson's *Brush with Illumination*, and Richard Prince's *Terra Nova*. I will discuss only Tsang's and Simpson's artworks. Along the seawall, in line with Drake Street, is Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light*, from 1997 (Figs 37-39). Extending one hundred meters along the seawall railing, Tsang's installation comprises two lines of text, Chinook Jargon and English. The English text reads:

"Greetings! Good you arrive here, where light be under land. Future it be now. Here, you begin live like new. Come to time where people talk different but good together. If you heart mind open, you receive new knowledge. You have same like electric eye and heart mind and talk sound. You live fast like light. See talk be here there and everywhere at one time. Us make this community good indeed. You not afraid here. Here, you begin live like chief. World same like in you hand.

A fibre-optic cable, which emits coloured light during the evening and night, runs along the base of the artwork (Fig. 39). Three plaques accompany the installation. They explain that the bottom line, the English text, is a direct translation of the top line, the Chinook Jargon text – the region's nineteenth century lingua franca that originated from Columbia River Chinook and was combined with elements of French, English, and Nootkan. This pidgin was the dominant language of commercial exchange until English replaced it in the twentieth century. The plaques explain that the juxtaposition of the two languages is "a metaphor for the ongoing development of intercultural communications in this region," and that the installation "speaks about how technology promises to bring

<sup>137</sup> Peter Wilson, 'Column One', Vancouver *Sun*, Wednesday 21 September 1994, sec. D, p. 4.

cultures together in the new global village on this site.” The fibre-optic lighting is “in reference to the state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure that makes this area one of the world’s first fibre optic communities” – a community where “[p]erhaps in the 21st Century there will be another shift in social and cultural relations to bring forth yet another dominant language.”

Simpson’s *Brush with Illumination*, completed in 1998, also celebrates technology and telecommunications (Figs 40 and 41). Located in the waterway itself, west of Drake Street and south of Marinaside Crescent, this “environmental kinetic sculpture” transmits wind speed and tide levels in real time to the website [www.brushdelux.com](http://www.brushdelux.com).<sup>138</sup> Attached to two metal buoys is a slender rod that is purported to be “the evolutionary successor of an ancient communication tool: the calligraphy brush.” The website proclaims, “*Brush with Illumination* is perhaps the first work of art to present the public with actual and virtual realities simultaneously, functioning as both an instrument of data acquisition and the creator of new ideograms” – a techno-pioneering spirit similar to that shown in Tsang’s *Welcome to the Land of Light*.

Further east, Al McWilliams’s *Untitled (Fountain)* was commissioned for Boathouse Mews, a pedestrian walkway that connects Pacific Boulevard and the seawall (Fig. 42). The fountain, completed in 2000, consists of a sunken rectangular pool with curved edges on its northern and southern sides and a black granite stylized lotus flower that rises out of the centre of the pool. Water emanates from the centre of the circular flower, flows over the flat surface, and falls down from the pointed petals to the pool

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<sup>138</sup> *Brush Delux* <<http://www.brushdelux.com>> [accessed 26 January 2005]. The artwork’s website was inactivated at some point during my research and writing process. The intent and function of the work is also described on Simpson’s website (see ‘Brush with Illumination’, in *Buster Simpson* <<http://www.bustersimpson.net>> [accessed 11 August 2007]).

below. Unlike *Streetlight*, *Welcome to the Land of Light*, and *Brush with Illumination*, there is no plaque or associated website to explain the meaning of the commissioned artwork. I will discuss the fountain's intended meaning in Chapter Three.

This is only a summary of the architecture and public artworks built and installed during the initial phases of Concord Pacific's development on False Creek's North. A number of projects have been constructed since the Aquarius project, and several areas are still slated for development at the time of writing.<sup>139</sup> A number of similarities are evident in all of Concord Pacific's high-rise buildings. Not only are the structures sheathed amply in glass and metal of varying shades; they are also relatively slender buildings, typically placed on top of wider podia. The zoning guidelines for the buildings called for rather small floor plates, the area covered by the base of a tower: the Roundhouse neighbourhood and the Quayside neighbourhood were limited to 580 m<sup>2</sup> and 651 m<sup>2</sup> respectively, with the exception of Landmark 33, which had a 680-m<sup>2</sup> maximum.<sup>140</sup> Trevor Boddy notes that Concord Pacific's tall, thin towers derive partly from the small floor-plate high-rise structures that emerged in Hong Kong in the decades following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.<sup>141</sup> Struggling with a dense population due to a massive influx of Chinese refugees and the resulting

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<sup>139</sup> Concord Pacific has completed its Roundhouse, Yaletown Edge, Quayside, and Cambie-Beatty neighbourhoods (Fig. 5, areas 2, 3, 4 and 5A). All towers planned for the Beach neighbourhood have been built, except for The Erickson project (Fig. 5, area 1). The projects in the Coopers Park and Viaducts neighbourhoods are currently under construction (Fig. 5, areas 6A and 7B). Concord Pacific is planning to build towers in the Abbott-Carrall neighbourhood and in the area bounded by B.C. Place and the Coopers Park, Quayside, and Cambie-Beatty neighbourhoods (Fig. 5, area 6C). See Concord Pacific, 'Vancouver Real Estate Listings Map' <<http://www.concordpacific.com/location-map.htm>> [accessed 28 January 2008]. Concord Pacific sold the International Village neighbourhood to Lee Kau Shee's Interville Developments Ltd. (see Stewart Bell, 'The Players', Vancouver *Sun*, Friday 11 February 1994, sec. B, p. 4).

<sup>140</sup> City of Vancouver, *Quayside Neighbourhood CD-1 Guidelines*, p. 7, sec. 3.4.3; and City of Vancouver, *Roundhouse Neighbourhood CD-1 guidelines*, p. 7, Section 3.4.4.

<sup>141</sup> Boddy, 'New Urbanism', pp. 16-18; and Boddy, 'Downtown's Last Resort', p. 21.

overpopulation of the existing long horizontal slab buildings, the Hong Kong government developed a building code dependent on mathematical formulas, which favoured tall slender structures.<sup>142</sup> This building-form appealed to the Hong Kong real estate market, since a view of water was thought to bring good luck. As a result, Hong Kong's cityscape is saturated with thin high-rises, each vying for a water view. A similar planning model has been employed in Vancouver, a city that has its own "cult of the view."<sup>143</sup> Concord Pacific, however, was not the first developer to bring small floor plates to Vancouver. The residential towers built in Vancouver's West End during the 1960s and 70s had small floor plates and were much narrower than residential high-rises built in most of Canada and the United States.<sup>144</sup> Yet, it is no coincidence that Concord Pacific Place mimicked the Hong Kong model: the company's owner, Li Ka-shing, originates from Hong Kong, and a substantial portion of the expected condo owners were thought to be Hong Kong's affluent business elite – a familiar urban environment would likely entice more buyers.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Boddy, 'New Urbanism', p. 16. Prior to Hong Kong's amendments to its building regulations in 1956, structures were predominately four to five storeys high (see Edward George Pryor and Shiu-hung Pau, 'The Growth of the City – A Historical Review', in *Hong Kong Architecture: The Aesthetics of Density*, ed. by V.M. Lampugnani [New York: Prestel, 1993], pp. 97-110 [pp. 108-09]).

Few low-rise structures have survived Hong Kong's rapid development of skyscrapers, which maximize space on small floor plates and are "frequently designed in frugal ways to achieve minimum costs and maximum returns" (see Edward George Pryor, 'Foreword', in *Hong Kong Architecture*, p. 7).

<sup>143</sup> Ward notes "Vancouver's residential mega- projects... have fetishized the cult of the view" (see Doug Ward, 'The Future is Now', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 24. September 2004, sec. A, p. 1). See also Lance Berelowitz, 'High-Rise Anxiety in Vancouver', *Canadian Architect* 37.1 (1992), pp. 9-13; and Berelowitz, *Dream City*, pp. 174-81.

<sup>144</sup> Boddy, 'New Urbanism', p. 15; and Berelowitz, 'High-Rise Anxiety', p. 9. Berelowitz notes that units in small floor plate towers are far more costly than in wider towers and that the consumer typically pays for the extra cost. In Vancouver, consumers readily paid higher prices for units in tall, narrow towers because of their units' mountain and water views (see Berelowitz, 'High-Rise Anxiety', p. 9).

<sup>145</sup> I will discuss this in further detail in Chapter Three.

### **The Planning Process and Local Politics**

Punter's celebration of the Concord Pacific mega-project, cited earlier, revolves around the efficiency and public input of Vancouver's urban planning process. He notes that Concord Pacific's planning process moved rapidly for two reasons: a municipal government that favoured development and Kwok's previous experience in North Park.<sup>146</sup> Certainly, the political environment in Vancouver meshed with Concord Pacific's vision. The mayor, Gordon Campbell, had worked for Marathon, while the city council, dominated by the NPA, supported further development in Vancouver.<sup>147</sup> Punter, however, attributes the rapid progression largely to "Kwok's approach in North Park by resolving the large-scale conceptual issues before proceeding to specifics, and by ensuring public and private cooperation to develop the scheme." In January 1989, council adopted a plan for public involvement, which would inform the False Creek Policy Broadsheets.<sup>148</sup> It was derived from public consultation methods used on both sides of False Creek throughout the 1970s and 80s, but its primary model was the B.C. Place Citizen's Advocacy Committee, a group active between 1981 and 1984, a period that overlaps Kwok's tenure at B.C. Place. (He was hired in 1983.) The 1989 program for public consultation was directed at three groups: the general public, neighbouring communities, and special interest groups that focused on seniors, families, the disabled, recreation, and boating.

Even though numerous public meetings were held regarding the future of the site, some speculation remains as to how much attention public input was actually given. City

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<sup>146</sup> Punter, pp. 194-97.

<sup>147</sup> Marathon was CPR's property management subsidiary (see p. 20).

<sup>148</sup> City of Vancouver, *Public Involvement in Planning the North Shore of False Creek*, (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1989).

planners and developers were working together on the development plans, an unconventional process in urban design. Stanley Kwok stated, “We have worked on the basis of mutual trust. It takes a lot of guts for a developer to do that and it takes a lot of courage for the city to do the same.”<sup>149</sup> An editorial in the *Vancouver Sun* wondered whether the cooperative planning model raised the possibility of conflict of interest:

The cooperative effort in planning has obvious benefits for developer and city staff alike - small problems or disagreements are addressed before they grow into chasms of dispute too large to be easily bridged. The question is: if both the proponents of a project and those whose duty it is to carefully assess it have worked hand in hand for a long period, does the detachment needed for truly independent scrutiny ebb away?

The final say, of course, lies with city council. But after the city's staff has been intimately involved with putting together a plan, the council may be tempted to accept it with little questioning.

When the product of this combined effort is finally placed before Vancouver and its politicians for approval, both developers and council will have to show that the mutual trust Mr. Kwok speaks of was well placed.<sup>150</sup>

These concerns about the process have considerable importance, since the council, dominated by the NPA, was notorious for its pro-development agenda; it consistently emphasized economic gain over social concerns. The partnership process did come under fire from left-leaning aldermen, representing the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) – “deals are worked out behind closed doors and presented to council and the public as a *fait accompli*.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Gordon Hamilton, ‘Expo plan now ready for hearing: Concord Pacific alters initial design’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 26 August 1989, sec. A, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> ‘An embrace . . . at arm’s length?’, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 1 September 1989, sec. A, p. 14.

<sup>151</sup> Jeff Buttle’s comments regarding COPE alderwoman Libby Davies’s criticism regarding the collaboration between city planners and developers on the Coal Harbour development (see Jeff Buttle, ‘City’s joint planning process under fire’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 7 August 1990, sec. B, p. 3).

Guidelines for planning aspects such as parkland, the seawall, public art, transportation and preservation of views were incorporated into the plan. By suggesting principles for these elements, developers and planners maintained that they were bending to the public's demands; yet these elements double easily as selling-points for the condominiums. One key issue that could hamper market values and ranked high among public concern was the integration of social housing in the site. The City maintained that twenty percent of the total units in a mega-project should be reserved for non-market housing. Vancouver's non-market housing is subsidized shelter, where the rent is determined by the occupant's financial situation instead of the market rate. The units are purchased by the City and leased out to either government, non-profit, or co-operative organizations.<sup>152</sup> Not only was this figure attacked as too low for a city plagued with low vacancy rates and high homelessness, but the strategy for maintaining twenty percent was questionable as well.<sup>153</sup> The DERA, the United Church, and the Tenants Rights Coalition considered it a "worthless gesture," since funding had not been allocated for the proposed 1500 units.<sup>154</sup> These concerns did prove to be well-founded, for government funding for the program was reduced in 1993. Without funding in place, the architects of the Aquarius development negotiated a payment-in-lieu of the proposed 150 non-market units.<sup>155</sup> This had the effect of reducing the projected percentage of non-market housing

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<sup>152</sup> City of Vancouver, 'What is Non-Market Housing?' <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/housing/whatis.htm>> [accessed 26 October 2004].

<sup>153</sup> Laurel Bryson, 'City sets target densities for Expo site development', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 31 August 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Justine Hunter, 'Concord Pacific plan called real estate dream gone bad', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 3 November 1989, sec. B, p. 1; Daphne Bramham, 'How a vision will unfold on False Creek', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 4 November 1989, sec B, p. 1; and Ian Austin, 'Megaproject attacked', *Province*, Friday 3 November 1989, p. 6.

<sup>155</sup> City of Vancouver, 'CD-1 Text Amendment, 800-1100 Pacific Boulevard (Quayside Neighbourhood, Concord Pacific Place) Payment-in-Lieu for Non-Family Non-Market Housing', 13 May 1997 <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/970513/p2.htm>> [accessed 26 October 2004].

to 16.6 percent from 18.2 percent of the total units. Statistics from 2002 show that 434 non-market units and a total of 3516 units were built on the site, equaling 12.3 percent.<sup>156</sup> The figure is clearly creeping downwards. Although another 5000 units were planned for the site, this figure shows that rate for building non-market housing needs to be raised dramatically to reach the already reduced 16.6 percent. Whether this will actually occur remains questionable.

Although the developer's payment-in-lieu of non-market housing is transferred into other social housing projects, the original goal of creating a diverse neighbourhood is undermined since social housing is not integrated into the development. Trevor Boddy holds both the right and left political factions culpable for failing to reach a greater diversity in Vancouver's wealthier neighbourhoods and for segregating the impoverished into a small locus in the Downtown Eastside.<sup>157</sup> While the NPA is happy to remove social problems from gentrified areas, "[c]onversely and perversely, COPE and poverty activists seem dedicated to increasing pockets of indigent voters who might elect an NDP member or two provincially or federally."

The apparent gentrification of the north shore of False Creek does contrast with the earlier development on the south shore, a lower density development with a twenty-two percent ratio of non-market units.<sup>158</sup> The distinctions between the north and south side of False Creek mirror the periods in which they were built and the hotly contested

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<sup>156</sup> City of Vancouver, 'Non-Market Housing in Vancouver's Major Projects - Commonly Asked Questions' <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/housing/MajorQA.htm>> [accessed 26 October 2004]; and City of Vancouver, 'Major Development Information Sheets' <<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/cityplans/majorinfo.htm>> [accessed 26 October 2004].

<sup>157</sup> Trevor Boddy, 'Downtown Eastside an artificial slum: Canada's poorest postal code didn't get that way by accident. Its troubles are largely the result of policies that warehouse the city's most disadvantaged', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 15 October 2002, sec. B, p. 8.

<sup>158</sup> City of Vancouver, 'CD-1 Text Amendment, 800-1100 Pacific Boulevard'.

components of the 1990 civic election.<sup>159</sup> Jim Green, a DERA activist and the COPE mayoralty candidate, based his platform on building affordable housing and controlling growth in the city. Mayor Gordon Campbell, campaigning for a second term, “epitomized the free market internationalization of the world city.” The election’s outcome was believed to be the determining factor of Vancouver’s future, whether it would remain a provincial “urban village” or be transformed into a world city. The election results are indicative of the split in Vancouverites’ opinions: both COPE and NPA had five council members each, while Gordon Campbell was re-elected with only fifty-four percent of the vote.

With victory secured, Campbell was able to continue with his agenda of high-density residential developments in the downtown area. Ironically, the NPA was at first opposed to False Creek’s rezoning from industrial to residential and subsequently lambasted the initial south shore plan as utopian and uneconomical; but perhaps the party thought it got the last laugh – under its watch the north shore developed into a high-density elitist neighbourhood expected to bring millions of dollars of offshore investment and business into Vancouver’s economy.

## **Conclusion**

I have provided a brief description of some of Concord Pacific Place’s architecture and public artworks and an overview of the historical, social, economical, and political conditions that led to the mega-project’s development on the north shore of False Creek. This summary will provide the context for my analysis of the site’s architecture and public artworks in the following chapters. In Chapter Two, I will discuss

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<sup>159</sup> Ley, Hiebert and Pratt, pp. 265-66.

False Creek's transformation into a post-industrial space, how this shift is related to accelerated modernity, globalization, informationalism, and technological progress, and how the site's Supermodern architecture and public artworks are symbolic of these socio-politico-economical conditions. In Chapter Three, I will examine how Canada's Business Immigrant Program and Hong Kong foreign investment helped produce Concord Pacific Place and how some of the site's art and architecture connotes Chinese transnationality. In Chapter Four, I will discuss my research of Vancouver *Sun* articles pertaining to Concord Pacific, and I will focus on two prevailing discourses: local racist reactions in response to Li Ka-shing's purchase and development of the Expo '86 site; and Concord Pacific's aim to destabilize its reputation as a Hong Kong firm and to advertise its mega-project as a global and technologically advanced neighbourhood.

## Chapter Two – Supermodernism and Supermodernity: a Critique and an Analysis

Concord Pacific Place's glass towers are examples of a building style Dutch critic Hans Ibelings has coined "Supermodernism." Ibelings borrows the term from Marc Augé's *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, to refer to a trend to aesthetic minimalism in architecture that arose during the 1990s.<sup>160</sup> This aesthetic minimalism is expressed in buildings that are constructed with large amounts of glass and mirror-smooth façades, giving a feeling of transparency and lightness.<sup>161</sup> Ibelings's *Supermodernism* is lavishly illustrated with photographs of glass structures, such as Jean Nouvel's Galeries Lafayette in Berlin (Fig. 43) and Toyo Ito's ITM Building in Matsuyama. In Vancouver, Landmark 33, the Peninsula, and the towers soaring above the Aquarius project are shining examples of the Supermodern architecture that lines the north shore of False Creek (Fig. 17, 18, 21, 22, 25-33).

*Supermodernism* is a valuable guide that identifies a trend in architecture that emerged near the end of the twentieth century, but it offers few insights into the socio-politico-economic context of Supermodern architecture. Indeed, it seems pointedly to ignore it. After a brief summary of Ibelings's *Supermodernism* and Augé's *Non-places*, I will discuss some flaws in Ibelings's analysis and elaborate on how globalization, accelerated modernity, informationalism, and technological progress form the context that produced – and is reproduced in – Supermodern architecture. Intertwined with this discussion are examples of how these social, political, and economic forces affected the

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<sup>160</sup> Hans Ibelings, *Supermodernism: Architecture in the Age of Globalization* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2002), pp. 55-65; and Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe (New York: Verso, 1995).

<sup>161</sup> Ibelings does not limit Supermodernism's aesthetic minimalism to strictly glass structures; his definition includes monolithic structures, minimalist designs, and buildings with smooth façades.

production of the Concord Pacific's Supermodern structures – such as Landmark 33, the Peninsula, and the Aquarius towers – and the surrounding Concord Pacific Place mega-project. I will also discuss how *Welcome to the Land of Light* and *Brush with Illumination* reinforce the site's Supermodern image.

### **Supermodern Architecture, Supermodernity, and Non-places**

Ibelings declares that Supermodern architecture is a reaction to Postmodernist and Deconstructivist architecture, characterized by neutrality and rejecting the two earlier styles' preoccupation with the symbolic.<sup>162</sup> He contends that a Supermodern structure lacks symbols that allude to the building's context: namely, there are no references to the place in which the building is located (i.e. the place's history and collective memory), the building's function, or its neighbouring structures. Ibelings, critical of Postmodernism, devalues the role of semiotics in architecture:

The insights of semiotics, it must be said, have made little lasting contribution to architectural criticism and history. What has remained, however, is the idea that every building is, in semiotic jargon, a 'bearer of meaning', a conception that led to special attention being paid to the symbolic dimension of architecture.<sup>163</sup>

Ibelings's motive for attacking Postmodernism and architectural sign value is two-fold: he champions the 1990s surge in symbol-free, aesthetically neutral minimalism as a departure from Postmodernism and Deconstructivism; and his book *Supermodernism* is a manifesto clearly meant to document the new movement's arrival. He posits the idea that the neutral Supermodern structures are free from symbols so that he can align the architectural style with Augé's "non-places" (an idea that will be explored shortly).

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<sup>162</sup> Ibelings, p. 88.

<sup>163</sup> Ibelings, p. 14.

Ibelings notes that Supermodernism “can be characterized as a sensitivity to the neutral, the undefined, the implicit, qualities that are not confined to architectural substance but also find powerful expression in a new spatial sensibility...”<sup>164</sup> He also claims that “the rise of such notions as undefinedness, boundlessness and neutrality” in architecture is both a reaction to Postmodernism and a result of changes in our experience of time and space – changes brought on by advances in telecommunications and high-speed travel.<sup>165</sup> Ibelings’s insights into this “new spatial sensibility” derive from Augé, a French anthropologist who examines what implications the recent changes in individuality, time, and space have had on contemporary anthropological research. Augé considers these changes to be part of Supermodernity, which is not a departure from modernity but an intensification of it – a condition “characterized by the acceleration or enhancement of the determining constituents of modernity.”<sup>166</sup> His investigation concentrates on non-places, the spaces that are most characteristic of the Supermodern condition. Non-places include physical spaces such as supermarkets, airports, and freeways, and also abstract spaces such as radio waves, satellite transmissions, and information networks.

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<sup>164</sup> Ibelings, p. 62.

<sup>165</sup> Ibelings, pp. 62-64.

<sup>166</sup> Marc Augé, ‘Paris and the Ethnography of the Contemporary World’, in *Parisian Fields*, ed. by M. Sherringham (London: Reaktion, 1996), pp. 175-79 (p. 177). See also Marc Augé, *An Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, trans. by Amy Jacobs (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. x; and Peter Merriman, ‘Driving Places: Marc Augé, Non-places, and the Geographies of England’s M1 Motorway’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.4-5 (2004), pp. 145-67 (p. 148). Augé’s notion of Supermodernity as an accelerated form of modernity resembles – and more than likely derives from – Paul Virilio’s theoretical analyses of speed and technology. Augé refers to Virilio’s analyses of global telecommunications networks and his discussions of the instantaneous and ubiquitous transmission of information (see Marc Augé, ‘About Non-Places’, *Architectural Design* 66 [1996], pp. 82-83 [p. 82]; Augé, ‘Paris’, p. 178; Augé, *An Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, p. 119; and Merriman, p. 151). Virilio’s analysis of accelerated modernity is discussed in Steve Redhead, *Paul Virilio: Theorist for an Accelerated Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004); John Armitage, ‘Paul Virilio: An Introduction’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 16.5-6 (1999), pp. 1-23; and John Armitage, ‘From Modernism to Hypermodernism and Beyond: An Interview with Paul Virilio’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 16.5-6 (1999), pp. 25-55.

Augé highlights three sets of changes, or “accelerated transformations,” that characterize Supermodernity: an “excess of time,” an “excess of space,” and an “individualization of references.” The “excess of time” – by which he means not a surplus of time available to us, but an “overabundance of events” – arises from an ever-increasing number of incidents that are continually given meaning and scrutinized as to how they relate to history.<sup>167</sup> The excess of time results from the desire to give every event a meaning so that it fits into history; yet the events are given meaning immediately after they have occurred, leaving “history snapping at our heels.”<sup>168</sup> Twenty-four-hour news channels and immediate access to worldwide news on the Internet help facilitate this process.

The second characteristic, “excess of space,” is marked not only by the exploration of outer space but by an overabundance of references to the world’s spaces.<sup>169</sup> The increasing speed of transport systems and the wealth of images of places and non-places have led to this excess of space. Augé argues that this has not resulted in a greater knowledge of the various spaces of the world but an overabundance of “universes of recognition.”<sup>170</sup> The spaces depicted are primarily fictional and form part of the viewer’s imagination.

The third characteristic is the “individualization of references.”<sup>171</sup> In the contemporary West, individuals are increasingly creating their own interpretations of information for their own use. He attributes this change to the dismantling of grand narratives – with “the confirmed impotence of the great systems of interpretation,

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<sup>167</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, pp. 24-31.

<sup>168</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 30.

<sup>169</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, pp. 31-36.

<sup>170</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>171</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, pp. 36-40; and Augé, *Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, p. 59.

individuals are now required to conceive their relation to history and the world all by themselves.”<sup>172</sup>

Augé defines the non-place, the space of Supermodernity, as the polar opposite of the traditional anthropological place.<sup>173</sup> Places are historical, relational, and concerned with identity.<sup>174</sup> Augé defines the non-place as a space where these three characteristics are negated. In the non-place, the individual makes no lasting connections within the space; it is a space that is typically traveled through. The accelerated mobility of people and goods has created a large network of non-places spanning the world. Airports and airplanes, highways and automobiles, railways and trains – any transportation centre or mode of transport – are all non-places. Commercial centres, such as shopping malls and fast-food restaurants, fall into this void as well. A key corollary to Augé’s theory is that places and non-places are never realized in their full potential; they exist dialectally, like “opposed polarities.”<sup>175</sup> In every non-place there is still an aspect of place: an airport may function as a non-place for a traveler, but it certainly is a place for an airport employee who interacts with his co-workers daily.<sup>176</sup>

Ibelings’s manifesto for a new style of architecture is only loosely anchored to Augé’s theoretical work regarding non-places. Ibelings contends that there are two types of Supermodern architecture: the first type includes the aesthetic minimalism that is typified by Landmark 33 on Vancouver’s Expo site (Fig. 21 and 22); the second is typological, including the “contemporary transformations of the built environment, many

<sup>172</sup> Augé, *Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, p. 102.

<sup>173</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 78; and Augé, *Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>174</sup> A place is historical because its inhabitants find some connection with the place’s past. It is relational because its occupants recognize the set of relations specific to the space that ties them together. A place is concerned with identity because its occupants define themselves according to the characteristics of the place (Augé, *Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds*, p. 109).

<sup>175</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 79.

<sup>176</sup> Augé, ‘About Non-Places’, p. 82.

of which serve to erode the sense of place.”<sup>177</sup> The latter type is clearly influenced by Augé’s conception of non-places; Ibelings’s examples include Las Vegas casinos, airports, and tourist resorts. The former type, Supermodern aesthetic minimalism, has a less obvious connection to Augé’s non-places. Ibelings contends that this aesthetic minimalism is tied to globalization, an underlying theme in Augé’s *Non-Places*.<sup>178</sup> He acknowledges that this term is rather contentious and that there are divergent viewpoints that argue whether globalization causes cultural homogeneity, heterogeneity, glocalization, creolization, or hybridization.<sup>179</sup> Ibelings, who is an apologist for the uniformity and ubiquity of global capitalism, argues that globalization has predominantly had a homogenizing effect, which is evident in the worldwide uniformity and global availability of products produced by multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola and Nike. Urban planning has become uniform as well: “Wherever one looks there seem to be high-rise downtowns, low-rise suburbs, urban peripheries with motorway cultures and business parks and so on.”<sup>180</sup> Filling in these urban spaces are structures that have “assumed a certain expressionlessness.”<sup>181</sup> These aesthetically neutral buildings express the Supermodern aesthetic – they are symbol-free, neutral structures that can be built anywhere.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibelings, pp. 10-11.

<sup>178</sup> Ibelings, pp. 66-69.

<sup>179</sup> I agree with Arturo Escobar’s explanation: “Globalization, rather than being a single process of worldwide homogenization, is characterized by unity and fragmentation; by cultural dominance and by heterogeneity; by the transformation of space by capital and the defense of place by social movements.” He notes that globalization does not erase difference since there are numerous ways in which local groups respond – both positively and negatively within a group – to global economic and cultural forces. Arturo Escobar, ‘Foreword’, in *The Spaces of Neoliberalism: Land, Place and Family in Latin America*, ed. by J. Chase (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2002), pp. vii-ix (p. viii).

<sup>180</sup> Ibelings, p. 67.

<sup>181</sup> Ibelings, p. 67.

Other than a cursory discussion of globalization and Augé's non-places, Ibelings avoids analysis of the social, political, and economic forces that have produced and are reproduced in Supermodern architecture. Ibelings argues "that the tendency of Postmodernists and Deconstructivists to look for hidden meanings everywhere has become largely superfluous for the simple reason that, more often than not, there is no hidden meaning"; and he suggests that Supermodern architecture should be read phenomenologically, as "derived directly from how the architecture looks, how it is used and, above all, how it is experienced."<sup>182</sup> I disagree with Ibelings's argument that Supermodern architecture is devoid of symbolic references.<sup>183</sup> Theodor Adorno argues that "the absolute rejection of style becomes style" and that functionalism itself is a style.<sup>184</sup> Following Adorno's argument that every structure – no matter how minimalist in design – contains symbolic references, I propose that the Supermodern aesthetic is rife with symbolic references to globalization, accelerated modernity, and informationalism – social forces that have all played a role in the sale of Vancouver's Expo lands and the planning of the Concord Pacific mega-project.

### **Accelerated Modernity and Neo-liberalism**

A starting point for examining the social context of Supermodern architecture may be deeper analysis of Ibelings's main theoretical inspiration – Augé's *Non-places*.

The Supermodern condition described by Augé is essentially an accelerated form of

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<sup>182</sup> Ibelings, p. 133.

<sup>183</sup> Ibelings's argument itself is contradictory. He argues that the Supermodern aesthetic is tied to globalization. If globalization influenced the shift towards neutrality in architecture then this neutrality is symbolic of globalization.

<sup>184</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'Functionalism Today', in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. by N. Leach (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 6-19 (p. 10). Adorno contends that functionalist modern architecture cannot be symbol-free since every object in our world, regardless of whether the object has any ornamentation, has some form of symbolic significance (see Adorno, pp. 6-19).

modernity. David Harvey describes a similar speeding-up of modernity in his critical materialist analysis of Postmodernity; he argues that Postmodernity is mimetic of a form of capitalism and that the characteristics it shares with modernity have been accelerated and intensified.<sup>185</sup> Harvey contends that the emergence of Postmodernity, which “has been a sea-change in cultural as well as in political-economic practices since around 1972,”<sup>186</sup> is related to two factors: a shift in capitalism’s organization from Fordism to flexible accumulation; and an intense time-space compression.<sup>187</sup> Harvey’s description of the latter factor parallels Augé’s postulates of excess time and space.

Fordism originated in or about 1914 – when Henry Ford introduced his five-dollar, eight-hour day for the workers who operated his automobile-assembly line – and was the dominant capitalist structure until its collapse in 1973.<sup>188</sup> Industries that flourished under Fordism – typically large assembly-line factories that mass-produced standardized products – were not structured to cope with rapid changes in the economy.<sup>189</sup> The collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement and the oil crisis of 1973 forced corporations modeled on the rigid structures of Fordism to adopt a more flexible

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<sup>185</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*. Frederic Jameson presents a similar materialist analysis; he considers Postmodernism to be “the cultural logic of late-capitalism” (see John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: an Introduction*, 3rd edn [Harlow: Pearson, 2001], p. 157). For an earlier critique of Postmodernity see Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982). Berman argues that modernity is marked by a continual process of destruction and renewal, and that within modernity there is always a dialogue with past and future modernisms. He predicts that modernity is far from complete and that “the modern economy is likely to go on growing” (see Berman, pp. 345-48).

<sup>186</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, p. vii.

<sup>187</sup> Harvey argues that if flexible accumulation still follows the logic of capitalism then Postmodernity does not mark a new social condition. Harvey’s aim in *The Condition of Postmodernity* is to analyze Postmodernism in terms of a meta-theory – namely Marxism. By locating Postmodernism within the logic of capitalism, he is able to conclude that a Marxist analysis can still be used as a valid interpretation of Postmodernism. He also suggests that the changes in aesthetics evident in Postmodernism are not that novel since it is a response to a dramatic change in time-space compression. See Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 327-28.

<sup>188</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 125-26. Henri Lefebvre claims that the whole world changed in 1910 (see Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 25).

<sup>189</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 141-55.

organization, which Harvey calls flexible accumulation.<sup>190</sup> Instead of the Fordist large factory where all production is done in-house, corporations that have adapted to the economic mode of flexible accumulation typically have a core group of managers that sub-contract out the majority of their production. The geographic spread of production associated with flexible accumulation was also spurred by the development of new information systems, telecommunications, and transportation.<sup>191</sup> The changes in information technology include the introduction of computer databases, telephone networks, electronic banking, and faxes. (Of course this list now includes the World Wide Web and email, both of which grew after Harvey published *The Condition of Postmodernity* in 1989.) The advances in telecommunications also encouraged the development of a global financial system. The growth of the stock market and the ease of transferring capital between distant locations have created a complex monetary system. Harvey contends that flexible accumulation is characterized by “paper entrepreneurialism,” by which corporations are more interested in mergers and diversification to create paper profit rather than creating profit through actual production. The transformation of False Creek’s north shore from an industrial waterfront into a forest of glass condominium towers is an example of an industrial space changed into a post-industrial space that is congruent with the economic conditions of Harvey’s flexible accumulation. In 1980 David Ley noted that the slightly earlier de-industrialization of

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<sup>190</sup> Fordism’s collapse was partly due to the abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreement, which caused the fixed exchange rates that were in place from 1944 to 1973 to be swapped with floating and unstable exchange rates. Another factor that favoured a more flexible capitalist organization was the sharp recession and remarkable rise in oil prices in 1973 due to the oil embargo resulting from the Arab-Israeli war. The economic shift to flexible accumulation has not prompted an entire abandonment of Fordist-style factories. There has been an increase in peripheral Fordism; large assembly-line factories are set up in third-world countries to take advantage of loose labour laws and minimal wages to produce products at lower costs. Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 141-55.

<sup>191</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 159-63.

False Creek's south shore (during the 1970s) was tied to Vancouver's shift towards being a post-industrial city, specializing in services and consumption.<sup>192</sup>

Harvey notes that the changes in telecommunications and transportation that helped develop flexible accumulation are indicative of a dramatic shift in time-space compression. Harvey's analysis of time-space compression is similar to Augé's "accelerated transformations": the excess of time, the excess of space, and the individualization of references. Harvey explains that he uses "compression" "because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by the speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us."<sup>193</sup> Increased human mobility because of air travel, the international mix of commodities available to the consumer, and the compression of the world's geographic diversity into a series of images on the TV screen all contribute to the compression of space.<sup>194</sup> Yet the spatial compression resulting from the international mix of products and televised spaces does not mark an increase in the experience of actual spaces; it is an increase in the experience of representations of spaces.<sup>195</sup>

Harvey's denunciation of Postmodernity, which he contends is a reaction to a shift in economic organization and not a new social condition, has been criticized as too

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<sup>192</sup> David Ley, 'Liberal Ideology and the Postindustrial City', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70 (1980), pp. 238-58 (pp. 247, 252-53); and Thomas A. Hutton, *The Transformation of Canada's Pacific Metropolis: A Study of Vancouver* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1998), p. 107.

<sup>193</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 240.

<sup>194</sup> Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>195</sup> These simulacra of world's spaces are superficial representations of the world that have no depth and that erase the marks of class struggle that are inherent in capitalism: "The interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. But it does so in such a way as to conceal almost perfectly any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production" (see Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 300).

simplistic.<sup>196</sup> Steve Best considers the *Condition of Postmodernity* a valuable text owing to its analysis of social and cultural changes resulting from time-space compression, but he argues that Harvey's analysis of Postmodernity is reductionistic and that in it the "links between capitalism and postmodernism... are too simple and crude."<sup>197</sup> Whether or not accelerated modernity can be explained solely by economic determinism,<sup>198</sup> the economic forces cannot be discounted since they are among the many factors that prolong, produce, and are reproduced by the social conditions of accelerated modernity. Ibelings, Harvey, and Augé all identify globalization –its economic manifestation being the global spread of multinational corporations such as the ubiquitous Starbucks, McDonalds, Sony, and Shell – as a constituent part of accelerated modernity.

