

ARAS Connections

IMAGE AND ARCHETYPE

Welcome

by Tom Singer, M.D.

Every time Allison Tuzo, Ami Ronnberg, and I put the finishing touches on an edition of ARAS Connections we find ourselves deeply pleased at the quality of our contributors' work. It is gratifying to see such fine articles go out into the world. And, once again we now find ourselves delighted to offer you **EDGES: Mountains, Forests, Creeks; Nature's Guide to Village Form.**

This work is the culmination of a lifetime of reflections on the nature of Edges by the renowned landscape architect Eldon Beck.



It seems timely at the “edge” of a new year that we focus on the many levels of reality in which we experience “Edges.” There are the edges of our inner horizons, where we find ourselves in transition between past and future, known and unknown. There are the edges of our interpersonal and social relations. And, there are the edges of our relationships to nature. Perhaps the biggest “edges” that we are all facing now are the impending changes to life on earth as we know it as a consequence of climate change. In that context, Eldon Beck’s study of “edges” in nature seems most significant in its celebration of what we can learn as human beings from the edges we observe in nature and the edges at the intersection of the human and natural world. I believe that Eldon Beck’s work allows us to see “Edges” as archetypal phenomena—the edges in nature, the edges between man and nature, the edges in the human community between “us” and “them” and the edges between conscious and unconscious in our own nature. About archetypes, Jung wrote:

The primordial images [archetypes] are the most ancient and the most universal “thought-forms” of humanity CW7 ¶ 104

If for a moment, we allow ourselves to consider “Edges” in terms of Jung’s definition of archetypes as “primordial images” of “the most universal thought forms of humanity” we can see that Eldon Beck’s unique and imaginative lifetime

exploration of “edges” opens up new dimensions of our experience of ourselves and the world. Beck writes:

“The creation of places where people are encouraged to interact with others and to find attachment to nature has guided my design philosophy for almost fifty years. My edge of consciousness is awareness of the vitality of edge conditions in the natural world. Where boundaries of two natural habitats meet, like meadow to forest, there is a richness of life in the zone termed an ecotone. The edge in nature is a celebration of connection, not division.” page 5

Printed copies of the book are available for \$24 by contacting:
mfc77edge.ewb@gmail.com. The \$24 includes shipping and handling.

EDGES

MOUNTAINS, FORESTS, CREEKS

Nature's Guide to Village Form

Eldon Beck

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As my young family hiked into the Sierra foothills long ago, beyond rolling meadows, we passed the sparkles of a lake nestled into the forested landscape.



Plate 1 Evening on the Jungfrau. From Wengen, Switzerland.

Ancient mountain peaks, pasted like paper cutouts against passing skies, rose mystically, compelling exploration. On trips to explore these mammoths of nature, I wanted to absorb the messages offered by wilderness. We spent our days on the edge of Thousand Island Lake at the base of Mount Ritter, or sitting at the edge of Hat Creek, near Mount Lassen, watching a bold red fox just across the rippling water. These precious times are at the core of my love of nature. They led directly to my creative life in the design of landscapes and composition of villages in mountain settings.

The forms of forested peaks with walls of glistening stone are the playfields of sunlight. There, erratic edges toss and catch fragments of brightness with poetic abandon. I am intrigued by the stunning diversity of edge conditions, physically, environmentally, visually and symbolically. Edges are where habitats connect and interact, both in natural and man-built settings. This makes an edge a place of unity rather than division.

Attempting to comprehend the complex union of nature with human settlements has been at the core of my design search. *Edges: Mountains, Forests, Creeks*, describes my path of awareness to how our inner lives respond to fringes in nature, and to what edges open for us within our own spirits.

In many readings of Diane Ackerman's book, *A Natural History of the Senses*, these words speak to my love of edges.

*Our senses define the edge of consciousness
and because we are born explorers
and questors after the unknown, we spend
a lot of our life pacing that windswept perimeter*



Plate 2 Near Kleine Scheidegg, base of the Jungfrau.

Ackerman's words *Our senses define the edge of consciousness* take me to memories when I was between ages three to six, living in Andrade, California. This was a residential enclave built for workers on the All-American Canal, across the Colorado River from Yuma, Arizona, tucked tightly to the border of Algodones, Mexico. My awareness was of blazing hot days, blinding sandstorms, harsh cactus covered hills, tempered by constantly changing shapes of lovely dunes of sand. Later we moved to a gentler part of Southern California, arriving on a warm May evening, the air saturated with an overwhelming fragrance of sweet citrus blossoms. I felt an unforgettable rousing of benign senses. The drama of these early landscapes would guide me along *life pacing that windswept perimeter*.

The creation of places where people are encouraged to interact with others and to find attachment to nature has guided my design philosophy for almost fifty years. My *edge of consciousness* is awareness of the vitality of edge conditions in the natural world. Where boundaries of two natural habitats meet, like meadow to forest, there is a richness of life in the zone termed an *ecotone*. The edge in nature is a celebration of connection, not division.



