

# URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

for

Proposed Subdivision & Rezoning of the 700 Block  
Pandora/Cormorant Street and 1520 Blanshard Street

Project# 112  
Revised November 16, 1994



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Pandora/Cormorant Street and 1520 Blanshard Street

Prepared by: • British Columbia Buildings Corporation  
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• The Campbell Moore Group Architects Ltd.  
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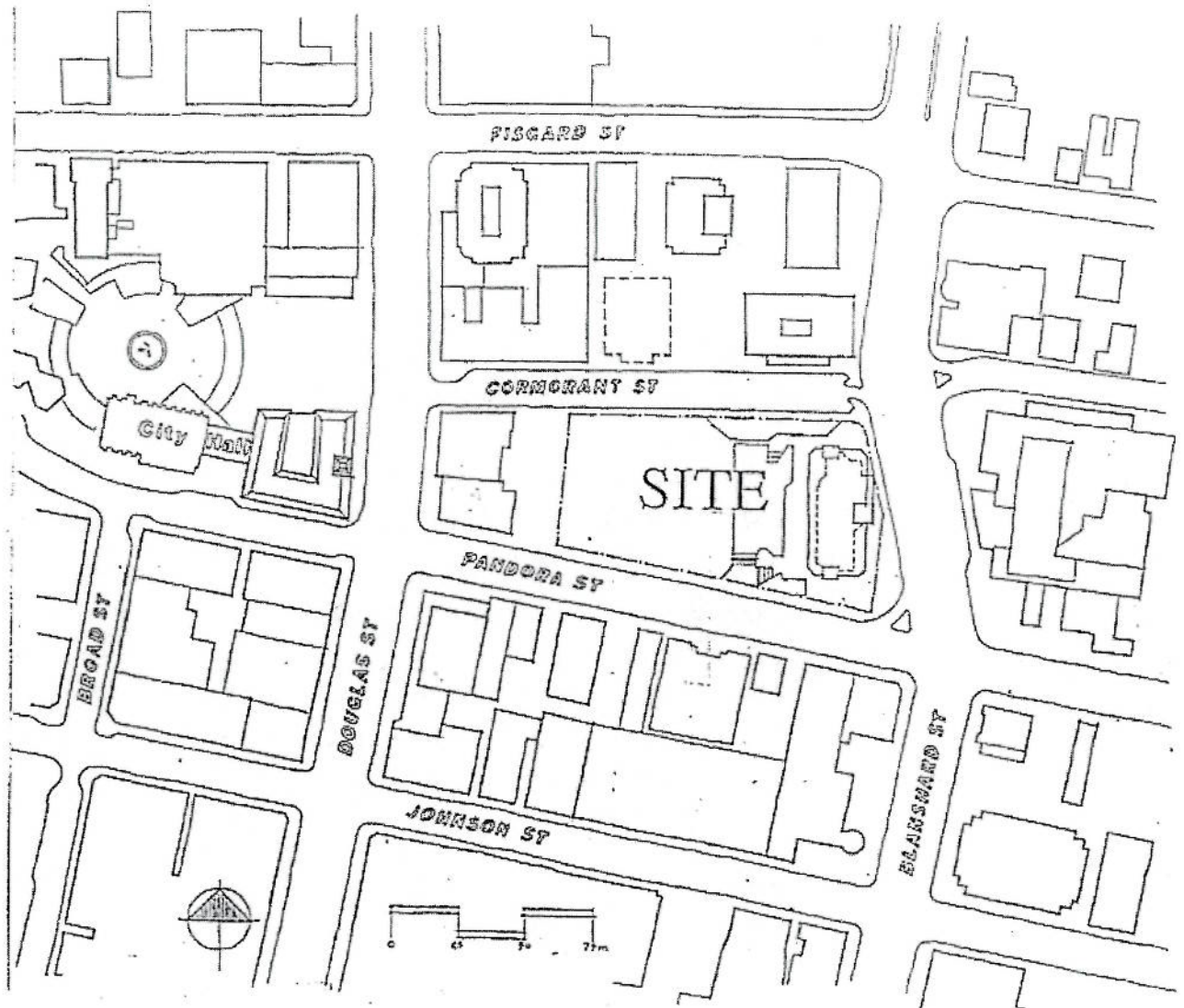
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## 1.0 LOCATION PLAN



## LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

LOT 1 OF LOT 1257, VICTORIA CITY, PLAN 27099  
(TO BE SUBDIVIDED INTO LOTS A & B)



## 2.0

## INTRODUCTION

*Proposed Subdivision and Rezoning of 700  
Block Pandora/Cormorant Street and 1520  
Blanshard Street.*

On behalf of our Client, the British Columbia Buildings Corporation, Aitken Wreglesworth Associates Architects Ltd. and The Campbell Moore Group Architects Ltd. wish to submit the following rationale as part of the above Stage 2 Rezoning Application.

Our Client wishes to construct a new 10 storey building of 17,805m<sup>2</sup> to accommodate Provincial Government Ministry offices at the above location in the north end of downtown Victoria. We note that the proposed office use is permissible within the existing CA-4 zoning and that the Downtown Victoria Plan 1990 describes the mid-block site (Precinct 15) as a "major new development opportunity, e.g., office or residential". As well, the proposed development meets with the objectives and City policies listed in the Official Community Plan for New Town.