One particular political-economic framework that strives to increase the global spread of multi-national corporations is neo-liberalism – a policy that seeks to deregulate government intervention in all business affairs and ease restrictions on cross-border trade.<sup>199</sup> A neo-liberal state encourages economic growth at all costs, even at the expense of the citizens' well-being, and it supposes that a good business climate will reduce poverty. This is opposed to the postwar social democratic state, which aimed to improve its citizens' welfare while sustaining a satisfactory rate of economic growth.

Privatization, the reduction of the government's role in the public sector, is a fundamental neo-liberalist policy; rather than the state regulating services and institutions such as

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<sup>196</sup> Ross Abbinnett, *Culture and Identity: Critical Theories* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>197</sup> Steve Best, Review of *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* by David Harvey, in 'Book Review: The Condition of Postmodernity, David Harvey', *Illuminations* <<http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/best2.htm>> [accessed 18 April 2005].

<sup>198</sup> Harvey is a staunch Marxist and contends that all spaces and human actions are affected by capital accumulation. He is critical of Jürgen Habermas's "lifeworld" and Michel Foucault's "heterotopias"; both Foucault and Habermas argue that there are spaces that exist outside the grip of capitalism. Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>199</sup> Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, pp. 25-29; and Jacquelyn Chase, 'Introduction: The Spaces of Neoliberalism in Latin America', in *Spaces of Neoliberalism*, pp. 1-21 (pp. 3-6).

health care, utilities, and transport systems, these services are sold to private interests.<sup>200</sup> The transformation of False Creek's north shore, a space with Supermodern structures, was dictated by neo-liberalist policies. BC premier Vander Zalm ordered the province to sell the Expo site to a private developer, on the grounds that the provincial government should not be involved with development projects.<sup>201</sup> This strategy, clearly influenced by neo-liberal policies, was considered to foster more economic growth in the long run since Li Ka-shing's interest in Vancouver would bring more foreign investment into the city.

### **Technology, Informationalism, Techno-optimism**

The rise of the global marketplace is undoubtedly linked to innovations in technology. Manuel Castells argues that global capitalism could not have grown to its current extent without the "information technology revolution."<sup>202</sup> Castells is not advocating a technological determinism; rather, he argues that societies simply use technology and therefore societies change themselves because of their decision and ability to use a particular technology. He considers the changes in technology during the last quarter of the twentieth century to be indicative of a new mode of development, "informationalism." He explains that "Each mode of development has also a structurally determined performance principle around which technological processes are organized: industrialism is oriented toward economic growth, that is towards maximizing output; informationalism is oriented towards technological development, that is toward the

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<sup>200</sup> Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>201</sup> See Chapter One, p. 27.

<sup>202</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, 1, 2nd edn (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), p. 77. In his 3-volume *The Information Age*, Castells has conducted an empirical analysis of the changes in information technology and the concurrent changes in society (see Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, p. 4).

accumulation of knowledge and towards higher levels of complexity in information processing.”<sup>203</sup> The continually accelerating growth of knowledge that results from the informational mode of development is likely a cause of the excesses Augé associates with the Supermodern condition. Castells acknowledges that the accumulation of knowledge and information has been a source of power and wealth to all societies; however, informationalism is unique because there is a significant increase in the ability to process information with the use of computers and digital communications.<sup>204</sup> He also notes that this shift in the “dominant technological paradigm” from industrialism to informationalism has not replaced industrialism; rather, informationalism relies on industrialism’s technologies to operate. Castells’s informational mode of development was a factor in the production of space on False Creek’s north shore. Since its inception, the Concord Pacific mega-project was planned to be a major node in the global telecommunications network, and, early in its marketing campaign was advertised as “North America’s first fibre optic community.”<sup>205</sup>

The smooth glass structures Ibelings identifies as Supermodern architecture are characterized by – and seem to celebrate – innovations in technology. He notes that architects such as Dominique Perrault, Jean Nouvel, Iñaki Abalos, and Juan Herreros employed the latest construction technologies, such as adhesives and self-supporting

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<sup>203</sup> Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, p. 17.

<sup>204</sup> Manuel Castells, ‘Informationalism, Networks, and the Network Society: A Theoretical Blueprint’, in *The Network Society: A Cross-cultural Perspective*, ed. by M. Castells (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004), pp. 3-45 (pp. 7-9). Castells argues that the informational mode of development has had its most profound effect on social organization, leading to what he calls the “network society”.

<sup>205</sup> Hamilton, ‘Bouquets for \$2 billion Pacific Place’, sec. A, p. 1; and Stewart Bell, ‘The High-Tech Future’, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 11 February 1994, sec. B, p. 5. In November 1991 the *Vancouver Sun* announced that the mega-project would be North America’s the first fibre-optic community (see Chapter Four, p. 173).

glass, to achieve their smooth facades.<sup>206</sup> Key to the Supermodern architectural aesthetic is the incorporation and exhibition of the latest technical innovations. Not that this quality is exclusive to Supermodern architecture; but, Ibelings notes, “the 1990s can be seen as the superlative of the modernist 1950s and 60s.”<sup>207</sup> He draws a number of parallels between the Supermodern architecture of the 1990s and the International Style of the 1950s and 60s, including minimalism, technical innovation, modernization, and internationality,<sup>208</sup> but excluding one major theme evident in the two architectural styles: both convey unquestioning faith in technology and the values associated with the Enlightenment doctrine of progress. The International Style’s and Supermodernism’s lack of historic ornamentation and their embrace of technological innovation indicate that the styles emphasize looking forward rather than backward for inspiration. This theme parallels Jean-François Lyotard’s pronouncement that the modern age was marked by a meta-narrative of progress that originated during the Enlightenment.<sup>209</sup> The narrative of progress suggests that the accumulation of knowledge could lead to human emancipation. The notion of progress leading to liberation is evident in the early International Style of the 1920s and 30s, which was marked by rationalism and often leftism,<sup>210</sup> but not the late International Style as manifest in the 1950s and 1960s, which saw the construction of icons of the global spread and might of American corporate capitalism. Ibelings, who

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<sup>206</sup> Ibelings, pp. 98-102.

<sup>207</sup> Ibelings, p. 33.

<sup>208</sup> Ibelings, pp. 33-51.

<sup>209</sup> Jean-François Lyotard analyzed the narrative of progress in *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge* published in English in 1984 (see Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield, *Cultural Studies and Critical Theory*, 2nd edn [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], pp. 107-09; and Storey, pp. 150-51). Berman offers a fascinating analysis of Goethe’s *Faust* and the emerging notions of progress and development in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (see Berman, pp. 37-86).

<sup>210</sup> Diane Ghirardo, *Architecture after Modernism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 8-12.

tends to avoid any discussion of the social implications of Supermodern architecture, does allude briefly to social resistance and architecture:

The laconic acceptance of things as they are, is also indicative of a real change in the fundamental intellectual stance of both architect and critic. The echo of the avant-garde attitude of disapproval and resistance that was audible in postmodernism and deconstructivism, has completely died away. In that respect contemporary architecture bears an unmistakable resemblance to the least critical phase of modernism, during the 1950s and 60s, when there was a strong tendency to accept prevailing conditions as inescapable facts. Now, as then, architecture is (fairly straightforwardly) at the service of modernization which is currently most visible in the processes of globalization.<sup>211</sup>

Although the later International Style and Supermodern architecture abandoned the emancipatory ideals of the early modernist architecture, they were – and are – still guided by the narrative of progress because of their emphasis on technological innovation.<sup>212</sup> As discussed above, David Harvey and Manuel Castells have analyzed the

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<sup>211</sup> Ibelings, pp. 133-34. Ibelings does not care to expand on the architects' and critics' "acceptance of things" and offers little insight on the implications of modernization or globalization; as mentioned above, Ibelings's argument is centred on Supermodernism's neutrality and minimalism versus Postmodernism's symbolic representation in architecture. Ibelings, an architectural critic, is no doubt writing about himself as well – his "acceptance of things" is evident since *Supermodernism* has no critical analysis of globalization or Supermodern architecture.

<sup>212</sup> Proponents of global capitalism would argue the validity of this statement; they would suggest that globalization's impetus to bring an unfettered capitalism to every nook and cranny of the world is an equalizing and democratic force (see Chase, p. 4; Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, p. 11; and Steven Best and Douglas Kneller, *The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology, and Culture Studies at the Third Millennium* [New York: Guilford Press, 2001], p. 12). Fernando Coronil states, "...corporate discourses of globalization evoke with particular force the advent of a new epoch free from the limitations of the past... these discourses set in motion the belief that the separate histories, geographies, and cultures that have divided humanity are now being brought together by the warm embrace of globalization, understood as a progressive process of planetary integration" (see Fernando Coronil, 'Toward a Critique of Globalcentrism: Speculations on Capitalism's Nature', in *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, ed. by J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff [Durham: Duke University Press, 2001], pp. 63-87 [p. 63]). David Harvey, on the other hand, notes that globalization has had the opposite effect. Neo-liberalism, the political-economic framework of global capitalism, has since its emergence in the 1970s been a project to re-establish class power in the wealthiest echelons of society and has only widened the gap between the rich and poor (see Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, p. 13). Harvey also notes that the rates of economic growth under neo-liberal policies have been remarkably low and that the increase in wealth among the upper classes has been achieved through a process of redistribution; wealth is transferred from either poorer classes or more "vulnerable" nations – a process that Harvey calls "accumulation by dispossession" (see Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, pp. 41-43). The Marxist critique of globalization is a contentious issue; a substantial examination of the debate will not be included in my analysis of Vancouver's Concord Pacific Place.

way in which changes in technology and changes in capitalism's structure are deeply intertwined; the Supermodern architectural aesthetic, which is symbolic of globalization as well as the narrative of progress, can also be read as a strong reflection of these linkages between technological innovation and global capitalism.

The Concord Pacific mega-project evokes the same techno-pioneering spirit that is integral to Supermodern architecture. This enthusiasm is strongly evoked in two public art works visible to the pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters, and skateboarders traveling along the site's seawall: Henry Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light* (Fig. 37-39) and Buster Simpson's *Brush with Illumination* (Fig. 40 and 41). As discussed in Chapter One, *Welcome to the Land of Light* and *Brush with Illumination* are both uncritical artworks that convey a positive response to the global spread of telecommunications systems.<sup>213</sup> A plaque accompanying Tsang's installation reminds the viewer that they are standing in an "area [that is] one of the world's first fibre optic communities." The same plaque explains that the "artwork speaks about how technology promises to bring cultures together in the new global village on this site" – an optimistic view of technology that echoes Lyotard's description of the meta-narrative of progress.

Tsang's mention of the "global village" appears directly to refer to the work of Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan, whose ideas and writing regained popularity after the commodification of the Internet during the early 1990s and the introduction of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1992.<sup>214</sup> The WWW's debut spurred a widespread

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<sup>213</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 40-41.

<sup>214</sup> In 1992 *Wired*, a magazine dedicated to cyberspace and cyberculture, named Marshall McLuhan its "patron saint" (see Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002], pp. xvi-xvii, 224; and Noah Shachtman, 'Honoring Wired's Patron Saint', *Wired*, 13 May 2002 <<http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2002/05/52441>> [accessed 18 January 2008]). For a detailed account of the Internet's development, see Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, pp. 375-85.

visionary whirlwind of techno-optimism; the celebration of technology evoked by *Brush with Illumination* and *Welcome to the Land of Light* echoes that techno-utopian rhetoric. Tsang and Simpson's artworks were completed in 1997 and 1998 – roughly halfway between the start and end points of the “dot-com” stock-market bubble. This media blitz and frenzied financial growth started to inflate in 1995 and burst 10 March 2000, when the NASDAQ, the US technology index, reached its highest peak and began to tumble dramatically.<sup>215</sup> The techno-utopian rhetoric, which accompanied the massive speculation and the appearance of unlimited economic growth during the dot-com boom, ranged from the utopias proposed by the “virtual communitarians,” who argued that the Internet had a liberating potential and created “non-hierarchical and more democratic social structures”, to the ultimate capitalist fantasies that saw unlimited prosperity offered in the unbounded and endless cyberspace.<sup>216</sup>

Terry Hui, who was appointed Concord Pacific's president in 1993, was embroiled in the flourishing e-commerce.<sup>217</sup> While directing Vancouver's primary mega-project, he was involved as the president of a cyberspace business venture, MultiActive Technologies. MultiActive appears to have designed Concord Pacific's website, which contains one page that explains how each Concord Pacific Place condominium is

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<sup>215</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger and Robert Z. Aliber, *Manias, Panics and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises*, 5th edn (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), pp. 6-7, 137-142; and Chris Alden, 'Looking Back on the Crash', *The Guardian*, 10 March 2005 <<http://technology.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1433697,00.html>> [accessed 27 January 2007].

<sup>216</sup> Thomas Foster, Review of *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment* by Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows, and *Virtual Realities and Their Discontents* by Robert Markley, in *Contemporary Literature* 40 (1999), pp. 144-60. See also John Armitage's and Joanne Roberts's critique of the utopian rhetoric espoused by the cyber-business elite in John Armitage and Joanne Roberts, 'Chronotopia', in *Living with Cyberspace: Technology & Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. by J. Armitage and J. Roberts (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp. 43-54.

<sup>217</sup> Rebecca Wigod, 'Prince of Commerce: Hui: More than just a pretty face', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 10 February 1996, sec. F, p. 1; and Bell, 'The Players', sec. B, p. 4.

connected to and a part of “The Digital Neighbourhood.”<sup>218</sup> The Concord Pacific development was located close to two epicentres of the dot-com boom, only a few hundred kilometers north of Microsoft’s headquarters located in Seattle’s suburb Redmond and approximately twelve hundred kilometers north of California’s Silicon Valley.

Tsang’s *Welcome to the Land of Light* and Simpson’s *Brush with Illumination* are landmarks that reiterate to the passerby the “technophilic celebration” inherent in the Concord Pacific mega-project.<sup>219</sup> This romance of technology guided the site’s development since its early planning phase in 1988, when the initial “high-tech” model was unveiled to the public, to the early construction phase in 1993,<sup>220</sup> when the six-kilometer glass loop of fibre-optic cable was embedded in the site’s foundations, to the completion of the glass towers that are all connected to the world through the glass loop.<sup>221</sup> Following Charles Jencks’s pronouncement that “The Modern Movement revered the means of production, the Machine Aesthetic, and metaphors such as Le Corbusier’s: ‘the house is a machine for living,’” I suggest the glass wall that lines the north shore of False Creek reveres the informational means of production and is a metaphor for the six-kilometer loop of underground fibre-optic cable – the glass root

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<sup>218</sup> Concord Pacific, *In Our Homes* <<http://www.concordpacific.com/inourhomes/homeoffuture.html>> [accessed 28 October 2007].

<sup>219</sup> I borrow “technophilic celebration” from Steven Best and Douglas Kneller’s discussion of the proponents and detractors of new technologies, such as cyberspace, nanotechnologies, robotics, and genetic engineering (see Best and Kneller, pp. 155-58).

<sup>220</sup> Tsang refers to the underground fibre-optic cable in *Welcome to the Land of Light*: “Good you arrive here, where light be under land” (see Chapter One, pp. 40-41).

<sup>221</sup> Hamilton, ‘Bouquets for \$2 billion Pacific Place’, sec. A, p. 1; Gordon Hamilton, ‘West Coast Venice: Lagoon, islands Li Ka-shing’s vision’, *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec G, p. 1; David Smith, ‘Life in the Glass Loop: BC Tel spins \$20-million web of fibre optics for communication at Pacific Place’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 26 June 1993, sec. E, p. 1.

system that feeds and draws information to and from the forest of glass towers that have grown and are growing on the Concord Pacific development.<sup>222</sup>

## Conclusion

The architectural aesthetic exhibited in the glass residential towers, such as the Peninsula, the Aquarius towers, and Landmark 33, is a rebirth of the International Style that Hans Ibelings labels Supermodernism. Ibelings's manifesto *Supermodernism* is a valuable guide that identifies a trend to aesthetic minimalism that arose during the 1990s, and it is helpful since it identifies some of the parallels between Supermodernism and the International Style of 1950s and 60s. I disagree, however, with Ibelings's assertion that Supermodern structures do not imply any symbolic representations. I am arguing that the shimmering Supermodern glass wall on the north shore of False Creek is symbolic of an accelerating modernity, globalization, informationalism, and the technological innovations that have stemmed from and helped develop these three socio-politico-economic conditions.

Ibelings's term Supermodernism derives from Marc Augé's discussion of Supermodernity. Augé's analysis of the Supermodern condition resembles David Harvey's materialist analysis of the Postmodern condition in that they both describe an accelerated modernity. These two analyses of accelerated modernity have some close resemblances; for example, Harvey's time-space compression parallels Augé's "excess of time" and "excess of space". Their analyses diverge because of their different theoretical and methodological approaches. Harvey's Marxist study is centred on economics and

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<sup>222</sup> Charles Jencks, *The New Paradigm in Architecture: The Language of Post-Modernism*, 7th edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 13.

geography; whereas Augé's anthropological study is centred on non-places – the spaces that are characteristic of the Supermodern condition.

By no means do I argue that the Concord Pacific mega-project is a non-place; the Supermodern towers on the former Expo site are inhabited by people, and they have made the Concord Pacific neighborhood their home and their community. Nevertheless, non-places have played a significant role in transforming the site from a former industrial waterfront to a downtown luxury resort-style residential space. Non-places – both physical spaces such as airports and aircraft, and abstract spaces such as radio waves and telecommunications – are intertwined with globalization; their worldwide distribution is both a product of and a mechanism for the global flows of capital. The development and proliferation of these non-places have changed our experience of time and space. Harvey contends that this shift, which he defines as time-space compression, resulted from and influenced the shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation. False Creek's reconstruction from an industrial workplace to a residential community linked to a high-tech communications system echoes this shift in capitalism's structure. The derelict factories that used to manufacture goods were replaced with towers of condominiums that boasted a high-speed connection to global flows of information, entertainment, and finance.

The transformation of False Creek's northern waterfront is also an empirical example of the shift in technological organization from industrialism to informationalism that Manuel Castells describes. Since its earliest planning phase, the Concord Pacific development intended to use the latest technological innovations to become a major node in the global flows of information and capital. This aim has been realized in its built form with the fibre-optic loop embedded under the glass structures and connected to each

unit. Concord Pacific's marketing campaign indicates the developer's aim to portray the mega-project as a community on the technological forefront. The advertising pitches for the site's high-tech communications network are reiterated in the public artworks *Welcome to the Land of Light* and *Brush with Illumination*. Tsang's artwork celebrates the mega-project's access to the world through the site's high-tech fibre-optic network and the new technology's potential to transform the community into a "global village."

*Welcome to the Land of Light* refers to the reciprocal relationship between technological advances and globalization, a theme that is implied in the glass Supermodern condominium towers on the site. The Supermodern architectural style focuses on exploring new construction techniques and materials, and is symbolic of the narrative of progress. Following Harvey's and Castells's propositions that the advances in technology and the shift in capitalism's structure are deeply interrelated, I suggest that the Supermodern architectural style is symbolic not only of global capitalism and progress but also of the intertwining of globalization and technological progress. Extending this statement to four other relationships discussed above – technological innovation is a determining factor of accelerated modernity, informationalism is a mode of development centred on technological innovation, and both accelerated modernity and informationalism are tied to globalization – I contend that the Supermodern architectural aesthetic is symbolic of accelerated modernity, globalization, informationalism, and technological progress, as well as the complex and intertwined relationships between each of these social processes.

### **Chapter Three – Concord Pacific Place: a Transnational Chinatown?**

To this point, I have analyzed Concord Pacific Place as a space produced by globalization, accelerated modernity, technological progress, and informationalism. My analysis thus far has scarcely discussed the mega-project's architectural style and public artworks in the context of the patrons' ethnicity. Concord Pacific is a Hong Kong-owned company that marketed its condominium residences to Hong Kong investors, recent Hong Kong immigrants, and Canadian middle-to-upper-class consumers. Concord Pacific began its condominium pre-sale phase during the early 1990s; this coincided with a period of increased immigration from Hong Kong into Canada, prompted by China's scheduled acquisition of the British colony in 1997. Many Hong Kong Chinese entered Canada through the Business Immigration Program – a federal initiative, mentioned earlier, that offered foreign investors and entrepreneurs Canadian citizenship in exchange for their commitment to investment and enterprise in Canada.

In this chapter, I will examine how and why the Business Immigrant Program attracted Chinese transnationals to Vancouver and how this Canadian immigration policy helped produce Concord Pacific Place. I will also introduce my concept of a Transnational Chinatown, which derives from David Chuenyan Lai's classification system of Canadian Chinatowns. I will explain how Concord Pacific Place is in part a Transnational Chinatown and will use this discussion to illustrate how the Supermodern point towers and the sculpture *Brush with Illumination* (Figs 40 and 41) include subtle visual references to Chinese transnationalism. I will also examine how, and possible reasons why, Concord Pacific Place's public artworks recount a version of the site's past

that elides the history of the Chinese people that lived in the region. The public artworks' rendition of False Creek's history mentions the site's connection to the CPR – a national project that had been marketed as a bridge of Empire<sup>223</sup> – but omits references to the thousands of Chinese labourers who travelled to Canada to work on the railway.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first is a historical review of Chinese people in Canada and Canada's immigration policies. My discussion focuses on Chinese railway workers, Vancouver's Chinese residents, and Canada's multicultural policies and Business Immigration Program. The second section is a brief summary of David Chuenyan Lai's theoretical analysis of Chinatowns. Lai examines how Canada's immigration policies, the dominant host society, and Chinese cultures affected the formation of Canada's Chinatowns. I review Lai's analysis of Old Chinatowns in the context of Vancouver's Chinatown and Lai's conception of New Chinatowns in the context of Richmond. The third section examines whether Concord Pacific Place can be considered a Chinatown according to Lai's classification system. I introduce my concept of a Transnational Chinatown and suggest that Concord Pacific Place is partially a Transnational Chinatown. I also examine how the site's Supermodern point towers and public artworks are symbolic of Chinese transnationality. The fourth section examines how Concord Pacific Place's historically-themed public artworks fail to mention the region's Chinese railway labourers and residents. I consider a few possible reasons for this elision. I also discuss how Concord Pacific Place's Postmodern architectural style refers to the Chinese labourers who worked on the railway.

This chapter examines the history of the Chinese population in Vancouver and British Columbia. The term "Chinese," however, does not refer to one homogenous

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<sup>223</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 15-16.

group.<sup>224</sup> The Chinese who have lived in Vancouver since 1886 constitute a diverse social group that varies in region of origin, class, political affiliation, gender, and religious beliefs.<sup>225</sup> The city's Chinese population has consisted of immigrants from numerous source-countries and descendants of immigrants who entered Canada one to five generations earlier. My discussion in this chapter illustrates many institutional and personal acts of racism levelled against Vancouver's and British Columbia's Chinese people. Although my discussion centres on the host society's anti-Chinese sentiments and actions, I do not wish to imply that every Chinese person in British Columbia encountered racist and prejudicial acts at all times and in all regions of the province.<sup>226</sup>

I provide a cursory discussion of Chinese immigration and settlement patterns since the arrival of Chinese labourers during the nineteenth century until the influx of Hong Kong immigrants during the 1990s because it illustrates the dramatic shifts in Canada's immigration policies and these policies' effects on Chinese spatial practices. For example, exclusionary laws prior to the Second World War limited Chinese immigration and partly influenced the creation of Chinatowns as a Chinese space excluded from the host society. This discussion of immigration policy and Chinese settlement patterns provides the historical context for my analysis of Canada's Business Immigrant Program and how it is tied to the production of Concord Pacific Place. My

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<sup>224</sup> Ien Ang discusses the complex and shifting meanings of "Chinese" and "Chineseness." She suggests that "Chineseness is a category whose meanings are not fixed and pregiven, but constantly renegotiated and rearticulated, both inside and outside China" (see Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West* [New York: Routledge, 2001], p. 25).

<sup>225</sup> Wing Chung Ng identifies the multiple identities and subject locations within Vancouver's ethnic Chinese population of 1945 to 1980 (see Wing Chung Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80: The Pursuit of Identity and Power* [Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999]). Paul Yee also examines the city's diverse ethnic Chinese population in Paul Yee, *Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver*, rev. edn (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2006).

<sup>226</sup> For example, during the early twentieth century, Chinese people residing in Quesnel and the Cariboo region shared a far less antagonistic relationship with the host society than Chinese people living in Vancouver or Victoria (see Faith Moosang, *First Son: Portraits by C.D. Hoy*, foreword by Paul Yee [Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery / Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999], pp. 137-40).

discussion of the history of Vancouver's Chinese population also illustrates the host society's reception of the city's Chinese residents; this informs the historical context for my analysis in Chapter Four, which examines articles published in the *Vancouver Sun* that both support and denounce racist reactions to Chinese immigration into Vancouver and Concord Pacific's condominium construction.

My discussion of Canadian immigration policies and Chinese people in Vancouver focuses primarily on the 1980s and 1990s because this is an integral part of the socio-politico-economical conditions that influenced the patron to acquire and develop the site. Moreover, Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo '86 site was largely influenced by the expected influx of Hong Kong immigration into Vancouver leading up to China's reacquisition of Hong Kong in 1997.<sup>227</sup> Concord Pacific targeted Hong Kong investors and immigrants as a primary market for the urban mega-project's condominium units. The units are primarily in point towers that, as I mentioned earlier, resemble skyscrapers in Hong Kong. My discussion of how these Hong Kong-style Supermodern towers allude to Chinese transnationality informs a larger argument in my thesis. In Chapter Two, I refuted Ibelings's argument that the Supermodern style is symbol-free, illustrating how the style was indicative of globalization, accelerated modernity, informationalism, and technological progress. In this chapter, I will illustrate how a supposedly "non-referential" Supermodern architectural style is also indicative of Chinese transnationality.

I will also argue that these subtle visual references to "Chineseness" were meant to be noticed only by Hong Kong buyers; I contend that this is related to Concord Pacific's attempts to weaken its local reputation as a Hong Kong development company

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<sup>227</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 75-89.

that was attracting affluent Hong Kong immigrants to Vancouver. I will also argue that Concord Pacific's attempt to avoid overt "Chineseness" influenced the firm's decision to exclude references to the history of the region's Chinese residents from the public artworks it sponsored. I contend that Concord Pacific repeatedly downplayed its connections to Hong Kong and avoided including symbols and signs that obviously evoke "Chineseness" because of local racist responses to Li's purchase of the Expo '86 site.<sup>228</sup>

### **Part A: Chinese People in Canada, the CPR, and Canada's Immigration Policies**

In 1987, the Secretary of State of Canada and the Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism, David Crombie, wrote, "I am pleased to introduce a Bill which, upon passage, will become the world's first national Multicultural Act... Its intention is to strengthen our unity, reinforce our identity, improve our economic prospects... Multiculturalism has long been fundamental to the Canadian approach to nation-building..."<sup>229</sup> Crombie's celebratory proclamation emphasized that cultural pluralism promised economic gain and had helped develop the nation in the past. In this section, I will analyze the federal government's motives for introducing its official multicultural policy. I will discuss how Canada has promoted cultural pluralism as a morally and ethically informed policy but has used its multicultural project primarily for capitalist gains.

Crombie's message introducing Canada's innovative immigration policy came one year after a crucial event that was tied to both past and future Chinese immigration

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<sup>228</sup> In Chapter Four, I examine articles printed in the *Vancouver Sun* that illustrate local responses to Concord Pacific's acquisition and development of the site.

<sup>229</sup> Cited in Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism', p. 281.

into Canada – Expo ‘86. As previously discussed, the world’s fair was an “invitation to the world” and, afterward, its grounds were sold to Hong Kong magnate Li Ka-shing, who proceeded to transform the site into an upscale urban neighbourhood. The condominium residences, marketed to overseas Hong Kong investors, have attracted large amounts of off-shore investment into Canada. Expo ‘86 also celebrated an earlier event that had been produced with the help of Chinese labourers in Canada – Vancouver’s incorporation in 1886. The city was incorporated after it was named the western terminus for the CPR, and its early growth was primarily the result of the railway. The last leg of the CPR leading into Vancouver was cleared and built largely by Chinese labourers. This final section passed through the Fraser Canyon, a treacherous and nearly impassable route. Once the dangerous passage was cleared and the track completed, the CPR united Eastern Canada with the Pacific Coast.

During the 1880s, multiculturalism did help Canada with “nation-building”; yet it was not accepted as part of the Canadian identity. The Chinese labourers who traveled to Canada faced overtly racist policies, dangerous working conditions, and frequent attacks fuelled by anti-Asian sentiments. The prevailing Sinophobic mentality in British Columbia was based on the dominant European immigrant society’s desire “for a racially homogenous home” and economic conflicts between Asian and European immigrants.<sup>230</sup> The Canadian government imposed a Chinese Head Tax<sup>231</sup> soon after the railway was

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<sup>230</sup> Yee, p. 26. Patricia Roy argues that racism was tied to both economic relations and the dominant society’s ambitions for a “White Canada.” Peter Ward, on the other hand, dismisses arguments that tie anti-Asiatic racism to competing economic interests. See Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989), pp. vii-xvii; W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, 3rd edn (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), pp. xxi-xxvii; and Barman, p. 148.

<sup>231</sup> In January 1886, the Canadian government introduced a fifty-dollar head tax to be levied from each Chinese immigrant entering Canada.

completed in 1885 and maintained similar anti-Chinese immigration laws until the 1960s, when the state officially abolished its “White Canada” policy. The purportedly egalitarian regulations that followed, which privileged applicants according to class instead of ethnicity, still allowed for some practices that subtly discriminated according to race. Canada’s multiculturalist endeavour, which derives from egalitarian, democratic, and humanitarian ideals, has been used by the state (increasingly since the 1980s) to justify and support its project to attract wealthy immigrants and foreign capital in the interest of boosting the nation’s economy.

This section begins with a discussion of Chinese railway labourers in British Columbia, many of whom settled in Vancouver’s Chinatown. My main reason for including this contentious period of Canadian history in my analysis of Concord Pacific Place is that it is excluded from the renditions of history espoused by the mega-project’s public artworks. I also contend that this controversial past is connoted in some of the architecture on the north shore of False Creek. I will discuss the relationship between Chinese railway labourers and Concord Pacific Place’s art and architecture in Part D.

### **Early Chinese Immigration into British Columbia and the CPR**

The first Chinese to settle in the region now called British Columbia arrived in 1788. Fifty Chinese artisans sailed with Captain John Meares to Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island to develop a fur trade between the Indigenous peoples and Guangzhou (Canton), a major port city on the Pearl River in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong.<sup>232</sup> Part of the Chinese crew decided to stay in Nootka Sound when Spanish

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<sup>232</sup> Anthony B. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983), p. 33.

sailors forced Meares to leave. The Chinese married Indigenous women, raised children, and lived out their lives in the region.

The first Chinese immigration en masse into what would become British Columbia started in 1858, when news of gold deposits drew Chinese people from California.<sup>233</sup> The gold rush also spurred a wave of immigration from China. The Chinese worked as miners, although those arriving directly from China had no experience in the mines, and in other services such as restaurants and laundries that catered to the miners.

The second substantial wave of Chinese immigration, an estimated 16,000 to 17,000 Chinese, occurred during the early 1880s, when Chinese labourers were employed to build the western leg of the transnational railway.<sup>234</sup> The federal government awarded Andrew Onderdonk, an American civil engineer, the contract for building the passage that followed the Fraser River from Savona's Ferry to Port Moody.<sup>235</sup> When Onderdonk started construction in British Columbia in 1880, he imported Chinese railway workers from Oregon and California. White railway workers protested Onderdonk's employment of Chinese labour and held an anti-Chinese meeting, which "passed a resolution that no Chinese should be employed east of Savona's Ferry."<sup>236</sup> The railway, the result of a promise that came with British Columbia's union with Canada, was a contentious issue; the province had several times threatened to secede from Confederation because of slow

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<sup>233</sup> Yee, pp. 10-14; and Ng, pp. 10-11.

<sup>234</sup> Roy, *White Man's Province*, pp. x-xi.

<sup>235</sup> Julia Ningyu Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit: A Tribute to the Chinese Who Worked on Canada's Railroads More Than a Century Ago* (Toronto: Paxlink Communications Inc., 2000), pp. 9-11; and Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 50.

<sup>236</sup> Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 50.

progress on the railway.<sup>237</sup> Though British Columbians dearly wanted to be connected by rail to the eastern provinces, they were decidedly against Chinese labour. This anti-Chinese sentiment, which had been prevalent in British Columbia since the arrival of the first Chinese, was echoed in New Westminster's *The Columbian*: "[It is] of the very first importance that the labor should be performed by those who shall become settlers.... If hordes of Mongolian slaves are brought in to do the work...the country shall have its railway; but nothing more! The grand opportunity of peopling its vast plains and fertile valleys will have been missed."<sup>238</sup> When Onderdonk discovered that the Fraser Canyon's rugged terrain would increase the anticipated construction cost, he argued that the railway could only be completed within his budget if he employed Chinese labourers.<sup>239</sup> In the fall of 1881, the federal government agreed to help Onderdonk import Chinese workers for the railway.<sup>240</sup> Chinese immigration was an issue addressed in many politicians' campaigns during the 1882 federal and provincial elections, but it did not play a key role. Many of the province's sinophobes agreed that Chinese labour was a "necessary evil" required for the rapid completion of the railway.

Nearly all the Chinese who landed in British Columbia during the nineteenth century had emigrated from the Pearl River Delta region in Guangdong.<sup>241</sup> Many Chinese chose to emigrate from the region because of instability caused by the First

<sup>237</sup> One of the terms of British Columbia's union with the dominion of Canada was that the national railway was to be completed within ten years of the province's union in 1871 (see Barman, pp. 104-05).

<sup>238</sup> *The Columbian* (New Westminster), 7 October 1882 cited in Ward, p. 11. The Chinese that immigrated to North America were from Guangdong in southern China and were not Mongolians. Although Mongolia was ruled by the Qing dynasty at the time of the article's publication, Mongolians were a different ethnic group than the Chinese in Guangdong. This misunderstanding illustrates the author's ignorance of the Chinese immigrants in British Columbia.

<sup>239</sup> If Onderdonk would have relied strictly on local white labourers and European immigrant workers, the project would have cost him an extra \$1.5 million US dollars. Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, p. 11.

<sup>240</sup> Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 50.

<sup>241</sup> Ng, p. 14.

Opium War (1839-1842), the subsequent Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), other uprisings in Guangdong, the lack of sufficient agricultural land, floods, and droughts.<sup>242</sup> The British victory in the First Opium War in 1842 forced China to sign the Treaty of Nanjing, which disestablished the Pearl River Delta region as a major trading centre with the West. Guangzhou had been the only port that the Chinese government allowed to trade with the West since 1757. The Treaty of Nanjing ceded Hong Kong to the British Empire and opened Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai to British trade, which subsequently reduced employment and raised crime rates in the Pearl River Delta region. With news of gold in California in 1848 and in the Fraser River valley in 1858, many Chinese men from the region bought tickets for passage to North America to find fortunes to send home to their families in Guangdong.

Onderdonk used a contract labour system to bring Chinese workers to British Columbia. When he required more labourers, he would send a message to his associates in Victoria, who would contact compradors in Hong Kong.<sup>243</sup> The comprador would recruit workers in Guangdong and send them to Hong Kong. The comprador loaned the newly recruited labourers the fees for their passage to Victoria, their food, and their lodgings. The indebted labourers were expected to repay the comprador, typically within three to five years. The labourers' several-month boat journey to Victoria was an arduous trip; the entire time aboard was spent in a locked cabin below the deck that allowed little ventilation.

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<sup>242</sup> Yee, pp. 5-6; Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 22-32; and Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>243</sup> Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 43-46; and Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 13-19.

