

Discussion Paper No.3
Clovelly-Caulfeild; Issues Assessment



*Prepared for Working Group
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Preface

What will this place look like in 50 years? Clovelly-Caulfeild is a mature, fully developed, stable residential neighbourhood. It is not slated in the Official Community Plan as a target area for absorbing growth. Nevertheless, residential change in the neighbourhood will occur and there are and will be development, or rather redevelopment, opportunities here.

Given this context, the aim of the Clovelly-Caulfeild Working Group was to recommend carefully modulated, moderate changes to the regulations sufficient to ensure the restoration of Design with Nature principles and preserve the existing neighbourhood character without jeopardizing property values. Critics however jumped to the opposite conclusion - that the proposals went too far, focussed too heavily on one small geographical area, and would result in loss of the area's property value and "property rights". Some declared their intention not to support or improve the process, but to stop it in its tracks.

The Working Group listened to what residents had to say and to understand their concerns, and then moved to adjust and finalize its recommendations. Some recommendations were withdrawn, others were modified and the rest were retained, with the objective of achieving a balance the Working Group had striven for from the beginning – to “come up the middle” in order to harmonize the interests of both existing and new private owners and the community interest. We are all in this together.

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction**
 - Issues Overview
- 2. Regulatory Context**
 - Official Community Plan
 - Business Plan
- 3. Analysis**
 - Development Opportunities
 - Property Values
 - Tree Valuation
 - Amount and Rate of Residential Change in Clovelly-Caulfeild
 - Side Effects of Current Development Practices
- 4. What “Design with Nature’ Means**
 - At the Regional Scale
 - At the Neighbourhood Level
- 5. Community Input**
- 6. Conclusions**

1. Introduction

This *Clovelly-Caulfeild: Impact Assessment* is one of four inter-linked discussion papers that have been used as information and analytical tools by the Clovelly-Caulfeild Working Group. Read together, they document the neighbourhood planning process for Clovelly-Caulfeild. The four papers are listed below

1. *The Story of Clovelly-Caulfeild*
2. *From Grass-Roots to Community Dialogue: The Story of One Neighbourhood's Journey*
3. *Clovelly-Caulfeild: Issues Assessment*
4. *Rainwater Management: Context for Designing with Nature*

Early in the planning process the Working Group adopted preservation of neighbourhood character as the goal of the neighbourhood plan. The Group believed that despite being in compliance with existing regulations, some current development practices have adversely affected properties adjacent or near to redevelopment sites, and put neighbourhood character at risk.

Issues Overview: On the face of it a dispute over a handful of residential redevelopment projects in one West Vancouver locality may seem to be little more than a storm in a teacup between neighbours of no particular consequence to others who do not appear to be directly involved. But as the Working Group thought about the actual and potential consequences of the situation, and pondered how further repetition of the dispute best could be avoided for the overall benefit of the community, it became clear that some important issues had to be addressed, including the following;

- Sustainability and Neighbourhood Character
- Designing with Nature
- Development Opportunities in Clovelly-Caulfeild
- Rate of Residential Change in Clovelly-Caulfeild
- Property Value
- Side Effects of Current Development Practices
- Trees and the Urban Forest
- Community Input

2. Regulatory Context

The policy and planning framework for the Clovelly-Caulfeild neighbourhood planning process is governed by the Official Community Plan and *Sustainable Future*, the District's three year Corporate Business Plan. Both of these key documents are based on the fundamental concept of sustainability, by which is meant the long term economic, environmental and social health of the community, the inter-relationships between and balance amongst them.

Official Community Plan: To guide West Vancouver's direction to become more rather than less sustainable the Official Community Plan sets out 8 planning principles, 16 policy sections, and 128 policies. Whilst virtually every one of the policy sections and many of the policies touch on and affect existing neighbourhoods (for example, Section 3 *Housing*, Section 5 *Heritage*, Section 6 *Natural Environment*, Section 14 *Safety and Emergency Preparedness*, and Section 16, *Governance and Civic Participation*), the Working Group focused its primary attention and recommendations on Section 4, *Built Form and Neighbourhood Character*.