Plate 3 Meadow to forest to mountain. Site of Village 1950, Les Arcs, France.

This book is arranged in five sections:

Sunlight: A Celebration of Edges



Plate 4 Sun

In reviewing years of photos and slides, I realized that, for me, lighted edges that hint at form are more interesting than form itself. Landscapes, built surfaces and people are accented by the diversity of light on edges. I value this observation as a premise of my design process. Sunlight is my guiding force.

Gore Creek: My Ecotonal Mentor***Plate 5 Gore Creek***

The complex edges of Gore Creek, in Vail, Colorado, create an ecotone, a connection of habitats of land and water. This edge has a greater variety of life than either of the adjacent habitats. Natural ecotones provided prototypes for my concepts of village form, in particular, the pedestrian lanes. The flow of pedestrians as they move, pause, stop, look, resembles the life of the creek. The textured, irregular stream edge provides calm nooks for retreat, rest and observation, waiting for the next delicious morsel to drift by.

***Plate 6 In Whistler Village,
Skiers Approach***

Peaks to Shore: Continents Edge to Edge***Plate 7 Eiger***

The ultimate connector, the creek, the stream of life, flows from the uppermost continental peaks to the land's lowest points, where oceans bathe continental edges. On the trek from high to low, the riparian corridor pays tribute to the descending ecotones, layer after layer of forests, meadows and craggy rocks where one habitat connects to the next.

Alpine Settings: Villages and Buildings



Plate 8 Topography guides village development in Murren, Switzerland

In regions of dramatic environments, the materials and forms of settlements and individual buildings often reflect the dictates of ecotones. Climate, sunlight and topography guide the types of vegetation and animal life. Human settlements follow similar patterns, and survival can depend upon fitting to the dictates of nature. The word “settlement” itself suggests



Plate 9 Wengen/Jungfrau

“settling in”: finding comfort, safety, identity, and respect for one’s place. Settlements that adapt have a rare beauty.

Three Villages: Distant Yet Alike

Three villages that I love share a dramatic relationship to mountains that have world-renowned reputations, though they are separated by thousands of miles, evolved in different periods of history, and are culturally unique. They are

Interlaken, Switzerland

Mill Valley, California

Whistler, British Columbia



Plate 10 Interlaken



Plate 12 Mt. Tamalpais

Interlaken is the gateway to the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau; Mill Valley is at the base of Mount Tamalpais north of San Francisco and the Golden Gate; and Whistler Village is at the toe of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, mile high peaks that received world-wide attention as co-host of the 2010 Winter Olympics. These three villages share similarity in scale, give priority to walking patterns, and fit comfortably to the natural ecotones. In all three, streets, lanes and plazas create a social richness that overcomes any differences.

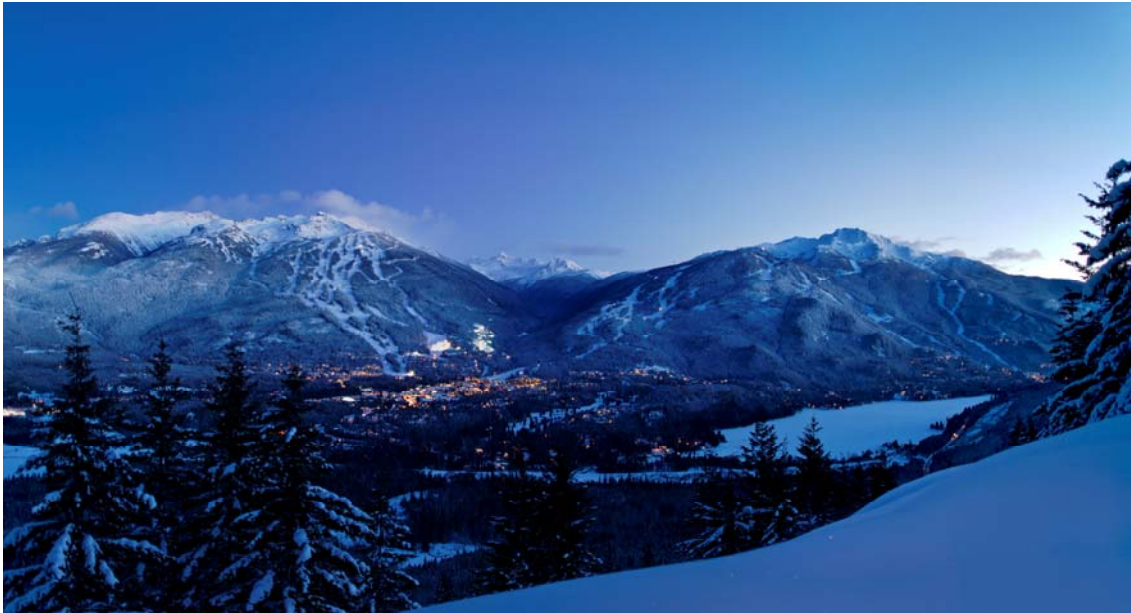


Plate 13 Whistler Village



Plate 11 Winter in the Olympic Plaza, Whistler, B.C.