Once they landed, Chinese railway labourers were faced with dangerous conditions and overtly racist policies.<sup>244</sup> White workers were paid between \$1.50 and \$2.50 per day depending on their skill level; Chinese workers were paid \$1 per day. White workers had cooks, lodging, and other amenities provided; the Chinese were expected to pay for their own equipment, tents, and food, and were often forced to pay high prices for provisions at company stores. In the Fraser Canyon, Chinese labourers working on the railway outnumbered their white counterparts. According to Patricia E. Roy, the railway employed approximately three times as many Chinese workers as white workers in 1881.<sup>245</sup> Onderdonk estimated that in the summer of 1884 he had at one point employed approximately six thousand Chinese labourers – approximately double the white workforce.<sup>246</sup> The labour was also divided along racial lines.<sup>247</sup> Chinese workers were responsible for the difficult and dangerous tasks, such as grading, which involved levelling hills and filling ravines, tunnelling, and handling explosives. Many Chinese died in the Fraser Canyon in accidents, often caused by their white superiors' carelessness and indifference. Illness was another leading cause of death among Chinese labourers. Because of low wages, Chinese workers were unable to afford fresh food, which led to many cases of scurvy. 'Paying for a Chinese labourer's medical treatment was deemed unprofitable for the compradors and the contractor; an ailing Chinese labourer could easily be replaced by a new recruit from Guangdong. The number of Chinese who died on the railway is unknown, but the railway's deadly working

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<sup>244</sup> Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 60-61; and Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>245</sup> Patricia E. Roy, 'A Choice Between Evils: The Chinese and the Construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia', in *The CPR West: The Iron Road and the Making of a Nation*, ed. by H.A. Dempsey (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), pp. 13-34 (p. 26).

<sup>246</sup> Roy, 'Choice Between Evils', p. 15.

<sup>247</sup> Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 63-67; and Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 53-55.

conditions were described by a saying common in Canada's Chinatowns: "for every foot of railroad through the Fraser Canyon, a Chinese worker died."<sup>248</sup> In November 1885, after the railway's completion, the *Victoria Daily British Colonist* estimated that fifteen hundred Chinese died of illness out of a total of eight thousand employed by Onderdonk.<sup>249</sup> The number may have been even higher. Chinese merchants estimated that during 1882, alone, twenty-two hundred Chinese labourers died while working on the railway!

The Chinese who entered British Columbia for railway construction did not all stay in the province. Some returned to China, some immigrated to the United States, some moved further east, and some chose to stay – between 1880 and 1884, the Chinese population in British Columbia rose from 4,000 to 10,000.<sup>250</sup> Many Chinese labourers were unable to return to China after the railway was completed.<sup>251</sup> Onderdonk broke his promise to buy return tickets for his Chinese employees. With low wages and spiralling costs for equipment, food, lodging, taxes, and fees, few Chinese labourers were able to save enough money to pay for the passage home to China after the railway was built. Victoria was a common western destination for Chinese railway workers since it was a primary sea port linked to China, and it had a large Chinatown that offered employment opportunities. Some of the Chinese labourers traveled eastward along the CPR line to settle in the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes.<sup>252</sup> Many of those who finished their work on the railway with little or no money stayed in Yale, the CPR construction

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<sup>248</sup> Cited in Chan, *Gold Mountain*, p. 67.

<sup>249</sup> Roy, 'Choice Between Evils', p. 15.

<sup>250</sup> Ng, p. 10.

<sup>251</sup> Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 67-73; and Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 71-73.

<sup>252</sup> Only a small number of Chinese moved to eastern Canada. According to the 1891 census, 219 Chinese were living east of the Rocky Mountains. See Roy, 'Choice Between Evils', p. 33.

centre at the foot of the Fraser Canyon. They lived on the town's streets, surviving on discarded food scraps.

During the fall of 1885 and the winter of 1886, thousands of destitute Chinese struggled to survive in British Columbia.<sup>253</sup> In the middle of this harsh season, the federal government adopted a law that would impede Chinese labourers, who had toiled to unite the nation by rail, from bringing their families to Canada to settle. On 1 January 1886, eight weeks after the completion of John A. Macdonald's dreamed-of national railway, the federal government imposed a fifty-dollar head tax on each Chinese person immigrating to Canada.<sup>254</sup> The federal act also limited ships docking in Canada to carrying only one Chinese person per fifty tons of the boat's weight. The Immigration Act appeased British Columbia's politicians, who had long argued for exclusionary laws to limit Chinese immigration into the province. Macdonald, who argued in 1882, "either you must have this [Chinese] labor or you cannot have the railway," sought only to import cheap labour for a temporary period.<sup>255</sup> Three years later, he exclaimed that the Chinese labourer was "a sojourner in a strange land... and he has no common interest with us... gives us his labor and is paid for it, and is valuable, the same as a threshing machine or any other agricultural implement which we may borrow from the United States or hire and return to its owner."<sup>256</sup> Patricia E. Roy contends that John A. Macdonald was a "hero to many British Columbians" since he had completed the railway as promised and introduced legislation to limit Chinese immigration.<sup>257</sup> For the next

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<sup>253</sup> Roy, 'Choice Between Evils,' pp. 30-34.

<sup>254</sup> Roy, 'Choice Between Evils,' pp. 30-34; and Ward, p. 42. Chinese merchants, students, diplomats, tourists, and men of science were spared from paying the head tax.

<sup>255</sup> Cited in Roy, 'Choice Between Evils,' p. 27.

<sup>256</sup> Cited in Roy, 'Choice Between Evils,' pp. 30-31.

<sup>257</sup> Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 63.

sixty years, the Canadian government retained the head tax and introduced other acts to restrict Chinese people from settling in Canada.<sup>258</sup> In 1900, the federal government adopted a new act that increased the head tax to one hundred dollars, effective 1 January 1902. In 1903, the head tax was raised to five hundred dollars. On 1 July 1923 the federal government adopted an act that eliminated almost all Chinese immigration into Canada.<sup>259</sup> This exclusionary act was repealed in May 1947, although the policies that replaced it still had many limitations compared with immigration policies applied to non-Asians. Only in 1967 did Canada adopt a colour-blind immigration policy that did not vary according to race or ethnicity.

#### **Vancouver's Chinese Population and Canada's Immigration Policies: 1886 - 1967**

In this subsection, I discuss the changes in Vancouver's Chinese population from 1886 to 1967. The shifts in policies regarding Chinese immigration – from a head tax, to exclusion, to limited acceptance, to a point system – influenced the growth and characteristics of the city's Chinese population. My précis of Canadian immigration laws and Chinese immigration patterns into Vancouver before 1967 provides a historical context for my discussion of Canada's multiculturalism and the influx of Hong Kong and Taiwanese business immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s. I will also briefly discuss the host society's reception of the city's Chinese people. Vancouver's history is marked by anti-Chinese sentiments and racist attacks on its Chinese residents. I will address this sordid past because it provides the historical context for my analysis of the anti-Asian

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<sup>258</sup> Ng, pp. 11-20.

<sup>259</sup> The 1923 Chinese Immigration Act only allowed diplomats, wealthy merchants, Canadian-born Chinese returning from studies abroad, and university students to immigrate Canada. See Edgar Wickberg, ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1982), pp. 141-45.

sentiments expressed in the Vancouver *Sun* following Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo site, a topic I will discuss in Chapter Four.

In 1884, approximately one hundred Chinese lived on Burrard Inlet. Granville, the town that preceded Vancouver, had three Chinese stores and fewer than fifty Chinese inhabitants, many of whom worked in the town's sawmills.<sup>260</sup> During the early 1880s, the province's largest Chinese centre after Victoria was New Westminster. The town attracted many Chinese workers since the region's farms, canneries, and sawmills sought cheap labour. Soon after Vancouver was incorporated as the CPR's western terminal city in 1886, groups of Chinese people started to settle on the mudflats north of False Creek.<sup>261</sup> The Chinese, mostly railway workers, were able collectively to lease sixty hectares of the forested land rent-free for ten years on the condition that they cleared the land.<sup>262</sup> Within the first twenty-five years, Vancouver's Chinese had built their community in an area surrounding Pender Street that spanned from Canton and Shanghai Alleys to Main Street (Fig. 44).<sup>263</sup> So, the western edge of early Chinatown borders the north-eastern corner of the tract sold to Li Ka-shing in 1988.<sup>264</sup>

During the first few decades after Vancouver's incorporation, the Chinese population was almost entirely male.<sup>265</sup> Institutional racism, such as the head tax, and individual acts of racism undoubtedly discouraged the immigration of Chinese women and children. One of the first racial conflicts in Vancouver occurred in 1886, when a group of Chinese people was chased away from the city's first municipal election, which

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<sup>260</sup> David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), p. 49.

<sup>261</sup> Ng, pp. 10-11.

<sup>262</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 79.

<sup>263</sup> Ng, pp. 11-12.

<sup>264</sup> City of Vancouver, *False Creek North Official Development Plan*, p. 15.

<sup>265</sup> Ng, p. 11.

was closed to Chinese and First Nations peoples.<sup>266</sup> On 8 January 1887 and 24 February 1887 white workers attacked groups of Chinese labourers from Victoria that were contracted to clear the forest on the west side of Vancouver.<sup>267</sup> After the second attack, the white mob forced the Chinese to leave False Creek and move to New Westminster. The provincial government reacted to the violence by sending thirty-five constables from Victoria to Vancouver to protect the Chinese. Within a few weeks of the riot, the Chinese started to return to False Creek. One of the worst acts of violence committed by whites against the Chinese in Vancouver occurred Saturday, 7 September 1907.<sup>268</sup> Earlier in the day, the Asiatic Exclusion League had held a parade that marched to the old city hall at Hastings and Main Streets, where members delivered speeches condemning Asian immigration. The sinophobic meeting attracted eight or nine thousand whites, many of whom convened outside, since the hall could hold only two thousand people. Later in the evening, a mob of one thousand agitators rushed into Chinatown, only a block away from the meeting, and started breaking storefront windows and attacking Chinese people. Once the angry white mob had unleashed its destruction on Chinatown, it traveled to the Japanese district to cause further damage and violence. Although the Chinese did not try to resist the agitators, the Japanese responded to the mob with violence and forced the whites to retreat. When the mob tried to return to Chinatown, they were met by the police. On the following Monday, the Chinese held an unofficial strike, and many chose to purchase firearms since they anticipated further violence. The Canadian government deplored the riot and ordered the deputy minister of labour, W.L. MacKenzie King, to investigate the damages. On MacKenzie King's advice, the federal

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<sup>266</sup> Yee, p. 20.

<sup>267</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 79-81; and Yee, p. 18.

<sup>268</sup> Yee, pp. 28-29; Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 84-85; and Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp. 140-41.

government compensated the Chinese \$26,900 for damages, business losses, and legal fees.

These kinds of racist actions were a major impetus to the formation of segregated Chinatowns.<sup>269</sup> The Chinese settled as a group in one area of a city partly for the sake of protection from the regular racial slurs, bullying, and attacks. Chinatowns were almost always located on cheap land not valued by the white community, such as the mudflats on the north shore of False Creek. White racist actions and policies were not the sole reasons that drove the Chinese to live in separate districts; they also chose to live in Chinatowns since it allowed them to maintain their culture, language, and traditions. Some Chinatowns were created by Chinese contractors who brought labourers to Canada. The recently arrived immigrants would live in wooden shacks built by their sponsors on cheap tracts of land. These areas developed into larger Chinatowns as grocery stores, laundries, and restaurants were built to accommodate and employ the growing Chinese population.

Prior to the 1923 Exclusion Act, Vancouver's Chinese population was slowly changing from a predominately bachelor society to a more balanced community. The male-to-female ratio declined from twenty-eight to one in 1911 to ten to one in 1921. In 1919 there were 210 Chinese families living in Vancouver.<sup>270</sup> Once the Exclusion Act was passed, no Chinese women could immigrate and offset Vancouver's male-dominated Chinese population. In fact, only forty-four Chinese entered Canada between the Exclusionary Act's introduction in 1923 and its repeal in 1947.<sup>271</sup> Many Chinese in

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<sup>269</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 34-35; and Ng, p. 11.

<sup>270</sup> Yee, p. 49.

<sup>271</sup> Yee, p. 62.

Canada returned to China during this period.<sup>272</sup> Some of the older men returned after their years of labour in Canada, and others returned because of unemployment during the Great Depression. Because of emigration and the lack of Chinese women in Canada, the nation's Chinese population dropped from 39,587 in 1921 to 34,627 in 1941. The Chinese male-to-female ratio did, however, decrease in British Columbia during this period, since the Chinese males who left were not supplanted with new immigrants because of the Exclusion Act. In the meantime, the number of Canadian-born Chinese females grew, and the sex ratio started to level. The Chinese male-to-female ratio in Vancouver changed from ten to one in 1921 to five to one in 1941.<sup>273</sup> During the first half of the Chinese exclusionary period, the Chinese population in Vancouver grew substantially because many Chinese moved to the city from British Columbia's interior.<sup>274</sup> Vancouver's Chinese population was 6,484 in 1921 and 13,011 in 1931, but it dropped significantly during the next ten years – there were only 7,174 Chinese in the city in 1941.<sup>275</sup>

After the Second World War, many Canadians and Chinese people argued that the Exclusion Act was inhumane and that it contravened the United Nations Charter.<sup>276</sup> British Columbia's politicians agreed with the critiques of the racist policy but were apprehensive of a full repeal of the Exclusion Act. They worried that the province's Chinese – which was half of Canada's total Chinese population and predominately male – would bring their families to the province. That would dramatically increase the Chinese population. In May 1947, the Exclusionary Act was repealed; however, the

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<sup>272</sup> Wickberg, pp. 148-49.

<sup>273</sup> Wickberg, p. 306-07.

<sup>274</sup> Ng, p. 16.

<sup>275</sup> Wickberg, p. 303.

<sup>276</sup> Wickberg, pp. 204-11.

federal Order-in-Council P.C. 2115, a regulation set in 1930 that limited Asian immigration to Canadian citizens' wives and children under eighteen, remained in effect.<sup>277</sup> There were far fewer Chinese with Canadian citizenship than Chinese residents in Canada. Chinese residents in Canada were never officially excluded from attaining Canadian citizenship though they faced many barriers that impeded naturalization.<sup>278</sup> According to Canada's 1941 census figures, the entire Chinese population was 34,627 and only 5.9% had Canadian citizenship.<sup>279</sup> British Columbia had the nation's highest Chinese population of any province, at 14,667, and also the nation's lowest percentage of naturalized Chinese, 3.3%.<sup>280</sup> The immigration policies still prevented many Chinese men from reuniting with their families on Canadian soil, since Asian residents in Canada were unable to bring their wives and children to Canada. European, South American, and American residents in Canada, on the other hand, were able to bring their wives and dependents to Canada. In 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King reiterated the federal government's anti-Asian stance: "The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration... There will, I am sure,

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<sup>277</sup> Prior to May 1947, P.C. 2115 did not apply to the Chinese since the 1923 Exclusion Act was in effect.

<sup>278</sup> Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 2nd edn (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 31-37. Prior to 1947, few Chinese people were able to acquire Canadian citizenship since district judges often rejected their applications. Order-in-Council P.C. 1378, which was introduced in 1931 and repealed in 1947, was another barrier that prevented Chinese people from becoming naturalized Canadians. The order required that Chinese immigrants applying for Canadian citizenship had to provide official documentation that they relinquished their Chinese nationality (see Wickberg, p. 181; Yee, pp. 50, 55; and Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 103).

<sup>279</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 103.

<sup>280</sup> Ontario had Canada's second highest provincial Chinese population, 5,010, of which 15.5% were naturalized Chinese (see Wickberg, p. 304). Edgar Wickberg argues that the following factors caused the low-levels of Chinese naturalization in B.C.: "To the extent that naturalization is an indicator of assimilation, we would expect the B.C. results to be as they are. Vancouver and Victoria had large, well-established Chinatowns, which provided services and environments that encompassed most of the needs of the Chinese who lived there. Many Chinese could get by with little contact with white society and little need to make any commitment to it. Of equal importance, in B.C. judges were more likely than elsewhere to refuse citizenship applications from Chinese. Moreover, naturalization in B.C. did not cover the franchise or any other advantages" (see Wickberg, p. 150).

be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change that fundamental composition of the Canadian population.”<sup>281</sup> During the spring of 1947, British Columbia’s Chinese Canadian citizens saw another change with respect to their rights.<sup>282</sup> The provincial government voted to change the province’s Elections Act to include Chinese Canadians: for the first time in over seventy years, British Columbia’s Chinese Canadians were able to vote in both provincial and federal elections.<sup>283</sup>

Prior to its repeal in 1956, the Order-in-Council P.C. 2115 underwent a few minor amendments that slightly reduced its stranglehold on Chinese immigration.<sup>284</sup> Between 1947 and 1954, only 11,000 out of the 1,150,000 immigrants landing in Canada were Chinese. The president of Vancouver’s Chinese Benevolent Association, Foon Sien, had fought tirelessly against P.C. 2115. In 1956 he stated,

What we ask is not an open door to all Chinese who wish to come. Our appeal is that the Chinese Canadian may have his family with him – a complete family, not one part in Canada and the other part in Hong Kong or China.<sup>285</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Cold War spurred anti-Chinese sentiment in Canada; resistance to Chinese immigration because of the fear of communism increased

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<sup>281</sup> Cited in Yee, p. 118.

<sup>282</sup> Yee, p. 114.

<sup>283</sup> In 1875, the B.C. government disenfranchised the province’s Chinese. This legislation also prevented British Columbia’s Chinese Canadians from voting in federal elections; the War-Time Elections Act passed in 1917 stipulated that citizens disenfranchised from provincial elections were unable to vote in federal elections (see Li, *Chinese in Canada*, pp. 32-34).

<sup>284</sup> Yee, pp. 118-19.

<sup>285</sup> Cited in Yee, p. 119.

after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the 1950-1953 Korean War.<sup>286</sup>

In 1962, Canada shifted its immigration policies so that the immigrant's country of origin was no longer a major factor.<sup>287</sup> Instead, the policies were directed to assessing immigrants on their ability to boost the nation's economy. In 1967, Canada's immigration regulations were revised to remove all criteria based on ethnic origin. A point system, which allowed no differentiation between nationalities or ethnicities, was introduced. The class and background of Chinese immigrants changed remarkably after 1967 since the immigration policies favoured educated professionals and skilled workers. Immigration from Asia grew rapidly after these policy changes. Between 1968 and 1984, 169,000 Chinese landed in Canada, of whom 66% arrived from Hong Kong.<sup>288</sup> The marked increase of Hong Kong immigration after 1967 was not solely based on Canada's shift in immigration policies. During May to December 1967, Maoists in Hong Kong, inspired by the Cultural Revolution in China, rebelled against the British colonial government in Hong Kong; the demonstrations, riots, bombings, and martial law spurred many Chinese to emigrate from Hong Kong.<sup>289</sup> Five years later, when the People's Republic of China joined the United Nations, it reemphasized its aim to reclaim Hong Kong and caused another wave of emigration from the British colony.<sup>290</sup>

In Vancouver, the Chinese who had immigrated long before Canada's new immigration laws had mixed reactions to the post-1967 Chinese immigrants. Paul Yee

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<sup>286</sup> Anti-Chinese sentiment based on communist fears subsided during the 1970s when diplomatic relations between China and the West improved (See Li, *Chinese in Canada*, pp. 68, 93).

<sup>287</sup> Wickberg, pp. 244-45; and Yee, p. 144.

<sup>288</sup> Yee, p. 155.

<sup>289</sup> Wickberg, p. 245-46; and Yee, p. 156. Steve Tsang discusses the May to December 1967 uprising in Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 183-90.

<sup>290</sup> The Hong Kong stock market crash in 1973 also prompted many Chinese to leave Hong Kong for Canada. Yee, p. 156.

cites the following response: “They come to Canada today and they’ve got rights, they can vote, and the government helps them out. It’s a paradise for them. Do you think it was so easy for us? Do you think they’d have such a good time if it weren’t for us?”<sup>291</sup> Not only had Chinese Canadians acquired voting rights very recently, but Vancouver’s Canadian-born Chinese were only permitted to start working within professional fields during the early 1950s.<sup>292</sup>

Lisa Marie Jakubowski argues that although Canada adopted regulations during the 1960s that appeared equitable, the new Immigration Act still embodied veiled and subtle racist policies.<sup>293</sup> The point system introduced in 1967 was trumpeted as an objective method to assess an immigrant’s suitability; however, fifteen out of the one hundred points were graded subjectively by an immigration officer. Revisions to the 1976 Immigration Act addressed this inequity and reduced the subjective component to ten points out of one hundred. But the Act also introduced a caveat that allowed immigration officers to deny applicants entry regardless of whether or not they achieved the requisite fifty points required to pass the assessment. Furthermore, Jakubowski notes that the money spent on recruiting immigrants in less developed countries did not increase remarkably after Canada changed its immigration policies in 1962.<sup>294</sup> The developed nations, which received the majority of the funds, had been the traditional sources of immigration to Canada prior to 1962. This allotment of resources emphasized

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<sup>291</sup> Yee, p. 160.

<sup>292</sup> Yee, p. 126.

<sup>293</sup> Lisa Marie Jakubowski, “Managing” Canadian Immigration: Racism, Ethnic Selectivity, and the Law’, in *Locating Law: Race/Class/Gender/Sexuality Connections*, ed. by E. Comack, 2nd edn (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2006), pp. 94-122 (pp. 94-96, 104-08).

<sup>294</sup> The resources spent on Canada’s recruitment of migrants were split between nine percent for less developed nations and ninety-one percent for developed nations during 1951 and 1957. During 1962 and 1969, there was a minimal increase to twenty-two percent spent on less developed nations and seventy-eight percent spent on developed nations (see Jakubowski, p. 105).

that Canada had not entirely abandoned its “racist-inspired ‘White Canada’ policy.”<sup>295</sup>

The placement of Canadian immigration offices around the world also reflected the federal government’s subtle discriminatory practices: in 1981 the United States had ten offices, the United Kingdom had five, Africa had five, South America had three, and India had one.<sup>296</sup>

### **“Multiculturalism Means Business”**

The discriminatory policies referred to here show how Canada’s supposedly egalitarian Immigration Acts introduced after 1962 were holding on to the last vestiges of a “White Canada” policy. Even if these subtly racist policies are set aside, Canada’s immigration practices since the 1960s were not entirely egalitarian – the federal government removed overtly racist policies from the Immigration Act and introduced ones that assessed immigrants according to class. As discussed above, the point system evaluated an immigrant’s potential to contribute to the nation’s economy and thus favoured educated professionals, skilled workers, and intellectuals. Canada clearly articulated its aim to foster the immigration of wealthy individuals – who would be admitted only on condition that they invest their wealth in the nation’s economy – when it introduced the “entrepreneurial immigrant” category in 1978 and the “investor immigrant” category in 1986.<sup>297</sup> This type of policy was not unique to Canada: by 2000, at least twenty-nine other countries had developed business immigration programs.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Jakubowski, p. 94.

<sup>296</sup> Jakubowski, p. 94.

<sup>297</sup> See Chapter One, p. 24.

<sup>298</sup> David Ley, ‘Seeking *Homo Economicus*: The Canadian State and the Strange Story of the Business Immigration Program’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (2003), pp. 426-41 (p. 426).

During the 1980s and 1990s, Canada's immigration policies allowed the "entrepreneur" and "investor" immigrants to score a lower percentage on their applications and still be admitted than skilled workers who were applying with "independent economic status."<sup>299</sup> This discrepancy afforded individuals lacking post-secondary education and unable to speak Canada's official languages a better chance when they applied as business immigrants than as "independent" immigrants. David Ley notes that Canada's official multiculturalism and the flexibility accorded business immigrants, who had to have neither business experience nor detailed plans for their future enterprise, helped draw more Hong Kong emigrants to Canada after 1986 than to the United States, New Zealand, or Australia.

The state practice of awarding citizenship to those committed to entrepreneurialism derives from neo-liberal policies, which value economic growth as a nation's foremost concern and suppose that improvements in the economy lead ultimately to improvements in social welfare.<sup>300</sup> Since the 1980s Canada has viewed its multicultural project as an economic engine based on a "renewable resource."<sup>301</sup> Katharyne Mitchell examines the rhetoric used by the federal government to promote multiculturalism and discusses the way in which Canada's concept of multiculturalism works as an ideological construct. She also shows that cultural pluralism, a practice that derives from liberal, democratic, and egalitarian ideals, is promoted by the state as a morally and ethically informed policy and practice, yet is used by the state predominantly

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<sup>299</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', pp. 428-29.

<sup>300</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', p. 437. See my discussion of neo-liberalism in Chapter Two, pp. 60-61.

<sup>301</sup> Wong, p. 124.

to further its capitalist gains.<sup>302</sup> At a 1986 conference aptly named “Multiculturalism Means Business,” Prime Minister Brian Mulroney spoke about the enormous profits to be gained by cultural pluralism: “We, as a nation, need to grasp the opportunity afforded to us by our multicultural identity... Canadians who have cultural links to other parts of the globe, who have business contacts elsewhere are of the utmost importance to our trade and investment strategy.”<sup>303</sup> Mitchell posits that Mulroney was thinking primarily of Asia when he remarked on the potential trade with “other parts of the globe” and applies this analysis of “multiculturalist ideology” to the influx of foreign investment and local development in Vancouver during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>304</sup>

Vancouver’s immigration patterns show that the city attracted a disproportionate number of Canada’s “economic” immigrants during the early to mid 1990s.<sup>305</sup> Thomas Hutton notes that Vancouver is a unique case study for urban growth in Canada, in which foreign investment has played a major role. Drawing on Statistics Canada’s census information, Hutton reports that between 1991 and 1996 Vancouver had the highest rate of population growth (14.3%) of any Canadian city.<sup>306</sup> During these six years, eighteen percent of all immigrants coming to Canada chose Vancouver as a place to live. Vancouver accounted for approximately six percent of the national population; therefore, the city’s ratio of immigrant landings-to-total-population was three times that of the nation. Hutton also reports, “Four of every five international immigrants that have come to Vancouver in recent years have been from Asia, particularly from Hong Kong.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Mitchell, ‘Multiculturalism’, pp. 263-65, 279-88.

<sup>303</sup> Mitchell, ‘Multiculturalism’, pp. 281-82.

<sup>304</sup> Mitchell, ‘Multiculturalism’, pp. 281-82.

<sup>305</sup> Hutton, *Transformation of Canada’s Pacific Metropolis*.

<sup>306</sup> Hutton, *Transformation of Canada’s Pacific Metropolis*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>307</sup> Hutton, *Transformation of Canada’s Pacific Metropolis*, p. 7.

During 1994, 1995, and 1996, Vancouver was the destination for 33.5%, 35.8%, and 39.2%, respectively, of the total Hong Kong immigrants entering Canada.<sup>308</sup> Yet, the most remarkable characteristic of Vancouver's immigrant population during the 1990s was the large influx of business immigrants: 54.3% of Canada's business immigrants between 1992 and 1996 landed in British Columbia; however, only 15.2% of Canada's "social and humanitarian" immigrants – refugees and those coming by reason of family reunification – landed in the province during the same time.<sup>309</sup> Hutton comments that this influx has made a huge impact on Vancouver's economy: "...each investor-class immigrant to BC brought in an average of \$2.1 million. Over the recent period, this combination of immigration and capital inflow has contributed over \$4 billion in new income to the BC economy (mostly in Vancouver)."<sup>310</sup>

In 1998, the year Hutton published his laudatory pronouncement on the influx of investor immigrant capital, David Ley commented less favourably on preliminary results from a study on Hong Kong and Taiwanese business-immigrants: "At the very least, one can say that there is a fragility connected with this migration cohort that contradicts the widespread public impression, the myth, of deep wealth and vigorous entrepreneurialism, of an all-commanding economic overclass."<sup>311</sup> Ley found that many of the Taiwanese and Hong Kong business immigrants had strong entrepreneurial successes in Asia and

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<sup>308</sup> Vancouver's percentage of immigrants into Canada originating from Asia for 1994, 1995, and 1996 were 24.3%, 23.5%, and 25.1%. The percentages of immigrants originating from Europe were 9.9%, 9.8%, and 9.2%. The percentages of immigrants originating from North and Central America were 11.1%, 12.3%, and 12.3%. The only immigrant groups that had percentages lower than Vancouver's percentage of the national population (approximately 6%) were from the Caribbean (1.0%, 1.2%, and 1.0%) and South America (2.9%, 3.2%, and 4.7%). Hutton, *Transformation of Canada's Pacific Metropolis*, p. 8.

<sup>309</sup> Hutton, *Transformation of Canada's Pacific Metropolis*, pp. 7-9, 16n16.

<sup>310</sup> Hutton, *Transformation of Canada's Pacific Metropolis*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>311</sup> From David Ley's 3 June 1998 Wiley Lecture delivered to the Canadian Association of Geographers and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (see David Ley, 'Myths and Meanings of Immigration and the Metropolis', *Canadian Geographer* 43 [1999], pp. 2-19 [p. 17]). For a detailed analysis of the study, see Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', pp. 426-441.

emigrated with large assets but earned very little after arriving in Canada. Income-tax statistics for 1995 show that British Columbia's business immigrants' earnings increased with every year that they resided in Canada, but it took from ten to twelve years for the business immigrant's employment income to equal average employment income in British Columbia.<sup>312</sup> Ley comments that business immigrants' relatively low earnings contradict the goals of the Business Immigrant Program, which was supposed to be "an incubator of Canadian entrepreneurialism."<sup>313</sup> The "investor" immigrants who entered Canada did not fare well either; many suffered losses of funds, in part due to rampant corruption in the investor program.<sup>314</sup> The beleaguered business immigrants undoubtedly encountered difficulties after relocating to Canada because of their introduction and adjustment to a new business environment; they would have faced language barriers, differences in cultural norms and values, and were required to re-establish a social network of business ties. Yet, despite the difficulties experienced by "investor" and "entrepreneurial" immigrants, the federal government continued to publish impressive investment and business profit statistics tied to the Business Immigrant Program.<sup>315</sup>

The political uncertainty in Hong Kong before 1997 drove many Hong Kong Chinese to emigrate and seek citizenship in a second nation. Shortly before the change in administration, roughly ten percent of Hong Kong's population had acquired second passports.<sup>316</sup> Canada's Taiwanese immigrants faced similar political uncertainties; many emigrated because of the tensions between the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese

<sup>312</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', p. 434.

<sup>313</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', p. 434.

<sup>314</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', pp. 435-36.

<sup>315</sup> Ley notes that the federal government neglected to monitor the program; only a few business immigrants have been deported even though a large number did not meet the conditions of the entrepreneur or investor categories (ibid).

<sup>316</sup> Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 1.

governments.<sup>317</sup> Those who left Hong Kong and Taiwan typically retained their business contacts in Asia. Many of the business immigrants chose to return to Hong Kong and Taiwan after their Canadian enterprises failed. Others returned to Asia for work after their Canadian citizenship conditions were met, and they closed their required Canadian business ventures or flipped them to new business immigrants. This return migration led to an increase in “astronaut” families, whose main economic provider worked in Asia while the rest of the family lived in Canada.<sup>318</sup>

Aihwa Ong uses the terms “flexible citizenship” and “transnationality” to describe this practice of working in one nation while retaining citizenship in another for political, health, and educational benefits.<sup>319</sup> She contends that the Chinese transnational elite strive for flexibility and mobility, which allows them to move strategically according to global flows of capital.<sup>320</sup> Yet she notes that “Chinese entrepreneurs are not merely engaged in profit making; they are also acquiring a range of symbolic capitals that will facilitate their positioning, economic negotiation, and cultural acceptance in different geographical sites.”<sup>321</sup> Transnationality is tied to the flexible accumulation of capital as described by David Harvey.<sup>322</sup> Flexible accumulation favours geographically dispersed, small-scale businesses that can adapt to volatile and rapidly changing markets – a business model perhaps best exemplified by Hong Kong Chinese family firms.<sup>323</sup> Ong suggests that the Chinese transnational elites’ strategic dispersal of family, employment,

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<sup>317</sup> Ley, ‘Seeking *Homo Economicus*’, pp. 436-37.

<sup>318</sup> “Astronaut” was commonly used in Hong Kong newspapers to refer to transnational entrepreneurs and their families (see Ong, p. 127).

<sup>319</sup> Ong, pp. 1-26.

<sup>320</sup> Ong, p. 19.

<sup>321</sup> Ong, pp. 17-18.

<sup>322</sup> Ong, pp. 94-95. See Chapter Two, pp. 57-59 for my discussion of David Harvey’s analysis of flexible accumulation and postmodernism.

<sup>323</sup> Starting in the 1960s, Hong Kong was “(until the transfer of most production units to the Chinese mainland) the global capital of the subcontracting system of production” (see Ong, pp. 94-95).

and assets is a form of “flexible citizenship” whereby transnationals “both circumvent *and* benefit from different nation-state regimes.”<sup>324</sup>

Flexible citizenship is specific to the transnational elite, not transnational labouring classes.<sup>325</sup> Transnational investors and entrepreneurs are able to choose different locations for their investments and family, whereas transnational labourers and refugees are forced to move great distances for their livelihood. The late-nineteenth-century Chinese railway workers in Canada were sojourners rather than transnationals since they maintained their Chinese identity and intended to return to China.<sup>326</sup> Wong and Ng argue that transnationals differ from sojourners in that they are “simultaneously straddling two societies” and “find it difficult to commit and identify with any one society.”<sup>327</sup> Vancouver’s Chinese transnational elite is not limited to extremely wealthy entrepreneurs like Li Ka-shing, Victor Li, and Terry Hui; it includes small-scale Chinese business owners who operate transnationally.<sup>328</sup> Katharyne Mitchell notes that many Hong Kong investors have chosen Canada as a site for “social reproduction,” namely a place for family, education, and health benefits, while Southern China was chosen as a site for production, namely a space for factories and cheap labour.<sup>329</sup> Ong contends that flexible citizenship has not destabilized the nation-state; rather, nation-states adjust their immigration laws to attract global capital with the intention of benefiting the country.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Ong, p. 112.

<sup>325</sup> Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>326</sup> Lloyd L. Wong and Michele Ng, ‘The Emergence of Small Transnational Enterprise in Vancouver: The Case of Chinese Entrepreneur Immigrants’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26 (2002), pp. 508-30 (p. 526).

<sup>327</sup> Wong and Ng, p. 526.

<sup>328</sup> See Wong and Ng, pp. 508-30.

<sup>329</sup> Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line*, p. 16.

<sup>330</sup> Ong, p. 112.

Canada's Business Immigrant Program is an archetypal example of a nation's immigration laws that attract global capital and stimulate globalization.<sup>331</sup>

The transnational *modus operandi* has been (and is) perceived as a highly successful method of obtaining capital, and in practice the "astronaut" family tends to be secure in its assets and earnings. However, the dislocation between family members does take its toll.<sup>332</sup> Johanna Waters interviewed Hong Kong and Taiwanese "astronaut wives" residing in Vancouver and discovered the many difficulties they experience because of their family's geographic separation.<sup>333</sup> The Hong Kong "astronaut family" residing in Canada parallels the dislocated family unit of a late-nineteenth-century Chinese railway worker in Canada. The locations of employment and family, however, have reversed. The experience of physical separation was and is remarkably different for the two types of families, though. The transnational family is able to maintain its connections through telephone, e-mail, and air travel, whereas a railway labourer in North America had almost no interaction or communication with his family in Guangdong.

My analysis in Part A is a *précis* of Chinese immigration into British Columbia, Canadian immigration policies, and the host society's reception to Chinese immigrants since the nineteenth century. I began my analysis with the contentious history of Chinese railway labourers in British Columbia since this population formed the first major influx of Chinese immigration into Canada. It is also a relevant starting point for my summary of Canadian immigration policy since the federal government imposed its first restrictive

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<sup>331</sup> Ley, 'Seeking *Homo Economicus*', p. 437.

<sup>332</sup> Johanna L. Waters, 'Flexible families? 'Astronaut' Households and the Experiences of Lone Mothers in Vancouver, British Columbia', *Social & Cultural Geography* 3 (2002), pp. 117-34 (p. 130).

<sup>333</sup> Waters, pp. 117-34.

law on Chinese immigration when it introduced the head tax soon after the CPR was completed. I will revisit this topic in Part D, where I will discuss how and why this period is elided in Concord Pacific's public artworks that recount the site's history.

My discussion of Canada's immigration policies in Part A provides the context for that of Parts B and C, in which I examine how immigration policies and patterns have affected spatial practices in Vancouver. In Part B, I will summarize David Lai's analysis of Canadian Chinatowns. Lai examines how immigration policies and patterns have dictated the formation and nature of Chinatowns. In Part C, I will discuss the way in which Canada's immigration policies have produced the space on the north shore of False Creek; namely, how Chinese transnationality and flexible citizenship – which were both facilitated by the Business Immigrant Program – are deeply intertwined with the production of Concord Pacific Place.