The community wide policies laid out in Section 4, *Built Form and Neighbourhood Character*, promote unique neighbourhood qualities and design excellence.

Business Plan: *Sustainable Future*, the District's Corporate Business Plan, is linked and gives effect to the Official Community Plan. In approving the Business Plan Council established five Priorities (*Social Sustainability, Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Special Projects, and Governance*) and a related program of goals and action steps to be completed in the period 2006-2008.

Design with Nature is a goal of the Governance Priority (more fully defined in the document as *Governance Promoting Sustainability*). That Council chose this goal and chose to place it under the Governance Priority rather than one of the other priorities is significant – apparently West Vancouver is the first municipality in the Greater Vancouver area to adopt Design with Nature as an explicit community goal. Clearly, Council recognizes that municipal leadership and municipal regulation can and should influence design outcomes.

The Design with Nature goal statement in the plan is quite specific; it is to “update policies and bylaws (blasting, soil replacement and removal, slope treatment, retaining walls, tree removal) to ensure that housing development respects the natural environment wherever possible and supports community sustainability goals”.

The Clovelly-Caulfeild neighbourhood planning process is identified as a pilot project in *Sustainable Future*. The Clovelly-Caulfeild process was seen as a means of identifying possible changes to Council policies and bylaws that may be applicable broadly across the District.

3. Analysis

The Working Group defined neighbourhood character as being based on the heritage of designing with nature passed down from Francis William Caulfeild. He set the development pattern of Clovelly-Caulfeild – homes situated to respect both landscape and neighbours, in a pattern that combines both privacy and community. His streets were narrow and winding, following the natural contours. Trees and tree canopy were protected, without neglecting sunlight and views. Homes were built on bedrock, and rock outcroppings were left in place, giving shape and texture to gardens. Natural drainage patterns were sustained.

In order to explore ways of achieving the goal, sub-groups examined three sets of issues: (a) housing stock and site coverage; (b) tree management; and (c) site preparation. These discussions led to the Group's initial ideas - to keep the existing zoning but limit blasting and tree clearance - which were presented to the first Neighbourhood Meeting in April 2006. Some of those present asserted that limits on blasting and tree clearance would prevent developers from maximizing views and scare them away, and in so doing decrease property values.

The Working Group decided to address these issues directly as it continued work on the plan, and to assess the effect of its proposals on property values as well as its other effects before submitting the plan to Council. At the same time, the Working Group believed that proposed changes to existing regulations and processes should result in a net benefit for the community.

Possible financial impact is an important issue, but the planning process is broader than this. It also deals with social and environmental considerations.

In formulating its draft recommendations, the Working Group has attempted to balance the objectives of individual property owners with the community's desire to preserve the neighbourhood's character and liveability. The Group believes that the plan achieves this balance.

This Discussion Paper concludes that the discretionary nature of the proposed Voluntary Development Permit process with its associated development criteria and accompanying bylaw changes should not hamper property values in Clovelly-Caulfeild. On the contrary, experience in West Vancouver and elsewhere suggests that discretionary control is typically associated with increased property values, not decreased.

To evaluate the impact of the neighbourhood plan the following issues were examined;

- Development opportunities
- Property values
- Tree valuation
- Amount and rate of residential change in Clovelly-Caulfeild.
- Side effects of current development practices on adjacent properties and neighbourhood character

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

Development Opportunities: Clovelly-Caulfeild is a mature, fully developed, stable residential neighbourhood. It is not slated in the Official Community Plan as a target area for absorbing growth. The Working Group accepts that nevertheless residential change in the neighbourhood will occur and that there are and will be development, or rather redevelopment, opportunities here.

Review of building records shows that generally the existing housing stock in Clovelly-Caulfeild is comfortably within the applicable RS2 and RS3 zoning although some of the newly built homes come close to the limits. This stock has been built incrementally over nine decades. It provides homes for families, and a safe environment in which children can grow and the older generation can age in place. Some homes have been passed on within the family from one generation to another.