SUN'S LIGHT: CELEBRATION OF EDGES

*Still, the sun holds high
above my head, a yellow
fleece around my shoulders.*

Jacqueline Kudler



Plate 15 Over the Northern California Coast

With my shoulders weighted by multiple cameras, Helen and I, with our children, Fredric and Jean, toured the major cities, parks and landscapes of western Europe in 1967. We shared the excitement of discovery. Around every corner was a new view or experience. Streets and building facades held light on surfaces differently than in our California environment. The edges of ordinary things became bright: shining patterns of curved roof tiles in Holland, outlines of a sculpture in Germany, facades of historic buildings lining a street in Stockholm

and leaves of birch trees turned blazing white. These brightly-lit edges were of greater interest to me than fully illuminated objects, seeming to hint at the poetry of an object rather than the literal.



Plate 16 Roof tiles near the Hague, Holland

Ralph Waldo Emerson in his book, *Nature*, writes:

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child.

Upon returning home to the United States, with new awareness of the artistry of sunlight, I fell in love with the glow on the iced-edge of grass leaning over a snowy bank. I marveled at the shower of sparkling leaves shrouding darkened camellia shrubs, and the way light transforms the yellow inner-world of daffodils. What excitement, the discovery of new friends!



Plate 17

GORE CREEK: MY ECOTONAL MENTOR

This living flowing land

is all there is, forever

We ARE it

it sings through us-

G.Snyder



Plate 19 Gore Creek, Vail, Colorado

In the 1970's, with Town Manager, Terry Minger, I shared a design task of re-forming the center of Vail Village, Colorado, into a community where pedestrians would have priority. At that time, public spaces were overwhelmed by

autos and delivery trucks. Vail appeared to be any town rather than a special village in the Rocky Mountains. An initial change was to transform a service parking lot into a plaza with the Children's Fountain. Near the entrance to the village at the base of a new parking structure, ragged stones from nearby mountains were arranged to form a striking fountain of boulders.



Plate 20 Children's Fountain, 1975. Vail, Colorado



Plate 21 Fountain of Boulders, 1976. Vail, Colorado

Passing through the north side of Vail Village was Gore Creek, a riparian corridor with spray-shrouded boulders, musical ripples, and the flash of kingfishers ducking in and out. Gore Creek was my retreat in search of calm. On a crisp winter day, sunlight once again captivated my designer's eye. Snow covered the stream bank, white contrasted with the black of the water, and the creek appeared etched into the land. Edges that day were diverse, shaped by boulders honed by centuries of dashing water. Peninsulas were anchored by aspen and secured by clumps of floppy-iced grasses. White banks were dappled by exploring deer, with prints of rabbits, fox and mice blended into the tangle of the twigged edge. The texture of the creek edge provided places of retreat, quiet pools, safe havens where fish could dart into fast water to snare an elusive may-fly. The center flowed with little restriction, as surface-ripples announced the texture of the rocky bed.

Sitting on a boulder alongside this timeless flow, with its musical serenade, dancing flicks of sunlight and the cool air tinged by fragrance of willow and pine, made me appreciate this wondrous corridor of life. I was struck by how the environment of Gore Creek suggested the possible life and form of pedestrian corridors in Vail. Lanes with diverse edges, mirroring the complexity of the random creek-side, would invite people to slow and stop, to find quiet, to discover connections to each other and to the mountain environment. The center of the pedestrian way would provide open space for free-flowing movement.

My observations of Gore Creek and the creek-edged ecotones combined with my love of nature to form the basis of my design philosophy. My design work is based on edges, a philosophy and exploration that would challenge and satisfy me for decades to come.

In the study of natural science, *ecotone* is an important concept that I have adapted for my own use in design. The word ecotone emerges from the Greek, meaning ecologies in tension. It is the transition area between two biomes where two plant communities meet and integrate. The stream edge is an ecotone. An ecotone has some characteristics of each bordering biological community and often contains species not found in the overlapping communities. The ecotone may exist along a broad belt or in a small pocket, like a clearing in a forest where two local communities blend together.

Another concept from natural science has served me in design--the influence of the two bordering communities on each other is known as the *edge effect*. A characteristic of the edge effect is that the ecotonal area often has a

greater number of species than are found in either flanking habitat. In other words, in an edge transition zone, one and one totals three.



Plate 22 Ecotonal edges, creek to meadow, meadow to forest

Edges are a bit like the wild rabbits in the New Zealand landscape: at every glance there is another. Edges in nature abound. Think of a forest forming the edge of a meadow. Few people are aware of the diversity of life along this border, an edge where deer and fox move into the meadow to feed, then retreat into the security of the forest. The forest edge resembles the opulence of my Mill Valley garden: nuthatches, chickadees and downy woodpeckers are happy at the feeders, knowing that, at every threat, safe places abound in the adjacent fuchsia shrub and crabapple tree.