### **Part B: Chinatowns**

There is no precise definition of a 'Chinatown'; usually it is perceived as a Chinese quarter of any city outside China. – David Chuenyan Lai<sup>334</sup>

In this section, I summarize David Chuenyan Lai's analysis of how Chinese people constructed their spaces in Canada. Lai's *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* is a comprehensive analysis of how Canada's immigration policies, Chinese immigration patterns, reception to Chinese societies by Canada's dominant population, Chinese culture, and other social, economic, and political conditions affected Chinese settlement and spatial practices in Canada. Lai's investigation of Chinatowns is particularly helpful for my analysis of Concord Pacific Place because he examines

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<sup>334</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 3.

Chinese spatial practices in Canada after the Second World War. Before that war, Chinatowns were created partly because of the host society's racist actions towards and assumptions about the city's Chinese residents. The pre-1945 Chinatowns are those that are usually (and traditionally) associated with the word "Chinatown." Lai's study, on the other hand, extends the definition of "Chinatown" to all "Chinese quarter[s] of any city outside China" regardless when built. Lai develops a classification system to describe the different types of Chinatowns. In Part C, I will discuss the way in which Lai's classification system applies to Concord Pacific Place and will examine whether it can be considered a Chinatown.

Lai classifies the city's Chinese quarter into four types: Old Chinatowns, New Chinatowns, Replaced Chinatowns, and Reconstructed Historic Chinatowns.<sup>335</sup> Old Chinatowns include all Chinese districts – residential, commercial, and institutional – established before World War Two. New Chinatowns, Replaced Chinatowns, and Reconstructed Historic Chinatowns were all built after 1945. A New Chinatown is a grouping of Chinese businesses usually located close to a residential area that houses a significant Chinese population. The Replaced Chinatown is a planned neighbourhood developed to replace an Old Chinatown. The Reconstructed Historic Chinatown is a restored Old Chinatown that no longer houses a Chinese population and is designated a heritage site. Greater Vancouver contains Old Chinatowns, namely the Chinese district established on False Creek's north shore, and New Chinatowns, such as the Chinese shopping malls and business centres in Richmond. Lai formulated a stage-development model that classes the various waves of growth, decline, and revitalization in Old

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<sup>335</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 4. Victoria receives the most attention in Lai's extensive study of Canadian Chinatowns. Lai taught at the University of Victoria as a geography professor until his retirement in 2003.

Chinatowns.<sup>336</sup> He contends that every Old Chinatown experienced budding, blooming, and withering stages, which was then followed by either a reviving stage or the district's destruction. I will provide a summary of Lai's stage-development model in the context of Vancouver's Chinatown and the New Chinatowns in Richmond.

Vancouver's Chinatown was established later than Victoria's Chinatown and the Chinatowns formed by and catering to Chinese gold-miners.<sup>337</sup> The district started to bud shortly after Vancouver's incorporation in 1886 when Chinese people began to settle the mudflats north of False Creek. In the budding stage, a Chinatown had a small population that was almost entirely male – the majority of whom were labourers, and the minority merchants – and lived in a tight configuration of wood shacks and cabins.<sup>338</sup> During the 1890s, Vancouver's Chinatown began its blooming stage, a period marked by accelerated immigration and an increase in marriages. Like most Old Chinatowns in the blooming stage, it was still a crowded neighbourhood, containing wood cabins and tenement buildings populated primarily by Chinese males. It was considered a slum by surrounding whites. As discussed above, racial tensions and policies prompted the Chinese to live in a segregated space. During the 1900s, Vancouver's Chinatown was unable to expand northwards past Hastings Street because of opposition from white residents and businesses.<sup>339</sup> In 1902, Market Alley was formed between Hastings Street and Dupont Street (now East Pender Street), spanning the area from City Hall to Carrall Street (Fig. 45). The alley was built to help access the very compact rows of tenement buildings used for residential and commercial purposes. The limit on northward

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<sup>336</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 4-8.

<sup>337</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 79-81.

<sup>338</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 5.

<sup>339</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 83.

expansion forced Chinatown to grow westward: Canton Alley was established in 1904, and Shanghai Alley in 1905.

At the time Lai wrote, most structures surviving in Vancouver's Chinatown had been built during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>340</sup> Vancouver's Chinatown had all the amenities of a self-sufficient community, and few Chinese opted to live outside it. The buildings in Old Chinatowns were designed by Western architects but incorporated popular Chinese elements.<sup>341</sup> Many of the buildings were two- or three-storey tenements of brick and wood, with businesses below and housing above. Some incorporated bay windows – not traditionally used in Chinese architecture – to increase floor space, as in the long and narrow Sam Kee building in Vancouver (Fig. 46). Many buildings incorporated recessed balconies that derive from South Chinese architecture. Other Chinese-style details, such as upturned eaves and roof-corners, moon-shaped doors, tiled roofs, and latticed windows were integrated into the Old Chinatowns' architecture. Buildings were painted in vibrant colors, especially red, yellow, green, and gold; were often adorned with figurative elements such as phoenixes, lions, and dragons; and included Chinese characters on their façades.

Vancouver's Chinatown, like all others in Canada, began to wither after the 1930s, since the period saw a marked decrease in Chinese population as a result of the 1923 Exclusion Act.<sup>342</sup> Once the Exclusion Act was lifted in 1947, popular attitudes towards Chinese people and Chinatowns changed.<sup>343</sup> No longer perceived as dangerous slums, Chinatowns were recognized as declining residential and commercial districts that

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<sup>340</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 85.

<sup>341</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 69-70; and David Chuenyan Lai, 'The Visual Character of Chinatowns', *Places* 7.1 (1990), pp. 28-31.

<sup>342</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 9, 85; and pp. 87-88.

<sup>343</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 120-24.

housed primarily aging Chinese bachelors. Most second-generation Chinese Canadians, who were generally wealthier and more educated than the first generation, moved out of Chinatowns into more affluent neighbourhoods. This exodus caused a drop in commercial activity in Chinatowns, prompting many Chinese businesses to move into other residential areas. During the 1950s and 1960s, Chinatowns across Canada were threatened by urban renewal programs. Vancouver's Old Chinatown managed to survive its withering stage without too many alterations.<sup>344</sup> The only area affected was Canton Alley; the tenements built along the alley were torn down in 1949. Urban redevelopment during the late 1950s and 1960s did affect many Chinese residents of the Strathcona neighbourhood adjacent to Chinatown; many Chinese had moved into the area during the 1950s. The greatest threat to Old Chinatown came in October 1967, when the city approved a proposed freeway that would require the destruction of many businesses in Chinatown. The Chinese community was joined by U.B.C. architecture and planning students in vociferous protests against the urban freeway plan. In January 1968, the city gave in to the group's pressure and dropped the plan.<sup>345</sup>

Lai contends that Vancouver's Chinatown started its revival stage when the Strathcona Rehabilitation Program was implemented in July 1971.<sup>346</sup> The revival stage for Old Chinatowns is typically tied to an influx of renewal money coming from any of the three levels of government. Businesses revive and commerce flourishes. Old Chinatowns in the reviving stage are often perceived as tourist or heritage sites. In February 1971, Vancouver's Old Chinatown became a protected area under the Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act. Vancouver's Chinatown was already

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<sup>344</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 126-30.

<sup>345</sup> See also Chapter One, pp. 18-19.

<sup>346</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 8, 132-34.

in the midst of an economic resurgence since Hong Kong investment money had started flowing into the neighbourhood soon after Canada changed its immigration policies in 1967. During the late 1970s, many projects revitalized Vancouver's Old Chinatown; and during the 1980s, large developments such as the Chinese Cultural Centre and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park and Garden were built in the neighbourhood.

Lai defines New Chinatowns as strictly commercial areas developed after 1945 that contain Chinese businesses, such as restaurants, offices, and stores that service large Chinese populations in adjacent residential areas.<sup>347</sup> In Canada's large cities, many new Chinese businesses opened outside of the Old Chinatowns because there were substantial target markets located in suburban areas. Many Chinese entrepreneurial immigrants chose to open their businesses outside of Old Chinatowns since there were few opportunities there because of limited space, rising property values, and plenty of competition. By 1988, Richmond had two New Chinatowns: there was a concentration of Chinese restaurants and stores in three separate shopping plazas, within a few blocks of one another along No. 3 Road; and a shopping mall, Johnson Centre (Xiang Shun Center), on the Westminster Highway west of No. 3 Road (Figs 47-49).<sup>348</sup> Lai notes that Johnson Centre "is more popularly known as Liezhiwen Xin Tangren Jie (Richmond's New Chinatown)."<sup>349</sup>

Lai's analysis of Canadian Chinatowns contrasts with Kay Anderson's *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*.<sup>350</sup> Anderson argues that a "Chinatown" is a European conception and a racial category that differentiated the

<sup>347</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 157.

<sup>348</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 163-64.

<sup>349</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 164.

<sup>350</sup> Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), pp. 3-33, 245-52.

West from the East, or “us” versus “them,” and was used by the state as an ideological construct to support European hegemony and oppressive practices against the Chinese. Lai, on the other hand, argues that although Chinatowns were formed in part by socially exclusionary practices, Chinese people also chose to live in separate districts.<sup>351</sup> Wing Chung Ng praises Anderson’s analysis of anti-Asian racism at the institutional level but disputes her thesis because it suggests that Chinese immigrants’ had little or no agency.<sup>352</sup> Lai notes that Anderson’s ideas apply only to Chinatowns constructed before the 1970s.<sup>353</sup> Contrary to Anderson’s conception of Chinatown as a racial category conceived by Europeans, Lai argues that the “visible, audible and olfactory imprints of Chinese cultural traits which define Chinatown in the urban fabric of a North American city are by no means a Western construction.”<sup>354</sup> Lai’s definition of Chinatown, which applies to all four types (Old, New, Replaced, and Reconstructed Historic), is based largely on the how the space is perceived by its inhabitants, neighbours, and visitors.<sup>355</sup> There is no fixed definition of Chinatown, he contends, and “concepts about a Chinatown vary from person to person, place to place, and time to time.”<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Lai argues that Chinese people chose to reside in Chinatown as a means to preserve their language, culture, and traditions (see Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 34-35, 275). See also Patricia E. Roy, Review of *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* by Kay J. Anderson, in *The Canadian Historical Review* 74 (1993), pp. 150-51 (p. 150).

<sup>352</sup> Ng, pp. 6-7.

<sup>353</sup> David Chuenyan Lai, Review of *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* by Kay J. Anderson, in *Journal of Historical Geography* 19 (1993), pp. 108-09 (p. 108).

<sup>354</sup> Lai, Review of *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, p. 109.

<sup>355</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, pp. 3-4, 8, 274.

<sup>356</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 274. For a critique of Lai’s loose definition of Chinatown, see Peter S. Li, Review of *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* by David Chuenyan Lai, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 513 (1991), pp. 194-95.

### **Part C: Is Concord Pacific a Transnational Chinatown?**

Following Lai's definition of a Chinatown – "usually it is perceived as a Chinese quarter of any city outside China" – can Concord Pacific Place be considered a Chinatown?<sup>357</sup> I contend that Concord Pacific Place accords with Lai's open definition of Chinatowns since the mega-project was developed by a Hong Kong firm and marketed to Hong Kong buyers. But I argue that Concord Pacific Place cannot be adequately described as one of Lai's New Chinatowns; instead, I propose that Lai's taxonomy requires an additional type that I call "Transnational Chinatowns." I by no means argue that Concord Pacific Place can be considered a strictly "Chinese quarter" or "Transnational Chinatown." Rather, I am using these constructs to analyze how Hong Kong capital, culture, and architecture have influenced the production of Concord Pacific Place.

As discussed in Part B, David Lai's classification system of Chinatowns into different types and stages is tied to the shifts in Canada's immigration policies. Lai explains, "Extensive observation of all major Chinatowns in Canada convinces me that the examination of Canadian immigration policies is essential to better understanding the growth and decline as well as demographic structures of the Chinese population and the evolution of Canadian Chinatowns."<sup>358</sup> My suggestion of a Transnational Chinatown is also directly related to the introduction of a specific Canadian immigration policy – the Business Immigrant Program. My concept of an archetypical Transnational Chinatown in Canada is a neighbourhood in which the business and residential properties are largely

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<sup>357</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 3.

<sup>358</sup> Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 274.

owned by Chinese investors and entrepreneurs who acquired Canadian citizenship through the Business Immigrant Program and Chinese investors residing overseas.

I will begin by discussing the way in which Concord Pacific is a family firm that expresses the characteristics of Chinese capitalism, and how Concord Pacific marketed its condominium residences to Hong Kong investors. I will then examine how Concord Pacific differs from Lai's definition of New Chinatowns and compare the urban mega-project with the New Chinatowns in Richmond. My analysis of Concord Pacific Place as a Transnational Chinatown is largely focused on how the site's Supermodern architecture and some of its public artworks refer to Chinese transnationality. I will also show why these visual references do not overtly suggest "Chineseness" but were probably meant to be noticed only by Hong Kong buyers and residents.

### **Concord Pacific: Chinese Capitalism and Hong Kong Sales**

Kris Olds contends that Concord Pacific's development of the north shore of False Creek "is a social and cultural construct, reflective of the nature of Hong Kong-based ethnic Chinese capitalism."<sup>359</sup> Olds argues that his analysis of Concord Pacific's capitalist organization is a case study of an economic structure exhibited by many other large-scale urban developments on the Pacific Rim.<sup>360</sup> Chinese capitalism is characterized by paternally organized family firms; key decisions are made by the male head of the family, and sons are included in the firm from an early age and are expected to lead the firm after their father's passing.<sup>361</sup> Li Ka-shing purchased the site so that his son Victor could learn how to manage a large-scale development – a key lesson in

<sup>359</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 113.

<sup>360</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 61.

<sup>361</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 60-61; and Ong, pp. 124-25.

Victor's training to become his father's successor.<sup>362</sup> Concord Pacific Place was a significant project that would develop Victor's international reputation but was still somewhat removed from the Hong Kong press, which would have been watching Victor's every move. Chinese capitalism is based largely on social networks involving personal and familial relationships, a distinguishing quality that derives from Confucian ideals, which I shall discuss further below. These social networks of Chinese capitalism have spread further across space as modernity has accelerated; close personal relationships were (and are) maintained on a global scale with the help of telecommunications and air travel.<sup>363</sup> Olds illustrates how Concord Pacific's ownership was spread among people who shared trusted personal ties.<sup>364</sup> After Li Ka-shing purchased the site, he divided the shares with two other wealthy Hong Kong business associates, Cheng Yu-Tung, and Lee Shau Kee. As Terry Hui, Victor's business partner at Grand Adex, became more involved with Concord Pacific, the Hui family acquired Lee and Cheng's shares of Concord Pacific.

Concord Pacific marketed its condominium units primarily to middle- and upper-class Canadian residents and Hong Kong investors.<sup>365</sup> Olds argues that Concord Pacific Place's condominiums would have also appealed to recent Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver because they would have "recognize[d] the 'brand name' of Li Ka-shing."<sup>366</sup> Since the 1970s, Vancouver had adopted its "liveable city" urban planning program, the essence of which was to shift the city away from being an industrial space of production

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<sup>362</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 123.

<sup>363</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 59-63.

<sup>364</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 131-33. Business relationships based on trust, which are a characteristic of Chinese capitalism, are argued to derive from Confucian ideals (see Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 59).

<sup>365</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>366</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 89.

to a post-industrial space of services and consumption.<sup>367</sup> The north shore of False Creek was an ideal residential location for managers, entrepreneurs, service workers, and other post-industrial professionals employed downtown. The condominium residences were subjected to a pre-sale process; units were sold before they were built, which allowed Concord Pacific to finance their condominium construction with the funds acquired from the future owners.<sup>368</sup> Olds comments that “pre-sale is the most common method of residential property development” in Hong Kong, and that the method became more popular in Vancouver during the 1990s following the influx of Hong Kong immigration and capital. In Vancouver, prospective buyers browsed representations of the yet-to-be-built condominium towers at the mega-project’s presentation centre. According to Concord Pacific, “This state-of-the-art facility, with its unique features of glass walls and high ceilings reflect the latest in architectural design and is a symbol of Concord Pacific’s expansive imagination.”<sup>369</sup> Peter Busby designed the mobile glass pavilion, which “uses building technology in a self-conscious way to express optimism in the future.”<sup>370</sup> The glass-box sales centre exhibited the Supermodern aesthetic and prefigured the glass towers – such as Landmark 33 and the Peninsula (Figs 17, 18, 21, and 22) – that would line the north shore of False Creek. Olds recounts his visits in 1994 to the presentation centre and notes that prospective buyers can view models and plans of the entire site, the

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<sup>367</sup> The south shore of False Creek was transformed from an industrial district into an urban residential neighbourhood (see Chapter One, p. 21).

<sup>368</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 4. Peter Newman reports: “Not a shovel of dirt is dug on any new building until it is fully leased or sold” (see Peter Newman, ‘The Master Builder’, *Vancouver Magazine* 26.9 [1993], pp. 34-42 [p. 36]).

<sup>369</sup> This description appears on the Concord Pacific Website (see Concord Pacific, ‘Contact us’ <[http://www.concordpacific.com/contactus/contact\\_us.html](http://www.concordpacific.com/contactus/contact_us.html)> [accessed 27 July 2007]).

<sup>370</sup> Bruce Haden, ‘Pavilion of Glass’, *The Canadian Architect* 39.9 (1994), pp. 20-24 (p. 20). Haden examines Busby’s use of advanced glazing techniques. Busby was involved with the design of Norman Foster’s high-tech Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building completed in 1985. See also ‘Crisp and Clean in Vancouver’, *Progressive Architecture* 75.12 (1994), p. 22.

condominium towers, and individual units within the towers.<sup>371</sup> Buyers were also provided with promotional brochures and information on mortgage plans with Hong Kong and Vancouver banks.

Until 1997, buyers in Hong Kong could visit a similar pre-sale office in the Vancouver Information Centre in the China Tower, Central Hong Kong.<sup>372</sup> Along with materials related to real estate, buyers could find globes and maps that emphasized Vancouver's connection to major centres on the Pacific Rim. Olds notes that Concord Pacific's advertisements in Hong Kong newspapers showed photographs of the site's Supermodern architecture – which Olds calls “neo-modern Pacific Rim condo-style” architecture – rather than the site's “strong West Coast vernacular” architecture.<sup>373</sup> Concord Pacific's condominium units appealed to Hong Kong buyers since they were cheaper than similar units in Hong Kong, and many purchased units as investments and vacation properties.<sup>374</sup> In its advertisements directed at the Hong Kong property market, Concord Pacific emphasized “leisure, the aesthetic, and consumption.” The site's location next to Vancouver's downtown, which offered a “veritable cornucopia of consumption opportunities,” and the city's focus on “liveability,” which strove for “aesthetic form” and urban recreational spaces such as the seawall, appealed to Hong Kong buyers and “wealthy domestic consumers,” Concord Pacific's two main target-markets.

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<sup>371</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>372</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 4, 138n38.

<sup>373</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 137.

<sup>374</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 97-98.

### **Concord Pacific Place: New Chinatown or Transnational Chinatown?**

Concord Pacific Place loosely echoes David Lai's criteria for New Chinatowns. Lai defines a New Chinatown as a concentration of Chinese businesses that service Chinese customers who live in adjacent residential areas. In some respects Concord Pacific Place was a New Chinatown during its planning and development phases because the place was part of a lucrative Hong Kong-owned business that was generating profit through property development on the north shore of False Creek and condominium pre-sales. There were undoubtedly local Chinese Canadian consumers who chose to purchase condominium units on the north shore of False Creek, but, as we know, Concord Pacific was not strictly marketing its products to Chinese residents in Vancouver. In its completed form, Concord Pacific Place is a residential area that houses a diverse community of people of numerous ethnicities. Concord Pacific Place is markedly different from the New Chinatowns in Richmond, which are commercial areas that contain numerous Chinese restaurants, malls, stores, and services. Much like the businesses in Vancouver's Old Chinatown, the businesses in Richmond's New Chinatowns can be clearly identified as "Chinese" because of the Chinese characters on the buildings' signs and the products that they sell (Figs 47-49). Concord Pacific Place's buildings and artworks, on the other hand, contain almost no Chinese symbols and icons traditionally associated with a city's old Chinatown; there are no dragons, lanterns, buildings with upturned eaves and roof-corners.

Even though Concord Pacific Place may not resemble Vancouver's Old Chinatown or Richmond's New Chinatown, I contend that Concord Pacific Place can be read as a Chinatown according to Lai's definition. The urban mega-project can be

perceived as a “Chinese quarter” in Vancouver in terms of its patrons’ Chinese ethnicity and its intended market in Hong Kong. Concord Pacific was a Hong Kong-owned firm that targeted Hong Kong transnationals as one of their primary markets – especially before Hong Kong’s change in administration in 1997. The anticipated influx of Hong Kong immigrants into Vancouver – many of whom were entering Canada as business immigrants – was a primary reason why Concord Pacific acquired the site.<sup>375</sup> Concord Pacific was undoubtedly aware that Hong Kong investors, who feared political and economic uncertainty after 1997, perceived Canadian property and businesses as safe havens in which they could invest their wealth.

Concord Pacific Place appears to be an example of a Transnational Chinatown when considering the patrons’ ethnicity, the firm’s marketing plan in Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong and Taiwanese investors who purchased Concord Pacific’s condominium units. The urban mega-project, however, is by no means limited to Hong Kong and Taiwanese residents. The neighbourhood houses a diverse community that varies in gender, age, and ethnicity. Although I have used Concord Pacific Place as an example to describe what I call a Transnational Chinatown, I contend that the urban mega-project can only partially be considered a Transnational Chinatown.

### **Art and Architecture in a Transnational Chinatown**

Although our perception of Chinatown may be shaped by our knowledge of it as a social entity, our perception is also influenced by the act of seeing. David Chuenyan Lai<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 75-90.

<sup>376</sup> Lai, ‘Visual Character of Chinatowns’, p. 29.

In the previous subsection, I argued that, as “a social entity,” Concord Pacific Place can arguably be perceived as a type of Chinatown. But what about the physical space, and how is it read visually? Based on Lai’s idea that “our perception [of Chinatown] is also influenced by the act of seeing,” I suggest that Concord Pacific Place’s Supermodern architectural style and some of its public artworks emphasize that the space is a Transnational Chinatown. The suggestion of Chinese transnationality through the site’s art and architecture may have been evident to only some of the residents of and visitors to the Concord Pacific neighbourhood. These visual references to Chinese transnationality do not overtly suggest “Chineseness,” unlike the symbols and icons prevalent in Vancouver’s Old Chinatown and Richmond’s New Chinatowns.

As Chapter Two discusses, the Supermodern glass towers that line the north shore of False Creek are symbolic of accelerated modernity, globalization, informationalism, and technological progress. These social, political, and economic conditions are deeply intertwined with transnationality, which according to Aihwa Ong is “the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space – which has been intensified under late capitalism.”<sup>377</sup> The tall, thin glass towers on the Concord Pacific site are indicative of transnational flows – specifically, the cultural exchanges and migration between Hong Kong and Vancouver. As Chapter One discusses, the point towers built by Concord Pacific resemble the numerous tall, narrow towers built in Hong Kong.<sup>378</sup> Stanley Kwok, Concord Pacific’s director and senior vice-president from 1987 to 1993, confirmed that this architectural reference to Hong Kong was deliberate. Critic Trevor Boddy reported:

Kwok said his original concept for Vancouver’s Concord Pacific development came out of 1970s tropical resorts, combined with the tall,

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<sup>377</sup> Ong, p. 4.

<sup>378</sup> Chapter One, pp. 42-43.

thin towers of Hong Kong he knew well from working there. To these distant sources was added something already established in Vancouver's False Creek South – a commitment to mixing social classes and building community and wealth for all through public amenities like parks, day-care centres and arts facilities.<sup>379</sup>

Kwok had an intimate knowledge of Hong Kong's architectural practices since he worked as an architect in Hong Kong before immigrating to Canada in 1968.<sup>380</sup> Kwok was probably inspired by the private residential point towers built on the City One Shatin development in Sha Tin New Town, part of Hong Kong's New Territories. City One Shatin is a large, high-density residential project completed between 1981 and 1989 and containing fifty-two towers ranging from twenty-seven to thirty-four storeys.<sup>381</sup> Cheung Kong (Holdings) Ltd, a property development company founded and chaired by Li Ka-shing, was involved with building the mega-project. City One Shatin was a "prototype" for Hong Kong's large-scale residential projects since it was the first development in Sha Tin, which was in turn one of the first communities developed in the New Territories.<sup>382</sup> Concord Pacific Place also resembles this prototype, but the towers lining the north shore of False Creek "are the products of a number of different architects, and cladding and detailing have been selected to emphasize slight marketing differences between them, rather than the emphatic unity of the Hong Kong project."<sup>383</sup> In 1993, Hiroshi Watanabe explained that the uniformity exhibited in Hong Kong's private architecture was in part

<sup>379</sup> Trevor Boddy, 'False Creek in the Arabian desert', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 7 February 2004, sec. F, p. 21. See also Boddy, 'New Urbanism', pp. 16-18; and Boddy, 'Downtown's Last Resort', p. 21.

<sup>380</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 102. Kwok was also the director and president of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects prior to leaving the British colony.

<sup>381</sup> Edward George Pryor and Shiu-hung Pau, 'The New City Emerges', in *Hong Kong Architecture: The Aesthetics of Density*, pp. 111-39 (p. 115); and Cheung Kong (Holdings) Limited, 'City One Shatin' <<http://www.ckh.com.hk/eng/property/completed/residential/cityone.html>> [accessed 10 August 2007].

<sup>382</sup> In 1972, Hong Kong started a Housing Program that would develop nine new communities. Sha Tin was one of the first three new towns to be built. The new towns allowed developers to build on large parcels, whereas before the 1972 Housing Program, developers were limited to building on small parcels in urban spaces and residential towers conformed to the existing linear street patterns (see Pryor and Pau, 'The New City Emerges', pp. 111-15).

<sup>383</sup> Boddy, 'Borrowed Places, Borrowed Times', p. 51.

due to developers' placing "tremendous pressure" on architects to complete designs as quickly as possible.<sup>384</sup> The high interest rates on land in Hong Kong forced an expedited design process that was "scarcely conducive to imaginative solutions."<sup>385</sup>

Kwok had discouraged Li Ka-shing from hiring I.M. Pei and other internationally renowned architects to design buildings for Concord Pacific Place.<sup>386</sup> Instead, Kwok encouraged Li to use local architects to appease Vancouver's citizens. Kris Olds notes:

The Vancouver architects were 'solid basic' professionals who would 'get the job done', to the extent that creativity (as a factor) was a relatively unimportant criterion when hiring them. In other words, 'they knew where to put the doorknobs' (G. Magnus, interview, Apr. 1994).<sup>387</sup>

Kwok and Magnus's statements suggest that the local architects were "get[ting] the job done" by designing the prescribed Hong Kong-style towers accented by a 1970s resort aesthetic. Concord Pacific's pragmatic vision of architecture, which valued architects for their utility rather than their creativity, is similar to current trends in the Vancouver condominium market as a whole. In 2006, Rhodri Windsor Liscombe commented that Vancouver's condominium developers favoured "architizing" – the production and dissemination of advertising materials – over architectural design: "On average, the expenditure on the services of such marketing firms amounts to approximately 14 percent of total development budgets as against approximately two percent for all design activity."<sup>388</sup> Vancouver's trend to architizing is remarkably similar to conventions in condominium construction and pre-sale advertising in Hong Kong, where "architecture is

<sup>384</sup> Hiroshi Watanabe, 'Report from Hong Kong: Building a Future', *Art in America* 81.7 (1993), pp. 42-47 (pp. 42-43).

<sup>385</sup> Watanabe, pp. 42-43.

<sup>386</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 136.

<sup>387</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 136. George Magnus was one of Li Ka-shing's main associates. He was the deputy chairman of Li Ka-shing's Cheung Kong (Holdings) Ltd. and was involved the sale of the Expo '86 site (see Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 122).

<sup>388</sup> Liscombe also notes that condominium promotional materials rarely emphasized building design. Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, 'Architizing', *The Canadian Architect* 51.8 (2006), pp. 26-28.

no longer the art of designing buildings, but rather a means of expressing an exclusive concept or a collective fantasy.”<sup>389</sup> Brochures and showrooms create this “collective fantasy” and often market condominium units according to resort-style themes such as Hawaii and the Caribbean or historic themes such as the renaissance and ancient Greece.<sup>390</sup> The emphasis on promotional materials rather than building-design is undoubtedly driven by the pre-sale process, which advertises and sells condominium units before they are built.

Concord Pacific’s glass towers are in a Hong Kong-style of Supermodernism that is symbolic of Chinese transnationalism. My suggestion of an ethnic variant of Supermodernism contrasts sharply with Ibelings’s position in *Supermodernism*, which declares that Supermodern architecture is neutral, has no historical or place-based references, and is “architecture in the age of globalization.”<sup>391</sup> The neutral and universal characteristics that Ibelings sees in Supermodern architecture derive from an imagined globalization process that is singular and universal – namely, a European and North American model of modernism and capitalism that spreads uniformly around the world. My reading of Concord Pacific’s architecture as a Supermodern style nuanced and varied by ethnic influences is analogous to Aihwa Ong’s analysis of Chinese forms of modernity and capitalism.<sup>392</sup> Ong disagrees with theorists that contend globalization causes cultural

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<sup>389</sup> Laurent Gutierrez and Valerie Portefaix, ‘Homes for China’, *Design Issues* 19.3 (2003), pp. 21-36 (p. 27).

<sup>390</sup> Gutierrez and Portefaix, p. 28.

<sup>391</sup> I disagree with Ibelings’s argument. I contend that Supermodern architecture contains many symbolic references (see Chapter Two, pp. 56, 68-70).

Peter G. Rowe examines the differences in modern architecture throughout East Asia. See Peter G. Rowe, *East Asia Modern: Shaping the Contemporary City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

<sup>392</sup> Ong, pp. 29-54. Ong examines the post-Maoist modernity in China, which is influenced by Southeast Asian and overseas Chinese socio-economic structures. See also Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang’s analysis of post-Mao socioeconomic structures in China and their discussion of how to conceive Chinese

homogeneity worldwide.<sup>393</sup> She is also critical of postcolonial models of modernity that merely pit Asian states and economies as reactionary opposites to an all-pervasive Western-derived capitalist system. Instead, she suggests that Asian nations have constructed “alternative modernities” and that each distinct form of modernity consists of appropriated Western elements that are reformulated according to indigenous cultures and traditions.

Indeed, in a world of Western hegemony, Asian voices are unavoidably inflected by orientalist essentialisms that infiltrate all kinds of public exchanges about culture. I use the term *self-orientalization* in recognition of such predicaments, but also in recognition of the agency to maneuver and manipulate meanings within different power domains. Statements about Chinese modernity are an amalgam of indigenous ideas, Western concepts, and self-orientalizing representations by Asian leaders. Such formulations of modernity should not come as a surprise since the Asia Pacific region as a geopolitical entity was constructed by Euroamerican imperialism and capitalism.<sup>394</sup> [*italics in original*]

Ong focuses on a Chinese “alternative modernity” formed during Deng Xiaoping’s leadership (1976-1996), when China portrayed itself as a socialist state that adopted a capitalist economic system to strengthen the nation.<sup>395</sup> After opening its doors to foreign capital, many Hong Kong and other overseas Chinese invested in industrial operations in mainland China, especially in Guangdong.<sup>396</sup> Ong contends that overseas Chinese have been the main actors who developed Chinese forms of modernity: “Huaqiao communities have provided the signs, forms, and practices of a distinctive modernity that learns from the West but transforms capitalism into a Chinese

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postmodernism (see Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang, ‘Introduction: Postmodernism and China’, in *Postmodernism & China*, ed. by A. Dirlik and X. Zhang [Durham: Duke University Press, 2000], pp. 1-17).

<sup>393</sup> Ong, pp. 29-36, 53-54.

<sup>394</sup> Ong, p. 81. Arif Dirlik argues that “alternative modernities” are products of colonialism and were not formed outside the scope of European and North American modernity (see Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* [Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007], pp. 70-85).

<sup>395</sup> Ong, pp. 36-41, 68-77.

<sup>396</sup> Ong, pp. 37-38. By 1991, overseas Chinese invested over two billion US dollars into Guangdong and employed approximately three million mainland Chinese.

phenomenon.<sup>397</sup> The modern skyscrapers constructed in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia also provided a model for China's architectural program that evokes its capitalist ambitions.<sup>398</sup> China has not merely replicated overseas Chinese architecture but has created modernist building styles that are unique to the nation.<sup>399</sup> Hong Kong's influence, however, should not be discounted. Hong Kong-owned property development firms such as Li Ka-shing's Cheung Kong have invested in China's ambitious urban redevelopment program and produced numerous structures and mega-projects.<sup>400</sup>

Quite specifically, China's burgeoning capitalist venture is tied to a revival in Confucianism. The philosophy was suppressed in China during the Cultural Revolution but regained the government's support following Mao's death. The Chinese state and academics have championed China's capitalist system as a Confucian-inspired model that is morally superior to liberal Western capitalist economies. Chinese capitalism (discussed above in the context of Concord Pacific) is represented as a system that emphasizes networks of trust, family, and personal relationships.<sup>401</sup> Many Chinese scholars consider European and especially American forms of capitalism to be

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<sup>397</sup> Ong, p. 52. The term "*huaqiao*," which refers to overseas Chinese, has a contentious history. See my discussion of *huaqiao* below.

<sup>398</sup> Anthony D. King and Abidin Kusno, 'On Be(ij)ing in the World: "Postmodernism," "Globalization," and the Making of Transnational Space in China', in *Postmodernism & China*, pp. 41-67 (p. 49); and Charlie Q. L. Xue, *Building a Revolution: Chinese Architecture Since 1980* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 31-32.

<sup>399</sup> For a discussion of the rise of modernism in China during and following Deng's leadership, see Bernard Chan, *New Architecture in China* (New York: Merrell, 2005), pp. 7-15; Yung Ho Chang, 'A Very Brief History of Modernity', in *On the Edge: Ten Architects from China*, ed. by I. Luna and T. Tsang (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), pp. 9-12; and King and Kusno, pp. 41-67.

<sup>400</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>401</sup> In practice, Chinese capitalism has not necessarily met its apologists' moral pronouncements: "In both state-sponsored capitalist ventures and family-firm operations, the exploitation of young female workers and children is pervasive and in some cases, has been intensified by flexible strategies of capital accumulation based on informal networks and subcontracted production processes" (see Ong, p. 78). See also Ong, p. 131.

individualistic and immoral systems.<sup>402</sup> This Confucian revival also functioned strategically to reinforce business links between mainland and overseas Chinese because it emphasized the two groups' common history and culture. Mainland and overseas Chinese share a history of strained relationships. Ong notes that "overseas Chinese, who, after centuries of being portrayed as traitors, are now considered the prodigal sons of China's modernity."<sup>403</sup> Many mainland Chinese, however, question whether the return of overseas Chinese and capital is driven strictly by profit or if there is genuine interest in improving China as a nation.<sup>404</sup>

The Confucian revival that ties Chinese transnationals to China operates to identify the globally dispersed Chinese as a singular homogenous diaspora.<sup>405</sup> Ien Ang and Wang Gungwu note that describing Chinese transnationals as a diaspora appears to repeat China's view of overseas Chinese as *huaqiao*. *Huaqiao* was used by China as an ideological construction to bind all overseas Chinese with mainland China on racial and ethnic grounds. It implied that overseas Chinese were sojourners that had a "militant commitment to remaining Chinese or restoring one's 'Chineseness'."<sup>406</sup> This widely espoused, essentialist loyalty to China helped feed the prevalent anti-Chinese sentiments in late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth-century North America. Ang, who discusses the difficulties of defining the boundaries between Chinese and non-Chinese, argues against reformulations of a Chinese diaspora, which is synonymous with "sameness-in-dispersal".<sup>407</sup> She suggests that the globally dispersed Chinese should not be ascribed an

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<sup>402</sup> Ong, pp. 40-41, 70-77.

<sup>403</sup> Ong, p. 42. See also Ang, p. 12.

<sup>404</sup> Ong, pp. 60-61.

<sup>405</sup> Ang, pp. 81-85.

<sup>406</sup> Wang Gungwu cited in Ang, p. 82.

