

Comments from Ray Spaxman, former Director of Planning for City of Vancouver, following a visit to Victoria Harbour

We walked the Songhees waterfront as you had recommended, from the Magnolia Hotel (what a great Hotel!) to Head Street and back. It was yet another highlight of our wonderful weekend in Victoria. I don't know of a more enjoyable walk anywhere — the whole experience: from different underfoot textures to evolving and changing views and lighting; from the varying enclosures of soft and hard spaces, under, over, across, around, beneath, to the subtle rising and falling of pathway and edges and embankments; from hard to soft, wet and dry; different, sometimes surprising sounds, from the subtle to the beautiful to the intruding; and all those colours, textures and smells of nature. And the man-made — the unfolding examples of the human's ability to integrate, successfully and unsuccessfully, their design and development skills with nature, some partly aware of the challenge (with the rewards when understood), and the sadness at the many lost opportunities. The changing land values and development opportunities were all laid out with examples of the varying affordability and quality of life of the human habitat. And, of course, there were the joggers and walkers in all their different plumages and greeting calls, or not. And — BUT — sorry about that — I obviously enjoyed it! Victoria as a fantastic body with great bones and prospects, although the "great absence of mind" (as Prince Charles has expressed it) continues to whittle away at it.