3.2 URBAN CONTEXT

With the on-going development of the southeast False Creek district, and the build-out of the northern edge of West 2nd Avenue and Main Street over the next years, we believe that Mt. Pleasant sub-area on Main Street from 7th Avenue to 2nd Avenue can be developed to become one of the great arterials of Vancouver with a clearly defined street wall in scale with the street, and pedestrian-friendly building edges. In this respect there are a number of important urban-scale considerations related to the proposal:

- The Urban Section and the Hill-town Profile
- Diagonal and Orthogonal Grids
- Urban Rooms
- Pedestrian and Vehicle Interface

Mt. Pleasant Community Plan excerpt (3.3) ‘Hilltown’ Identity.
Recognize that its slopes are natural form-makers on which a low profile for residential and commercial properties helps keep the sense of hill intact.
• The Urban Section and the Hill-town Profile: The typical hilltown paradigm accommodates structures of varying heights throughout; however the topography remains the dominant feature with buildings typically rising up to the highest points. In the Mt. Pleasant context, the crest of the hill is between Broadway and Kingsway along Main Street. To support this ‘hill town’ feel, structures should terrace on the hillside. The topography should be evident when the neighbourhood is viewed from below or at a distance.
3.2 URBAN CONTEXT

North-South Cross Section: Main Street

North-South Cross Section: Lane
• Diagonal and Orthogonal Grids: Kingsway follows the Wagon Road built by the Royal Engineers between Vancouver’s historic Gastown waterfront and the former capital of the Colony of British Columbia at New Westminster. As Vancouver became established with a street grid beyond Gastown, the route was named Westminster Road, later Westminster Street, including what is now Main Street from 7th north to the waterfront, and ultimately was a component of the Trans-Canada Highway until the construction of the new freeway route. The intersection of the diagonal street grid with the orthogonal grid is a strong driver of building form in area and provides the immediate neighbourhood with a distinct “flatiron” character unique to Mt. Pleasant.
3.2 URBAN CONTEXT

• **Urban Rooms**: The Mt. Pleasant area already utilizes small private and public spaces to incorporate green spaces, urban agriculture and other uses. Mid-block spaces have been converted into courtyards and lane setbacks have been utilized to host major community events. With the re-development of the Main Street 2nd to 7th Avenue sub-area, new opportunities have emerged to create both smaller and larger scale public spaces. At the intersection of Kingsway and Main Street, there may be an opportunity to create a unique “green urban room” and terminus to Kingsway in the spirit of Madison Square Park, N.Y. The park, courtyard or community space could become the “pivot” point with the relative geometries of the buildings reinforcing the idea of the rotation of the urban grid.

The intersection of Main St. and Kingsway could be like Madison Square Park, New York. A similar diagonal street condition where the view north from Madison Ave is a large green park. Furthermore, because of its location and orientation, Madison Square Park has many cultural and artistic events.

Examples of Urban Rooms:

- Public space at One Kingsway
- Public space at The Social
- Public space at The Social
3.2 URBAN CONTEXT

- Pedestrian and Vehicle Interface:

The Mt. Pleasant Plan notes that the transportation modes of preference are walking and cycling. There is a strong desire to mitigate the impacts of traffic and parking on the livability of Mount Pleasant. The plan encourages the restoration or creation of routes for pedestrians, bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades and scooters with strong links to the four distinct shopping areas. The lanes should serve a dual function as service facilities, and more importantly as activated pedestrian zones. The site itself could be accessible from 7th Avenue and the lane. In order to activate the street edges with pedestrian-oriented uses any parking access ramps should be located on the lane and as close to the mid-block zone as possible.