Some homes however may be of an age and in a condition where redevelopment is a good option. Present day residential property values in the neighbourhood ranging from below \$1 million to \$5 million plus, robust underlying land values averaging \$55 to \$60 per square foot, and attractive, good-sized lots will continue to stimulate developer interest, and the trend to larger homes to satisfy contemporary lifestyle preferences will add pressure to increase new building size in the neighbourhood.

The Working Group felt that the current zoning could accommodate a reasonable increase in home size, and that the problems that had given rise to the 2005 grass roots protest and the establishment of the neighbourhood planning process were not so much related to the size of homes as to the treatment of site and lack of sensitivity to the surrounding neighbourhood fabric.

This position does not disturb opportunities to meet current and anticipated market trends through alterations/additions or updates to existing homes, or redevelopment to provide new and possibly larger homes that reflect modern trends and lifestyles. There is also the prospect that some redevelopment may occur as a result of subdivisions, particularly at the present time at the east end of Clovelly Walk and Piccadilly North where as many as a half dozen subdivided lots have been created.

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

Property Values: Value derives from the particular features of an individual property in relation to other individual properties, and from the attractiveness of its neighbourhood and area compared to others in the region. The market values of residential property in Clovelly-Caulfeild were studied through an examination of assessment rolls and real estate records for the period 2001 to 2006, and were compared with other neighbourhoods in West Vancouver.

Residential property values in Clovelly-Caulfeild have been rising at rates generally comparable to West Vancouver as a whole. MLS data show that in current dollars the price of an average single family District home doubled between 2001 and 2006. While they have been rising at this healthy rate, underlying land values in Clovelly-Caulfeild are not as high as in other attractive single family areas in the District such as Lower Caulfeild, Altamont and (upper) Dunderave with which comparisons were made. They are located closer to the urban centre and services, or are on the waterfront, and/or have more commanding ocean and/or mountain views than many of the properties in Clovelly-Caulfeild.

Among the attributes attracting the highest values for single family residential properties in West Vancouver are waterfront locations (which may command premiums that are double or even triple inland values), ocean and /or mountain views, centrality (proximity to services and amenities) and privacy. These attributes are highly rated and highlighted in their sales promotions by local realtors whenever possible. Gardens, landscaping, and trees are not mentioned nearly as frequently.

Clovelly-Caulfeild values depend on its commodious dwellings, and on its reputation as a treed neighbourhood offering families a blend of privacy and community, home to a well-regarded elementary school, served by transit, and with good access to a nearby shopping centre, a high school, parks, walking trails and other amenities. While there are properties in the neighbourhood that already have an ocean or mountain view or potentially might gain one, many of the others are situated on lots that do not have this attribute. Though lacking views they are nevertheless very pleasantly situated amidst gardens, landscaped lots and /or trees in a physically congenial setting.

Tree valuation: Professional appraisal practice specifies that the economic valuation of trees (and plants, gardens and landscape) should be part and parcel of residential and other property appraisals. In most cases however, the contribution of a tree or a group of trees to a valuation is not specifically identified. Such information cannot be found, for example, on existing publicly available West Vancouver data bases. The absence of this data and of publicly available appraisals by professional tree appraisers makes it difficult to determine objectively what the value (positive or negative) of single or multiple trees is either to specific properties in Clovelly-Caulfeild or to the neighbourhood.

There are various reasons why trees may have negative value. They may, for instance, be diseased or old, in a hazardous condition, or simply a nuisance. In West Vancouver convention suggests that trees blocking views detract from market value, and developers justify tree clearance both for this reason and to facilitate site preparation, as has been happening recently in this neighbourhood.

Trees also have positive values, for example when they enhance the attractiveness of a property or a neighbourhood aesthetically. Even a single, well-positioned, healthy tree can add to market value. But trees are more than just decorations. They perform a wide range of ecological, climatic, landscape, social and psychological functions, which, according to professional organizations such as the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers within the International Society of Arboriculture can contribute to, and should be taken into account in determining their economic value.