Ecotones on mountains are like maps documenting the sequence of layers of nature tumbling from peaks to lower valleys. Nestled into topmost crevices are diverse forms of life, like little club moss and silver-mist, serenaded by the whistle of the marmot and chirp of the pika. As habitats descend into the more

permissive lower environments, forests of deciduous hardwoods join conifers such as larch, spruce, cedar and pine, layering slopes in myriad shades of green over a patchwork of larkspur and mountain violet. Each layer of transition is an ecotone. At the base, forests meld with meadows where streams become grand torrents, such as the Merced River in Yosemite Valley, shaped by the grinding crush of ice over the ages.



Plate 23 Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park

We face east on Glacier Point.

The sun reaches out

With its last glinting hammer

William Keener

PEAK TO SHORE: CONTINENTS EDGE TO EDGE

Sunlight climbs the snow peak

glowing pale red

cold sinks into the gorge

Gary Snyder

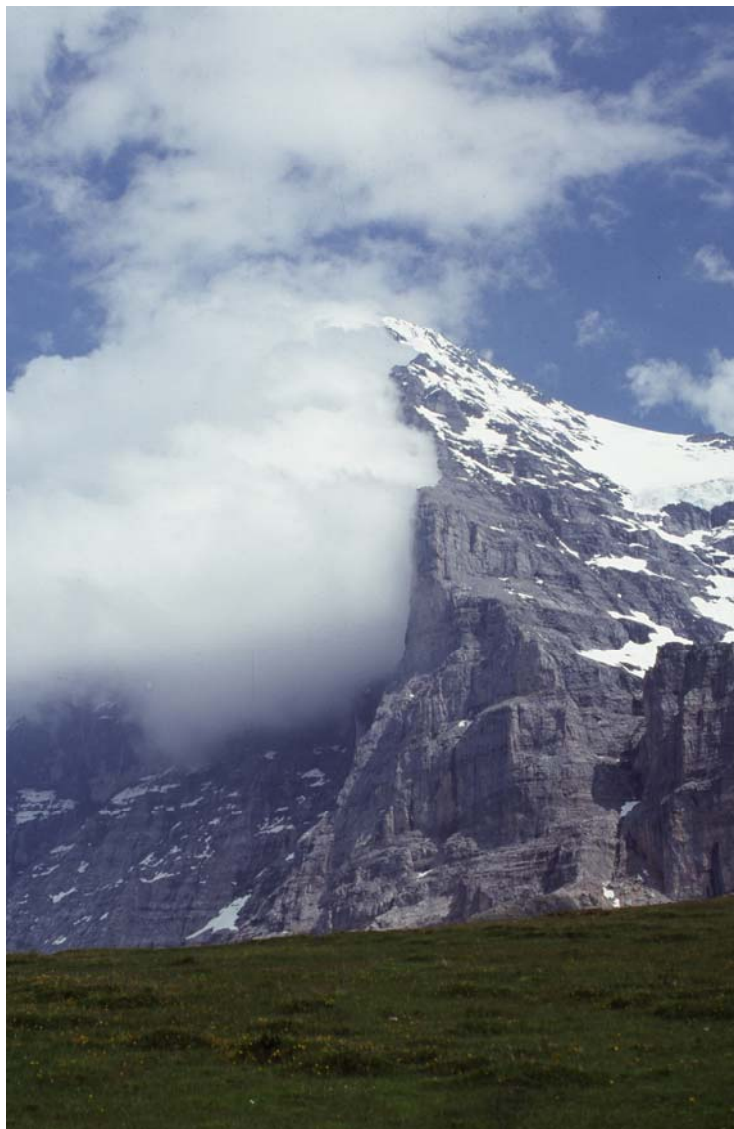


Plate 25 The Eiger, Grindelwald, Switzerland

At a scale much larger than the wild-edged stream or the quiet garden, we love the fierce majesty of soaring mountain peaks that shred clouds and wrap themselves in scarves of white. Man is compelled to climb, to challenge, on knife-like peaks, to conquer danger. These top-most edges of earth's continents dwell vibrantly in sun's brightness and find peace in soft moon-glow. In the bareness, water drips as snow melts, trickle by trickle, to form swaggering streams that tumble with erosive harshness.



Plate 26 Hat Creek at Dunwoody's near Mt. Lassen, CA

Hat Creek, North of Mount Lassen

Born from fire, tamed by centuries,

Sliced by raging water:

Faces etched in craggy-wizened lava.