<sup>407</sup> Ang, p. 13.

essentialist homogenous identity but a plural and hybrid identity. She cites Wang who suggests:

the single word, Chinese, will be less and less able to convey a reality that continues to become more pluralistic. We need more words, each with the necessary adjectives to qualify and identify who exactly we are describing. We need them all to capture the richness and variety of the hundreds of Chinese communities that can now be found.<sup>408</sup>

Concord Pacific Place is one of “the hundreds of Chinese communities” and it also requires “more words” than solely “Chinese” to describe its transnational owners and residents. In order to demonstrate this point, I will discuss Buster Simpson’s *Brush with Illumination* (Figs 40 and 41), a Concord Pacific-sponsored public artwork, as a cultural text that describes some aspects of Concord Pacific Place’s diverse community. The public sculpture plays with traditional Chinese symbols and icons but reformulates these Chinese themes to evoke a new form of Chineseness that is specific to the north shore of False Creek.

*Brush with Illumination* is an “evolutionary successor” of the traditional Chinese calligraphy brush that records False Creek’s tide levels, water currents, and wind speeds and digitally reproduces the information as ideograms on a website.<sup>409</sup> An “ideogram” is a symbol that conveys an idea and is a term that refers to the characters used in Chinese and Japanese script. The successively produced ideograms created by *Brush with Illumination* change with the shifts in False Creek’s weather, tides, and currents. At any given point in time, this fluctuating ideogram is a computer-generated image formed by a complex mathematical equation that uses the waterway’s environmental conditions as its variables. The viewer can only ascertain this reading by visiting the website listed on the

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<sup>408</sup> Wang Gungwu cited in Ang, p. 85.

<sup>409</sup> See Chapter One, p. 41.

artwork's explanatory plaque fixed to the seawall railing. *Brush with Illumination* is symbolic of a Chinese alternative modernity since it combines allusions to Chinese cultural icons with the techno-optimism of Supermodernity. Even though the sculpture was created by an American, Seattle-based artist for residents and visitors in Vancouver, it can also be considered a Hong Kong Chinese artwork since Concord Pacific commissioned it.<sup>410</sup> As in my argument above, in which I suggest that Concord Pacific's Supermodern point towers refer to Chinese transnationality, I also contend that *Brush with Illumination* alludes to Chinese transnationality. The sculpture plays with a prevailing social condition experienced by many Hong Kong investors who bought Concord Pacific condominium units with views of False Creek. Not all Hong Kong buyers chose to reside in Vancouver since many units were purchased as vacation properties and investments, or homes for "astronaut" families. The electronic calligraphy brush, which "is perhaps the first work of art to present the public with actual and virtual realities simultaneously,"<sup>411</sup> allows the overseas property owner to enjoy digital reproductions of False Creek. This virtual view of the waterway offered in real time is comparable to the coveted views of False Creek seen from the Concord Pacific

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<sup>410</sup> Simpson's website states, "*Brush with Illumination* was conceived in 1994 for the city of Vancouver, British Columbia. The notion of a large 'tool' of communication – the calligraphy brush – is a companion to an earlier, unrealized proposal, Fiber Optic Quill (1992), for the San Jose International Airport. The feather drew references to local early aviation innovations that arose from the study of the tailfeathers of birds in flight... The dynamic evolution of *Brush with Illumination* was driven by finding a balance between science, environmental conditions, budget, and the intent of the piece. The sculpture, *Brush with Illumination*, dances to the flow patterns of the tidal 'inkwell' of False Creek, responding to the character and interaction of environmental conditions. It is also an instrument of data acquisition, transmission, and translation that will create a unique language of ideograms for the third millennium" (see 'Conception' in 'Brush with Illumination'). Simpson states that "budget, and the intent of the piece" determined the outcome of the artwork. Concord Pacific provided the budget, and the intent of the artwork was determined by Concord Pacific in conjunction with its public art consultant. The jury for Concord Pacific's Illuminations public art competition chose Simpson's proposal for *Brush with Illumination*. The Illuminations competition had light as its theme (see Chapter One, p. 40).

<sup>411</sup> See 'Function' in 'Brush with Illumination'.

condominium towers.<sup>412</sup> The digital reproductions of False Creek, however, are not direct representations of the waterway; rather, they are ideograms created by a formula that uses numerical data based on False Creek's environmental conditions.

The traditional Chinese iconography employed in *Brush with Illumination* has a specific meaning associated with the artwork's place and its socio-political context. The calligraphy brush refers to the community of ethnic Chinese living on the north shore of False Creek – a place in a nation that was perceived as a safe haven for Hong Kong and Taiwanese immigrants who feared China's acquisition of Hong Kong and a possible Chinese re-appropriation of Taiwan. But *Brush with Illumination* is not simply a traditional Chinese calligraphy brush. It is the “evolutionary successor of an ancient communication tool” that “will create a unique language of ideograms for the third millennium.”<sup>413</sup> Henry Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light* (Figs 38-40), another public artwork sponsored by Concord Pacific and located along False Creek, also suggests that a new language will emerge in the region. Tsang's artwork, however, does not make explicit references to the Chinese language or ideograms. A plaque that accompanies *Welcome to the Land of Light* states, “[the artwork] juxtaposes English and Chinook Jargon, creating a metaphor for the ongoing development of intercultural communications in this region... Perhaps in the 21st Century there will be another shift in social and cultural relations to bring forth yet another dominant language.”<sup>414</sup> *Brush with Illumination* and *Welcome to the Land of Light* were both commissioned for the

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<sup>412</sup> Condominium units with water views are valuable and prized commodities in Hong Kong and Vancouver's real estate markets (see Chapter One, p. 43).

<sup>413</sup> See ‘Conception’ in ‘Brush with Illumination’.

<sup>414</sup> For my discussion of *Welcome to the Land of Light*, see Chapter One, pp. 40-41, and Chapter Two, pp. 65-67.

illuminations site and are separated by approximately 150 meters (Fig. 6).<sup>415</sup> I contend that Tsang and Simpson's artworks can be read together. The two works' proclamation of a new language, which is formed by the environmental conditions of False Creek and conveyed through ideograms similar to those used in Chinese script, suggests the creation of a new Chinese identity specific to the Vancouver region; namely, a Chinese community consisting primarily of emigrants originating from Hong Kong and Taiwan who are globally mobile and connected to worldwide networks of information and capital. Tsang and Simpson's insinuation of a new Chinese identity negates the notion of a singular homogeneous Chinese diaspora that is racially bound and loyal to China. Moreover, the artworks' prediction of a new "dominant language" does not necessarily imply the Chinese language but may refer to a hybrid of Chinese and other languages.

### **Concord Pacific Place: a Transnational Chinatown or a "High-tech Village of the 21st Century"?**

I have discussed Concord Pacific Place in the context of Lai's definition of Chinatowns and my concept of a Transnational Chinatown. The patrons' ethnicity and Concord Pacific's targeted market of Hong Kong investors and immigrants support my argument that the urban mega-project is in part a Transnational Chinatown. Following Lai's Chinatown classification system, I contend that the Transnational type of Chinatown also correlates with a specific Canadian immigration policy, the Business Immigrant Program. Although I have used Concord Pacific Place as an example to illustrate my concept of a Transnational Chinatown, I am not arguing that Concord

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<sup>415</sup> Chapter One, p. 40.

Pacific Place is a strict expression of a Transnational Chinatown. As a “social entity,” it is only partially a Transnational Chinatown.

Concord Pacific Place’s condominium towers with their small floor-plates and *Brush with Illumination*, together, operate visually to suggest that Concord Pacific Place is a Transnational Chinatown and differ markedly in style from the pre-1945 art and architecture in the neighbouring Old Chinatown. Far from being “universal” or “non-referential,” the Supermodern aesthetic employed in Concord Pacific Place’s point towers and Simpson’s public artwork alludes to the Chinese transnationals who reside and own property on the site. On the other hand, the art and architecture in Vancouver’s Chinatown employ traditional Chinese icons and symbols, which refer to pre-modern China. For Chinese sojourners, many of whom traveled to Canada to work on the railway, the traditional Chinese icons and symbols likely operated as a nostalgic reminder of their home. The Chinese-themed art and architecture in Vancouver’s Old Chinatown also functioned to delineate the space as a distinctive Chinese neighbourhood, a space that was far different from the spaces occupied by the host society. Concord Pacific’s Hong Kong-style point towers may operate as nostalgic reminders of home for Hong Kong immigrants residing in the neighbourhood. Unlike Vancouver’s Old Chinatown and Richmond’s New Chinatowns, Concord Pacific has not defined its urban mega-project as a distinctive Chinese place but has made subtle references to Hong Kong, which I believe were intended to be recognized only by Hong Kong buyers. For example, although Chinese characters do not appear on Concord Pacific’s buildings’

facades, many of the mega-project's condominium towers bear the same names as towers built in Hong Kong.<sup>416</sup>

I contend that Concord Pacific attempted to minimize overt references to Hong Kong because of the racist backlash that followed Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo '86 site. In Chapter Four, I will discuss local racist responses to Concord Pacific in more detail. Concord Pacific's use of local architects to design its point towers is one way in which Concord Pacific tried to weaken its urban mega-project's reputation as a Hong Kong enclave. Stanley Kwok encouraged Li Ka-shing to use local architects rather than I.M. Pei and other internationally renowned architects because of the local uproar over a Hong Kong developer's acquisition of the Expo '86 lands.<sup>417</sup> Although local architects did design Concord Pacific's condominium towers, the architects had to abide by the terms of the False Creek North Official Development Plan (FCNODP), which required point towers.<sup>418</sup> Concord Pacific's Stanley Kwok, who worked as an architect in Hong Kong prior to immigrating to Canada, was largely responsible for negotiating the FCNODP's details with Vancouver's urban planners. As discussed above, Kwok revealed that Concord Pacific's point towers purposely mimicked Hong Kong skyscrapers.

In my discussion of Vancouver *Sun* articles that pertain to Concord Pacific in Chapter Four, I will illustrate that Concord Pacific rarely emphasized its connections to Hong Kong and frequently downplayed predictions that its condominiums would be purchased by Hong Kong investors. Instead, Concord Pacific promoted its

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<sup>416</sup> Kris Olds notes, "Some individual buildings on the site (e.g. the Concordia) are also names used by Cheung Kong in Hong Kong (Concordia Plaza in this case)" (see Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, p. 130n32). Cheung Kong is a company owned by Li Ka-shing (see p. 116).

<sup>417</sup> See Chapter Four, p. 160.

<sup>418</sup> See Chapter One, p. 30.

neighbourhood as the first fibre-optic community in North America and as “a high-tech village of the 21st century.” The point towers’ Supermodern architectural aesthetic functions in an ideal way to minimize overt references to Hong Kong and emphasize the neighbourhood’s image as a high-tech space. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the Supermodern architectural style refers to globalization, accelerated modernity, technological progress, and informationalism. Concord Pacific’s Supermodern towers also allude to Chinese transnationality; although I contend that the architecture’s suggestion of “Chineseness” is subtle and likely meant to be noticed only by Hong Kong buyers. Likewise, *Brush with Illumination* and *Welcome to the Land of Light* overtly celebrate the site’s connectivity to global communications networks through its fibre-optic system and clearly emphasize this techno-optimism to viewers passing by the two public artworks.<sup>419</sup> Only by visiting the sculpture’s website, however, can viewers ascertain that *Brush with Illumination* refers to two traditional Chinese symbols, a calligraphy brush and ideograms.

#### **Part D: The Elided History of Chinese Railway Labourers**

My analysis of Concord Pacific Place thus far has centred on the mega-project’s Supermodern architecture and technophilic artworks. In the previous section, I illustrated how the Supermodern point towers and *Brush with Illumination* subtly refer to Chinese transnationality. In this section, I will turn to the urban mega-project’s architectural elements that refer to historic structures on the site and other public artworks, such as *Streetlight* (Figs 35 and 36) and *Welcome to the Land of Light* (Figs 37-39), which remind viewers of False Creek’s past. I will discuss possible reasons why the

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<sup>419</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 65-68.

historically-themed public artworks on the site lack references to the city's Chinese residents and Chinese railway labourers. I will also show how some of the site's Postmodern architecture, which was meant to allude to the site's CPR history, also summons up the railway's Chinese labourers for those who already know the history.

A number of Concord Pacific's public artworks examine historical themes such as the CPR, Expo '86, industry, and the site's Indigenous past – albeit in a whitewashed and clean rendition with no account of the actual oppressive history. Direct references to the city's Chinese population or the region's Chinese railway workers, however, are absent from the public artworks sponsored by Concord Pacific. Bernie Miller's and Alan Tregebov's *Streetlight* includes ten panes that each reproduce an archival photograph of an event or a scene occurring on or around the north shore of False Creek. The descriptions of the photographs engraved on the sculpture's concrete bases reveal that the images range from 1886-1985. None of the descriptions of the ten images mention the region's Chinese people. Similarly, Tsang's *Welcome to the Land of Light*, which recalls the languages spoken in the region during the nineteenth century, only mentions English and Chinook Jargon – a language that “can be traced to the dialect of the Columbia River Chinook in Oregon, with elements from English, French and Nootkan.” Tsang's account of the site's multilingual history does not include Cantonese, a language commonly spoken in the region since the arrival of Chinese gold miners in 1858.

Concord Pacific did commission one public artwork, Al McWilliams's *Untitled (Fountain)* (Fig. 42), which was intended to commemorate Chinese railway workers. The fountain contains a black granite lotus flower from which water emanates and flows over the petals into a pool below. The reference to Chinese railway workers is not

directly apparent to passersby. Unlike *Streetlight* and *Welcome to the Land of Light*, it has no textual accompaniment to explain the sculpture's intended meaning. The viewer, however, can ascertain the work's meaning by consulting The City of Vancouver's Public Art Registry, which explains: "The lotus form honours the history of Chinese immigrants and their contribution to the railway and the industries around False Creek."<sup>420</sup>

McWilliams's fountain offers only a veiled visual reference to the Chinese railway labourers. Concord Pacific appears to have been reluctant to commission a work that would directly refer to the history of the region's Chinese people. In a Vancouver *Sun* article, Trevor Boddy writes, "Sculptor Al McWilliams has crafted a finely detailed and understated fountain for Concord- Pacific, but this came only after his more sculptural earlier propositions were all shot down by his clients because of their symbolic associations with such things as Chinese funerary urns."<sup>421</sup> Boddy's comments suggest that McWilliams wanted publicly to address the contentious history of the region's Chinese labourers and residents, but Concord Pacific allowed McWilliams only to cryptically refer to this history through a highly decorative lotus flower.

Concord Pacific's exclusion of references to the history of Vancouver's Chinese residents in its public artworks program parallels a larger trend in Vancouver, which has few monuments and artworks that commemorate the hardships endured by the region's Chinese labourers and the city's Chinese residents. Gordon Brent Ingram, who was

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<sup>420</sup> City of Vancouver, 'Untitled (Fountain)', *Public Art Registry* <[http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/publicart\\_wac/publicart.exe/indiv\\_artwork?pnRegistry\\_No=65](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/publicart_wac/publicart.exe/indiv_artwork?pnRegistry_No=65)> [accessed 30 September 2007].

<sup>421</sup> Trevor Boddy, 'What's wrong with public art?: Public art is now juried to death, but the results are timid works that are just as controversial, Richmond has found', Vancouver *Sun*, Saturday 25 November 2000, sec. D, p. 17.

appointed to the City of Vancouver Public Art Committee in 1999, commented in the following year on the scarcity of public artworks of the kind:

With a deep-seated history of anti-Chinese racism, there are few historical references to Chinese history in The Terminal City. This lack of historical acknowledgement of the contributions of Chinese Canadians is probably the most glaring omission of a kind of de facto censorship in the city's public space.<sup>422</sup>

Two of the few public artworks in Vancouver that acknowledge the history of Chinese railway labourers in Canada are located in Chinatown. Arthur Shu-Ren Cheng's *Chinatown Memorial Monument* (Fig. 50), unveiled in 2003 and located at the northeast corner of Keefer and Columbia Streets, features two bronze statues: one is a Chinese railway worker; the other, a Chinese Canadian World War II soldier. Another notable commemorative artwork is a plaque mounted in 1988 on the exterior wall of the Chinese Cultural Centre, on Columbia Street between Keefer and Pender Streets (Fig. 51).<sup>423</sup>

These two artworks contrast with a substantially larger commemorative monument commissioned by the City of Toronto. Eldon Garnet's *Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railway Workers in Canada* (Fig. 52) is a sculpture of a thirty-foot-high railway trestle with life-size bronze statues of Chinese labourers building it.<sup>424</sup> Garnet placed large boulders imported from Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, around the base of the sculpture, likely to evoke the rugged terrain cleared for the railway. The monument was purposely erected near Toronto's primary rail line and was completed in 1989, a century after the first train arrived from Vancouver in Toronto. The

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<sup>422</sup> Gordon Brent Ingram, 'Vancouver Public Art', *On the Waterfront*, 2 (2000) <<http://www.ub.es/escult/Water/tress/gordon.htm>> [accessed 18 August 2007].

<sup>423</sup> Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 162-63.

<sup>424</sup> Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, pp. 163-64; City of Toronto, *ARTwalk: Toronto's Outdoor Art Gallery*, (2003) <[http://www.toronto.ca/culture/pdf/artwalk\\_nov4\\_03.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/culture/pdf/artwalk_nov4_03.pdf)> [accessed 28 September 2007]; and 'Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railroad Workers in Canada', *Eldon Garnet* <<http://www.eldongarnet.com/crwm.htm>> [accessed 28 September 2007].

reconstructed trestle is located next to the Skydome (renamed the Rogers Centre), adjacent to the CN tower and a historic CN roundhouse, similar to the one in Vancouver (Fig. 12).<sup>425</sup>

The marked difference in size between Garnet's memorial in Toronto and the ones in Vancouver I have discussed illustrates Vancouver's limited acknowledgement of the history of the region's Chinese labourers and residents. The monument in Toronto is located next to the city's main rail lines, historic railway structures, and the city's major stadium; Garnet's memorial stands in a space that was and is occupied by the dominant host society. On the other hand, the two Vancouver memorials that directly refer to Chinese railway labourers are located in Chinatown – a contested space that has been used to house an ethnic minority outside the spaces of the dominant society. Garnet's memorial in Toronto stands in a space that resembles the north shore of False Creek: both are waterfront spaces that were used for industry and the city's rail lines; they have historic railway structures; and they house the cities' major stadiums.

Why do Concord Pacific Place's public artworks fail to mention the history of Chinese railway labour and Vancouver's Chinese population?<sup>426</sup> I can only speculate on the answer. I will concentrate on only a few possible reasons that Concord Pacific may have consciously objected to including such historical references.<sup>427</sup> Concord Pacific's experience as a target of local anti-Asian criticism may have influenced the firm's

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<sup>425</sup> In 1997, Concord Pacific and Grand Adex purchased an eighteen-hectare parcel that abuts the Rogers Centre and the CN tower. Concord Pacific is currently developing its Concord CityPlace mega-project on the former Canadian National Railway land (see Kelman, p. 193; and Concord Pacific, 'Toronto Condo Real Estate' <<http://www.concordpacific.com/toronto-condo-for-sale.htm>> [accessed 12 February 2008]).

<sup>426</sup> None of the site's artworks refer to the Chinese people that worked and lived in the region except for McWilliams's *Untitled (Fountain)*. The meaning of the fountain, however, is not immediately available to the viewer. The artist's intent and the fountain's connotations are described on The City of Vancouver's Public Art Registry website (see pp. 129-30).

<sup>427</sup> Concord Pacific and its representatives primarily dictated the commission, selection, and installation of its corporate-sponsored public artworks (see Chapter One, pp. 37-39).

decision to elide this contentious history. Following my argument that local racist responses to Li Ka-shing's acquisition of the site prompted Concord Pacific to destabilize its mega-project's reputation as a site that would attract Hong Kong immigrants, I contend that Concord Pacific's continual effort to avoid obvious references to "Chineseness" extended to excluding mention of the history of Chinese people living in Canada in the region from its corporate-sponsored public artworks. Concord Pacific's installation of the artworks during the mid- to late-1990s came only a few years after the racist backlash of the late-1980s and early 1990s.<sup>428</sup> The firm undoubtedly wanted to avoid another resurgence of the same.

Concord Pacific may have also avoided a discussion of Chinese railway labour because the firm did not want to broach an emotionally-charged and difficult topic. Julia Ningyu Li, a Chinese scholar based in Beijing who compiled and edited *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit: A Tribute to the Chinese Who Worked on Canada's Railroads More Than a Century Ago*, comments on the difficulties of researching the history of Chinese railway labourers in Canada:

...we ran into a wide range of very real problems that we had not anticipated. The first one was the attitude of people towards this segment of history. Everybody said that the history of the Chinese working on the CPR was a "blood and tears" story of hardship and suffering, of mistreatment and humiliation, that had nothing to do with glory; and no one wanted to re-open these old wounds, for fear of offending mainstream Canadian society... Second, the first generation of Chinese unceasingly pushed their children to embrace to the society of their new country. They were ashamed and did not want to tell their children anything of their involvement in the construction of the railway.<sup>429</sup>

Class differences between the descendants of Chinese labourers and the urban mega-project's Hong Kong patrons and buyers may have also influenced Concord

<sup>428</sup> I will discuss local anti-Asian responses to Concord Pacific in Chapter Four.

<sup>429</sup> Li, *Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit*, p. 192.

Pacific's tacit embargo on mentioning the controversial history of how Chinese living in Canada in this region were treated by others. Aihwa Ong comments on how affluent Hong Kong immigrants landing in America continually had to struggle with stereotypes that portrayed Asian immigrants as lower-class labourers:

As extremely class-conscious subjects, they are offended by the popular American image of the Chinese as railroad and laundry workers. Despite their high social and economic profile in Hong Kong, these newcomers find that their welcome by the local Anglo upper class has been cool. Long viewed as coolies, houseboys, and garment workers, but now upgraded to members of a law-abiding and productive model minority, each new wave of Asian immigrants has to contend with the historical construction of Asian others as politically and culturally subordinate subjects.<sup>430</sup>

Concord Pacific probably approved the artists' exclusion of references to Chinese labourers and residents on Canada's Pacific coast from the public artworks it sponsored. Although Concord Pacific was not the only party involved, it did have a large influence on the commissioned works.<sup>431</sup> Boddy's remarks regarding Concord Pacific's rejection of Al McWilliams's initial fountain designs demonstrate how the developer ultimately decided what artworks were appropriate for the site.<sup>432</sup>

Concord Pacific Place's artworks *Streetlight* and *Welcome to the Land of Light*, which operate to outline a historical narrative, parallel the site's Postmodern architecture that is meant remind viewers of False Creek's past. I contend that, though unlike the corporate-sponsored artworks that attempt to elide Canada's racist and exploitative practices, Concord Pacific Place's Postmodern architecture, which mimics the site's historical CPR structures, has symbolic connotations of late-nineteenth century-Chinese railway labour. This connotation, however, is apparent only to those who know about the

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<sup>430</sup> Ong, p. 101.

<sup>431</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 37-39.

<sup>432</sup> See pp. 130.

region's Chinese railway workers.<sup>433</sup> The zoning guidelines for the Roundhouse neighbourhood specified that building façades facing the Roundhouse (Fig. 12) should incorporate brick cladding to refer to the historic CPR structures.<sup>434</sup> The engine turntable (Figs 10-12) and the maintenance shop are located at virtually the western terminus of the CPR – an endpoint created at the trunk of a treacherous and dangerous rail pass built primarily by Chinese labour. Concord Pacific's brick-faced structures thus refer to buildings developed by a company that profited immensely from Chinese labour. Thus, the site's historically-referential architecture that primarily signifies the CPR has a less obvious connotative suggestion of the Chinese labourers that helped build the railway.

### **Conclusion**

Similar to Canada's Chinatowns, Concord Pacific Place is a spatial expression of Canada's immigration policies and Chinese immigration patterns. Canada's shift to multiculturalism and its adoption of the Business Immigrant Program illustrate the nation's shift towards an immigration policy that favoured immigrants based on wealth. Canada's Business Immigrant Program helped draw Concord Pacific's financiers and some of the condominium units' buyers to Vancouver. I have used David Chuenyan Lai's classification system of Chinatowns as a methodological construct to examine if Concord Pacific Place can be considered a Chinatown. Since a specific immigration

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<sup>433</sup> Some general overviews of Canadian history recount the Chinese contribution to the CPR's construction. For example, *Canada: The Story of a Developing Nation*, a textbook recommended by British Columbia's Ministry of Education for Grade 10 Social Studies, discusses late-nineteenth century-Chinese railway labour in British Columbia (see Elspeth Deir and John Fielding, *Canada: The Story of a Developing Nation* [Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2000], pp. 176-77). Canadian Pacific's website acknowledges this history in 'The Story of the Canadian Pacific Railway,' an online resource for children (see Canadian Pacific, 'The Story of the Canadian Pacific Railway', <<http://www8.cpr.ca/cms/nr/cprinternet/images/cprchildrenshistory.pdf>> [accessed 12 February 2008]).

<sup>434</sup> See Chapter One, p. 34.

policy and an anticipated influx of Hong Kong immigrants determined the construction of Concord Pacific Place, the urban mega-project can in some respects be read as a type of Chinatown. Following Lai's classification, I have introduced my concept of a Transnational Chinatown and have used Concord Pacific Place as a case study. The mega-project on the north shore of False Creek is not a strict example of a Transnational Chinatown, however, but one that exhibits only some characteristics of a Transnational Chinatown. I have used this analysis to examine how the site's Supermodern architecture and its artwork *Brush with Illumination* employ subtle visual references to Chinese transnationality.

My reading of Concord Pacific Place's point towers as being in a Supermodern style that is nuanced by ethnic influence contrasts with Hans Ibelings's argument that Supermodernism is a non-referential style. Thus far, I have presented two readings of Concord Pacific's Supermodern point towers that negate Ibelings's argument that Supermodernism is a non-referential architectural style. In Chapter Two, I illustrated how the Supermodern towers were symbolic of accelerated modernity, technological progress, informationalism, and globalization; here, I have argued that Concord Pacific Place's point towers are in a Hong Kong-style of Supermodernism that obliquely alludes to Chinese transnationality. My dual reading of the point towers' Supermodern architectural style echoes Concord Pacific's two disparate identities for its mega-project. The former reading accords with Concord Pacific's advertising program that promoted its development as "a high-tech village of the 21st century." The latter reading parallels Concord Pacific's aim to create a mega-project containing tall, thin skyscrapers that

mirror point towers in Hong Kong, a resemblance likely intended to be noticed only by potential Hong Kong buyers.

Concord Pacific Place's architecture is best described as a combination of two types: a Hong Kong-style Supermodern aesthetic that evokes the firm's self-promoted reputation as a high-tech space and, at the same time, alludes to Chinese transnationality; and a Postmodern aesthetic that purposely refers to False Creek's history as the CPR's terminus but also silently implies the railway's sojourning Chinese labourers. The site's overall architectural symbolism is echoed in some of the Concord Pacific-sponsored public artworks. *Brush with Illumination* and *Welcome to the Land of Light* celebrate the site's fibre-optic network and were undoubtedly commissioned to reinforce Concord Pacific's high-tech image. *Brush with Illumination* and *Welcome to the Land of Light* both suggest the formation of a new language specific to the north shore of False Creek. I have argued that the two artworks' joint proclamation of a new language is a veiled reference to an anticipated new Chinese identity in Vancouver that arises primarily from Hong Kong and Taiwanese transnationals. The artworks' suggestion of "Chineseness" is not immediately apparent to the viewer; the obliqueness echoes the site's Supermodern architecture, which only subtly refers to Chinese transnationality. *Streetlight*, like the site's Postmodern architecture, recalls the site's former industrial and CPR past. But *Streetlight* makes no mention of the Chinese railway labourers that contributed to the CPR and the resulting industry on the north shore of False Creek. Al McWilliams' fountain is the only artwork intended to recall the region's Chinese railway labourers. Yet the final design, an ornamental lotus flower, signifies only silently the Chinese

labourers who helped build the nation's railway and ultimately contributed to the creation of the railway's western terminal city – Vancouver.

## Chapter Four – Concord Pacific in the Vancouver *Sun*

The dramatic transformation of the north shore of False Creek from an industrial waterfront to a fairground to a high-density residential mega-project garnered an array of reactions from Vancouver's citizens. That range of sentiments is captured in the pages of the daily Vancouver *Sun*; articles and letters to the editor both celebrated and condemned Concord Pacific's development on the former Expo site. My research into Concord Pacific Place included an examination of the *Sun*'s articles printed between 1 January 1987 and 31 December 2001. I used a web-based database and specific search keywords to locate articles that pertained to the Expo '86 site, Concord Pacific, Li Ka-shing, and Victor Li.<sup>435</sup> My research sample yielded numerous topics and themes, which included the controversy over the provincial government's decision to sell the site and the secrecy of the land sale process, fears of Concord Pacific's intention to sell residential properties overseas, the site's contaminated soil, concerns over increased levels of foreign investment and immigration, the amount of social housing to be built on the site, Vancouver's growing population and density, and Concord Pacific Place's technological innovations. The result is a picture of the development that may be surprising.

In this chapter, I will centre my discussion of the newspaper articles on the following five themes: the competition for purchasing the Expo '86 site (portrayed as a bidding war between a local group and a Hong Kong-based property tycoon); Vancouver's politicians' and residents' fear that Concord Pacific Place would be

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<sup>435</sup> I searched the Vancouver *Sun*'s articles printed between 1 January 1987 and 31 December 2001 using ProQuest's Canadian Newsstand database and the following keywords: false creek, concord pacific, concorde pacific, victor li, pacific place, ka shing, expo land, expo site, expo lands, k.s. li, and terry hui. I accessed ProQuest's Canadian Newsstand database via the University of Victoria Libraries' website (<http://gateway.uvic.ca>).

marketed only to Hong Kong investors; racist responses to Li's acquisition and development of the site; Concord Pacific's marketing program that portrayed the mega-project as a high-tech community; and, finally, the debate over where Engine 374 would be permanently housed. My aim is to illustrate how Concord Pacific created and maintained its high-tech self-image, which, I propose, was a strategy to shift the public's perception away from that of the site as a Hong Kong-funded development for Hong Kong investors and immigrants. I contend that Concord Pacific branded its mega-project a Supermodern neighbourhood partly to respond to the racist backlash directed at the firm in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### **Concord Pacific Place: A "mini-Hong Kong"?**

The B.C. government's sale of the Expo '86 lands to Li Ka-shing and Concord Pacific's development of the site were contentious issues addressed in numerous *Sun* articles printed during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The sale spurred a furious debate among proponents for and critics of increased levels of foreign investment and immigration into Vancouver. In this sub-section, I will examine how this hotly contested topic often centred on ethnicity, race, and place. In some of the *Sun*'s articles and letters to the editor, Concord Pacific's detractors espoused anti-Asian sentiments and uttered overtly racist statements. The sinophobic comments printed during the late 1980s and early 1990s are reminiscent of Vancouver's longstanding history of anti-Asian racism and violence.<sup>436</sup> The *Sun* also printed articles in which left-wing critics who opposed the mega-project on the grounds of class were denigrated as racists by pro-development and pro-capitalist supporters of Concord Pacific and foreign investment. My discussion

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<sup>436</sup> For a discussion of racism and Chinese people in Vancouver, see Chapter Three, pp. 85-87.

begins with articles covering the province's sale of the Expo '86 site, the competition between a local group's bid and Li Ka-shing's bid, and Li's acquisition of the site in 1988. My analysis will also centre on a controversy that arose over Victor Li's involvement with a development company that had sold an entire condominium project planned for the south shore of False Creek to Hong Kong buyers and had not marketed any of its units to local buyers. In response to the uproar, Concord Pacific guaranteed that it would market its residential properties to local buyers before offering its condominium units overseas. I will discuss local reactions to Concord Pacific's pledge and articles that monitored and scrutinized the firm's locals-first policy. I will also examine articles printed during Concord Pacific's marketing phases in which the firm emphasized that its units were being sold mostly to local buyers.

After hosting Expo '86, "invitation to the world,"<sup>437</sup> British Columbia's provincial government invited offers from developers worldwide to purchase the former fairground lands. On 15 September 1987, the *Sun* reported that the province had announced it was looking for a private developer for the Expo site and that advertisements would be placed in Canadian, American, Asian, and British newspapers.<sup>438</sup> In a sidebar to the article, an economist at the University of British Columbia, Michael Goldberg, commented that the province may have decided to conduct the international search to increase the pool of bidders, which could generate a higher price for the land.<sup>439</sup> Goldberg noted that if a Hong Kong or Japanese outfit bought the land it would increase Vancouver's profile on the Pacific Rim. An article printed the next day reported that business leaders and the

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<sup>437</sup> This was one of the advertising slogans for the fair (see Chapter One, p. 23).

<sup>438</sup> Moira Farrow, 'Developer for Expo site to be picked by early next year, official says', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 15 September 1987, sec. A, p. 9.

<sup>439</sup> Kevin Griffin, 'Cooperate on site's future, professor urges', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 15 September 1987, sec. A, p. 9.

city supported the province's global search for a developer.<sup>440</sup> Two days later, the *Sun* reported that Li Ka-shing was going to submit a bid and that the chairman of the government body in charge of selling the site, Kevin Murphy of the B.C. Enterprise Corporation (BCEC), had recently visited Hong Kong to meet with Li Ka-shing's associates.<sup>441</sup>

In October 1987, while the province was searching for a new landlord to purchase a substantial piece of its metropolis's downtown, the *Sun*'s columnist Trevor Lautens wrote an opinion piece that lamented False Creek's neglected past.<sup>442</sup> He suggested that the Expo lands should be used for factories – a workplace for “real work” – and that Vancouver should become a place of production rather than consumption. Lautens abhorred Vancouver's shift towards a post-industrial city and yearned for the old factories that inhabited the space: “No, I want to see actual factories on the Expo site – even if it means a little smoke. I want to hear the noise of something being built – not the swish of yuppie commerce.” Lautens reminded Vancouver's citizens that factory jobs would pay their blue-collar employees twenty dollars per hour, whereas boutiques, coffee shops, and sushi restaurants would pay their employees – the “aspiring Beautiful People” – four dollars per hour. Lautens's wish for a past form of modernity was clearly not fulfilled. True to the cycle of creation and destruction that is familiar to the modern period, the factories of the old modernity were cleared and replaced with towers produced by a new modernity.

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<sup>440</sup> Moira Farrow, ‘Global hunt for developer welcomed’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 16 September 1987, sec. E, p. 8.

<sup>441</sup> ‘Hong Kong bid seen for Expo site’, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 18 September 1987, sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>442</sup> Trevor Lautens, ‘Pray, save us from this awful phrase’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 10 October 1987, sec. B, p. 9. Pamela Durkin agrees with Lautens in her letter to the editor, Pamela Durkin, ‘Sophistication for a \$3 cup of coffee’, *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 26 October 1987, sec. B, p. 6.

The BCEC's deadline for proposals for the Expo site was 15 October 1987. The following day, the *Sun* announced that the BCEC had received twenty proposals and that the provincial agency would select a maximum of six interested developers for their shortlist.<sup>443</sup> The *Sun* also reported that only two bidders publicly confirmed their interest in the site: Li Ka-shing's group and the Vancouver-based BCE Development Corp (BCED). BCED had expressed its interest in developing the Expo '86 site as early as July 1987.<sup>444</sup> The company's chairman, Jack Poole, proposed to build a two-billion-dollar "mini-city" on the north shore of False Creek. On 17 October, Bruce Constantineau reported that the BCED proposal "takes dead aim at Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing's plan to develop the Vancouver site."<sup>445</sup> The BCED would form a new development firm specifically for the Expo site if the BCED were to win the bidding war. This company, the Vancouver Land Corporation (VLC), would be partly owned by B.C. investors, who would be offered the first opportunity to purchase shares in the firm.<sup>446</sup> BCED also intended to sell shares in its VLC to the City of Vancouver. Poole touted this plan as a "made in British Columbia" proposal." The bidding war for the Expo '86 site appeared to be a competition between a local development firm and a renowned Hong Kong property magnate: "BCED and the Li Ka-shing group are considered front runners in the race to win the right to develop the 90-hectare Expo site."<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> 'Agency gets 20 proposals for Expo site' *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 16 October 1987, sec. F, p. 5.

<sup>444</sup> Miro Cernetig, '\$2 billion mini-city eyed for Expo site', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 17 July 1987, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>445</sup> Bruce Constantineau, 'Developer would sell shares in Expo site', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 17 October 1987, sec. A, p. 3.

<sup>446</sup> Bruce Constantineau, 'Expo site still go, Hong Kong man says', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 26 October 1987, sec. B, p. 10.

<sup>447</sup> Constantineau, 'Expo site still go', sec. B, p. 10.