Fundamental to this proposal is the subdivision of the existing property (Lot 1 of Lot 1257, Plan 27099) into two new lots and the transfer of density from the easterly property (Lot B) to the westerly property (Lot A) to permit development of the new building as described in this document. The easterly property will accommodate the existing three storey Rotherham office building with its sunken plaza and underground parking garage. Together, the two lots will have a combined floor space ratio of 3.0 to 1, the maximum permitted in the CA-4 zone. Lot B would be down zoned to an F.S.R. of .80 to 1, reflecting the present total floor area of the Rotherham building. Lot A (the recipient site) would be rezoned to an F.S.R. of 5.26 to 1, to accommodate all the new buildable area.

The Downtown Victoria Plan 1990 states that density transfer should be considered as a means to achieve certain urban design objectives, including the provision of public open space, mid-block pedestrian walkways, and the development in the north and 700 block sections of downtown. We submit that this proposal will meet these and other objectives through:

- 1) Provision of public open space in the form of a south facing entrance forecourt along Pandora Street and retention of the existing Rotherham plaza.
- 2) Provision of a mid-block pedestrian walkway at street level overlooking the Rotherham plaza. The portion adjacent to the new building would feature a weatherproof canopy.
- 3) The creation of a multi-storey lobby within the lower levels of the new building which is oriented on an east-west axis that aligns with the City Hall Clock Tower. This allows for the potential of a direct connection to the Bank sites immediately to the west, particularly should redevelopment of these sites take place.

- 4 ) Provision of a three storey street wall along the Cormorant Street and Pandora Street frontage and a landscaped setback on the remaining portion to reduce the apparent scale of the development along these streetscapes.
- 5 ) Provision of two levels of underground parking for approximately 151 cars with access off Pandora Street.
- 6 ) The proposed development meets the setback criteria established for the CA-4 zone on all four sides. The 91m height sensitive zone established around City Hall Clock Tower is also respected by virtue of the westerly setback.

The ten storey building height fits within the maximum height permitted and we believe it relates well to the surrounding context. The 10th floor houses the mechanical equipment (eliminating the need for a higher penthouse level) and has been augmented with approximately 650m<sup>2</sup> of usable space. We believe this combination of mechanical and usable space creates a more integrated design and a cap to the building.

The massing of the building is stepped in plan and section to reduce its apparent bulk and make it more compatible with its smaller neighbours, as well as, reducing overshadowing of the Rotherham plaza.

The existing Rotherham plaza will be animated and better integrated with the new development by:

- i. Provision of generous and direct public access from the plaza into the new underground parking garage.
- ii. Orientation of the new building lobby towards the plaza with stairs and stepped seating forming a strong connection between the new and existing.
- iii. Provision of a significant, usable, soft landscaped area with seating along the Pandora Street frontage which will overlap slightly the existing plaza in plan. This will form a distinctive connecting feature between the plaza, the street, and the new building entrance. A ramp leading through this area will provide a strong directional gesture to the plaza as well as facilitating wheelchair access.

Finally, there will be a commitment from our Client to work with the Owners of the Rotherham site to make improvements to the existing plaza which will enhance its use as an animated public place and its appearance. Confirmation of these improvements will precede the issuance of the Development Permit for the Building.



In conclusion, we believe this submission, in the form of Urban Design Guidelines, reflects the input received to date from the Advisory Planning Commission, the Planning Department, and others. We contend that the quality of streetscape and public open space in this proposal will improve the existing situation enormously and create sufficient public benefit to warrant the density transfer proposed.

### 3.0

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA BUILDINGS CORPORATION - DESIGN DIRECTIVE

The following statements were part of the Design Tender Documents of the B.C. Buildings Corporation to convey to Architects the level of design sensitivity required for this project.

*"The Cormorant Building will be a generic office building for the use of Provincial Government Ministries. It is to provide an interesting and positive work environment for its occupants.*

*The design, scale, use of materials, attention to detail and colour of the exterior should be aesthetically sensitive to the downtown environment of Victoria, particularly its relative closeness to the City Hall, whilst still demonstrating fiscal responsibility in the use of public funds. (The design of the exterior to be a timeless design reflecting an image compatible with the more traditional architectural forms in Victoria but not faddish and not a parody of traditional designs)."*

### 4.0

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CRITERIA (REFER TO APPENDIX A)

#### 4.1

##### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE/PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

- a) Locate open space at grade on the east portion of the site. This space, in combination with the existing plaza of the Rotherham building, will provide the opportunity to develop a major public amenity in the form of a urban parkette (refer to 5.0 Landscape Design Criteria).
- b) Provide a north-south, mid-block connection between Pandora and Cormorant to further the Downtown Victoria Plan objectives.
- c) Introduce significant soft landscaping, pavement treatment, garden elements, public art etc. to create visual interest for the passerby and building occupants.

- d) Maintain good visibility into the open spaces from the streets with adequate lighting and appropriate design to promote the perception of security in accordance with C.P.T.E.D. principles.
- e) Orient entrance and lobby to Pandora Street address and open space to the east. Lobby should be multi-storey to ensure a view of City Hall Clock Tower and placed on an east-west axis aligned with the City Hall Clock Tower.