We see with our bodies, feel

*The songs of waters path,
hear plucked strings of the wind
as each soul tells its forever-story.*

*We are specks through time
Who dance on edges of stone.
Eyebrows of browning alder leaves
Seek winter beds of rest
Underneath a cap of golden grasses.*

*In this ancient world
Of blazing black and knifing yellow,
Earth and spirit wait.*

Eldon Beck

Then, quietly, in tight curves, the water explores willowed marshes widening into meadows, to share its moisture with animals, grasses, flowers and trees. This riparian corridor connects the highest peaks, a continental edge, to the ocean, an equally dramatic continental edge. Not until nearing the ocean where land becomes less steep, does the river relax and spread, creating wetlands wealthy in habitat diversity. The lazy river deposits its cargo of sand, offerings from highest mountains, into wind-shaped dunes and wave-groomed beaches. This continental frontier, where the sun drops in a rainbow of color, reminds us gently of our connection to the universe.



Plate 27 Sand from mountain peaks nourishes Carmel River, California

The edge of the ocean, like the adventuresome stream, contains both places of turmoil and places of serenity, where time seems to pause. Shorelines are never at rest, stretched by earthquakes, hammered by hungry waves, fragmented into crusty remnants, then scarred by human history. Small rock islands, brazen in survival, sprinkle the coast's edge. Nearby, the ocean invades land to form bays, retreats of quiet where seals sprawl in welcome safety. This elegant marriage of land and sea creates a sumptuous habitat for many of the life forms clustered along this continental fringe.



Plate 28 Rugged Coast at Medocino, California

Many times, Helen and I hiked the Mendocino shoreline. We were excited to sight harlequin ducks and sooty shearwaters. We focused binoculars on double crested cormorant nests tucked in crevices on the face of a vertical cliff, while the smashing ocean-edge frothed below.

For thousands of years, worldwide, human settlements have taken advantage of the richness of the ocean's edge. The availability of year-round fish and wildlife meant survival. As American Indians settled along the Pacific Coast, they knew the importance of shelter from prevailing winds and the advantage of orientation to the southern sun. The reaction to what nature provides and the sensory awareness of natural forces has guided the placement of native villages and of more contemporary small communities on the Northern California coast.

On warm, sheltered afternoons, nothing is more satisfying than sitting on the porch of the Mendocino Hotel, looking south, watching rafts of seals bobbing off Portuguese Beach. I imagine earlier inhabitants occupied the same sheltered spot to watch seals, and took the same pleasure in it.



Plate 29 Mendocino, California. On the edge of the Pacific Ocean

Two vital design principles evolve from my observations of the coastal habitat: orientation of public places to the patterns of the sun; and shaping of public places for seasonal shelter.

ALPINE SETTINGS: VILLAGES AND BUILDINGS

*All important ideas must include the trees,
the mountains and the rivers.*

Mary Oliver



Plate 31 Wengen, Switzerland, where buildings, forests and the Jungfrau meet

On trips to Europe prior to my preparation of the village design for the new Whistler Town Centre, I was inspired by seeing many forms of mountain villages and buildings. I saw admirable examples of how the villages and structures fit to their settings in nature, with respect rather than dominance. One factor was the growth of a village over time when each structure was built individually, placed with care to its neighbor, and fitted to natural slopes. In

villages, I saw respect for the neighbor and sensitivity to the natural settings. These ideas were principles that helped to form the concept for the development of Whistler.



***Plate 32 Les Arcs Village 1950, France, facing Mont Blanc,
a village shaped by forest and land form***

People who dwell in highest mountains survive at an edge, their lives filled with an awareness of discovery, uncertainty and history. Over the centuries, the locations and forms of mountain villages have varied by their relationships to

lakes and streams, by the steepness and ruggedness of the land, by presence of meadows and forests essential for survival, by access to trails and lanes, and by other whims of culture and nature. Perhaps the views of beautiful landscapes with overwhelming mountain peaks also gave purpose to the placement and form of a village.



Plate 33 Murren, Switzerland, facing the Jungfrau



Plate 34 Historic foundation detail, Rhone Valley, Switzerland

As with ocean edge villages, mountain settlements were often oriented to take advantage of the seasonal patterns of the sun. Meadow locations, though sunny, were exposed to the harshness of icy blasts of winter storms. The forests provided shelter, but were colder with less sun. The wonderful medium was the edge location where meadow meets forest, the ecotone where habitats connect, where the patterns of nature provide satisfaction for many forms of life.

Many mountain villages are settlements that use materials of the land, primarily stone and timber, possessing the strength to withstand the harshness of the seasons. Building form guided by the dictates of climate continues to be appropriate even in village developments of today. Steep roofs in Scandinavia shed heavy snow while roofs in areas of the Alps slope less steeply, weighted with stones to resist wind and retain snow, valued as winter insulation.

In overall form and skillful detail, buildings and villages that have grown with



Plate 35 Rural building in Wengen, Murren across the valley

respect for climate, location, and materials have the appearance and practicality of belonging. They are places that have a unique comfort and beauty appropriate to the history and culture of their location. Often, cultural features are most apparent in the details: roof form, door and window shapes, colors, and surface materials. The scale and beauty of public spaces, often the living rooms of a community, are shaped by edges that support activities. The essence of a community comes alive in the plazas, streets and parks.