Brian K. Calder wrote an editorial printed in the 28 October *Sun*, which celebrated BCED's intention to acquire the Expo '86 site: "This city has an opportunity to earn huge profits and show the world a first-class development, built by local developers. Don't tell me that we can't do it."<sup>448</sup> The following day, the *Sun* reported that Premier Vander Zalm would prefer to sell the Expo '86 site to a local developer. Vander Zalm stated: "If there are two offers reasonably close, then I would prefer the Canadian one."<sup>449</sup> Four days later, the *Sun* reiterated the B.C. Premier's nationalist stance.<sup>450</sup>

A *Sun* article printed 13 January 1988 announced that there were seven short-listed groups and they had until mid-February to submit their proposals.<sup>451</sup> The columnist noted that two of the seven developers were Li Ka-shing and the BCED's local firm, VLC. The other interested developers, who remained unidentified, were said to be from Hong Kong, Japan, the United States, and Europe.

On 28 March, the *Sun* announced that Li Ka-shing had likely won the bid for the Expo '86 site.<sup>452</sup> The columnist interviewed Brian Calder, vice-president of the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board, who speculated that Li Ka-shing was the only remaining bidder. Calder alleged that the VLC lacked the funds to match Li's bid. The columnists,

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<sup>448</sup> Brian K. Calder, 'Expo site shares would be a buy', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 28 October 1987, sec. B, p. 6.

<sup>449</sup> Vaughn Palmer and Sarah Cox, 'Victoria gets 12 'solid' land bids', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 29 October 1987, sec. A, p. 1. The article states that the BCED was working with Vander Zalm's friend, Peter Toigo. Toigo's involvement with the BCED, however, was short lived since the partnership dissolved in late 1987 (see 'Premier denies lobbying for friend' *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 30 March 1988, sec. F, p. 8). Premier Vander Zalm made several attempts to help Peter Toigo acquire the Expo '86 site during 1987 and 1988. These schemes were largely controversial and were hotly debated in the *Sun* (for an overview of the controversy, see Gary Mason and Keith Baldrey, *Fantasyland: Inside the Reign of Bill Vander Zalm* [Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989], pp. 197-276).

<sup>450</sup> Vaughn Palmer, 'Expo site attractive to tycoon', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 2 November 1987, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>451</sup> 'BCEC has no exact deadline for final deals on Expo site', Wednesday 13 January 1988, sec. E, p. 6.

<sup>452</sup> Neal Hall and Doug Ward, 'Asian billionaire tipped as developer for Expo site', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 28 March 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

Neal Hall and Doug Ward, noted that “Vander Zalm told reporters in Vancouver today there is probably only one bidder left for the former Expo site and he indicated that person is Li.” Hall and Ward also cited provincial New Democratic Party (NDP) leader, Mike Harcourt, who claimed that Li’s acquisition of the site “could get the provincial government into a real conflict with... New Democrats and British Columbians who don’t want to see downtown Manhattan or Hong Kong densities brought to Vancouver.” The following day, the *Sun* printed comments by Darlene Marzari, the New Democratic Party MLA for Vancouver Point Grey, who reiterated Harcourt’s concerns: “The megamillions offered for unserviced B.C. Place lands by off-shore developers can only be recovered by imposing a level of building density unacceptable to the people of Vancouver.”<sup>453</sup> An editorial printed in the same edition criticized the secrecy of the bidding process and charged that “The idea of such a large chunk of the city being foreign-owned is even more disturbing.”<sup>454</sup>

On 5 April, the *Sun* reported that a Hong Kong newspaper, the *Standard*, had printed a front-page story on 29 March that claimed “Canadian critics [were] in an uproar” because of Li’s acquisition of the site.<sup>455</sup> The *Standard* also noted that “Canadian critics are already promising a fight over what is seen as Mr. Li’s plans to turn the site into a high density ‘mini-Hong Kong.’” The *Standard* story had cited Harcourt and Calder, whose concerns about the Expo ’86 land sale were printed in 28 March edition of the *Sun*. Harcourt responded to the *Standard*’s story in the 5 April *Sun* article. He claimed that the Hong Kong newspaper had misinterpreted his criticisms, which were

<sup>453</sup> Mark Hume, ‘Cabinet down to details on Expo site sale talks’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 29 March 1988, sec. A, p. 3.

<sup>454</sup> ‘The secret place on False Creek’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 29 March 1988, sec. B, p. 2.

<sup>455</sup> ‘Chinese paper cites B.C. anger; Asian paper cites B.C. anger’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 5 April 1988, sec. E, p. 1.

meant to denounce the provincial government's decision to sell the site as a whole and the secrecy of the bidding process. Harcourt added, "I was not being critical of Li who is a long-time investor in Canada and a good corporate citizen. It's unfortunate that some people are trying to stir up negative feelings towards Li and Hong Kong." Ten days later, the *Sun* printed a letter to the editor that notified Vancouver residents about Li's alleged plans for the site: "Li Ka-shing, the bidder most likely to succeed, has already asked for proposals from a number of architectural firms in town. At least one such proposal involves a density much higher than the West End's. I don't think Mr. Li is making an academic study of the issues and consequences of extremely high density."<sup>456</sup>

On 16 April, the *Sun* printed the results of a poll regarding the future of the Expo site.<sup>457</sup> Six hundred Greater Vancouver residents were queried by Decima during 6-9 April. The columnist, Vaughn Palmer, reveals that the poll was conducted "on behalf of someone connected to a group of Vancouver businessmen seeking to buy the Expo lands." Palmer suggests that the results were gathered "fairly" even though the poll was connected to a local group bidding on the site, which the *Sun* confirmed to be the VLC headed by Jack Poole.<sup>458</sup> The pollsters found that fifty-nine percent of the respondents supported Poole's bid, and only fifteen percent supported Li's bid. The poll also revealed that the respondents were divided equally when they were asked to choose between the two positions:

Some people said we should be encouraging investors from Hong Kong to put their money into the province, as this will help develop the B.C.

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<sup>456</sup> D. G. Harper, 'Expo site process should be public', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 15 April 1988, sec. B, p. 2.

<sup>457</sup> Vaughn Palmer, 'Expo site poll says public wants a B.C. developer', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 16 April 1988, sec. B, p. 5.

<sup>458</sup> Brian Power, 'Courting Campbell says Vancouver must adjust', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 19 April 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

economy. Other people say we should not encourage Hong Kong investors since they are not sensitive to the needs of British Columbians.

The 19 April article reporting on the poll included Vancouver mayor Gordon Campbell's comments regarding the controversial survey. Campbell, who was in Hong Kong promoting Vancouver to foreign investors, responded to Vancouverites' mixed reactions to the expected increase in Asian investment and population in the city: "I think it is going to take some adjustment for some people." Andrea Eng, a member of the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association who was accompanying Campbell's group in Hong Kong, charged, "You can't say that Hong Kong money is welcome but the people aren't."

On 27 April, the province confirmed that Li had won the bid for site and unveiled Concord Pacific's plans for its mega-project. The following day, the front page of the *Sun* bore the headline, "Bouquets for \$2 billion Pacific Place: 'Breathtaking.'"<sup>459</sup> The 28 April edition devoted numerous articles to Li's acquisition of the site and the Concord Pacific Place proposal.<sup>460</sup> The plan called for the incorporation of residential zones, an international village, a hotel-entertainment complex, and a finance centre.<sup>461</sup> The office towers, which would reach a staggering forty-five stories, were dubbed "futuristic". The site's global position, in the Pacific Time zone, was ideal for trading with all the major cities in North America, Europe, and Asia. Its local position, on False Creek's north

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<sup>459</sup> Hamilton, 'Bouquets', sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>460</sup> 'A major challenge on False Creek', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. B, p. 2; Hamilton, 'Bouquets', sec. A, p. 1; 'Development at a glance', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. G, p. 1; Jeff Lee, 'Lands have long history of development plans', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. G, p. 1; Bruce Constantineau, 'Let's get on with it, city land dealers say', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. G, p. 7; 'Losers congratulate Li', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. A, p. 12; Karenn Krangle, 'Mayor looks forward to working on site', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. G, p. 1; Carol Volkart, 'Praise and anger from city residents', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 28 April 1988, sec. G, p. 7; and Hamilton, 'West Coast Venice', sec. G, p. 1.

<sup>461</sup> Hamilton, 'West Coast Venice', sec. G, p. 1.

shore, was going to be transformed into an idealized space – a Venetian-style waterway with lagoons and islands that housed residences and offices connected to the web of global communications and finance. Hamilton interviewed and quoted the Downtown Eastside Residents Association's spokesman, Jim Green, who was apprehensive about Vancouver's new post-industrial haven but applauded Concord Pacific for including social housing in the plan.

The *Sun's* report on Li's successful bid and the Concord Pacific Place proposal also included reassurances that the development would include local input and would not be modeled after ones in Hong Kong. Concord Pacific's George Magnus stated: "When we gave the brief to the architects, almost our first words were: 'We don't want a mini-Hong Kong here,' ... When it becomes too dense, it becomes too difficult to market."<sup>462</sup> Hamilton noted in his front-page article announcing the proposal that Li "wanted to use B.C. architects for the project to ensure that it would be acceptable to Vancouver residents."<sup>463</sup> Hamilton also notified readers that Li was "not a newcomer to investment in Vancouver." Li purchased his first property in the city nine years earlier. Li Ka-shing's son Victor, the only Li family member present at the project's unveiling on 27 April, also tried to emphasize his family's connection to Canada.<sup>464</sup> Victor, who apparently spoke only few words at the presentation, mentioned that "he was a Canadian citizen and that he hoped everyone liked the development plans."

On 2 May, Brian Power reported that the *South China Morning Post* printed an editorial that "urged Vancouver residents not to see Hong Kong billionaires as

<sup>462</sup> Krangle, 'Mayor looks forward', sec. G, p. 1.

<sup>463</sup> Hamilton, 'Bouquets', sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>464</sup> Bruce Constantineau and Brian Power, 'The New Emperor: Expo land buyer deals quietly', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 30 April 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

'profiteering opportunists' for their purchase of the Expo land site."<sup>465</sup> The editorial espoused the benefits of increased Hong Kong investment in Vancouver. Power also noted that Li Ka-shing "has come in for a grilling from the Hong Kong media over the Expo deal and its implications for the mass migration from the territory." Li, however, denied that his purchase of the Expo site would increase Hong Kong emigration to Vancouver.

On 21 May, the *Sun* announced that according to a recent poll forty-nine percent of the respondents in Vancouver agreed with the province's decision to sell the Expo site to Li.<sup>466</sup> Thirty-two percent disagreed with the decision, while nineteen percent were undecided. The pollsters also reported that thirty-six percent of the respondents believed that the province's process to sell the site was unfair. Thirty-two percent found the process to be fair, and the remaining thirty-two percent had no opinion. The columnist cited NDP leader Mike Harcourt's explanation for the poll's results: "[the pollsters' report] proves my point that Mr. Li Ka-shing is not the issue... People see him (Li Ka-shing) as a very honorable businessman and person." Harcourt believed that Vancouverites disagreed with the province's secretive approach to the land sale and would have preferred a more public and transparent process. The article also cited Brian Calder: "Now that the land is sold, I'm sure he'll do a great job." Calder disagreed with the province's decision to sell the site to one developer, and his comments were printed in numerous *Sun* articles before Li's purchase of the site.

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<sup>465</sup> Brian Power, 'Asian daily urges tolerance on B.C.', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 2 May 1988, sec. C, p. 2.

<sup>466</sup> William Boei, 'Majority polled favor Expo land sale to Li', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 21 May 1988, sec. B, p. 15.

On 6 October, Justine Hunter reported that Concord Pacific proposed to offer their residential units to Canadian buyers first.<sup>467</sup> Craig Aspinall, Concord Pacific's public relations spokesperson, mentioned the proposal at a public meeting held the previous day. Speakers at the meeting voiced their concerns that Concord Pacific's properties would only be sold to Hong Kong buyers. One critic, who charged that Li Ka-shing would only offer residential units "to his Hong Kong friends," wondered, "Is there any way we can be protected by [sic] that? It's a very attractive site, but I don't think we're going to get in on it." Another speaker noted, "I get the impression that the opportunities for Canadian ownership on the whole north side of False Creek are extremely limited." Aspinall responded to the speakers' fears: "Let's be frank about it – there is a perceived problem and we are sensitive to that to the point where the units will probably be put on the market in Canada before it's opened up anywhere else." Hunter added:

After the meeting, Aspinall said the issue "is something that has been discussed internally. Because Concord is Hong Kong-owned, it has been brought up almost since the first day Li Ka-shing's involvement was known."

"We don't want to give the appearance that somehow Canadians are not going to have an opportunity to purchase a unit on the site because they are all going to be sold in Hong Kong."

Nevertheless, ten weeks later, the *Sun* reported that most of the 216 units in The Regatta, a condominium tower planned for the south shore of False Creek, were available only to buyers in Hong Kong and were sold within three hours.<sup>468</sup> The front-page article revealed that The Regatta's sale was managed by Grand Adex, a company founded and

<sup>467</sup> Justine Hunter, 'Canadians could get first choice at Expo site; Expo site homes could be offered in Canada first', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 6 October 1988, sec. A, p. 9.

<sup>468</sup> 'Resentment feared as condos sold to Hong Kong residents', Vancouver *Sun*, Wednesday 14 December 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

directed by Victor Li and Terry Hui.<sup>469</sup> The columnist cited a Hong Kong real estate analyst, Rick Goosen, who predicted:

There will be [Vancouver] developments that don't have to cater to local people, because they can sell out in Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, it could bring on a backlash from Canadians, who can become less important in setting prices of some developments in their own city.

The columnist also interviewed Concord Pacific's Craig Aspinall, who reiterated the company's vow to sell its condominium units in Canada first. Aspinall noted that Concord Pacific was "sympathetic to the fact that Vancouverites hold the site in high regard" and that "Victor Li is concerned about the perception that we're totally oriented towards the Hong Kong market." Aspinall added that Victor Li was a Canadian citizen and that the Concord Pacific development would be designed by Canadian architects and be built by Canadian workers. Rita Johnston, British Columbia's Municipal Affairs Minister, expressed her concern about The Regatta's sale and noted that the Province would monitor Concord Pacific's sales process: "It bothers me to think our local citizens wouldn't be able to play on a level playing field, that they wouldn't be given the same opportunity to purchase properties as someone outside the province."

The *Sun* reported on the controversial Regatta sale in each daily edition until 20 December.<sup>470</sup> (The scope of the arguments presented by the columnists is wide, and I

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<sup>469</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 121-22.

<sup>470</sup> Peter O'Neil, 'Developers' sensitivity queried', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 14 December 1988, sec. A, p. 2; Gordon Hamilton, 'Victoria to monitor condo sales in future; We'll monitor sales of Vancouver condominiums, premier says', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 15 December 1988, sec. A, p. 1; Gary Mason, 'Minister cites concerns over sale of condos to developer's friends', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 15 December 1988, sec. A, p. 3; Gordon Hamilton, 'Suite dream ends for couple seeking new condominium', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 15 December 1988, sec. A, p. 3; 'Political gaucherie starts at home', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 15 December 1988, sec. B, p. 2; Gordon Hamilton, 'Li vows local sale for Expo project, Taylor says; Li promises local sale for Expo project, Taylor says', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 16 December 1988, sec. A, p. 1; Gordon Hamilton, 'Questions raised over Li legacy', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 17

will not discuss all the discourses and narratives.) Throughout the week, Premier Vander Zalm, Grace McCarthy, Progressive Conservative MP Kim Campbell, COPE city councillor Harry Rankin, and deputy mayor Carole Taylor all expressed their concerns about Grand Adex's exclusive sale of residential property to foreign investors. Taylor and McCarthy tried to resolve the controversy by asking Concord Pacific to guarantee that it would sell its properties in Vancouver first. In a meeting with Taylor on 15 December, Victor Li "gave his word" that Vancouverites would have the first opportunity to purchase Concord Pacific Place residential units.<sup>471</sup> Columnist Gordon Hamilton noted that "Taylor admitted the city can do little more than accept the developer's word that Vancouver residents would be offered a chance to buy." On 20 December, the *Sun* reported that Grace McCarthy had sent a letter to Victor Li on 19 December which addressed The Regatta's controversial sale.<sup>472</sup> McCarthy wrote,

I am sure that we, in the province, would find comfort in a further commitment from you that British Columbians would be given the first opportunity to purchase these properties for some fixed period, perhaps a three-week retail sales period here in Vancouver prior to the properties being offered elsewhere in the world.

The article also interviewed Craig Aspinall, who promised that Concord Pacific would market its condominium units in Vancouver for twenty-four hours before offering them for sale elsewhere.

Ten days later, a front-page *Sun* article readdressed the fear of residential properties on the Expo lands being sold strictly to foreign purchasers.<sup>473</sup> Jeff Lee

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December 1988, sec. B, p. 1; Kevin Griffin, 'Reaction to sale of condominiums felt fuelled by fear of change, racism', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 19 December 1988, sec. A, p. 3; and 'McCarthy looks for pledge on Expo lands', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 20 December 1988, sec. A, p. 3.

<sup>471</sup> Hamilton, 'Li vows local sale for Expo project', sec. A, p. 1

<sup>472</sup> 'McCarthy looks for pledge', sec. A, p. 3.

<sup>473</sup> Jeff Lee, 'Harcourt criticizes Expo deal: Developers free to sell offshore', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 30 December 1988, sec. A, p. 1.

reported that a “Concord Pacific spokesman said the company’s promise to give Canadians first crack at any condominiums it builds on the former Expo site does not extend to other developers to whom it may sell some of the land.” The breaking news prompted Mike Harcourt to criticize the Social Credit government’s decision to sell the site rather than lease the space. Grace McCarthy pledged to ask Concord Pacific to oblige other potential developers on the Expo site to market their residential properties to Canadian buyers first. Lee added that “Aspinall acknowledged the decision is likely to spark outrage from people who believed Canadians would have first option on the 83-hectare False Creek site.”

Aspinall’s predictions proved correct. On 2 January 1989, the *Sun* printed D.J. Breen’s letter to the editor, which expressed the author’s unease with Vancouver developers such as Victor Li selling local properties in overseas markets.<sup>474</sup> Breen charged:

Statements to the effect that Vancouver must also follow this international trend or face the wrath of international investors and developers are one-sided. Whose concerns ought to take precedence? What is Vancouver if it is not a city for Vancouverites?

In the following two daily editions, the *Sun* printed two other letters to the editor that maligned foreign investment in Vancouver and Li’s purchase of the Expo site. R.C. Quittenton wrote:

To treat the former landowners of the Expo land as witless peasants is the grossest form of abuse of position. I am appalled!

Clearly we need no more Hong Kong money in B.C. The price is far too high.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> D. J. Breen, ‘Vancouverites’ wishes should come first’, *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 2 January 1989, sec. A, p. 6.

<sup>475</sup> R. C. Quittenton, ‘Hong Kong money not needed here’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 3 January 1989, sec. A, p. 6.

Muriel Hadden's criticism extended into a racist anti-Asian tirade:

This B.C. government had no business selling the Expo lands to a foreigner. It should have been split up and sold to our own Canadian developers. If our borders aren't closed immediately to Asians, by the year 2000 the white people who developed this country over the last century will be on white reservations.<sup>476</sup>

On 3 January, the *Sun* announced that Premier Vander Zalm wanted to renegotiate the terms of the Expo sale contract with Concord Pacific.<sup>477</sup> In the following day's edition, the *Sun* noted that Vander Zalm retracted his pledge to reassess the contract,<sup>478</sup> but he did acknowledge that he wanted to discuss a few contentious issues with Concord Pacific's executives.<sup>479</sup> Vander Zalm revealed that the recent public outcry – over the possibility that developers would not offer Canadian residents the first opportunity to purchase residential property on the Expo site – “was a concern picked up by a lot of people and there was a great deal of pressure on us to respond to this... I responded... we've negotiated with the people involved and are satisfied with the result.” Victor Li assured Vander Zalm that Canadians would have the first opportunity to purchase Concord Pacific's units, Concord Pacific would “as far as is legally possible” oblige other developers “to ensure that Vancouver residents have an equal or preferred opportunity to buy residential units,” and Concord Pacific would probably develop approximately eighty percent of the Expo site.

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<sup>476</sup> Muriel Hadden, ‘Whites in Canada bound for reserves’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 4 January 1989, sec. A, p. 10.

<sup>477</sup> Gordon Hamilton, ‘Expo lands developer mulls call for changes’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 3 January 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>478</sup> Vander Zalm's purported decision to renegotiate the Expo land sale spurred criticism from numerous political actors such as Michael Harcourt and Grace McCarthy. Critics charged that Vander Zalm's call to re-open the contract would tarnish British Columbia's image among foreign investors (see Jeff Lee, ‘Premier's about-face on land rapped: Vander Zalm has damaged B.C.'s image, NDP leader says’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 4 January 1989, sec. A, p. 3).

<sup>479</sup> Gordon Hamilton and Gary Mason, ‘Li, premier rule out new deal’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 4 January 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

The last few weeks have been stressful, Li said, 'but I want to be seen as a good corporate citizen. I'm here for a long time. I want to live here. That's the biggest investment... so I am paying a little more sweat for it. 'I made my biggest investment about six years ago when I became a Canadian and a British Columbian. I came 10,000 miles to make friends, not enemies, not controversies.'

Regarding his participation in last month's sale in Hong Kong of condominiums on the south side of False Creek, Li said: 'I admit, although I have not broken any laws or normal business codes or ethics, I was not being sensitive enough to local feelings. I misjudged the market response and the immense demand for the project.'<sup>480</sup>

Two days after the *Sun* printed Victor Li's assurances, the newspaper printed Geoff Moss's letter to the editor, which is suffused with racist assumptions and derogatory anti-Asian comments:

We, the people of Vancouver, made a mistake giving up control of Expo lands on democratic principles. Let's face it, this area will become a new Van-Kong for displaced Chinese immigrants with money.

The city of Vancouver will change, but not with the same standards that we have grown to respect and trust.

Vancouver and Hong Kong are different societies and we represent an opportunity for the Chinese from Hong Kong to transplant themselves, and not for democratic reasons or love of Canada. They have no intention of changing their business practices or way of life to suit the Canadian conscience.<sup>481</sup>

Jamie Lamb, a columnist for the *Sun*, wrote an editorial for the 7 January edition, which questioned the rationale behind the outcry over the potential sale of property on the Expo site to foreign buyers:

The notion that a property seller would refuse the highest bid seems strange, but the idea that some sort of hometown social plan must be fulfilled in the sale of property is even more absurd. Yet that's what people seem to think is required when it comes to the Expo and Expo-related lands.<sup>482</sup>

<sup>480</sup> Hamilton and Mason, 'Li, premier rule out new deal', sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>481</sup> Geoff Moss, 'Love of Canada isn't the attraction', Vancouver *Sun*, Friday 6 January 1989, sec. A, p. 14.

<sup>482</sup> Jamie Lamb, 'Us,' 'them,' and the highest bid', Vancouver *Sun*, Saturday 7 January 1989, sec. B, p. 5.

Lamb commented that although the local uproar over The Regatta's sale in Hong Kong was "an understandable feeling," the reaction was based on an "ugly... us and them sentiment." He reminded readers that Victor Li was a naturalized Canadian citizen, had broken no laws, and had made concessions on the Concord Pacific Place proposal "so that he can be seen as a good local corporate citizen." Lamb also argued, "I don't think he'd have half the trouble he's getting if his name were Leigh instead of Li."

Four days later, the *Sun* published two more letters to the editor, which both charged that the media were partly responsible for the recent racist reactions to the Expo sale. William Zander, President of B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters, commented that "the media have chosen to focus on two issues: why was Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing favored over 'local bidders' when the former Expo site was sold, and why are condos being offered first to Chinese in Hong Kong instead of to Canadians?"<sup>483</sup> Zander argued that the media should have investigated why the Social Credit government was steadfast in its decision to sell the site to a private developer. He lamented that the development of the north shore of False Creek had not followed the same process and design principles as the south shore. Zander suggested that the media should scrutinize the mega-project's lack of affordable housing rather than the race and ethnicity of the future condominium owners. In the same edition, Joyce Ann Lam attacked the *Sun* for printing Muriel Hadden's 4 January letter to the editor titled, "Whites in Canada bound for reserves," and argued that the newspaper was "creating an anti-Asian hysteria in our multicultural society."<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> William Zander, 'The rich are rich, regardless of race', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 11 January 1989, sec. A, p. 16.

<sup>484</sup> Joyce Ann Lam, 'Publishing letter fuelled racism', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 11 January 1989, sec. A, p. 16. See my discussion of Hadden's letter, p. 154.

On 20 January, the *Sun* printed another reader's response to one of the overtly racist letters to the editor published by the newspaper early that month.<sup>485</sup> Grace Ang criticized Geoff Moss's ignorant and derogatory comments in "Love of Canada isn't the attraction"<sup>486</sup> adding:

I would dread it if Mr. Moss's gloomy prediction of the emergence of "a new Van-Kong" came true. I can understand how upsetting such a thought can be, but I am certain that not all the immigrants he refers to have come to Vancouver with the sole intention of transforming it into an overblown Chinatown.

Yes, Vancouver will change. But who's to say that it will not be for the better? I suggest that those with a pessimistic outlook get rid of their blinkers.

Concord Pacific's plan for the Expo site, which abutted Vancouver's Chinatown, also raised concerns among merchants operating in the city's historic Chinese quarter. The 23 February edition of the *Sun* reported that the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association (VCMA) disagreed with Concord Pacific's recent proposal for its neighbourhood next to Chinatown.<sup>487</sup> Concord Pacific's architects noted that the proposed development would contain 18,600 square meters of retail space, which would resemble and respond to the distinctive architecture in the adjacent Chinatown and Gastown neighbourhoods.<sup>488</sup> The VCMA's director Derick Cheng stated:

We are afraid that people will stop there and think that it's Chinatown and the old part of Chinatown will become a ghetto... We don't want to lose out to offshore interests... We've been here for a long time – some of us all of our lives – and we've kept Chinatown alive for the past 100 years.

<sup>485</sup> Grace Ang, 'A presumptuous tone in immigration letter', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 20 January 1989, sec. A, p. 14.

<sup>486</sup> See my discussion of Moss's letter, p. 155.

<sup>487</sup> Daphne Bramham, 'Chinatown merchants fear Concord tidal wave', *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday 23 February 1989, sec. A, p. 3.

<sup>488</sup> The initial plans for the neighbourhood called for 46,500 square metres of retail space. Chinatown's merchants had attended numerous public meetings during the design process and successfully lobbied Concord Pacific and the city to lower the retail space to 18,600 square metres.

Stanley Kwok responded to the VCMA's concerns by pledging to install signs indicating the direction to the historic Chinatown.<sup>489</sup>

On 25 February, the *Sun* printed "a rare interview" with Victor Li.<sup>490</sup> Li conceded that "Hong Kong immigrants should be more sensitive to Canadian customs and things like that," but he argued that "it's a two-way street" and disputed the alleged correlation between increased house prices and foreign investment. Li also commented on the recent furor over Hong Kong buyers purchasing residential properties in Vancouver:

What I'm very concerned about now is that Vancouver is saying, 'Hey, we like your money, we like your talent, but we don't want you to buy a home or condo here.' But the chairman of a company or an investor will wonder why he should invest in Vancouver if we are saying we don't even want him to buy a home.

I must emphasize, I would not say this is a problem or criticism, but it's slowing down working towards a goal.

Nearly a week later, Gordon Hamilton announced in the *Sun* that the surge in local anti-Asian responses following the Regatta uproar had not diminished Vancouver's allure among Hong Kong investors.<sup>491</sup> Malcolm McGraw, executive director of Chi Wo Properties Ltd. in Hong Kong, noted that most of the Hong Kong Chinese who purchased condominiums in Vancouver were middle-class buyers planning to immigrate to Canada: "Generally it's almost exclusively one buyer-one property which suggests to us they are looking for their first home in Vancouver."

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<sup>489</sup> Daphne Bramham, 'Concord reassures merchants', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 24 February 1989, sec. A, p. 10.

<sup>490</sup> Mia Stainsby, 'The private world of Victor Li', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 25 February 1989, sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>491</sup> Gordon Hamilton, 'Hong Kong demand still climbing: Agent reports bandwagon; Hong Kong investors ignore news of Vancouver grumbling', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 3 March 1989, sec. A, p. 3.

Two months later, the *Sun* reported that Vancouver had started to attract more Hong Kong investors than Toronto.<sup>492</sup> In the article published 9 May, columnist Gillian Shaw reported on an interview with Andrea Eng, who was an appointed member of Asian Pacific Initiatives, a federal program established in 1987 that sought to augment Canadian trade with countries on the Pacific Rim. Eng noted that Vancouver had raised its international reputation in 1988 thanks to Li Ka-shing's purchase of the Expo site and the subsequent increase in Hong Kong investment. Vancouver was at a "turning point," claimed Eng, and Vancouver's residents were "living history right now."

The 14 October 1989 edition printed a letter to the editor by Mary Lavin and David Dawneway, members of Residents Save Vancouver Please.<sup>493</sup> The authors penned a satirical piece which scornfully praised Grace McCarthy's sale of the site to Li Ka-shing and her encouragement of foreign investment into Vancouver: "we should remember that Sacred Grace McCarthy has done everything in her power to help make Vancouver a world-class city. When it comes to foreign-investment soliciting, she is surely one of the finest women in Vancouver." Lavin and Dawneway employed their sarcastic prose to deride the development of the Expo site:

The Expo site sale will change Vancouver into a tinselled, glittering tribute to Grace's vision for our city. It will also remind us that, by her grace, Vancouver has become the exorbitant commodity it is today.

Grace McCarthy has contributed to making Vancouver one of the finest cities money can buy.

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<sup>492</sup> Gillian Shaw, 'City called #1 Hong Kong draw; City called No. 1 Hong Kong draw; City called No. 1 draw for Hong Kong investors', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 9 May 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>493</sup> Mary Lavin and David Dawneway, 'Grace's vision has changed Vancouver', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 14 October 1989, sec. B, p. 4. Residents Save Vancouver Please was an organization that opposed the sale of local properties to non-residents and pushed for limitations on foreign investment flowing into Vancouver (see 'Ugly houses lashed at rally; City hall rally hears complaint on ugly houses', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 19 April 1989, sec. B, p. 7).

Two and half weeks later, the newspaper printed a reader's comments on Lavin and Dawneway's letter. R. S. Harrison suggested that McCarthy perhaps regretted her decision to support the sale of the Expo site to Li Ka-shing because of the Regatta controversy.<sup>494</sup> The letter ended with a prediction motivated by anti-Asian sentiment and a fear of the other: "Some people are worried about French as a second language. I welcome it, for it would appear that we'll soon be fighting to maintain either French or English as our language of second choice."

On 4 November 1989, the *Sun* published a feature on the plans for Concord Pacific Place.<sup>495</sup> Vancouver city planners and the site's architects had yet to agree on the official development plan. The article focused on the planning department and the architects' negotiations over the controversial lagoons and islands included in the first proposal presented a year and a half earlier; the Venetian-inspired waterway was removed from the plan because the city thought it would create "a sense of isolation and elitism." The author noted that Li initially wanted to hire a team of "internationally renowned" architects but that Stanley Kwok convinced him to hire locally-based firms. Kwok had undoubtedly gauged the local sentiment – one critical of foreign developments – and wanted to avoid any additional controversies. In the article Kwok emphasizes the plan's Vancouver-based character and his belief that the use of local architects would help create a project unique to Vancouver.

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<sup>494</sup> R. S. Harrison, 'We may soon descry threat to languages', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 1 November 1989, sec. A, p. 14.

<sup>495</sup> Bramham, 'How a vision', sec. B, p. 1.

Concord Pacific's official development plan was approved by Vancouver's city council on the evening of 21 November 1989.<sup>496</sup> The *Sun* reported the next day that Concord Pacific had made a last-minute amendment to limit its sales of condominium unit to Canadian buyers during the first two weeks of a project's marketing. The 21 November edition of the *Sun* had announced on its front page that Concord Pacific would reserve the first twenty-four hours of each marketing for Canadian purchasers.<sup>497</sup> Apparently, the developer faxed the amendment to city council only a few hours before the evening meeting that ultimately approved the development plan. Stanley Kwok stated that Concord Pacific wanted to "be more responsive to the needs of Vancouverites." Jon Markoulis, one of Concord Pacific's vice-presidents, alleged that the firm did not decide to change the timeframe in an attempt to sway the city councillors voting on the development plan's approval: "We've have [sic] just allowed Vancouverites more time to purchase because there is not as much pre-selling here as there is in other places like Toronto." Kris Olds notes that although the two-week period appeared to be a concession by Concord Pacific, it actually favoured the firm since it spurred a sense of urgency among local buyers and local intermediaries representing overseas buyers to purchase units before Concord Pacific officially marketed its units overseas.<sup>498</sup> On 24 November, the *Sun* published an editorial that questioned Markoulis's explanation for the timeframe's shift:

The consortium, which bought the site from the provincial government last year, swears it did not extend the period because it was afraid

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<sup>496</sup> Daphne Bramham, 'Expo site plan approved: Condo sale period now up to 2 weeks', Vancouver *Sun*, Wednesday 22 November 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>497</sup> Daphne Bramham, 'Canadians get 24-hour condo jump: Expo site sales then shift to buyers in Hong Kong; Canadians get 24-hour jump on condo sales', Vancouver *Sun*, Tuesday 21 November 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>498</sup> Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 137-38.

Vancouver city council would vote down its development plan if it didn't. Rather, it wanted to give Vancouverites more time because they could be buying the units sight unseen.

Two questions: Is two weeks long enough for people to commit themselves to something as large as a house, especially when forced to visualize it from plans? And is this hopped-up marketing method, called preselling, creating a climate of desperation?

Two months later, the *Sun*'s columnist Gordon Gibson wrote an op-ed piece that criticized the terms of the Expo '86 lands sale.<sup>499</sup> Gibson derided the Social Credit government and the BCEC, the department responsible for selling the site. His diatribe also disparaged the province's motive to sell the land to an overseas investor to increase foreign investment and immigration into Vancouver. Gibson suggested that the province should rescind the deal, buy the site back from Li Ka-shing, and embrace the resulting decline of immigration and foreign investment:

To those who say that such a move would discourage the world from coming to B.C., I say, 'So be it.' Enough of the world will be here sooner than most of us want under any scenario. I don't see why we shouldn't slow it down a bit, by reversing an unconscionable deal.

Jonathan Skrimshire questioned the point of Gibson's article in a letter to the editor printed in the *Sun* eight days later, asking why Gibson took issue with the Expo '86 lands sale twenty-one months earlier:

What a truly delightful little piece of trash. A little bit of bash-the-rich, a little bit of close-the-borders – a real tour de force.

Seldom are we treated to such a fine example of good old-fashioned West Coast provincialism – and published directly opposite a lead editorial drooling over the prospect of Hong Kong's shipping industry coming to Vancouver, too.

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<sup>499</sup> Gordon Gibson, 'Let's buy the whole mess back', Vancouver *Sun*, Friday 26 January 1990, sec. A, p. 15.

You people must have a wonderfully black sense of humor.<sup>500</sup>

Gibson, however, did find support from J. Bufton, whose letter to the editor was printed on 17 February 1989. Bufton congratulated Gibson for writing the outspoken op-ed piece and proclaimed, "I don't give a darn if we discourage investment in British Columbia. People will come here in any case."

Nine months later, another controversy arose over Victor Li's involvement with Vancouver condominium sales in Hong Kong. On 27 November 1990, the *Sun* headlined a story with "Flashy ads in Hong Kong market Pacific Place condos."<sup>501</sup> Gordon Hamilton reported that advertisements in Vancouver newspapers marketing the first phase of Concord Pacific Place condominium units were an eighth the size of the advertisements in the Hong Kong press. In Vancouver, the units were listed in the classified sections of the *Sun* and the *Province* indicating only the building's address, 900 Cambie. In Hong Kong, the units were marketed in "flashy quarter-page ads" that "show a photo of the Expo site and name Pacific Place Community Development in large, bold type. The development is called phase one of Pacific Place." Hamilton conceded that the development was not part of the Expo '86 lands and that it was being sold by Victor Li and Terry Hui's Grand Adex, the company involved with The Regatta's sale two years earlier. Grand Adex claimed that Vancouver buyers would know the location by merely reading the development's address, whereas Hong Kong buyers, unfamiliar with Vancouver's street names, required extra marketing information. Concord Pacific's spokesman, Blair Hagkull, defended Grand Adex's actions by arguing that the

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<sup>500</sup> Jonathan Skrimshire, 'No use getting choked up: the Expo sale is history', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 3 February 1990, sec. B, p. 4.

