

# Vancouver Carpet

*"So much of Vancouver's public life happens at the edge, at the waterfront. We shouldn't see the square so much as an amenity, but as a necessity."*

Lance Berelowitz

The recent decision to move the Vancouver Art Gallery to False Creek reinforces a peculiar preference: **Vancouverites live at the edge of urbanity, not within it.** This oddly proud Vancouver trait of looking outward only exacerbates the hollowness of the core, both geographically and culturally.

We question the wisdom of abandoning the VAG's role in the heart of the city and believe that a simple shift in building program and investment in a new civic space will **dissolve the hole in the Vancouver donut** and give us an energetic new 'living room' for Vancouver's downtown.

With department store retail in its death throes, the Sears building will soon require alteration, and we believe a likely successor can be art; **we propose the Sears building becomes the venue for the new VAG**, entrenching it in the heart of the city and symbolically usurping displays of commercialism with exhibitions of culture and craft. We propose re-skinning the building with media art that enlivens the street.

We propose the restoration of the VAG and former court house into a truly public venue for cultural exchange and higher learning, **reopening its ceremonial doors to the street and square**, and readdressing the building on Georgia Street.

Lastly, we propose a refreshed civic square on the north courthouse plaza bound by Georgia, Howe and Hornby that achieves three things:

Rolls out a welcome mat for the city, a **Vancouver Carpet**, that is part media art, part interactive display, part narrative, but always dynamic, playful, unique and memorable.

- **Media art:** interactive and interchangeable projection media floor, responding to weather, program, large events.
- **Interactive and Programmable:** patterns and images change based on movement of people over the surface, and can be utilized by community or arts groups to exhibit work for free.

- **Genius of the Place:** iconic Vancouver images and stories capturing the ubiquitous cultural characteristics and natural features of the city, a comment and conversation about the place where we live.

Applies an **Ecological Infrastructure** over the site, including restored native plants and edible species, harvesting latent energies like sun and steam, and capturing rainwater for display and reuse.

- **Planting:** rainforest canopy species of fir, hemlock and cedar with marsh planting to contrast with urban form and media displays.
- **Energy Collection:** media walls and floor collect solar energy to activate lighting on the site. Central steam vents used as display in the boggy edge of the site.
- **Water Reuse:** stormwater is collected in marsh planting areas for reuse as irrigation and display.

Acts as a **Civic Living Room**, providing comfort, conversation, theatre and food, an invigorating and dynamic social space in the everyday or for major civic events.

- **Food:** Raw Café provides sustainably and locally harvested foods, including the ubiquitous sushi, as well as green wall veggies.
- **Comfort:** buildings are located to frame sun pockets for warmth, deep overhangs for rain protection, generous patios with moveable seating.
- **Events:** the ceremonial stairs becomes the natural elevated location to stage events for 2500 to 8000 people in the square, supported by the Vancouver Carpet media floor and walls.