## 4.2

## FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

- a) Locate the building footprint within an envelope at grade that will provide opportunities to combine the resulting open space with the existing Rotherham Plaza and permit maximum sun penetration into these spaces.
- b) Position new development above three storeys to respect the 91 metre radius - height sensitive zone - surrounding the City Hall Clock Tower.
- c) Setback building form above 3rd storey to ensure that the building mass steps back from the street wall and that a scale transition occurs from the street wall to the tower.
- d) Incorporate tripartite building expression of base middle and top. In addition to this massing strategy the building is to have distinct forms of varying heights to reduce the perceived height and bulk and to be more in keeping with the scale of the existing buildings in the immediate context. The distinct forms would be characterized by the following:
  - i. Three storey podium which provides the base for the tower portion to rise out of.
  - ii. A central mass which extends from the base to the building top and screens all roof top mechanical equipment. This form would act as a hinge connecting the adjacent 'wrapper' forms and accentuate the main entry to the building. A transparent treatment of this form would clearly define and separate the more solid 'wrapper' elements.
  - iii. A form which would identify the middle of the building and 'wrap' around the central mass as described in item ii. above. This element would be more solid to contrast with the central, transparent form.
  - iv. The 10th floor is to have a floor area component of approximately 650m<sup>2</sup> of usable space and to conceptually sit on the wrapper walls and to abut the central mass. The penthouse would be setback from the 'wrapper' wall by approximately 3 metres on all sides and have a distinctive roof top element which would provide an interesting termination to the building form at the skyline.



## 4.3

## EXPRESSION/CHARACTER (Refer to Appendix A - 6.5 Massing)

## a) Three Storey Building Base:

- i. Express structural grid.
- ii. Inset glazing line to accentuate column expression and "storefront" nature of the ground floor.
- iii. Demarcate entry with detailed entrance canopies.
- iv. Use materials and fixtures of a fine grain of detail (i.e., reveals and/or texture of treated pre-cast concrete, brick, or tile inserts; column base expression; integrated lighting canopy etc.).
- v. Use clear glass to permit pedestrian views into ground floor spaces.
- vi. Tinted glass and tinted spandrel glass to be used above the ground floor. Highly reflective glazing will not be used.

## b) Middle - 'Wrapper' walls: (Refer to Appendix A - 6.6 Design Examples)

- i. Clad columns and spandrels with a heavier material (i.e., treated pre-cast concrete) to express the major structural grid.
- ii. Introduce a secondary grid established by the window and spandrels glass framing to play against the structural grid. Window patterns to be repetitive and recessed in keeping with traditional commercial buildings in the area.
- iii. Introduce subtle differentiation of the 9th floor by the use of an intermediate cornice line and/or accent.
- iv. Tinted glass and tinted spandrel glass to be used throughout. Highly reflective glazing will not be used.

## c) Central Form: (Refer to Appendix A - 6.6 Design Examples)

- i. Clad wall with taut skinned assembly such as curtain wall. Tinted glass and tinted spandrel glass to be used throughout. Highly reflective glazing will not be used.
- ii. Express horizontal window mullions to line up with spandrels, and window mullions in 'wrapper' wall assembly.
- iii. Express vertical window mullions to contrast horizontal bands of spandrel glazing panels.
- iv. Integrate metal horizontal louvres at the top of the building wall to accommodate air intake requirements of the mechanical equipment.

## 5.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGN CRITERIA

### 5.1 OPEN SPACE STUDY

Through the design process for the proposed Cormorant Building, the adjacent Rotherham Plaza has been considered an integral part of the open space concept. It is generally recognized that the existing condition of the Rotherham Plaza does not realize the potential of this space as a public amenity. With development of the Cormorant Building, there is an opportunity to both address the deficiencies of the existing plaza and to link the Cormorant and Rotherham areas of the block.

The following is an examination of the negative and positive features of the Rotherham Plaza, as well as some comment as to the design direction that may be followed to retrofit this space.

### 5.2 ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE

#### NEGATIVE FEATURES:

- LACK OF INTIMACY/SCALE PROBLEM  
(Vary the types of spaces; add layers of interest and complexity)
- LACK OF FOCUS  
(Provide focal points and a sequence of experiences)
- LACK OF REASONS TO PASS THROUGH  
(Provide a sequence of spaces/amenities; and plaza access to parkade)
- LACK OF PRESENCE ON STREET  
(Provide a portal that is visible from along the sidewalk)
- IMAGE PROBLEM  
(Develop an identity that is distinct from other downtown plazas)
- SUNKEN PLAZA  
(Consider the view from above; ensure casual surveillance of space)
- LACK OF WEATHER PROTECTION  
(Develop a system of canopies and windbreaks)
- HIDDEN SPACE AT EDGES  
(Eliminate potential hiding places; ensure casual surveillance)
- DARK WELL TYPE SPACE AT EDGE  
(Provide appropriate lighting)

- 
- STAIR BARRIERS  
(Provide a ramp option)
  - LACK OF SEATING  
(Provide seat options in warm locations and good view areas)
  - BARREN SPACE  
(Provide soft landscape/planted areas; and ensure seasonal interest)
  - BLANK WALLS  
(Soften walls with planting, shadow patterns and lighting)
  - LOAD BEARING CONSTRAINT  
(Develop light weight solutions for areas on the existing structure)

POSITIVE FEATURES:

- SOUTH/SUN EXPOSURES  
(Provide seat options in sun; use the potential of shadows; improve views to the south)
- GOOD SCALE RELATIONSHIP ALONG PANDORA AND CORMORANT
- VIEWPOINTS OVERLOOKING LOWER PLAZA
- UNUSUAL CURVILINEAR PLAZA VIEWPOINT AT SOUTH STAIR
- SOME MATURE PLANTING  
(Retain large conifers and colourful Sumac; reduce use of Berberis)
- SUBSTANTIAL MATURE STREET TREES ALONG PANDORA STREET
- LIGHTING
- NORTH-SOUTH MID BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- WINDOWS LOOK OUT ONTO THE LOWER PLAZA
- PAVING HAS SOME PATTERNING AND DIVERSITY OF MATERIALS
- THE FUTURE ADDITION OF OVER 1000 PEOPLE TO THE AREA  
(With development of the Cormorant Building and the site to the south, as well as, occupancy of the office tower on Fisgard Street, the potential for active use of the plaza will improve)



**5.3 OPEN SPACE CONTEXT (Refer to Appendix A - 6.7 Open Space Inventory)**

There are few public plazas or other open spaces of significant size in the local area. Centennial Square is the prime public space. Other spaces include the Rotherham Plaza, the Market Square courtyard and the Jack Davis Building plaza. Currently, there is public gathering also at the entry to the Richard Blanshard Building, as well as, the outdoor cafe space at the corner of Fisgard and Government Streets. These sites are, with the exception of the Centennial Square lawn, all hard surface spaces. Further, spaces such as the Centennial Square plaza require considerable special event programming to generate substantial public use.

**5.4 LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES**

- a) Develop a unified concept for Lot A and Lot B (Cormorant Building and Rotherham Plaza) open spaces, that blurs the line between the sites, and provides an appealing public amenity.
- b) Provide a 'green', soft landscape alternative to the local context of hard surface open spaces.
- c) Develop a landscape concept for the Lower Rotherham Plaza that respects the limited load bearing capacity of the plaza structure.
- d) Develop a concept that allows for change in the use of the Lower Rotherham Plaza to respond to future demand for active / commercial use of that space.
- e) Provide diverse, comfortable seating and gathering opportunities, with spaces that have good sun exposure and spaces that are shaded.
- f) Provide outdoor areas that offer protection from rain, snow and wind.
- g) Develop route options through the open space that offer viewpoints and varied route experiences.
- h) Ensure that entry to the open space is visible from the street, and that the space has a 'presence' on both Pandora and Cormorant Streets.

- 
- i) Develop an image for the open space that links Lot A and Lot B, and distinguishes this space from other plazas, squares and public places in the area.
  - j) Provide for interesting views of the space from adjacent high viewpoints, including the Upper Rotherham Plaza, as well as existing and future office and residential towers.
  - k) Ensure that the open space is a safe environment, through application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.
  - l) Infill the existing street tree patterns on Cormorant and Pandora Streets, where appropriate, in consultation with City of Victoria staff.
  - m) Develop a diverse palette of plant materials for the open space that provides for seasonal and sensory interest.
  - n) Develop a lighting concept that addresses security and route definition, as well as contributes to the amenity of the open space.

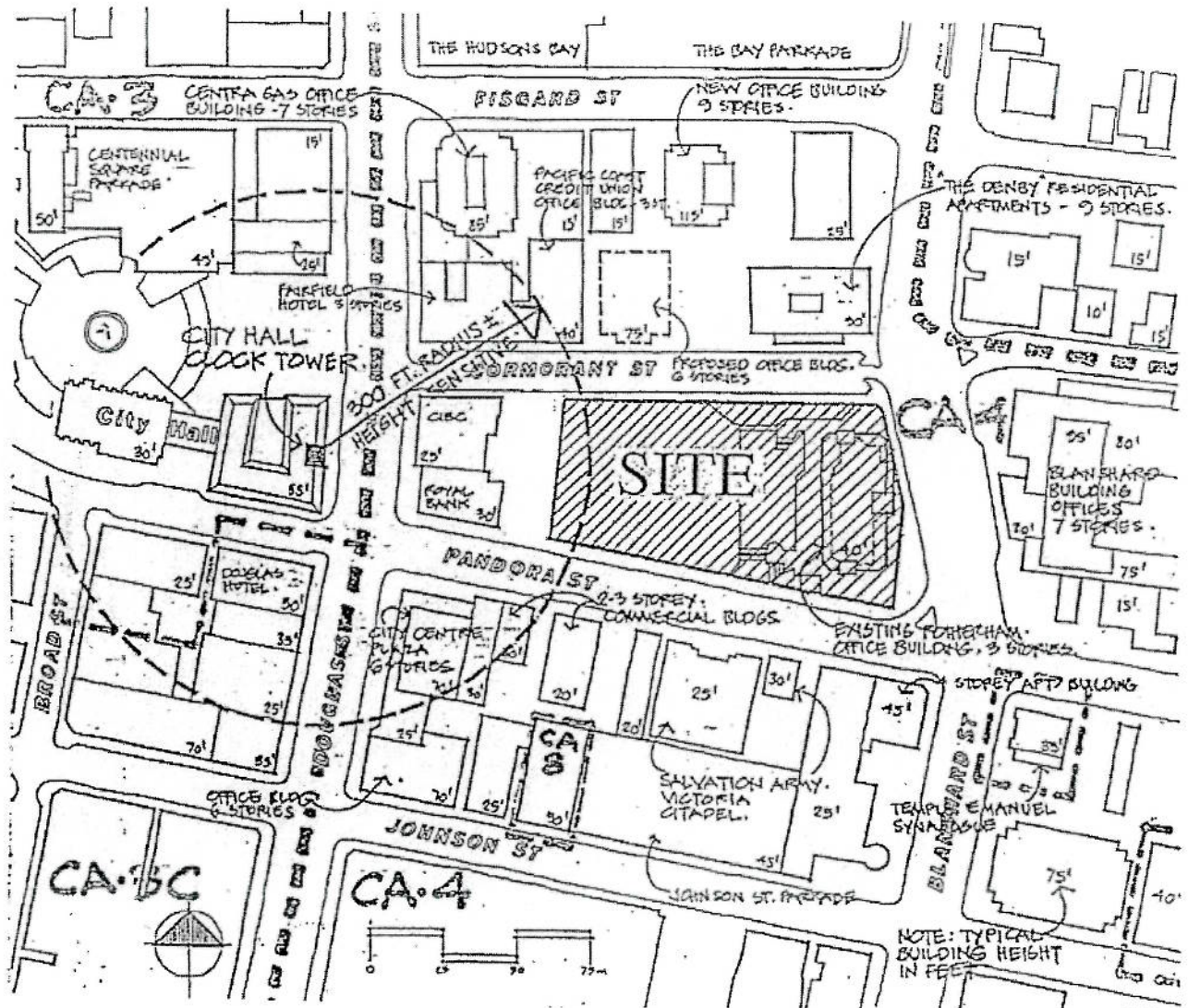
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APPENDIX A - ANALYSIS DRAWINGS