Not enough is known about the economic value of trees in West Vancouver. There has been no local study valuing trees in relation to residential property values in the District. However, the web-based *Compendium of Best Management Practices for Urban Forests in Canada* included reports of studies done elsewhere in Canada and the United State that suggest local studies here in West Vancouver might be worthwhile. Some studies compare values of treed properties against non-wooded properties. Estimates of the value trees can add to properties vary. One study, for example, reported increases in the range of 3% to 10% of appraised values. Another quoted estimates made by developers of as much as 20% to 30%.

Residential properties that are close to parks, wooded areas and green spaces have also been found to gain in value; by as much as 8% to 20% according to one study. Another study, conducted for Environment Canada, concluded that “ a property’s value increases substantially for every walking foot closer it is to a park”

In the past ten to twenty years as Canadians have become more concerned about the condition and loss of trees in their cities and communities the concept of the ‘urban forest’ has been gaining increasing attention. The concept can be applied to all private and public trees in an area, be it a neighbourhood, city or region, and is useful in increasing understanding of the ‘forest’s’ functions, value and condition from ecological, social and economic perspectives. There is a growing realization that protecting and conserving urban forests through proper management is vital to sustaining healthy communities.

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

Environmental Benefits of the Urban Forest: Among other benefits urban forests help to reduce the quantity of rainwater flows, soil erosion and stream sedimentation, and help to improve the quality of rainwater run-off through absorption. Factors influencing the level of absorption and evapo-transpiration include species, stature, size, and leaf area density. Maintaining or increasing tree canopy is a simple way to help control runoff and reduce overall run-off. The companion Discussion Paper #4 explores these issues more fully.

Neighbourhood trees also help to reduce greenhouse gasses through carbon sequestration. They moderate climatic effects by providing shade and wind protection, and in so doing help to reduce energy consumption for air-conditioning and heating. To perform these functions trees have to be close at hand as part of the urban fabric, present in neighbourhoods and in proximity to where people live

The publicly and privately-owned trees of Clovelly-Caulfeild are part of the District of West Vancouver's urban forest, and need to be managed with this consideration in mind. Over and above the intrinsic value of the trees themselves, the Clovelly-Caulfeild portion of West Vancouver's urban forest has two important roles; to contribute to the character of the neighbourhood and to help sustain the local eco-system and maintain Clovelly-Caulfeild as a wildlife corridor linking the ocean to the wilderness forest above the Upper Levels Highway and beyond.

Environmental Damage: Urban forest suffers when it is managed on a site-by-site basis, and when an attitude of disregard for trees creeps in. On Clovelly Walk and in a couple of other parts of the neighbourhood over the last couple of years dozens of trees on a small number of individual private sites have been cut down (and on at least one occasion cut down during the nesting season) to make way for redevelopment, opening up noticeable gaps in the tree canopy.

In the same time frame and in unrelated actions other trees on public land at the west end of the Walk have been casually topped and damaged by individuals acting without authorization. The cumulative effect has been reduction of the forest canopy and neighbourhood character

From time to time nature also wreaks havoc. The fourteen or fifteen storms so far this winter have damaged and destroyed many trees across the District hitting Clovelly-Caulfeild homeowners (including some members of the Working Group) among others hard.

This does not mean, however, that in urban and suburban areas society should abandon efforts to retain trees of the urban forest and safeguard them. On the contrary, the Working Group believes it means that more research, greater knowledge, and better management of both individual trees and the urban forest is needed. The Group believes that West Vancouver is well positioned to adopt a leading role on these matters

Amount and Rate of Residential Change in Clovelly-Caulfeild: The rate of residential change in the neighbourhood will be influenced partly by the rate and number of properties coming onto the market, and partly by the rate and amount of property redevelopment and/or alterations and additions taking place.

There are some 230 homes in Clovelly-Caulfeild. Sales records over the five years 2001 to 2006 showed some 60 neighbourhood properties changed hands in this period. Sales ranged from seven in 2001 to a peak of thirteen in 2005. 2006 has been a little slower with eight sales this year.