Plate 36 Market in Beaune, France

Design professionals know the struggle between developing a sense of place versus the dictates of budgets. Economies force many hard choices, but all of us in the professions of creating places must constantly evaluate how best to achieve a philosophic concept of connection to place. Above all, mountain locations and mountain landscapes are precious resources that must be conserved and used wisely. Sensitive thought and respect for the land is the route to follow.



Plate 37 Signatures of skiers on Whistler Mountain

In her book, *The Nature Fix*, Florence Williams writes:

We don't experience natural landscapes enough to realize how restored they make us feel, nor are we aware that studies also show they make us healthier, more creative, more emphatic and more apt to engage with the world and with each other. Nature, it turns out, is good for civilization.

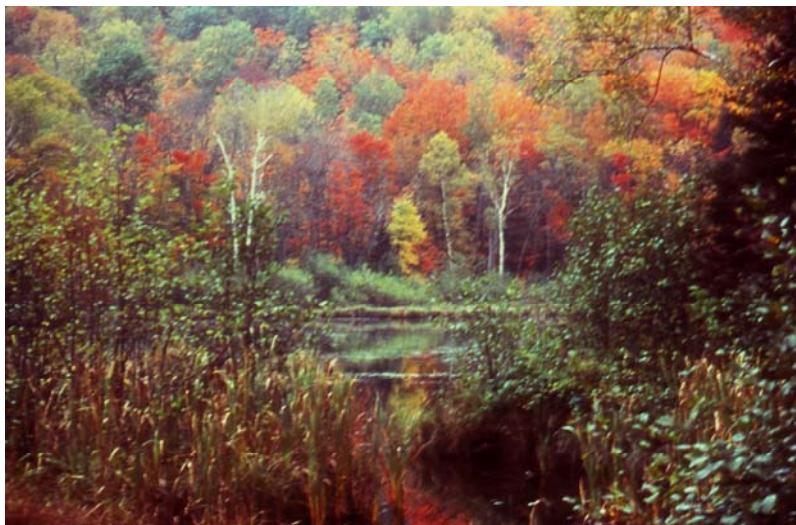


Plate 38 October in Quebec, Canada

THREE VILLAGES: DISTANT YET SIMILAR



Plate 39 Three villages united by the environments of their mountains



Plate 40a Interlaken, Switzerland



Plate 40b Mount Tamalpais, Mill Valley, California

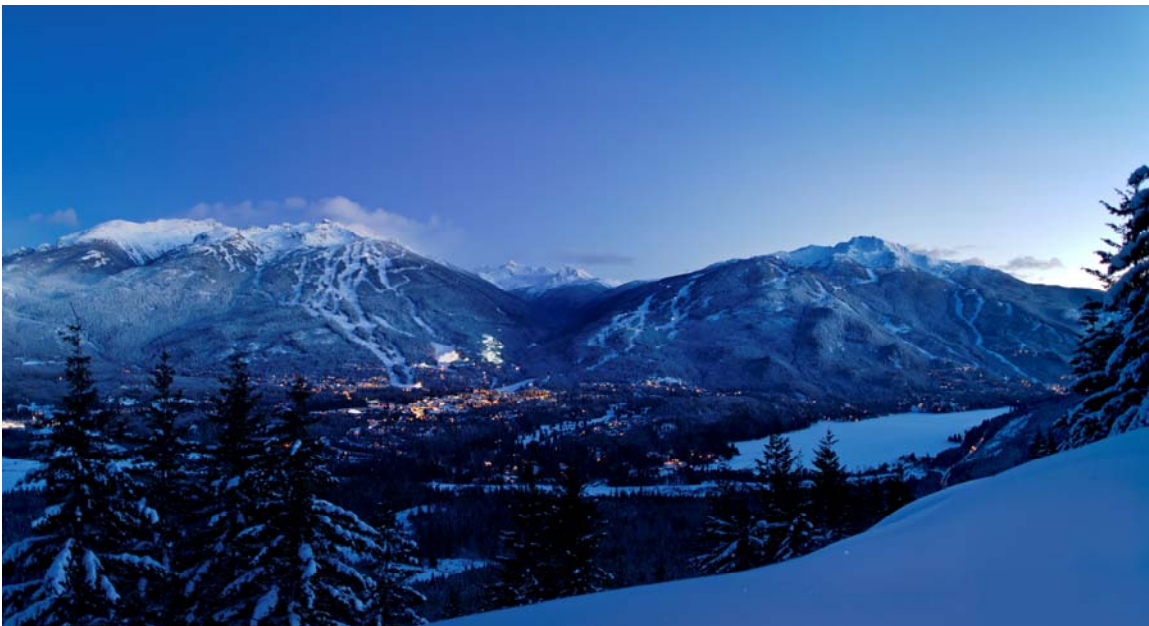


Plate 40c Whistler, British Columbia, Canada

Three villages, separated by thousands of miles and differences in history and culture, share relationships to remarkable mountains and to the vitality of village life. These three villages are Interlaken, Switzerland; Mill Valley, California; and Whistler, British Columbia. Each community has a small, permanent population but appeals to visitors from around the world. Interlaken, in the Bernese-Oberland District, is the gateway to the Alpine peaks of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. Mill Valley, in Marin County north of San Francisco, is at the base of Mount Tamalpais. It is not a huge mountain but has a remarkable landscape with redwood forests and views of the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco and much of central California. Whistler, 70 miles (113 km) north of Vancouver, at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, has become an internationally popular ski resort with summer hiking and biking, and the village has grown rich in the arts and regional culture.