- 6.1 ZONING, DENSITY, & HEIGHT
- 6.2 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- 6.3 VIEW CORRIDORS
- 6.4 TRAFFIC & PARKING
- 6.5 MASSING
- 6.6 DESIGN EXAMPLES
- 6.7 OPEN SPACE INVENTORY



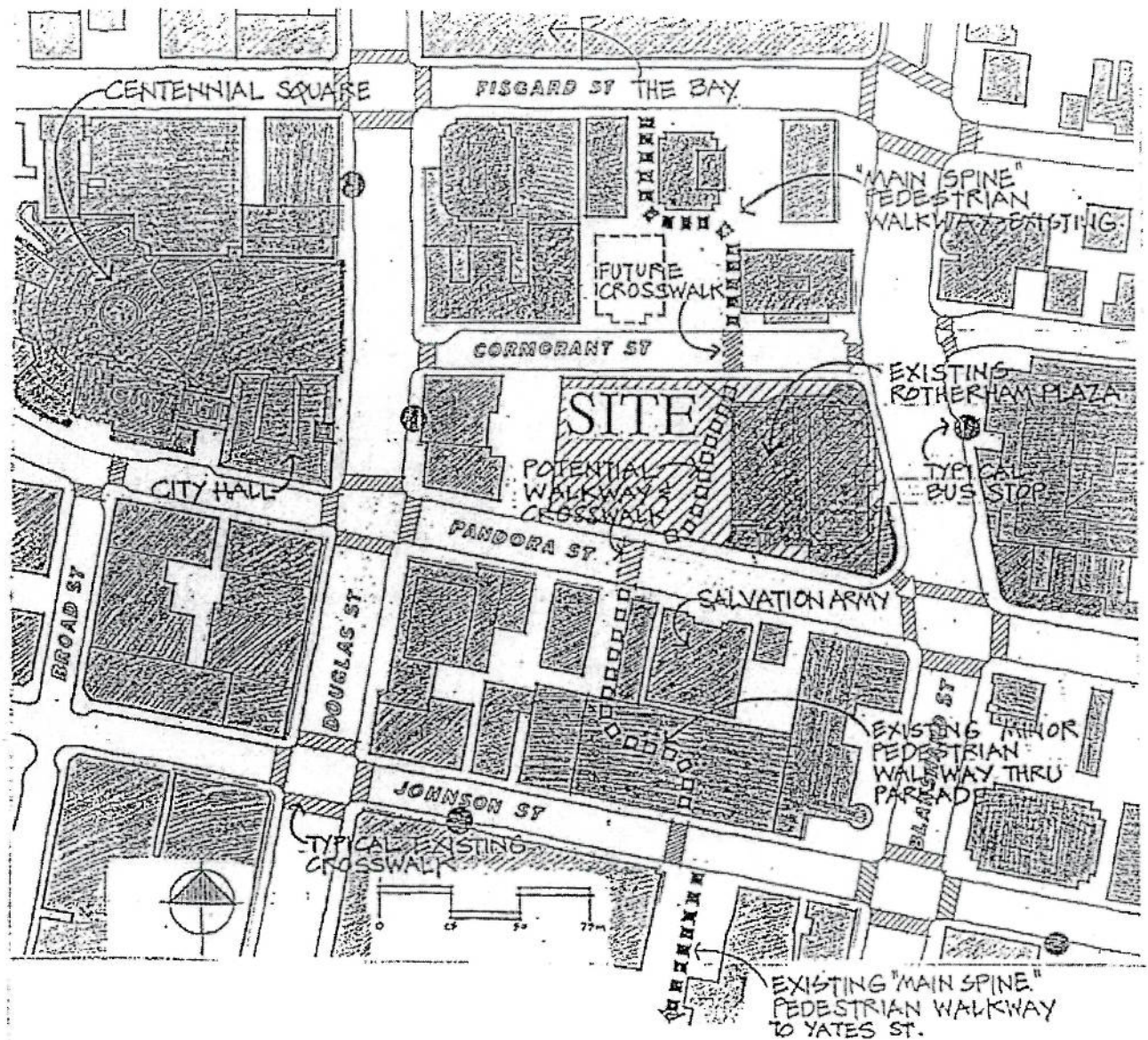
## APPENDIX A - 6.1 ZONING, DENSITY, AND HEIGHT