A high proportion of current owners have lived in the neighbourhood for many years and there is a strong inclination to “age in place”. Unless there is a generational change similar to that experienced twenty years ago or so, annual turnover in the next five years is likely to stay within the range exhibited over the past five years.

District records indicate that 9 building permits were issued for new, larger homes in the neighbourhood during the period 2001 to mid 2006, essentially between 2003 and 2005, the majority of which have been in the vicinity of Clovelly Walk, although a couple were in other parts of the neighbourhood. In addition 16 permits for alterations/additions were issued. Alterations/additions did not add significantly to building footprints.

As long as the real estate market continues to be healthy the likely rate of redevelopment over the medium term (5 to 7 years) may fluctuate up and down a little as opportunities occur and are taken up but remain at levels roughly similar to those of the past five or six years.

Side Effects of Current Development Practices: Recent development has altered considerably some existing streetscapes and landforms in Clovelly-Caulfeild. Streetscapes – the roads and boulevards- narrow and winding in the older parts, more curving and a little wider in the newer parts, are an important element of the neighbourhood’s character, providing its public realm.

Individual streets do vary in character, but overall they have an air of informality and intimacy that is dependent on a range of factors; the amount of tree foliage and the extent of the tree canopy, shrubs, hedges and plantings, rock outcroppings, fences, walls and the individual treatments and contributions of garden frontages that through serendipitous individual homemakers’ decisions combine to give a sense of continuity.

Gaps or abrupt changes in that continuity brought about by such recent practices as over-aggressive rock piling across a frontage break this effect. The Working Group wants the existing character of the neighbourhood streetscapes to be maintained, and recommends that the District review its standards for rock piling and treatment of frontages to ensure that this goal can be achieved.

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

Natural rock outcroppings are another characteristic feature of Clovelly-Caulfeild. Historically, homes were built on rock foundations, and rock outcroppings were incorporated in gardens and landscaping. More recent developments have tended to re-shape sites to suit the design requirements of new construction, through greater amounts of blasting, extensive retaining walls and rock piling.

Rock blasting and its effects - short term noise and debris from blasting activity, the long term alteration of landforms, and the piling of blasted rock on site - are cause for neighbourhood concern. Analysis of blasting permits issued by the District indicates that blasting volumes increased over the past ten years, from a District average of 211 cubic metres in the period 1994 to 1998 to 319 cubic metres in 2006. Recent blasting volumes in Clovelly-Caulfeild have been significantly higher than these averages, coming close to or at the currently permitted limit of 600 m³.

To understand how much disturbance such volumes cause it is helpful to know that according to the experts broken, blasted rock occupies more space than it does before the blasting occurs. Six hundred cubic metres of blasted rock occupies a space equivalent to about 1,000 cubic metres in situ. It takes 100 full truck loads to transport the broken rock away, a heavy truck having the capacity to carry up to ten cubic metres of rock. When several sites on the same street of a neighbourhood like Clovelly-Caulfeild are blasted to the current permitted limit at the same time the disturbance is huge.

For several reasons therefore the Working Group believes very strongly that the permitted blasting volume must be

significantly reduced. The Group debated how much reduction is warranted, contemplating a limit as low as 100 cubic metres at one point. Reducing the limit by half to 300 cubic metres would still allow most blasting applications to be approved. The Voluntary Development Permit process the Group has recommended would allow a developer to make a case for a larger volume blasting permit if it can be shown to be consistent with the principles of Designing with Nature.

Trees are another defining feature of the neighbourhood. Residents have expressed concern over tree-cutting and in particular the 'clear-cutting' of dozens of mature trees on a small number of individual properties in preparation for blasting and new construction, as well as for enhanced views and increased sunlight for individual properties.

The new homes have tended to be larger, in some cases much larger than existing homes with more expansive driveways sometimes leading to large garages in rear yards, as well as large areas of hard surface impermeable paving, and bigger retaining walls needed to support homes, paved surfaces and ancillary structures such as swimming pools and patios.