These three towns have much in common besides their role as gateways to mountains. All three villages have a size comfortable for walking and each has developed with respect for history and culture. Building facades along the streets display the decisions of owners over many years, often reflecting the scale, cultural styles or fashions of the time. History is evident in choices of materials and details and the relaxed pace of pedestrians, strolling or sitting, signals of comfort and feeling at home.



Plate 42 Street in Interlaken



Plate 43 Central Mill Valley



Plate 42b Central Whistler

Interlaken



Plate 44



Plate 45 Alps above Interlaken

Between Lakes Thun and Brienz, connected by the River Aare that flows through the village, Interlaken is one of the most popular resort destinations in Switzerland, the trailhead to the Alps.

In 1133, a monastery was established in a location that eventually became central Interlaken. Villages under various names survived the turmoil of the middle centuries, but not until the early 1800's did the location become popular as a European tourist destination, primarily because of landscape paintings by Franz Niklaus Konig and other Swiss landscape artists. The first rail connections were about 1830, but connections to Bern and Lucerne, and shorter routes to Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald, at the base of the Jungfrau and Eiger, were not in place until 1890. The town name of Interlaken was not official until 1891. Dates of the train operations are surprisingly similar to the establishment of rail

service to Mill Valley and Mount Tamalpais. (The train from Sausalito to Mill Valley was installed in 1889 and the train carrying visitors to the top of Mount Tamalpais was built in 1896.)



Plate 46 The Höhematte below the Jungfrau, Interlaken, Switzerland

One of the most noted features in Interlaken is the Höheweg, a street lined with major hotels that face the edge of a thirty-five-acre park, The Höhematte. The park space was once the location of the Augustinian monastery, and remnants of stone walls remain. With the demise of the monastery, hotel owners purchased the land for a future public park, a benevolent act that is appreciated every passing year. (Many, many years later, Whistler has followed a similar path. Public park space was reserved in Whistler North featuring superb views of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. Following the 2010 Winter Olympics, the

park space was re-created as Olympic Plaza. The circular lawn space hosts a wide range of recreational and cultural activities with the view of mountains similar to that of the Höhematte.)



Plate 47 Whistler Olympic Plaza, Canada Day 2015. Partial view of Whistler Mtn.

Today, narrow streets and lanes in the historic Interlaken village center find their unpredictable way, a bit like streams wandering in a meadow. Lanes in a village can be compared to ecotones in nature where one habitat, the flow within the lane, connects along the fringes to the built habitat of shops, market places and homes scattered like thickets along a stream edge.



Figure 48 *Street-side market in Interlaken*

Interlaken is entrancing. Colors, textures, carved doors and windows are true to the regional style. Carved wood ornamentation displays the styles of centuries of craftsmen. The public places are the most compelling: intimate courtyards loaded with flowers, plazas with kids kicking balls, many benches under the shade of mulberry trees, and sunlight romancing with the various edges. Above the roofline of the town, shimmering white alpine peaks poke holes in the cloud-scattered sky, as though Interlaken is glued to the historic scene. As Helen and I walked the lanes with one surprise after another, we were met with smiles and helpful guidance, such as direction to the café with the best regional mid-day meal. It seemed to be a stroll into history—the intimate ecotone of the lane, the village people, transported us back in time.



Plate 49 Regional house details



Plate 50 Regional detail in Berne, Switzerland

Inspired by the rich atmosphere of many Swiss villages, and other villages in Western Europe, it seemed to me that Interlaken captured the essence of village life. I realized in later years that my visits to Interlaken were pivotal in the development of my philosophy of design related to villages in mountain environments. I was impressed by the individuality of village buildings



Plate 51 The individuality of village buildings, residences above shops and restaurant, the essence of Village life and form.

when owners lived above their shops and cafes, with pride taken in personal and excellent service. Buildings reflected individuals, not corporations, both in scale and design choices. Recessed entrances offered irresistible invitations to enter. Colorful and textured facades, below unique signs and bright awnings, all contributed to the habitat of a village edge. The village lanes were a zone of interaction, with many ways to pause, sit, argue, ask about a neighbor family, or discuss current affairs.