<sup>501</sup> Gordon Hamilton, 'Flashy ads in Hong Kong market Pacific Place condos', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 27 November 1990, sec. B, p. 1.

advertisements were printed in local newspapers before the units were marketed in Hong Kong.<sup>502</sup> Vancouver mayor Gordon Campbell stated, “We can’t hold them (Concord Pacific) accountable for what somebody else is doing next door.” Campbell did assure the *Sun*’s readers that the city would monitor Concord Pacific’s marketing process and ensure that local buyers would receive the same opportunities as offshore buyers.

Left-wing critics, on the other hand, did raise an alarm over Grand Adex’s inconsistent marketing process. Bob Williams, NDP’s MLA for Vancouver East, alleged, “It’s quite apparent the real marketing is taking place in Asia,” and warned that Victor Li’s marketing program in Hong Kong would cause “a backlash in this community.” Hamilton included Libby Davies’s comments on the controversy when he revisited the story in the *Sun* the next day: “They gave us an undertaking there would be equal access to those units for local people as well as for people from abroad. My opinion is: They haven’t carried out their undertaking.”<sup>503</sup>

In his article of 28 November, Hamilton also interviewed Jerry Collins, a reporter for the Hong Kong daily *South China Morning Post*. Collins predicted that the units in the 900 Cambie development, which were going to be available to Hong Kong buyers in two days, would sell quickly because the project was tied to Li Ka-shing. He commented that Li Ka-shing’s developments appealed to buyers in Hong Kong and that “people here [in Hong Kong] go dotty when that family is involved in something.” Hong Kong buyers would have undoubtedly been aware of Li Ka-shing’s connection to the project because

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<sup>502</sup> Hamilton revealed the following day that Grand Adex started advertising the units in Vancouver on 7 November 1990 and in Hong Kong on 26 November 1990 (see Gordon Hamilton, ‘Hong Kong condo ads draw fire: Ald. Davis calls local sales push token gesture’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 28 November 1990, sec. B, p. 1).

<sup>503</sup> See Hamilton, ‘Hong Kong condo ads draw fire’, sec. B, p. 1.

the units were being sold in Hong Kong through Li's Cheung Kong Real Estate Agency.

Hamilton also described an advertisement for the project in the Hong Kong *Standard*:

The condos are described in today's ad as part of "the famed Expo site." The ad includes photos of the False Creek waterfront and an aerial photo showing the Expo site fully developed. Pacific Place is described as "Vancouver's prestigious residential and commercial address."

Investors need put only 10 per cent down and pay an additional 10 per cent by the middle of next year to take part in "an excellent opportunity for investment and the acquisition of a home in Canada," the ad states.

During the following three weeks, the *Sun* printed two letters to the editor that responded to Hamilton's report and supported Grand Adex's marketing scheme. Both authors attacked the critics who disagreed with the inconsistency in the advertising program and claimed that the detractors, such as Libby Davies, were driven racism.<sup>504</sup>

Joel Silverman wrote:

Ald. Libby Davies has a bias against this development, so it's not surprising to see her try to get some political mileage out of the issue. Unfortunately, her views come across as racist.<sup>505</sup>

Donald G. Mackay presented a similar argument:

Another outrage by the racists at City Hall and your paper at Victor Li because he is trying to sell his condos in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Condo Ads Draw Fire, Nov. 28). It may come as a big shock to Libby Davies and others but all the advertising in this city will not help the market.<sup>506</sup>

My sample of *Sun* articles obtained through a database using keywords related to the Expo site, the Li family, and Concord Pacific shows that there were few articles

<sup>504</sup> Katharyne Mitchell discusses how proponents of rapid development in the downtown area used an argument that championed multiculturalism to defend Grand Adex's condominium construction that was paid by and sold to foreign investors; when leftist local politicians, such as Libby Davies and Harold Rankin, voiced their opposition to condominium residences being sold strictly on the Hong Kong market, they were immediately branded as racists by right-wing critics (see Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism', pp. 263-94).

<sup>505</sup> Joel Silverman, 'If price is right, condos will sell here', Vancouver *Sun*, Tuesday 11 December 1990, sec. A, p. 8.

<sup>506</sup> Donald G. Mackay, 'Condo developer Li deserves to be congratulated', Vancouver *Sun*, Wednesday 19 December 1990, sec. A, p. 12.

printed after December 1990 that critiqued Concord Pacific on the grounds that it would spur mass migration from Hong Kong. Articles that questioned Concord Pacific's practice of selling its condominium units overseas also appear to have subsided after December 1990. Concord Pacific did, however, continue to reiterate its promise to sell units locally before opening its sales overseas. In February 1991, Stanley Kwok announced that Concord Pacific would start selling its first units in approximately three months.<sup>507</sup> He assured the *Sun*'s readers that Concord Pacific would limit the first two weeks of a project's marketing phase to Canadian buyers. Kwok noted that Concord Pacific decided to make this announcement to avoid rekindling the controversy caused by Grand Adex's condominium sales in Hong Kong:

That (Regatta) was not my development. But this one is. I made a promise, and I am keeping that promise to let people know well in advance that the units will be built.

On 11 February 1994, the *Sun* printed a two-page feature on Concord Pacific, which coincided with the firm's opening of its presentation centre in Vancouver:

The Hong Kong-controlled Concord Pacific company is trying desperately to portray its massive development on the Expo lands as a made-in-B.C. and made-for-B.C. project.

But half the units sold so far have been bought by non-Canadian buyers. And although Concord is reluctant to admit it, the company is quietly paying close attention to the design of the project to ensure it appeals to Asians.<sup>508</sup>

Bell reported that "several people working on the project" alleged that Concord Pacific asked builders to make changes so that their structures would accord with *feng shui*

<sup>507</sup> Jeff Lee, 'Concord plans sale of first condos', Vancouver *Sun*, Thursday 7 February 1991, sec. B, p. 7.

<sup>508</sup> Stewart Bell, 'The Harmony', Vancouver *Sun*, Friday 11 February 1994, sec. B, p. 5.

principles.<sup>509</sup> Bell also revealed that each unit would have a phone number containing an eight, a number many Chinese associated with luck.

A year and a half later, it appeared that Concord Pacific was selling most of its units within Canada. In October 1995, the *Sun*'s columnist Jeff Lee interviewed Concord Pacific's Blair Hagkull, who estimated that ninety percent of the six hundred units sold in the previous fourteen months were purchased by local buyers.<sup>510</sup> On 27 February 1996, Wyng Chow reported that Concord Pacific's Yaletown Limited Edition had sold all its sixty condominium units within three hours.<sup>511</sup> Concord Pacific's vice-president of marketing, Henry Man, announced that all units were sold locally: "There was no need to go to Hong Kong." Six months later, Chow reported that Man expected Concord Pacific's Columbus to be sold largely to local buyers and that Concord Pacific would not have to advertise the project overseas:

Man notes it is getting tougher and more costly for Canadian developers to market condo projects in Asia, although the potential for sales remains attractive.

Hong Kong buyers, for example, are most demanding since many of them have connections here – either friends or relatives – who can shop around on their behalf.

Concord Pacific's claims to have sold the majority of its units locally need to be considered in terms of Man's admission that Hong Kong buyers were using local

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<sup>509</sup> Eleven weeks earlier, Concord Pacific and the city's planning department denied that feng shui experts were consulted for the site's plans. The firm and city were responding to an article in an United Airlines magazine that alleged that Vancouver's planning department conferred with feng shui consultants. City planner Larry Beazley did concede, "In doing the planning for the Expo lands, we did talk with the Concord Pacific people about the alignments of buildings. We never paid a feng shui expert and there was never one in the meetings, but when they wanted to change the floorplate of some buildings to create more rounded edges, we agreed to that" (see Pamela Fayerman, 'Tale of city planners using feng shui expert called just a lot of wind', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 24 November 1993, sec. NB, p. 1).

<sup>510</sup> Bruce Constantineau, 'Who will buy the condos? Series: Land Lords', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 2 October 1995, sec. A, p. 4.

<sup>511</sup> Wyng Chow, 'Project Sold Out', *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 27 February 1996, sec. D, p. 1.

intermediaries to purchase Vancouver properties.<sup>512</sup> Clearly, the exact number of units sold to overseas buyers would be difficult to obtain. Concord Pacific undoubtedly announced that its mega-project's units were sold to a high proportion of local buyers over offshore buyers since the firm dearly wanted Concord Pacific Place to appear a local development, not a Hong Kong-financed project sold to Hong Kong immigrants.

### **“A High-Tech Village of the 21st Century”**

Aside from promoting its mega-project as a local development for Vancouverites, Concord Pacific championed its master-planned neighbourhood as a high-tech community connected to global telecommunications networks. In my analysis of the *Sun*'s articles pertaining to Concord Pacific Place, I found that Concord Pacific espoused a self-image that accords with the symbolic meanings I contend are associated with its mega-project's Supermodern architecture. Concord Pacific portrayed itself as a firm at the forefront of an ever-accelerating modernity and emphasized its development's incorporation of the latest technology. When Concord Pacific did concede that its mega-project was connected to foreign investment and overseas investors, the firm defended Concord Pacific Place as global space and a product of globalization rather than a project specifically tied to Hong Kong investment and immigration. In this section, I will discuss some of the *Sun*'s articles that associate Concord Pacific Place with technological progress, informationalism, accelerated modernity, and globalization. I will also examine articles that portray Concord Pacific Place as an archetypal modernist project.

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<sup>512</sup> Olds also notes that overseas buyers were purchasing Concord Pacific properties through local agents during the two-week preliminary marketing phases in Vancouver (see Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*, pp. 137-38).

Concord Pacific's winning proposal for the Expo '86 site competition, unveiled on 27 April 1988, contained high-tech plans that emphasized newness and technological progress. Columnist Gordon Hamilton described the finance centre as "a cross between an oil refinery and a space station" in which computers had direct access to "the centre's own satellite orbiting overhead."<sup>513</sup> In the 29 and 30 April editions, the *Sun* printed two articles by business columnist Rod Nutt, who celebrated the deal signed with Li and claimed that Vancouver was on its way to becoming a Pacific Rim city, and one by Gordon Hamilton, who interviewed Richard Hulbert, the leading architect involved with the mega-project's plan.<sup>514</sup> Hamilton included comments by Clive Grout – an architect who had worked on the VLC's proposal – that praised Hulbert's transformation of the waterfront. Grout added that the trend for North American cities to transform their former industrial waterfronts into residential, leisure, and business spaces was a direct result of the shipping industry's shift to containerization.

In Victor Li's interview with Mia Stainsby in February 1989, he commented on the local racial tensions about the migration of Hong Kong Chinese to Vancouver. Li argued that social conditions associated with Supermodernity, such as globalization and accelerated modernity, were some of the driving forces behind the influx of Hong Kong immigrants into Vancouver:

People are scared of the change taking place, but change has to take place. The world is getting to be a very small place and status quo is not an alternative. We are a global village.

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<sup>513</sup> Hamilton, 'West Coast Venice', sec. G, p. 1.

<sup>514</sup> Rodney Nutt, 'Li's victory puts city firmly on map in Asia', *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 29 April 1988, sec. C, p. 6; Rodney Nutt, 'Tailoring to the Pacific', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 30 April 1988, sec. D, p. 6; and Gordon Hamilton, 'Project Pacific Place: Public's reaction pleases architect', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 30 April 1988, sec. A, p. 10.

To me, Hong Kong or Singapore or Taiwan is only a nap away from Vancouver. It takes half a sleeping pill and I'm already in the Orient.<sup>515</sup>

On 28 October 1989, the *Sun* reported on the parks planned for Concord Pacific Place.<sup>516</sup> Columnist Elizabeth Godley interviewed Concord Pacific's chief landscape architect, Don Vaughan, who reiterated that the city transformed into a global city: "We've changed. Vancouver is going to be a city that's international." Godley wrote that his proposed parks would contrast with Stanley Park's wilderness and would be "formal, symmetrical spaces that reflect Vancouver's new, post-Expo sophistication." This binary – rationally planned spaces in contrast to the wilderness of the pre-Vancouver spaces – echoes a modernist archetype. It is reminiscent of Goethe's Faust, who clears every inch of wilderness and traditional townscapes to make way for his new developments. In *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Marshall Berman identifies Faust as the archetype for a long line of rational modernist planners that includes Georges Eugène Haussmann in Paris and Robert Moses in New York.<sup>517</sup>

In 1990 the *Sun* published a few articles that portrayed Concord Pacific as the latest developer to take up Faust's torch. In a profile of Richard Henriquez printed in the *Sun*'s edition of 26 February, the architect commented on how the plans for the Expo site contrasted with his postmodernist approach.<sup>518</sup> Henriquez noted that his building

<sup>515</sup> Stainsby, 'The private world of Victor Li', sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>516</sup> Elizabeth Godley, 'Project gives parks top priority', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 28 October 1989, sec. D, p. 2.

<sup>517</sup> Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*.

<sup>518</sup> Elizabeth Godley, 'Architect takes his design clues from history of each site', *Vancouver Sun*, Monday 26 February 1990, sec. B, p.10. Alberto Pérez-Gómez discusses the references to place and history in Henriquez's architectural practice in Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 'The Architecture of Richard Henriquez', in *Vancouver: Representing the Postmodern City*, ed. by P. Delany (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1994), pp. 50-59. Although Henriquez criticized Vancouver's mega-projects' modernist planning principles in 1990, he later became involved with the city's two major mega-projects, designing the 21-storey Concord for Concord Pacific and the Dockside condominium building for Coal Harbour (see Steve Whysall, 'The Architects: Richard Henriquez', *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 24 November 2001, sec. H, p. 5).

designs, by eschewing homogeneity, capture a sense of place, weaving his structures into existing urban fabric, whereas Vancouver's mega-projects were being developed on cleared and bulldozed parcels of land – spaces that had lost “the resonance of the history of the place... the scale, the richness, the texture that the old city once had.” Jamie Lamb offered a similar critique of Concord Pacific Place in an article that reviewed the events at the Architectural Institute of B.C.'s annual meeting in April 1990.<sup>519</sup> After viewing slides of mega-projects by Richard Hulbert's firm, Lamb questioned whether the intended community actually grows in a pre-determined environment. Lamb suggested that real communities seem to grow organically and that “something seems to happen between the grand design and the final product that robs it of the human element.” In the same year, Robin Ward wrote a celebratory article on the Pendera, a neo-Edwardian eight-story apartment building slotted between two existing buildings on West Pender Street.<sup>520</sup> He applauded the developer, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association, for building a structure that responded to its surroundings and contrasted it favourably to “the tall, isolated towers that characterize the residential components of the Marathon and, indeed, Concord Pacific schemes.” Ward concluded his piece by stating that the Pendera is a “desirable alternative to a high-income ‘ghetto.’”<sup>521</sup>

In August 1991, the *Sun* printed an article that countered these postmodernist critiques of the Concord Pacific mega-project.<sup>522</sup> The development was lauded for a quality that is integral to Modern and Supermodern architecture – technological

<sup>519</sup> Jamie Lamb, ‘No Headline’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 24 April 1990, sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>520</sup> Robin Ward, ‘Robin Ward’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 4 August 1990, sec. D, p. 14. See also Kalman, Phillips and Ward, *Exploring Vancouver*, p. 60.

<sup>521</sup> Behind Ward's dismissal of the tall blocks is probably his awareness of the way in which Postmodernists made much, for example, of the demolition of St. Louis's Pruitt-Igoe slab-housing blocks built in 1951 (see Jencks, *New Paradigm in Architecture*, pp. 8-9).

<sup>522</sup> Jeff Buttle, ‘Pacific Place development puts accent on environment’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 21 August 1991, sec. A, p. 6.

innovation and progress. The *Sun* reported that Concord Pacific and B.C Hydro were “negotiating a ‘ground-breaking’ deal” to implement steam heating in all buildings to be erected on the former Expo site. The proposed plan would reduce the residential towers’ energy consumption. Stanley Kwok, Concord Pacific’s vice president, announced that Concord Pacific Place would be one of Vancouver’s most environmentally friendly communities. In December 1991, architect Richard Hulbert, who was involved with the development of Coal Harbour and Concord Pacific Place, penned an article declaring that the two mega-projects were models of eco-conscious developments. Hulbert commented that the residents of the new Coal Harbour and Concord Pacific Place would be close to amenities and their places of work, reducing the need for automobiles. He argued that on a large tract of empty land planners are able to orient buildings so as to improve energy-efficiency and are able easily to implement new technologies in the project’s infrastructure instead of having to work with less efficient systems already in place.<sup>523</sup> Ironically, eight years later, Robin Ward contended that Concord Pacific Place and Coal Harbour used few green innovations in their skyscraper designs.<sup>524</sup> Instead the developers had focused on the individual units’ views and “techno gimmicks” such as online connections, high-tech security systems, and satellite dishes as key selling points for their “build-’em-cheap, sell-’em-quick” towers.

Ward’s accusation that Concord Pacific’s marketing strategy emphasized “techno gimmicks” appears to be correct. Between 1991 and 2001 (the end-date of my research sample), the *Sun* printed a plethora of articles that publicized the mega-project’s

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<sup>523</sup> Richard Hulbert, ‘Toward a civilized city centre: Planning for less pollution in a pleasanter environment’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 10 December 1991, sec. A, p. 15.

<sup>524</sup> Robin Ward, ‘Vancouver lags far behind in environmental design: In a few buildings in Asia and Europe, thought has been given to minimizing environmental impacts’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 28 January 1998, sec. C, p. 5.

technological innovations and portrayed the master-planned neighbourhood as a major node in the global telecommunications network. On 16 November 1991, the *Sun* announced that the \$2.5-billion Concord Pacific Place mega-project would be the first fibre-optic community in North America.<sup>525</sup> Concord Pacific signed a deal with B.C. Tel and planned to wire each building to an underground fibre-optic system. Touted as “technology of the 21st century,” the network of bundled glass fibres would provide high-speed voice, video, and data communications to the residents and businesses on the site. The article reported that this advanced communications system would allow users to link computers to databases, transfer information at the highest possible speeds, use an “enterphone” intercom system that would allow residents to screen visitors with a video link, and use video telephones – highly advanced handsets, not yet available to consumers, that transmitted a video picture of the caller to the receiver. In March 1992, Carrie Mishima reported on a reception held by B.C. Tel and Concord Pacific to celebrate their partnership.<sup>526</sup> Brian Canfield, the president and CEO of the communications company, exclaimed, “The launch of this strategic alliance has the potential to revolutionize the way people communicate.”

The *Sun* featured another article on Concord Pacific Place and its fibre-optic system in June 1993. David Smith reported on the company’s progress installing the six-kilometre circular glass tunnel and how each building on site would tap into this communications node.<sup>527</sup> He described the high-speed capabilities of a fibre-optic system, noting that it “can put the knowledge of the world, literally, at your computer –

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<sup>525</sup> Carrie Mishima, ‘Pacific Place fibre optics network a North American first’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 16 November 1991, sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>526</sup> Carrie Mishima, ‘“Smart” home does chores’, *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 4 March 1992, sec. D, p. 2.

<sup>527</sup> Smith, ‘Life in the Glass Loop’, sec. E, p. 1.

and some day – your TV screen.” This set a precedent for Vancouver, where only a few buildings then accessed fibre-optic cable. Blair Hagkull, Concord Pacific’s manager of corporate relations, claimed that this advanced communications system would set Concord Pacific Place apart from other housing developments. Smith noted that Hagkull “uses words like ‘new’ and ‘future’ and ‘potential’ a lot in conversation.” Smith also interviewed “Vancouver’s very own futurist,” Frank Ogden, who claimed, “[Fibre optics] [w]ill dramatically change the look of the city, just as the railroad tracks shaped this country and the auto shaped the city. For 10 years I’ve been saying that the big towers they keep building will be the raw material for the ghost town of tomorrow. You have two floors out of every 13 stories devoted to storing file folders when you can put all that information on a single disk.”

The edition of 11 February 1994, which contained a two-page report on Concord Pacific Place, included one article devoted to the site’s fibre-optic network and to the way Concord Pacific was marketing the advanced communications system.<sup>528</sup> Columnist Stewart Bell cited an advertising brochure that claimed the mega-project would be “A high-tech village of the 21st Century” and that “every Concord Pacific Place residence will have greater personal and business communications capabilities than most Vancouver office buildings.” Bell also described how Concord Pacific marketed their fibre-optic system in a promotional video:

As the sun sets over False Creek and another working day comes to an end, the woman executive picks up the telephone in her glass office and dials the number to her apartment.

Over the phone, she instructs her computer to turn on the lights, close the drapes and boil the pot of water on the stove in anticipation of her arrival.

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<sup>528</sup> Stewart, ‘The High-Tech Future’, sec. B, p. 5.

Each of the commands is electronically carried out.

“Imagine,” says the deep-voiced announcer. “The possibilities are endless.”

The video’s emphasis on how the fibre-optic system would ease domestic duties is reminiscent of utopian modernist schemes, such as Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky’s Frankfurter Kitchen, of 1926, and Le Corbusier.<sup>529</sup> Lihotzky and Le Corbusier’s shared a functionalist ethos that is best described by Le Corbusier’s proclamation, “We must look upon the house as a machine for living in...”<sup>530</sup> I propose a reworking of Le Corbusier’s powerful statement to describe the digital functionalism espoused in Concord Pacific’s promotional material: We must look upon the Concord Pacific condominium unit as an informational node for living in.

The image Concord Pacific espoused as a high-tech globally connected neighbourhood proved an effective marketing technique. On 24 August 1996, the *Sun*’s New Homes Reporter, Barbara McQuade, wrote that surveys showed technology was among the top five reasons buyers chose a Concord Pacific condominium over another

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<sup>529</sup> In 1926 Lihotzky designed a highly efficient kitchen, which aimed to reduce domestic tasks to the least possible movements. Lihotzky believed that her housing plans, which minimized the time spent on housework, would create more leisure time for women and were a step towards women’s liberation. Her design for an efficient space, in which the user would be spared from movements or actions deemed redundant or irrelevant, derived from the scientific management principles used in factories to increase productivity (see Susan R. Henderson, ‘A Revolution in the Woman’s Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen’, in *Architecture and Feminism*, ed. by D. Coleman, E. Danze and C. Henderson [New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996], pp. 221-53; and Leif Jerram, ‘Kitchen Sink Dramas: Women, Modernity and Space in Weimar Germany’, *Cultural Geographies* 13 [2006], pp. 538-56). These models for functionalist planning in the workplace – particularly those prescribed by Frederick Taylor – also influenced Le Corbusier (for a detailed analysis of Le Corbusier’s interest in Taylorism and Technocracy, see Simon Richards, *Le Corbusier and the Concept of Self* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003], pp. 23-36). Although Lihotzky and Le Corbusier created similarly efficient, machine-age designs during the 1920s, they had contradictory political motivations for functionalism. Lihotzky was a socialist who strove for liberation, whereas, Le Corbusier was a technocrat who sought to maintain a hierarchical society. For discussion of functionalism and domestic space in Vancouver’s post-World War II modernist architecture, see Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938-1963* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), pp. 144-47.

<sup>530</sup> Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. and intro. by Frederick Etchells (Oxford: Butterworth Architecture, 1989; first published Paris: Éditions Crés, 1923), p. 240.

residence in the area.<sup>531</sup> Two months earlier the *Sun* reported that condominium units with “high-technology innovations,” particularly those offered by Concord Pacific and the Kuok Group of Southeast Asia, were selling faster than other condominium units in the housing market.<sup>532</sup> The columnist noted that developers were having trouble competing with Concord Pacific. Some developers were waiting as long as two years to sell all the units in a building, whereas Concord Pacific managed to sell its entire projects within a few weeks or a few hours – in February 1996, Concord Pacific sold all sixty units in its Yaletown Limited Edition building within only a few hours!

In March 1997, the *Sun* printed an article that hypothesized popular trends in housing of the twenty-first century. Columnist Wyng Chow predicted that there would be a shift from the traditional single-family home and that home offices would become standard in the future.<sup>533</sup> He explained that Concord Pacific was at the forefront because each condominium included office-space with high-speed Internet access, adding that these units could accommodate some of the two million Canadians already working from home.<sup>534</sup> “High technology and major changes in the global economy have made it easier, and in some cases, forced adult Canadians to work from home.” On 13 September 1997, six months after the *Sun* printed Chow’s predictions for housing in the coming century, the newspaper published an article that portrayed Concord Pacific’s “techno-

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<sup>531</sup> Concord Pacific’s Blair Hagkull mentions these survey results in Barbara Mcquade, ‘High-tech options boost condo appeal: Communication is critical to modern households, and that means fibre optics are a must in new buildings’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 24 August 1996, sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>532</sup> Wyng Chow, ‘It’s a buyer’s market: Condomania!: Developers unrelenting in new construction despite glut of units in Greater Vancouver that’s forcing prices to decline: ‘The first 50% is easy to sell’’, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 21 June 1996, sec. D, p. 19.

<sup>533</sup> Wyng Chow, ‘Traditional homes on way out: Changing mix of households will create a demand for compact, flexible and efficient housing’, *Vancouver Sun*, Tuesday 11 March 1997, sec. D, p. 1.

<sup>534</sup> Chow cites the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s estimation that two million people, a quarter of Canada’s working population, worked from home.

gimmicks” as essential devices in a new home.<sup>535</sup> Joe McGuinness, Cyberbia InfoSystems’ director of sales and marketing, wrote in his review of the Concord Pacific website that buyers in the housing market are no longer asking simply about a structure’s foundation, builder, or age, but also about its technology:

Most of the new questions revolve around the constant technological advances we’ve come to view as the norm. What kind of Internet access will I have? How fast will it be? Will the security system be state-of-the-art? Will I be able to program my VCR by phone when I’m out of town?

McGuinness informs his audience that, fortunately, Concord Pacific “is riding the crest of the information wave,” able to offer all these amenities to its residents.

In the *Sun*’s inaugural issue of 2000, nine “experts” offered their predictions of the next five years’ housing trends.<sup>536</sup> James Cheng, architect of the Aquarius (Figs 25-33), identified technological changes within the home as the main trend. “Urban couples” would shop primarily online, he predicted, and rely on the building’s concierge to receive and store their incoming goods. He also suggested that the distinction between home and office would become increasingly blurry.

Concord Pacific Place modeled itself as a high-tech community from its early planning phases to its later construction and selling phases, and the numerous articles printed in the *Sun* that celebrated the site’s technological innovations likely helped Concord Pacific boost that image. I contend that Concord Pacific purposely focused its marketing and publicity on “techno gimmicks” as a strategy to mould the public’s perception of the mega-project as a technologically progressive space in Vancouver

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<sup>535</sup> Joe McGuinness, ‘Congratulations to Concord for an info-packed web site’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 13 September 1997, sec. E, p. 16.

<sup>536</sup> ‘They have a vision: Nine B.C. housing experts tell us what we can expect in the next five years, including potential lifestyle changes that new trends could bring’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 1 January 2000, sec. F, p. 7.

rather than a “mini-Hong Kong” on the north shore of False Creek. I believe that Concord Pacific adopted this defensive strategy as a result of the racist responses to Li’s acquisition of the site and the local anti-Asian sentiment during the late-1980s and early-1990s. Concord Pacific appears to have followed this strategy in its public artworks program. As I discussed in Chapters Two and Three, none of the artworks overtly refer to “Chineseness,” whereas artworks such as *Welcome to the Land of Light* (Figs 37-39) blatantly celebrate the site’s fibre-optic network and champion the development as a high-tech community.<sup>537</sup>

The site’s point towers are in an architectural style which has a multifaceted meaning that supported Concord Pacific’s desired self-image. The tall, thin glass towers reinforce Concord Pacific Place’s image as a high-tech space since the Supermodern architectural style refers to globalization, accelerated modernity, technological progress, and informationalism. Concord Pacific Place’s point towers also allude to a Hong-Kong architectural style, which would have appealed to – and was meant only to be noticed by – Chinese transnationals looking for residential property in Vancouver.

In my research in the *Sun*, I found only a few articles that compared Concord Pacific’s small floor-plate structures to Hong Kong’s soaring, narrow towers. In February 1994, former Vancouver Park Board commissioner Jim Harvey commented on Concord Pacific Place’s towers:

I personally abhor these high, high buildings. We don’t need Hong Kong lifestyle in Vancouver in this century.<sup>538</sup>

In July 1999, the *Sun* printed an excerpt from Trevor Boddy’s essay “Borrowed Places, Borrowed Times: The Rhetoric of the Visual in Vancouver and Hong Kong

<sup>537</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 65-68, and Chapter Three, pp. 127-30.

<sup>538</sup> Stewart Bell, ‘City Within a City’, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 11 February 1994, sec. B, p. 4.

Photography,” written for the forthcoming exhibition *Vertical Cities: Documenting Hong Kong and Vancouver*:<sup>539</sup>

Vancouverites increasingly live in Hong Kong-style small-floor-plate highrise towers, built by Hong Kong developers and financiers, and partially filled – temporarily, permanently or periodically – with Hong Kongers seeking a new home.<sup>540</sup>

In my research sample of *Sun* articles printed between 1987 and 2001, Concord Pacific never acknowledged that its condominium towers were similar to Hong Kong architecture in style. In February 2004, however, the *Sun* printed Stanley Kwok’s admission to Trevor Boddy that Concord Pacific Place’s point towers derived from skyscrapers in Hong Kong.<sup>541</sup>

### **Heritage versus Progress**

During 1991 and 1992, around the beginning of Concord Pacific’s campaign to advertise its fibre-optic network, the *Sun* published a few articles on Concord Pacific Place that can be read as a dispute between the developers’ push for progress and heritage conservationists’ pull for preservation. In August 1991, Robin Ward wrote two articles on the Roundhouse (Fig. 12) and Engine 374 (Fig. 16), the first locomotive to complete the trans-Canadian journey that ended in Vancouver.<sup>542</sup> The historic engine was rusting under a tarpaulin outside the Roundhouse, a structure built for CPR locomotives under

<sup>539</sup> The exhibition was held at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design Charles H. Scott Gallery from 21 July until 22 August 1999. Boddy essay was printed in the exhibition’s catalogue (see Boddy, ‘Borrowed Places, Borrowed Times’).

<sup>540</sup> Trevor Boddy, ‘Looking at urban myth-making: Sisters of invention: Vancouver and Hong Kong, artificially conceived in the same era, share a family resemblance even as they mature, argues Trevor Boddy. An Emily Carr exhibit illustrates the point’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 17 July 1999, sec. F, p. 12.

<sup>541</sup> Boddy, ‘False Creek in the Arabian desert’, sec. F, p. 21; and Chapter Three, p. 115-16. Kwok left his position as director and senior vice-president with Concord Pacific in April 1993 (see Chapter One, p. 28).

<sup>542</sup> Robin Ward, ‘Robin Ward’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 24 August 1991, sec. D, p. 16; and Robin Ward, ‘Robin Ward’, *Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 31 August 1991, sec. D, p. 16.

repair. Ward blamed city officials for Engine 374's deterioration because the parks board's plan to convert the Roundhouse into a community centre did not make provision to shelter the locomotive, nor did the city approach Concord Pacific for help with aiding the ailing engine.<sup>543</sup> He reported that Concord Pacific proposed an alternative building to house the engine, also on the corner of Davie Street and Pacific Boulevard. He noted that, whether or not the engine was housed in the structure, "a bold, elegantly engineered modern design" was required for that particular corner, and he figured that "it could become the architectural focus for the new development." Ward emphasized that Engine 374 and the Roundhouse played a valuable role on the Concord Pacific site because they were links to the location's past. In January 1992, the *Sun* printed another article on the locomotive and cited lawyer Steve Stark, co-chairman of the Friends of 374, who blamed Concord Pacific for the engine's worsening state: "They refuse to allow it inside the Roundhouse for reasons they have never explained and the park board has taken the view it can't force them."<sup>544</sup> Four months later, Concord Pacific and the city gave in to public pressure and moved the engine into the Roundhouse – a former locomotive repair shop that could protect Engine 374 for at least five years. The *Sun* reported on 26 May 1992 that more than a hundred rail enthusiasts attended the engine's transfer.<sup>545</sup> Evelyn Atkinson, the Friends of 374's president, noted, "it was a wonderful, joyous occasion." When the Roundhouse would eventually be transformed into a community centre, Atkinson hoped "to have Engine 374 in its own glassed-in annex where it will be the

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<sup>543</sup> Ward suggests that when the Roundhouse was designated as a heritage monument in 1986 it was intended to be a heritage centre that included Engine 374 and the turntable, which were both designated as heritage monuments a year earlier.

<sup>544</sup> Alan Daniels, 'Historic CPR Engine 374 getting the 'cold shoulder'', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 22 January 1992, sec. D, p. 3. The Friends of 374 was an organization that spent \$500,000 to restore the engine in 1987. See also Wynn Horn, 'Roundhouse plans raise museum fan's ire', *Vancouver Sun*, Wednesday 29 January 1992, sec. B, p. 4.

<sup>545</sup> Daniels, 'Concord Pacific puts engine under cover', sec. D, p. 2.

flagship of Pacific Place and get the attention and respect it deserves.” The same article cited Concord Pacific’s vice-president Stanley Kwok: “[The engine] will become a welcome addition to the Roundhouse neighborhood development,” and “Engine 374 is an important part of our history.” Kwok’s comment that the engine would be an “addition” to the site expresses less enthusiasm than Atkinson’s statement that the engine would be the “flagship” of the site.

Ten days later the *Sun* printed an article on the front page in which Kwok identified a tall, homogenous glass tower as the signature building for the site.<sup>546</sup> Jeff Lee described Concord Pacific’s plan for the tower, now known as Landmark 33 (Figs 21 and 22), which was to stand one block east of Engine 374 and the Roundhouse. Though not as tall as some commercial buildings then standing in Vancouver, the 110-meter tower would be the tallest residential building in the city.<sup>547</sup> Lee wrote that Kwok believed the tower would “act as an anchor for the whole neighborhood” and cited Kwok’s proclamation, “[i]t will be a stunning landmark for the city.” This claim – that Landmark 33 would be the iconic building for the site – contrasts with Ward and Atkinson’s endorsement of the proposed structure for Engine 374. As Chapter Two discusses, Landmark 33 is symbolic of informationalism, accelerated modernity, globalization, and the technological innovations that have produced and have been

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<sup>546</sup> Jeff Lee, “‘Stunning landmark’ tower proposed: 40-storey building will ruin city skyline, opponents say”, *Vancouver Sun*, Friday 5 June 1992, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>547</sup> According to the skyscraper database Emporis, Landmark 33 is a thirty-five-storey structure standing 103 meters tall. It is named “Landmark 33” because there are thirty-three residential floors. Since the building stands seven meters shorter than the projected height in 1992, Concord Pacific was unable to claim it as Vancouver’s tallest residential tower when it was completed in 1998. In 2002, however, Concord Pacific did build the city’s tallest residential tower when it completed the 117-meter West One. In 2007, the West One was surpassed by the 141-meter The Melville (see Emporis, ‘Landmark 33, Vancouver’, *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=landmark33-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 6 April 2007]; Emporis, ‘West One, Vancouver’, *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=west1-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 6 April 2007]; and Emporis, ‘The Melville, Vancouver’, *Emporis.com* <<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=streetmelville-vancouver-canada>> [accessed 27 January 2008]).

produced by these three conditions. This tall glass structure is symbolic of the social conditions of a modernity that existed – and would continue to exist – when the building was produced, whereas the building that houses Engine 374 (Figs 14-16), though it too is sheathed in glass, looks back to an older modernity, one of industrialism and railways – particularly the CPR, the first railway line to connect Canada’s Pacific coast with the eastern provinces. By declaring Landmark 33 the main attraction on the site, Kwok reiterated Concord Pacific’s intention to develop a mega-project that evoked innovation and renewal rather than heritage preservation and nostalgia. The next day the *Sun* printed an editorial that mourned for older buildings, which were considered “anachronisms” because their lower densities were no longer commercially viable.<sup>548</sup> The editorial criticized Kwok’s landmark structure as remarkable for its height, not its architectural merit: “Simply another pile... the pleasure of all is diminished as our heritage is visually and socially ransomed by those with mainly a dollar in their sights.”