Though the number of development projects is quite small the extent of these practices has resulted in unfortunate side effects for as many as three or four times the number of surrounding properties. Individually and collectively, extensive site disturbance, tree cutting and site coverage have created a series of problems for neighbours including changes in drainage patterns causing additional run-off or loss of natural irrigation, damage to and loss of neighbouring trees and plants, reduction of tree canopy and loss of shade, visual intrusion and visual barriers, and loss of privacy.

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

Financial Implications: These effects may have affected the value of neighbouring properties, as well as possibly imposing additional costs on them, whether it be the necessity to correct a drainage problem, or to spend a couple of thousand dollars on blinds to reduce glare on windows that previously were shaded by tree cover, or to replace lost or damaged trees. Ultimately, the District also loses, and may face unanticipated additional costs, for example to manage additional rainwater run-off, that could total as much as \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 (Please refer to the companion paper on Rainwater Management for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

Replacing lost trees can be expensive; just how expensive is illustrated by the experience of a family living on Clovelly Walk for the past 20 years. As a consequence of the redevelopment of the next door property, in 2005 and early 2006 this family suffered the loss of three mature trees (two Douglas firs approximately 175 years old, averaging 150 feet in height, and a 60 foot cedar) and associated damage to their garden landscape partly through root damage due to blasting and excavation, partly through wind exposure when the surrounding trees were cut down, and partly through loss of natural irrigation brought about by changes to the drainage pattern. A second neighbour also lost three large, healthy trees (two hemlocks and a cedar) due to blow-down.

It is not possible to replace a fully grown 150 foot tree, but tree specialists indicate that trees as tall as seventy feet can be found and purchased in the region, transported and replanted in a properly prepared and acceptable new location at an estimated cost of \$30,000 to 40,000 per tree. A full 'cost of cure' however, having as its objective to return the family's property to a reasonable approximation of its original condition prior to the loss, would include other costs such as the cost of nurture until the plantings are well established, plus ancillary costs such as fees for professional advice. A cost of cure process would also be lengthy, taking at least three years or longer.

The diversity of species, age and coverage of trees in the neighbourhood varies, from what may be vestiges of old growth forest around Clovelly Walk which still has one or two trees that are well over a hundred years old, to younger and less densely planted trees in some of the newer parts of the neighbourhood. A small number of individual trees or groupings of trees are sufficiently valuable that they could qualify for inclusion on the District's prospective heritage tree registry which is to be established in 2007.

4. What ‘Design with Nature’ Means

Design with Nature is not a new term; there have been various versions and interpretations over time. Those famous builders the Romans, for example, accommodated the countryside in the city – *rus in urbe*. Previous generations of West Vancouverites – Francis Caulfeild for one – designed with nature from the very beginnings of the community. More recently, the 2005 exhibition of design excellence in West Vancouver by leading contemporary architects entitled the Poetics of West Coast Modernism fostered, in the words of Ruth Payne, “a new understanding and appreciation for how organic and sensitive architecture designed with reverence for nature contributes to essence of daily living in West Vancouver”. Perhaps every age needs to articulate or re-articulate its’ own understanding and appreciation, and maybe individual localities need to do so too.

The Working Group concluded that the District would be wise to debate and adopt a definition (or a set of definitions) that fits modern needs and requirements at the local and district level and respects the fundamental, umbilical relationship between humans and nature.

The section provides a synopsis of the discussions that took place in Working Group sessions over the past year.

At the Regional Scale: The UBC Design Centre for Sustainability led by Professor Patrick Condon studies what the Greater Vancouver region and constituent communities might look like physically in 2050 based on six “sustainability principles” that are summarized in the brochure *Sustainability by Design* in the following one or two word titles - jobs, corridors, walkability, green space, infrastructure and housing.

The Design Centre recognizes that “a sustainable region exhibits sustainability features at every scale, from the individual parcel, to the block, to the district, to the region. Just as the health of each cell of our body is integral to the well-being of our body, so too is the ecological, social, and economic health of each site integral to the sustainability of the region”.