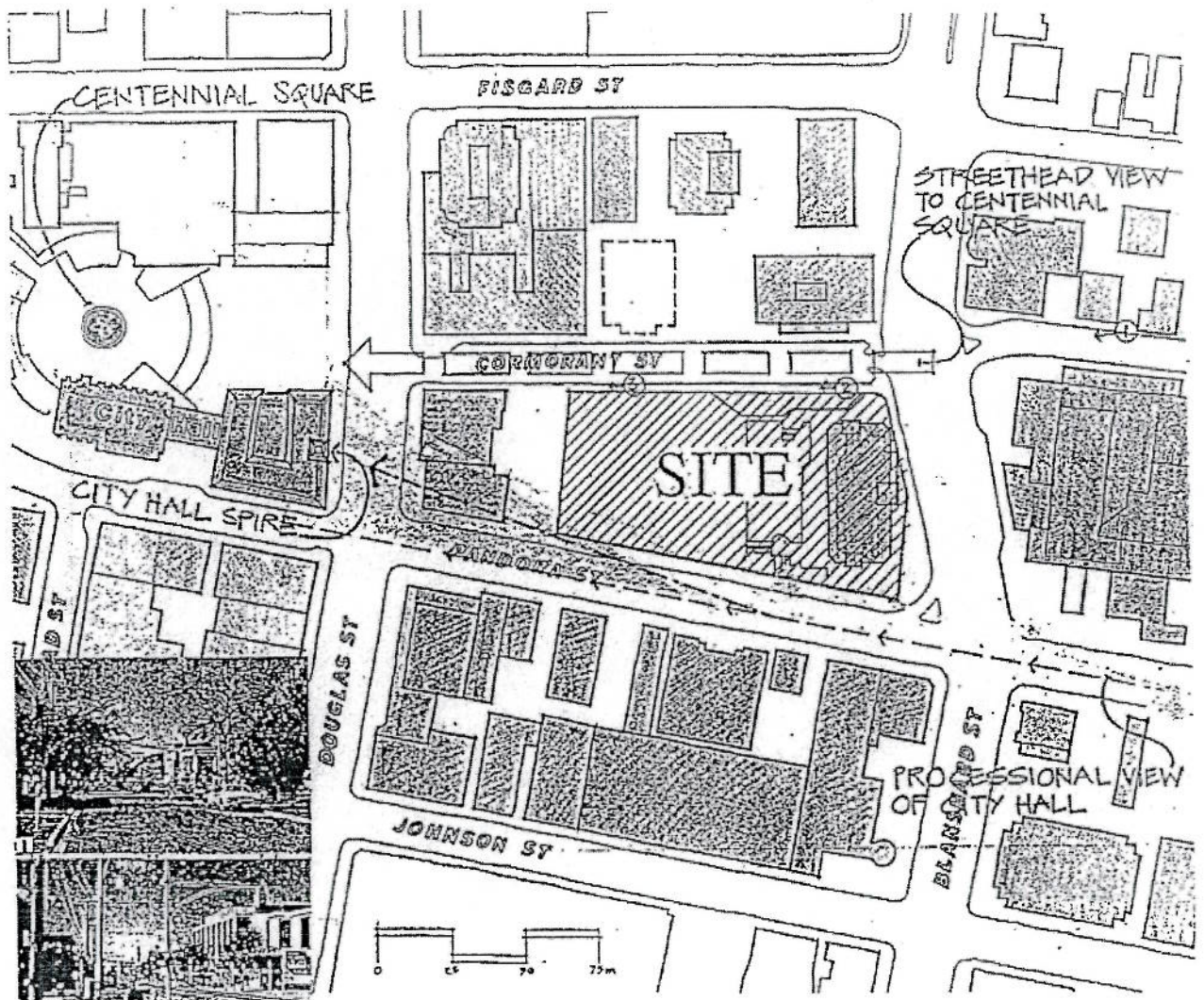
## APPENDIX A - 6.2

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACES AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