Kwok’s promotion of a glass-sheathed point tower as the site’s landmark, rather than the annex for Engine 374, was perhaps motivated by the tower’s and the locomotive’s symbolic references to “Chineseness.” As Chapter Three discusses, Concord Pacific’s point towers such as Landmark 33 derive from Hong Kong architecture and allude to Chinese transnationality. Engine 374 was the first engine to travel from eastern Canada to Vancouver – a symbolic journey that included the treacherous stretch of railway through the Fraser Canyon, which was built by thousands of Chinese sojourners. Although Engine 374 is touted as a symbol of Canadian unity, it

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<sup>548</sup> ‘Just another pile without character’, Vancouver *Sun*, Saturday 6 June 1992, sec. A, p. 14. In a letter to the editor, Graham McGarva, who was “the lead architect for Concord Pacific’s Quayside Neighborhood project,” congratulated the *Sun*’s editorial staff for printing the critique (see Graham McGarva, ‘Tower debate should awaken appetite for architecture’, Vancouver *Sun*, Tuesday 16 June 1992, sec. A, p. 14).

is also symbolic of the Chinese labourers that toiled to complete Canada's transnational railway. Concord Pacific may have emphasized Landmark 33 as the site's focal point since the tower alludes to an affluent Chinese community – a social group that includes the site's powerful and wealthy financiers. Engine 374, on the other hand, refers to an earlier impoverished Chinese population that endured hardships and suffering while toiling on the railway. Concord Pacific may have wanted to deemphasize the site's railway past since it referred to a controversial historical event that remained a sensitive topic for Chinese people.<sup>549</sup> Or, perhaps Concord Pacific wanted to avoid all references to Chinese labourers since it embodied the stereotype of a Chinese underclass that immigrated to North America – a disempowering stereotype which affluent Chinese transnationals wanted to undermine.<sup>550</sup>

## Conclusion

Articles and letters to the editor printed in the *Sun* illustrate some of the local reactions to Concord Pacific's acquisition and development of the Expo '86 site. My analysis has focused on the articles that pertain to Concord Pacific and discuss the ethnicity of the mega-project's patrons and consumers; these articles were mostly printed between September 1987 and December 1990. Key events that spurred these articles were the bidding competition between the local VLC group and Li Ka-shing's group, Li's acquisition of the site, and Victor Li's involvement with Grand Adex's marketing of Vancouver properties exclusively to Hong Kong buyers. The *Sun*'s articles represent viewpoints that both celebrate and condemn Concord Pacific's development of the site

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<sup>549</sup> See Chapter Three, p. 133-34.

<sup>550</sup> See my summary of Aihwa Ong's comments about this stereotype in Chapter Three, p. 133-34.

and its anticipated sale of condominiums to Hong Kong investors and immigrants. Some articles that attack Concord Pacific contain racist statements, illustrating the anti-Asianism of some Vancouver residents. Expressions of local anti-Asian sentiment during the late 1980s and early 1990s appears to repeat past racist actions and policies enacted against Vancouver's Chinese residents since the city's incorporation. Ironically, Concord Pacific Place, which was denigrated over concerns that its residential units would be sold primarily to Hong Kong buyers, abuts the city's Old Chinatown, which has housed many of the city's Chinese residents since the city's founding years. Concord Pacific responded to the backlash to the anticipated sale of its properties to Hong Kong buyers by pledging to limit its sales to local buyers during the first two weeks of a project's marketing. In my research sample, I found that Concord Pacific repeatedly assured the *Sun's* readers that it would sell its units in Vancouver before offering them overseas. The firm also emphasized that some of its projects were sold entirely to local buyers, although some overseas buyers may have purchased Concord Pacific condominium units through local intermediaries during the initial two-week period of sales only to locals.

A second predominant theme I found in my analysis of the *Sun's* articles is Concord Pacific's promotion of its mega-project as a high-tech community that offered its residents the latest technological innovations. Similar to *Welcome to the Land of Light* (Figs 37-39) and *Brush with Illumination* (Figs 40 and 41), Concord Pacific's publicity campaign is suffused with rhetoric that emphasizes the social conditions associated with Supermodernity – globalization, accelerated modernity, technological progress, and informationalism. I contend that Concord Pacific tried to convey a Supermodern self-image as an effective sales strategy and in response to the local anti-Hong Kong

sentiment during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, I suggest that Concord Pacific's motivation to brand its development as "a high-tech village of the 21<sup>st</sup> century" was not only a marketing plan but also an attempt to undermine Concord Pacific Place's local reputation as a "mini-Hong Kong". When critics attacked Concord Pacific Place's connection to Hong Kong investment and immigration, the firm argued that its Supermodern mega-project was a "global village" and a product of accelerated modernity and globalization.

Stanley Kwok's declaration that Landmark 33 would be a "stunning landmark" for both the development and the city illustrates that Concord Pacific considered the site's point towers to be the defining characteristic of the mega-project. Not only do the tall, thin glass towers reinforce Concord Pacific's intended Supermodern self-image, but they also mimic skyscrapers in Hong Kong and hence allude to Chinese transnationality. Concord Pacific's enthusiastic promotion of Landmark 33 contrasts with its unsympathetic response to Engine 374. Articles in the *Sun* printed during May and June 1992, illustrate that Concord Pacific viewed the historic locomotive and its future shelter as an "addition" rather than a "landmark" for the site. Concord Pacific certainly appears to have treated Engine 374 as an addition to, but not part of, the mega-project since the firm did not provide any funds for the glass annex housing the locomotive. The city's parks board and donations collected by the Vancouver Lions Club paid for Engine 374's shelter.<sup>551</sup> Concord Pacific may have chosen not to support Engine 374's maintenance because of the locomotive's symbolic associations with Chinese railway labourers. As I discussed in Chapter Three, Concord Pacific has avoided including references to Chinese

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<sup>551</sup> See Chapter One, p. 33.

labourers in its public artworks.<sup>552</sup> Or, Concord Pacific may have been indifferent to the historic locomotive because it referred to the past and contrasted with the Supermodern self-image it was trying to convey.

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<sup>552</sup> See Chapter Three, pp. 128-30.

## Conclusion

The rapid transformation of the north shore of False Creek from a derelict industrial district to an upscale urban residential neighbourhood is an archetypal example of a space's shift from industrialism to post-industrialism – a shift Concord Pacific celebrates in its corporate-sponsored public artworks. Although some of the artworks such as *Streetlight* recall the site's industrial past, these artworks emphasize that railway and industry were indeed part of the past and have moved far from False Creek. *Welcome to the Land of Light* and *Brush with Illumination* emphasize technological progress and newness, or at least what was new during the mid- to late-1990s, and portray the mega-project as a place where inhabitants are able to live at the forefront of the ever-accelerating modern condition. Concord Pacific blatantly publicized its high-tech self-image and heavily marketed its mega-project's fibre-optic communications network. I suggest that Concord Pacific's condominium units can be considered an "informational node for living in" – a Supermodern reworking of Le Corbusier's famous dictum, "We must look upon the house as a machine for living in."

Concord Pacific undoubtedly advertised its units' technological advances for the purpose of attracting potential buyers, and, as I discussed in Chapter Four, this marketing strategy worked. I contend that Concord Pacific espoused its overt high-tech slogans not only as an effective sales technique, however, but also as a defensive strategy to challenge its local reputation as a Hong Kong-owned development for Hong Kong buyers. I am arguing that local antagonistic and racist responses to Concord Pacific's acquisition and development of the Expo '86 lands pushed the firm to portray its mega-

project as a Supermodern space practically devoid of “Chineseness.” The elision in the mega-project’s historically-themed public artworks of the region’s Chinese population and railway labourers is perhaps the most striking example of how Concord Pacific avoided overt references to “Chineseness”. The glass point towers’ architectural style effectively reinforces the firm’s Supermodern self-image. This architectural style, however, also recalls Hong Kong’s tall, thin skyscrapers and alludes to Chinese transnationality. A dual reading of Concord Pacific’s point towers accords with two of the firm’s apparent objectives: to overtly advertise its mega-project as a high-tech “global village”; and to build a development containing structural forms familiar to Hong Kong buyers and investors.

My reading of Concord Pacific’s Supermodern architectural style contrasts with Hans Ibelings’s argument that Supermodernism is a symbol-free, non-referential style. In the spirit of Manfredo Tafuri’s method of analyzing architecture,<sup>553</sup> I have discussed the various meanings inscribed in Concord Pacific’s glass towers. I have demonstrated that the Supermodern architectural style, in general, is indicative of accelerated modernity, informationalism, technological progress, and globalization. I have also demonstrated that Supermodern architecture can be nuanced by ethnic influences: although Concord Pacific’s point towers are indicative of the 1990s revival of the International Style, they are also modelled after and refer to skyscrapers in Hong Kong.

Canada’s immigration policies during the 1980s and 1990s influenced the production of Concord Pacific Place. The urban mega-project is a spatial expression of Canada’s official multiculturalism and the Business Immigrant Program, an immigration policy that favoured immigrants based on wealth. The Business Immigrant Program

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<sup>553</sup> See Introduction, p. 4.

undoubtedly attracted Concord Pacific's patrons and some of its Hong Kong clientele to the north shore of False Creek. Following David Chuenyan Lai's system of classifying Chinatowns, which delineates Chinatowns into types and defines these types according to Canada's immigration policies, I introduce a fifth type of Chinatown – the Transnational Chinatown, which is a spatial expression of the Business Immigrant Program. I contend that Concord Pacific Place can be considered a Transnational Chinatown because of the patrons' ethnicity and Concord Pacific's objective to sell condominiums to Hong Kong investors and immigrants. I argue, however, that Concord Pacific Place is only partially a Transnational Chinatown because the mega-project's condominium unit owners and inhabitants vary markedly in ethnicity, gender, and age. The mega-project's point towers refer, albeit subtly, to Chinese transnationality. Likewise, *Brush with Illumination* alludes to Chinese transnationality and proclaims in conjunction with *Welcome to the Land of Light* that a new language is being formed on the north shore of False Creek. I contend that the two artworks' promise of a new language refers to the formation of a new Chinese identity on the site.

The Concord Pacific-sponsored artworks' understated celebration of a new Chinese identity coincides with the artworks' erasure of an older Chinese identity. The historically-themed artworks fail to mention Vancouver and British Columbia's Chinese residents and railway labourers. Al McWilliams appears to have attempted to include references to this contentious history, but Concord Pacific prevented McWilliams from installing an artwork that overtly referred to it. Once again, following Manfredo Tafuri's method of analyzing the social conditions inscribed in architecture, I argue that Concord

Pacific Place's historically-themed Postmodern architecture not only refers to the CPR but also connotes the Chinese labourers that toiled on the construction of the CPR line.

Concord Pacific Place's overall architectural program can be considered a combination of two architectural styles: a Hong Kong-style Supermodern aesthetic that reinforces the mega-project's high-tech reputation and also alludes to Chinese transnationality, and a Postmodern aesthetic that explicitly refers to the site's railway and industrial past and makes a silent nod to the railway's Chinese workers. Concord Pacific appears to have favoured the Supermodern architectural aesthetic over the heritage-inspired Postmodern architecture and the historic CPR structures on the site. For example, Stanley Kwok commented in the *Vancouver Sun* that the Supermodern Landmark 33 would be a "stunning landmark" for Concord Pacific Place and Vancouver while the historic Engine 374 and its shelter were merely an "addition" to the site. Kwok's comments reflect Concord Pacific's aim to build a mega-project that appears to be a high-tech "global village" rather than a neighbourhood that is largely reminiscent of the place's history. Concord Pacific may have had little enthusiasm for the site's heritage structures because they contrast with the developer's marketing program which emphasizes technological progress and innovation. Concord Pacific may have also wanted to deemphasize the CPR structures because they refer to the railway's Chinese labourers, albeit a connotation only evident to those who know of the region's contentious history.

I can only speculate on the possible reasons why Concord Pacific wanted to elide the history of Chinese railway labourers in British Columbia and Vancouver from the mega-project's artworks and architecture. Concord Pacific may have wanted to avoid

references to the contentious history since it remained a sensitive topic for Chinese people. The firm may have also wanted to disassociate its patrons and residents' identity from the Chinese railway labourer identity; many affluent Chinese immigrants wanted to erase a damaging stereotype prevalent in North America, which identified all Chinese immigrants, regardless of their economic and cultural background, as lower class individuals seeking low-paying work in a new country. Or, Concord Pacific may have wanted to avoid all possible references to "Chineseness" because of the racist reactions and anti-Asian sentiments directed at the firm during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Concord Pacific's tall, thin, shimmering glass towers are impressive structures that strike the viewers passing through the neighbourhood or strolling along the seawall. The glass wall lining the north shore of False Creek is equally spectacular when viewed from the inlet's south shore. Yet the mega-project also appears somewhat sterile and lacks the vitality of the downtown streets directly north of the development. This lifelessness is perhaps unavoidable in all large-scale master-planned communities since the pre-existing structures and natural forms are almost all cleared away and replaced with buildings, roadways, and parks that follow a meticulously calculated design. This is not to say the neighbourhood is devoid of people. Joggers, pedestrians, and cyclists pass through the development along the seawall, and many customers patronize the neighbourhood's cafés, restaurants, and stores.

People living in and passing through Concord Pacific Place vary in age, ethnicity, and gender. Although I have discussed the mega-project in terms of a Transnational Chinatown, I do not mean to imply that the neighbourhood's population is strictly Chinese. I do argue, however, that Hong Kong cultural forms and social conditions

partly dictated the production of the mega-project. I have illustrated that the visual references to “Chineseness” and Chinese Transnationality are subtle and were likely intended to be noticed only by Concord Pacific’s Chinese clientele.

These subtle references to Chinese Transnationality also refer to accelerated modernity and globalization. This dual reading agrees with Concord Pacific Place’s overtly advertised image as a global and high-tech space. Concord Pacific’s self-promoted image has undoubtedly helped foster Vancouver’s perception of itself as a global city. This civic myth is best described by Lance Berelowitz’s book’s title *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination*. Concord Pacific’s artworks and architecture can be easily read as products of globalization, but, as I have illustrated, merely reading these artworks and structures in terms of a universal and homogenous globalization process is insufficient. A complex interaction between local, provincial, federal, and Hong Kong-based cultural, economic, social, and political conditions influenced Concord Pacific’s development on the north shore of False Creek. Identifying the mega-project simply as a “global village,” only veils the rich history and social forces that produced Concord Pacific Place.

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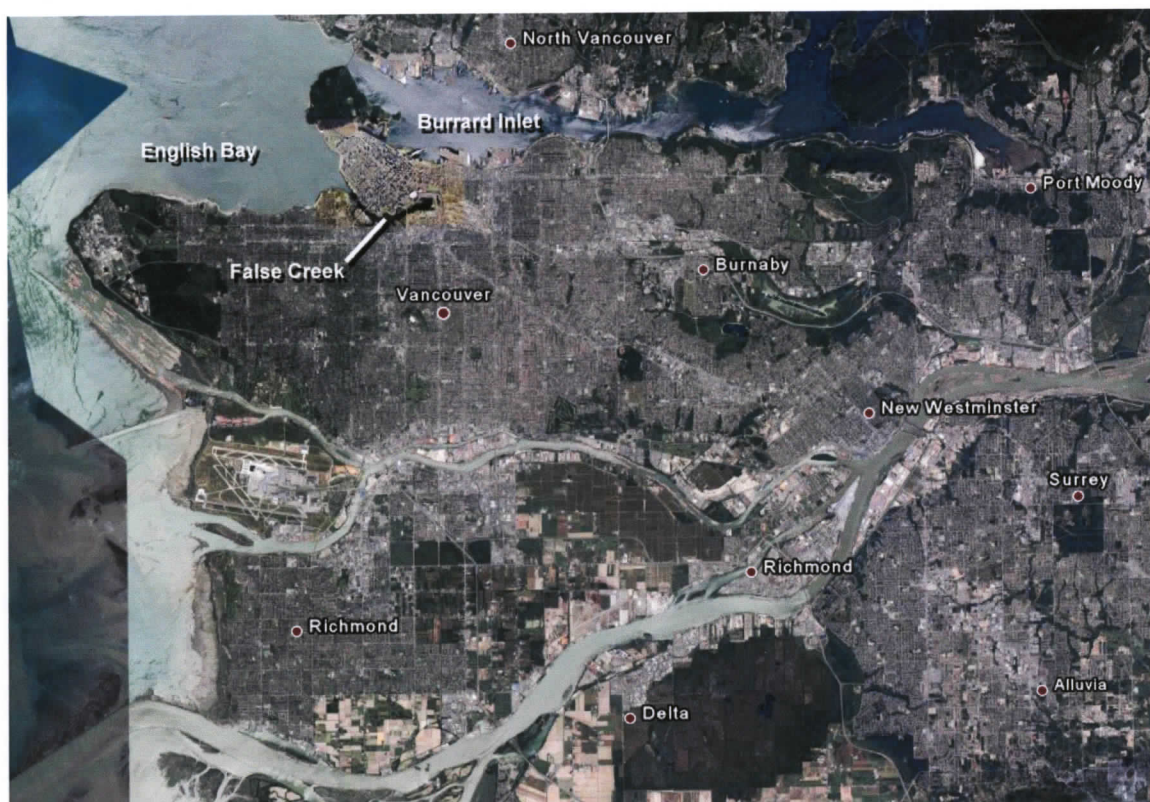
**Figures**

Fig. 1. Vancouver, British Columbia. Aerial View (Photo: Google Earth). Image captured using Google Earth on 22 October 2007.



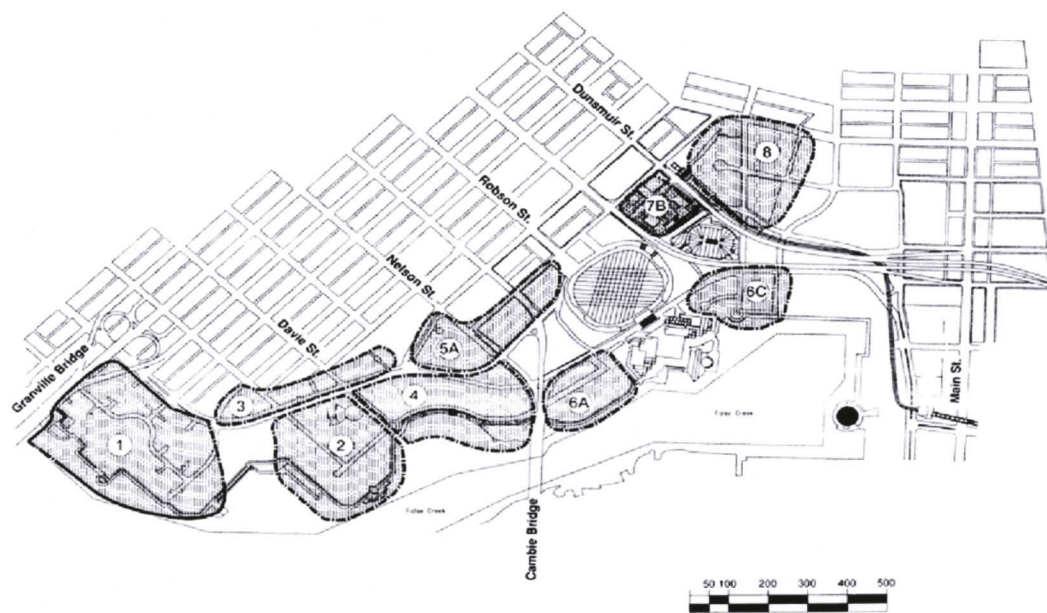
Fig. 2. Concord Pacific, Concord Pacific Place, Vancouver, 1993-. View from the south (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 3. MacDonal Gill, Empire Marketing Board, *Highways of Empire*, poster, 1927. <http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/empire/g2/cs1/g2cs1s3.htm> > [accessed 25 March 2008]



Fig. 4. James Crookall, *South shore of False Creek west of Cambie Street*, 1936, Vancouver, City of Vancouver Archives, CVA 260-572. Burkinshaw, *False Creek*, p. 40.



- 1 – Beach
- 2 – Roundhouse
- 3 – Yaletown Edge
- 4 – Quayside
- 5A – Cambie-Beatty
- 6A – Coopers Park
- 6C – Abbott-Carrall
- 7B – Viaducts
- 8 – International Village

Fig. 5. City of Vancouver, Concord Pacific's Neighborhoods, 1990. Vancouver, False Creek North Official Development Plan, p. 18.



- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 – Parkview Tower              | 11 – Aquarius II                             |
| 2 – Parkview Gardens            | 12 – Aquarius III                            |
| 3 – CPR Engine Turntable        | 13 – Aquarius Villas                         |
| 4 – CPR Roundhouse              | 14 – Leaf-shaped Pool                        |
| 5 – Roundhouse Community Centre | 15 – <i>Perennials</i>                       |
| 6 – Expo 374 Pavilion           | 16 – <i>Cambie Bridge Ring Gear Monument</i> |
| 7 – The Peninsula               | 17 – <i>Streetlight</i>                      |
| 8 – Crestmark II                | 18 – <i>Welcome to the Land of Light</i>     |
| 9 – Landmark 33                 | 19 – <i>Brush with Illumination</i>          |
| 10 – Aquarius I                 | 20 – <i>Untitled (Fountain)</i>              |

Fig. 6. Concord Pacific Place, Vancouver. Aerial View (Photo: Google Earth). Image captured using Google Earth on 22 October 2007.



Fig. 7. Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects, North side of 1200-block Pacific Boulevard, 1993-94. View from the southwest (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 8. Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects, Parkview Tower, Vancouver, 1993. View from the south-southeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 9. Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects, Parkview Gardens, Vancouver, 1994. View from the southeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 10. CPR Engine Turntable, Vancouver, 1889. View from the northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 11. CPR Engine Turntable, Vancouver, 1889. View from the southwest with the Aquarius project in the background (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 12. CPR Roundhouse, Vancouver, 1889. View from the northeast with the engine turntable in the foreground (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 13. Baker McGarva Hart, Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver, 1997. View from the north (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 14. Baker McGarva Hart, Expo 374 Pavilion, Vancouver, 1998. View from the southeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 15. Baker McGarva Hart, Expo 374 Pavilion, Vancouver, 1998. View from the northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 16. Menno Hubregtse, *Engine 374 with reflected Aquarius Project*. Digital photograph, 2005.



Fig. 17. Hancock Brückner Eng + Wright, The Peninsula, Vancouver, 1996. View from the east (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 18. Hancock Brückner Eng + Wright, The Peninsula, Vancouver, 1996. View from the east (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 19. Hancock Brückner Eng + Wright, The Peninsula, Vancouver, 1996. View from the northwest with the engine turntable in the foreground (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 20. Downs Archambault & Partners, Crestmark II, Vancouver, 1997. View from the northeast with *Streetlight* on the left (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).

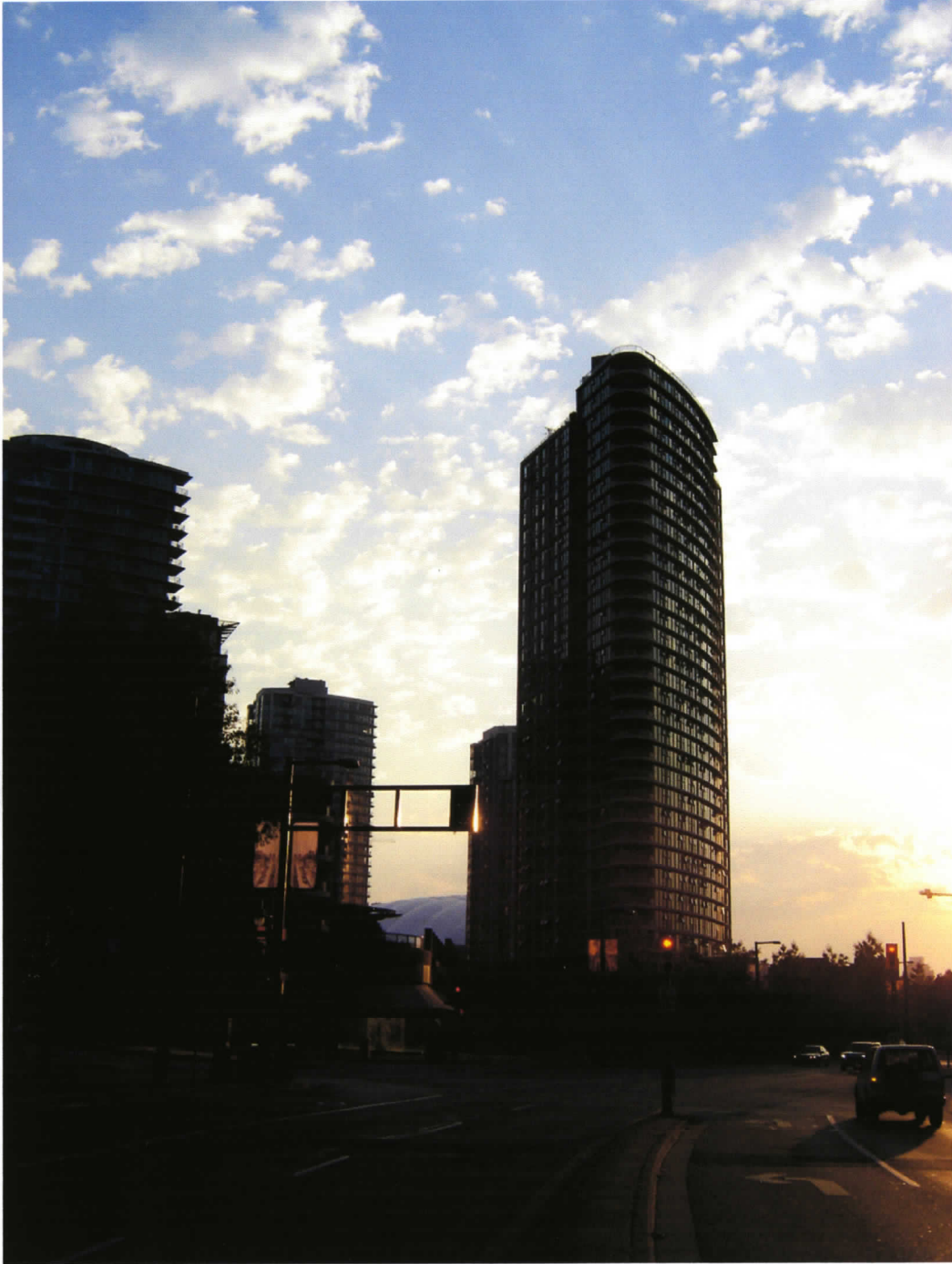


Fig. 21. Downs Archambault & Partners, Landmark 33, Vancouver, 1998. View from the southwest (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 22. Downs Archambault & Partners, Landmark 33, Vancouver, 1998. View from the south (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 23. Harold Neufeldt, *Leaf-shaped Pool*, Vancouver, 1998. View from the west with Landmark 33 in the background (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 24. Barbara Steinman, *Perennials*, 1997. View from the east (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 25. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius II on the northeast corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 26. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius II on the northeast corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 27. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., north side of the Aquarius project with Aquarius III on the right, Vancouver, 1999. View from the northeast and Pacific Boulevard (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 28. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius Villas on the southeast corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the south-southeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 29. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., south side of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the east with The Peninsula on the left (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 30. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius I on the south-southwest corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the east-southeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 31. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius I on the south-southwest corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the south-southwest (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 32. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., south side of Aquarius project (left – Aquarius I; middle – Aquarius II; right – Aquarius Villas), Vancouver, 1999. View from the south along the seawall with *Streetlight* in the midground (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 33. James K.M. Cheng Architects Inc., Aquarius III on the northwest corner of the Aquarius project, Vancouver, 1999. View from the west (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 34. *Cambie Bridge Ring Gear Monument*. Vancouver, 1987. View from the south (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 35. Bernie Miller and Alan Tregebov, *Streetlight*, Vancouver, 1997. View from the northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 36. Bernie Miller and Alan Tregebov, *Streetlight*, Vancouver, 1997. View from the south (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 37. Henry Tsang, *Welcome to the Land of Light*, Vancouver 1997. View from the north (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



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Fig. 39. Henry Tsang, *Welcome to the Land of Light*, Vancouver 1997. View from the west (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 40. Buster Simpson, *Brush with Illumination*, Vancouver, 1998. View from the east-northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 41. Buster Simpson, *Brush with Illumination*, Vancouver, 1998. View from the east-northeast (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 42. Al McWilliams, *Untitled (Fountain)*, Vancouver, 2000. View from the north (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 43. Jean Nouvel, Galeries Lafayette, Berlin, Germany, 1991-1996. (Photo: Peter Schut, Amsterdam). Ibelings, *Supermodernism*, pp. 116-17.

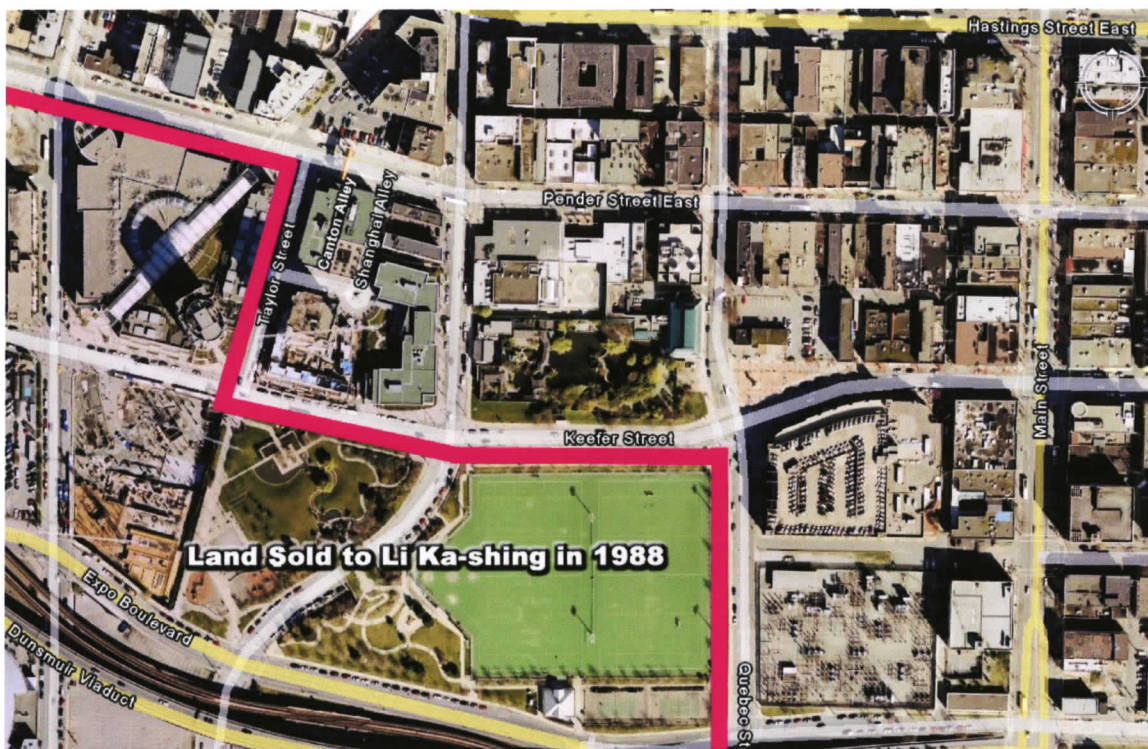


Fig. 44. Chinatown and north-eastern corner of the land parcel sold to Li Ka-shing in 1988, Vancouver. Aerial View (Photo: Google Earth). Image captured using Google Earth on 13 December 2007.

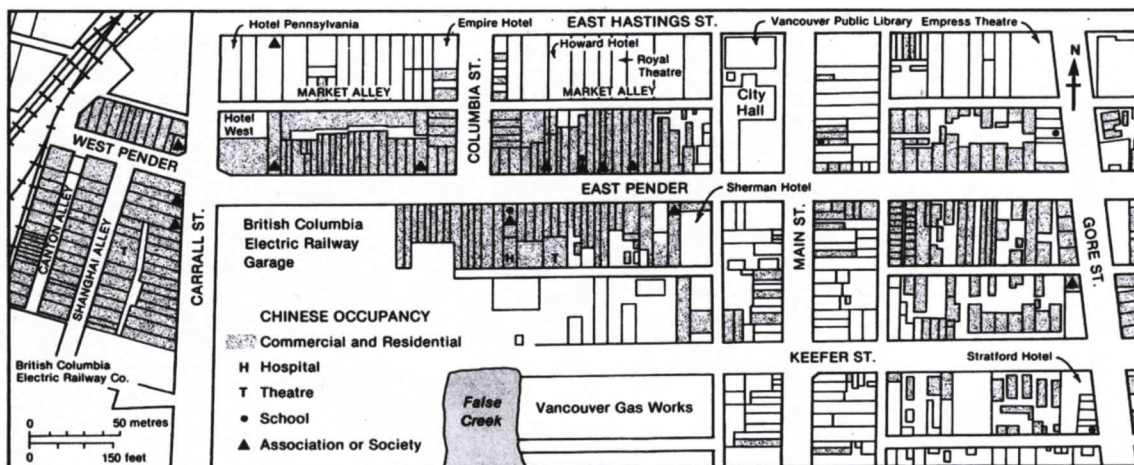


Fig. 45. Chinatown, Vancouver, 1927. Lai, *Chinatowns*, p. 86.



Fig. 46. Brown and Gillam, Sam Kee Building, Vancouver, 1913. View from the northwest (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 47. Johnson Centre, Richmond, 1987. View from the southwest (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 48. Street signs for two strip malls neighbouring Johnson Centre to the east, Richmond. View from the west (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 49. 8251 Westminister Highway, Richmond. View from the south (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).



Fig. 50. Arthur Shu-Ren Cheng, *Chinatown Memorial Monument*, Vancouver, 2003. View from the east (Photo: Menno Hubregtse).

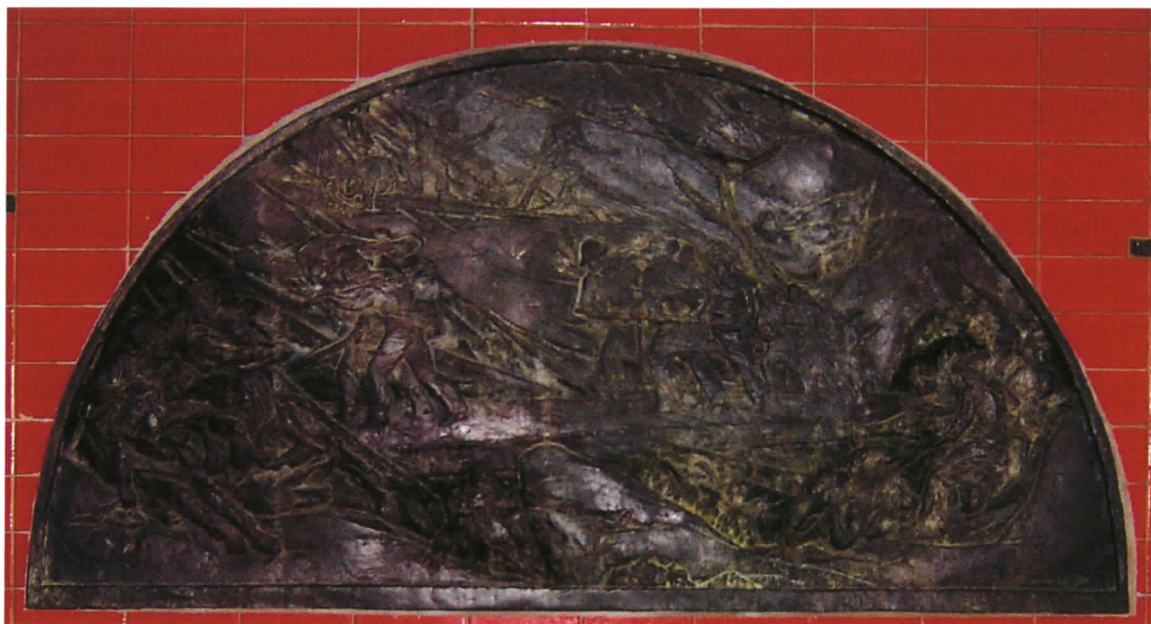


Fig. 51. Commemorative plaque mounted in the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver, Vancouver, 1988. (Photo: Menno Hubregtse)



Fig. 52. Eldon Garnet, *Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railway Workers in Canada*, Toronto, 1989. <<http://www.eldongarnet.com/crwm1.htm>> [accessed 5 December 2007]

**Appendix**

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