GVRD Livable Region Plan: The Official Community Plan reflects and supports the Livable Region Strategic Plan. “Although West Vancouver itself is neither a self-contained nor a self-supporting community”, the OCP states (page 24), “it has varied and numerous opportunities to promote sustainable practices and development and to demonstrate leadership within the region”.

At the Neighbourhood Level: The Working Group focussed on defining the character of the neighbourhood and reaching an understanding of the principles of Designing with Nature followed by Francis Caulfeild as he patiently pursued the slow development of the Caulfeild neighbourhood from 1899 to his death in 1934, with subsequent developers such as Howard Martin and Ted Henderson followed the same philosophy. *The Story of Clovelly-Caulfeild* explored the development history of the neighbourhood and traced Caulfeild's influence on the form and character of Clovelly-Caulfeild.

The Design with Nature approach that these men applied to protecting valued natural features through the careful, subtle placement, orientation, site preparation and construction of the homes that were built on the lots they parcelled out in creating the community was neatly summarized later by Mr Frank G. Cross, Director of Public Works and Municipal Approving Officer for all new subdivisions for the District after the second World War, as "Doing what makes sense without disturbing what makes sense for the trees and the lot".

Caulfeild's 1916 subdivision plan for Caulfeild, which began the development of Clovelly-Caulfeild, is characterized by irregular lots of various size, and informal country lanes. In promoting Caulfeild as "the select residential district" period advertising noted that "this beautiful property has been laid out with the special object of preserving the natural beauties of the site, thus giving opportunities for pleasant homes among unusually picturesque surroundings". Among other things, he provided view lots where feasible without compromising his Design with Nature principles, and, in compensation, often allocated larger lots to sites lacking this feature.

The Working Group was mindful of this heritage as the members defined the characteristics of the neighbourhood that members want to preserve. Clovelly Walk and Piccadilly North in particular, although somewhat diminished by recent events, still have a unique character of winding narrow lanes within a forested setting, as originally envisaged by Francis Caulfeild. This character is also still evident in other parts of Caulfeild below Marine Drive and in other neighbourhoods such as Whytecliff that also developed along similar lines.

While the balance of Clovelly-Caulfeild is perhaps less unique and more similar to many other parts of West Vancouver, development along natural contours and siting of homes "amidst nature" has remained the chief defining characteristic of this neighbourhood. Specific character-defining elements of Clovelly-Caulfeild include;

- A forested setting
- Varied topography and natural rock outcroppings
- Small tree-surrounded creeks that tumble through the neighbourhood on their way to the sea, and help shape the landscape and settlement pattern
- Narrow winding country lanes in its core area
- Later roads that follow the contours
- Boulevard additions to these roads that also often contribute to the natural setting
- A system of small parks, trails and open spaces
- Varied lot shapes and sizes
- Buildings of diverse architectural styles that "fit" with the natural setting

CLOVELLY-CAULFEILD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussion Paper on Issues Assessment

In ascribing so much value to this heritage and “in shorthand” describing the Clovelly-Caulfeild neighbourhood as having a treed character, the Working Group was criticized at the April and October 2006 public meetings. Some critics felt that the Working Group had overstated both the influence of Francis Caulfeild on the evolution of the neighbourhood and of the importance of his Design with Nature principles. He was good for his time but this is a different time with different values, critics said.

Nevertheless, the Working Group maintained its view that designing with nature is just as important today as in Caulfeild’s time. The inclusion of Design with Nature in contemporary District and regional policy and linkage to the whole concept of sustainability is testimonial to that. The Working Group’s position was also endorsed by Tim Pringle, Executive Director of the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. Leaders of the real estate industry in this province have adopted the Design with Nature approach as one of the essential keys to sustainability and to real estate success he told two members of the Working Group in a late summer 2006 meeting.

Critics also took the Working Group to task for not being sufficiently cognizant of finer-grained differences in the character of individual neighbourhood streets. The Working Group agrees that individual streets in the neighbourhood do have physical differences that provide some differentiation of feel and character

In formulating its proposals to restore the Design with Nature approach, the Working Group was focussed on maintaining the existing healthy tree presence in the neighbourhood so that the overall treed character of the area can be preserved.