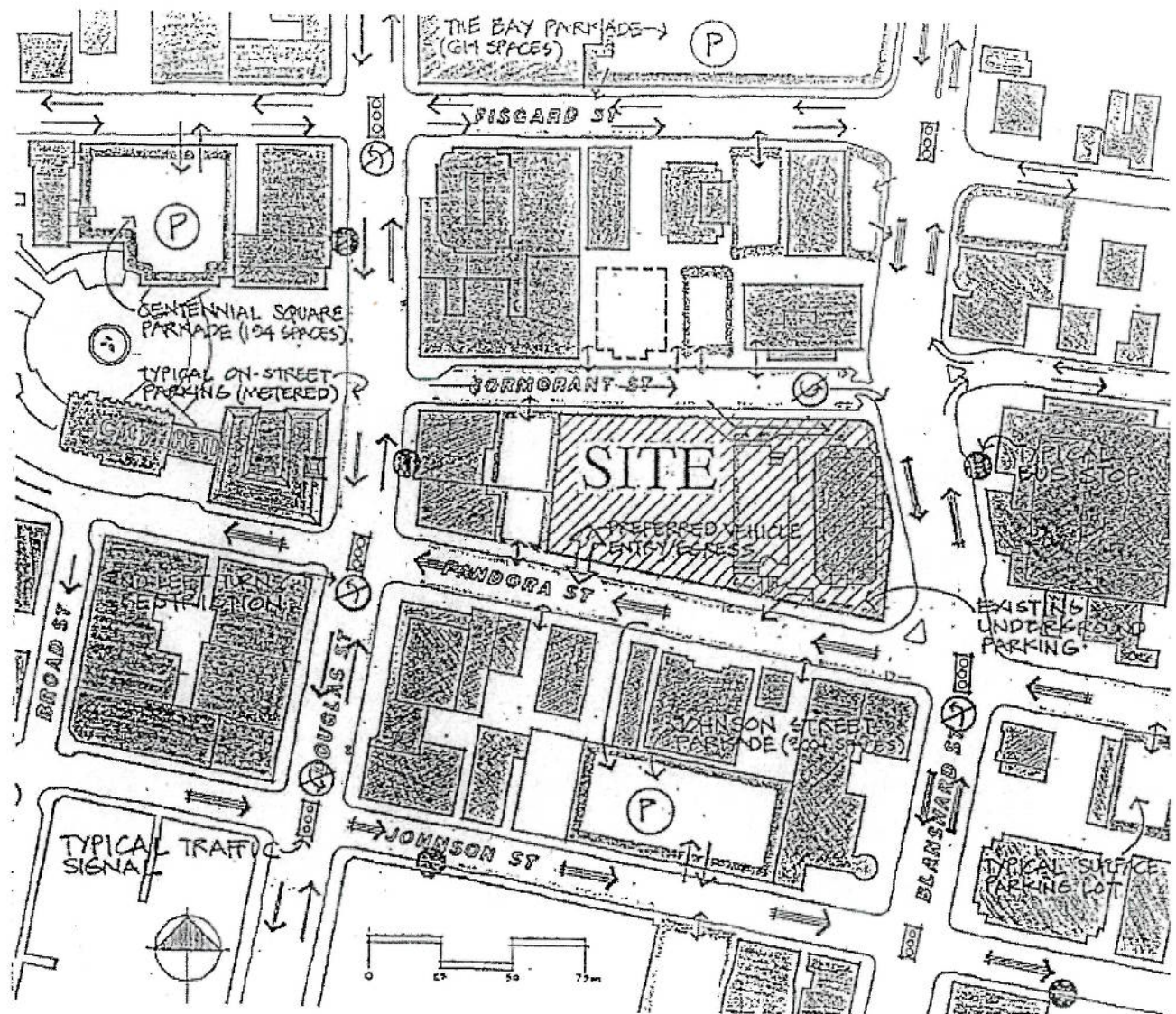


APPENDIX A - 6.3 VIEW CORRIDORS

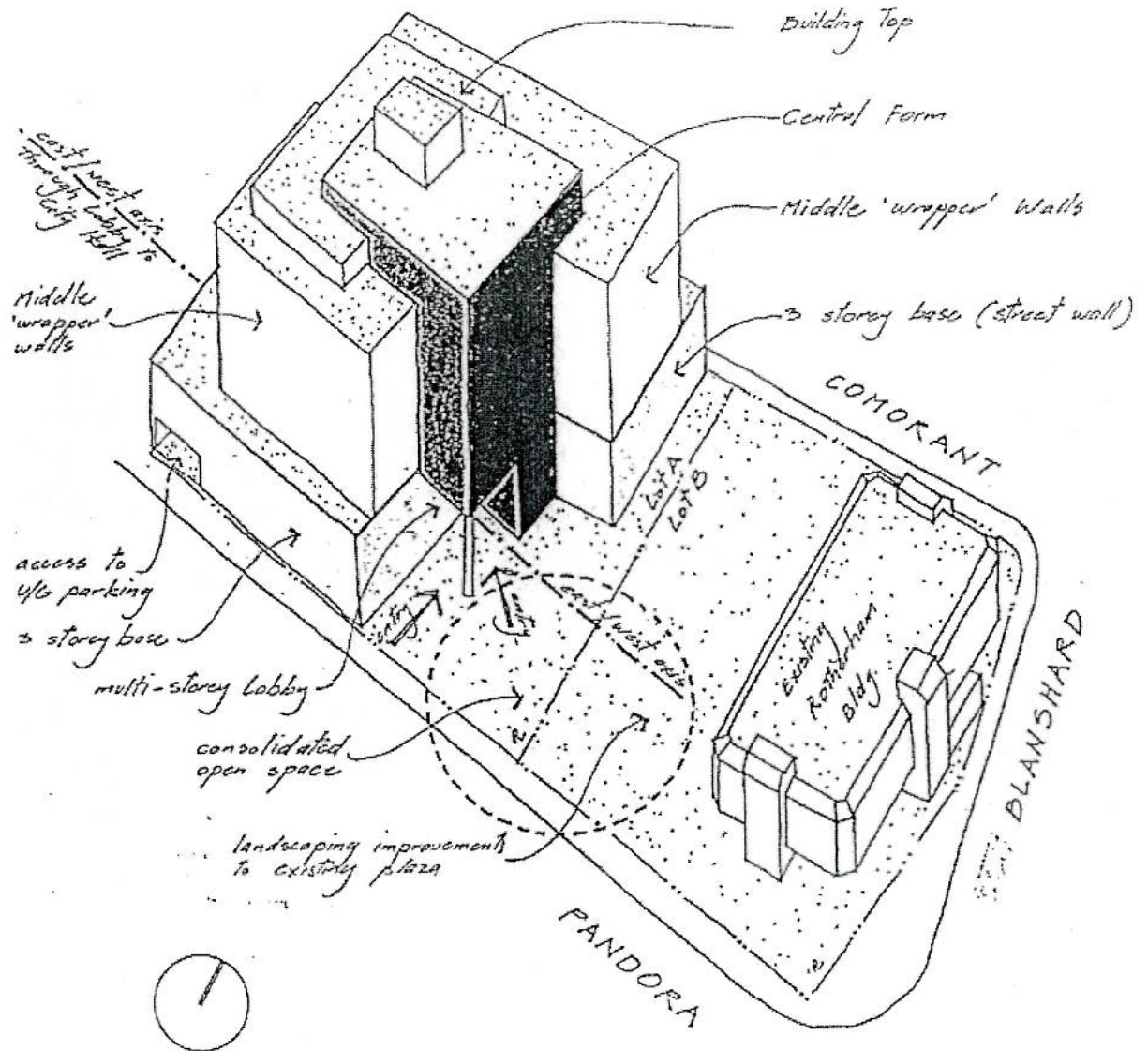




APPENDIX A - 6.4 TRAFFIC & PARKING



APPENDIX A - 6.5 MASSING

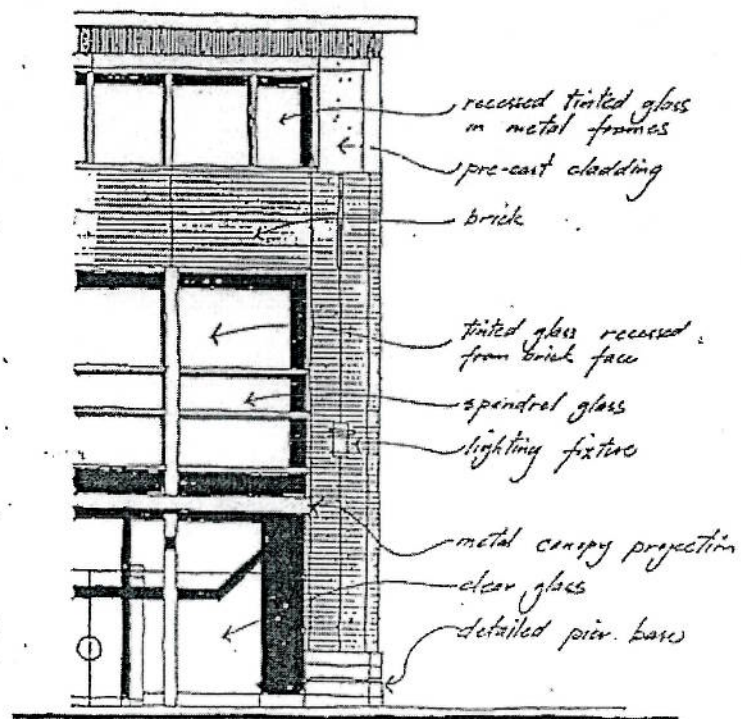
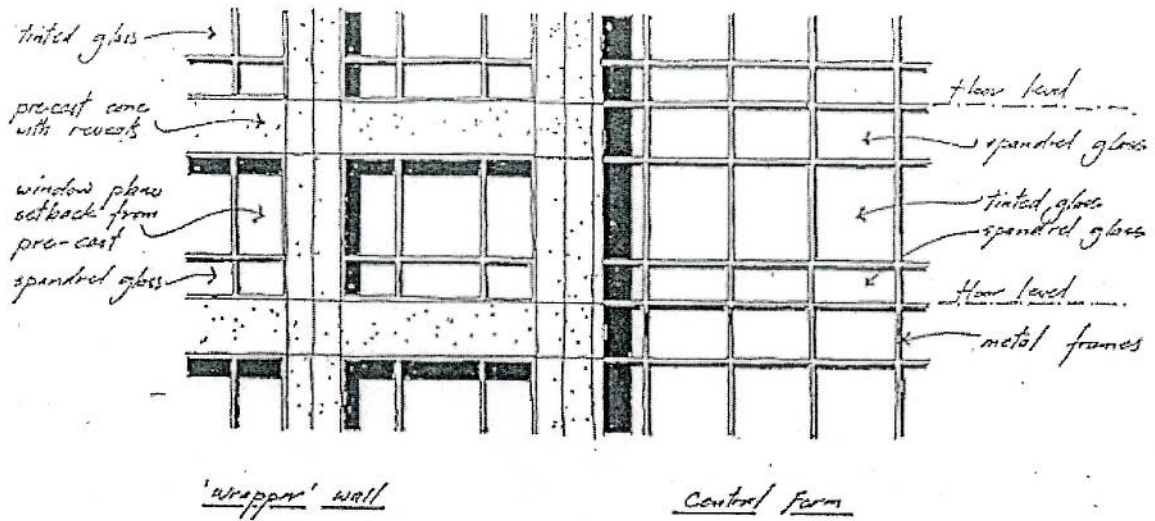


EXAMPLE OF BUILDING FORM ON LOT A  
NOT TO SCALE



## APPENDIX A - 6.6

## DESIGN EXAMPLES



3 Story Base (Street wall)



APPENDIX A - 6.7 OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