However at the still finer-grained level of the individual building site in neighbourhoods like Clovelly-Caulfeild the Working Group quickly appreciated the planning and design challenges caused by irregular lots, and readily concluded that a “one size fits all” approach to planning does not fit well.

The Working Group also recognized that the design challenge today is more complicated than the challenge that faced Francis Caulfeild and his contemporaries. Residential space and infrastructure demands to fit modern lifestyles and amenities in today’s high tech, automobile based society with the increased pressure they place on land and landscape are more complex than the simpler summer cottages and homes of yesteryear.

To meet this greater challenge whilst maintaining respect for neighbours and nature and meeting the regulatory requirements of the District places strong demands on the skills of architects, landscapers, engineers and builders. But it can be done, and as Tim Pringle, Executive Director of the Real Estate Foundation testifies, is being done by leaders in the field.

It was the above considerations that led the Working Group to propose the introduction of a Voluntary Development Permit process whereby a property owner can apply for minor variances to achieve a Design with Nature solution.

5. Community Input

Community input to the Working Group's process, particularly the Neighbourhood Meetings held on April 20th and October 25th 2006, deepened the Working Group's understanding of local planning and development issues, and assisted the Group in refining its final recommendations to Council.

The issues were discussed primarily in terms of neighbourhood character, with little or no direct reference to sustainability apart from the Working Group's vision and goal of preserving neighbourhood character and the Design with Nature heritage for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

In reaching out to neighbourhood residents the Working Group had encountered the same barriers that other groups have met when trying to engage in the sustainability dialogue. In a presentation to the Fraser Basin Council in November 2006 James Hoggan, a noted Vancouver public relations expert on sustainability defined three kinds of barriers – mindset barriers, information barriers and trust/mistrust barriers. His research concludes that the key barrier to be overcome is the trust/mistrust barrier.

The Working Group listened to what residents had to say and to understand their concerns, and then moved to adjust and finalize its recommendations. Some recommendations were withdrawn, others were modified and the rest were retained, with the objective of achieving a balance the Working Group had striven for from the beginning – to “come up the middle” in order to harmonize the interests of both existing and new private owners and the community interest. We are all in this together.

6. Conclusions

The Working Group endorses a Design with Nature approach for preserving the character of Clovelly-Caulfeild and other similar neighbourhoods in West Vancouver. Key findings that provide a framework for action are:

1. **To promote common understanding and acceptance**, it would be helpful if the District established a contemporary definition of the term “Design with Nature” for use within its planning and approvals processes.
2. **To encourage owners and developers to apply Design with Nature principles more readily and easily**, and to facilitate site plans that integrate the resolution of Design with Nature issues while respecting zoning requirements, the current planning and approval processes need to be made more flexible and adaptable.
3. **To enable enforcement of existing regulations**, there is a need for more consistent and vigilant monitoring of the construction process, and
4. **To benefit from the Work of the Working Group and the local community over the past year**, it is recommended that the lessons learned from this process be incorporated into the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing, and further consideration be given to District wide solutions for preserving neighbourhood character.

About the Author:

David Carter spent much of his career in public service, including city management, the government of Canada and a provincial crown corporation before establishing his own consulting company, Carter International, in 1997. His focus has been on public policy and strategic planning for real property, urban and environmental regeneration, regional planning and economic development.

In the federal public service David became Director General of Corporate Affairs, Public Works Canada. He served as a member of the public-private team appointed to examine the management of federal real estate holdings as part of the government's Program Review (1984 -85). He joined the staff of the Crombie Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (1988-92).

David holds an MA in History from the University of Oxford and an MA in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Nottingham.

Together with his wife Janet, David moved from Oakville, Ontario to West Vancouver, B.C. in August 2005. He joined the Working Group for the Clovelly-Caulfeild Neighbourhood Plan in January 2006.

He received the Conservation Award of Excellence from Conservation Halton in 2002, for his leadership of the Oakville Heritage Trails project. In 2005 he was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.