I saw within this extraordinary village edge the comparison with the edge of an ecotone in nature, most simply expressed in a stream edge, like Gore Creek in Vail. Think of the walkway or lane as the stream. The diversity and texture of the stream edge captures the richness of life. The adjacent habitat of foliage is an edge of the ecotone, and this edge is the place of connection. The village lane and the textured facades of buildings are where habitats connect. In the well-made village, life in the pedestrian lane leads into the inner life of buildings.

Mill Valley

Plate 53 Mt. Tam. Above Mill Valley, California

North of San Francisco by about ten miles (16 km), over the Golden Gate Bridge, the small town of Mill Valley nestles in a forest of redwood trees in the southern end of Marin County. Mount Tamalpais, the notable landmark in the county, rises to an elevation of 2,571 feet (784 m) from the western edge of the village. Further west, beyond the mountain, is the swashbuckling Pacific Ocean, the source of cooling breezes and flowing fog that supplies moisture to the redwood forests. In the late 1800's, landscape painters such as Thaddeus and Ludmilla Welch achieved fame and drew international attention to Mount

Tamalpais for their portrayals of the elegant mountain landscape. The role of the landscape painters promoting the beauties of the mountains is wonderfully similar to how landscape artists were key to the popularity of Interlaken as a resort destination.

Preceding Mill Valley's present-day population by perhaps 10,000 years, were many small settlements of the Coastal Miwok Indians. They called themselves "The First People." Although there are few remnants from those past years, the bits of history that remain are precious. They left names such as *Marin*, from *Chief Marin*, and *Tam'mal pi*, their name for Mount Tamalpais. Locals now use the simple name, *Mt. Tam*, and refer to the mountain as *Sleeping Maiden*. The Miwoks feared the mountain, believing that evil spirits lived there. When an early pioneer climbed to the summit, Chief Marin tore himself from his tribe to join the climb. After all, he was the bravest man in the world. His ascent broke the myth. Ever since that time, the mountain has been seen as a test of strength. For example, the Dipsea Race, the oldest marathon-type race in a natural setting in the nation, started in 1904. A challenging seven-mile (11 km) course climbs

steeply up steps
and trails out of
Mill Valley,
descends
through Muir
Woods, climbs
up over the



Plate 54 Start of Dipsea Race, circa 1900. Views of Lytton Sq. and Keystone Building

flank of Mt. Tam, and descends finally to its terminus at Stinson Beach.



Plate 55 The 3rd Dipsea Women's hike, 1920

In the early 1800's, California was a part of Mexico and Marin County was subdivided into 22 huge parcels of land, called Land Grants. The first to be awarded were to John Reed and William Richardson. Reed, an ambitious gentleman from Ireland, built a sawmill on Cascade Creek. (A reconstruction stands in contemporary Old Mill Park.) He built the first house in the Mill Valley area, and started the cattle and dairy industry that supplied products to growing San Francisco. With the 1849 Gold Rush, San Francisco exploded with activity. The market for dairy products and redwood timber became enormous.



Plate 56 Replica of the Saw Mill in Old Mill Park, circa 1835

Worldwide visitors to San Francisco also found the appeal of Mt. Tam as a place with magnificent views, endless hiking and camping places, and respite from foggy San Francisco.



***Plate 57 Replica of the 1900s Mill Valley and Mt. Tamalpais
Scenic Railway Gravity Car***

The North Pacific Coast Railroad opened a route to Mill Valley in 1889, and in 1896 the “Crookedest Railroad in the World” was constructed. Its route from the center of Mill Valley to the top of Mt. Tam served five hotels on the way. The railroad offered an optional Gravity Car descent from the mountain peak to Redwood Valley, now known as Muir Woods, a National Monument. These were life-changing events for this tiny cluster of buildings called Mill Valley. Thousands of visitors arrived every year and Mt. Tam became known as a “must visit” destination. In this, Mill Valley’s relationship to the famed mountain resembled both Interlaken and Whistler.

Helen and I loved Mt. Tamalpais, visiting every weekend possible. Intrigued by trails through the misty redwoods, hearing the Pacific Ocean's serenade along the edge of Marin County, we moved to Mill Valley in 1963 with our two youngsters, Fredric and Jean. On clear, cool days, we loved the view from the peak of the mountain. The Farallon Islands floated twenty miles westward, while to the south, white-textured San Francisco decorated the skyline. Snow-topped Sierra peaks, almost two hundred miles (322 km) eastward, drew our eyes to the eastern edge of the state.



Plate 58 Family hike on Mt. Tam, Helen, Fred, and Jean



Plate 59 Fred and Jean check out the bug life on Mt. Tam

Mt. Tam compelled weekly hikes for education and adventure. I wore a backpack heavy with books describing birds, flowers, mushrooms and the tiny things that wriggled in every crack and nook. The rocky, soggy trail from Rock Springs to Laurel Dell was our favorite. Fern-lined banks stepped up to massive boulder walls, where reddish chert and striped greenish-grey serpentine were painted bright with miniature worlds of succulents and ferns. The stream trail opened to a concert hall of meadow, edged by a musical chorus of meadow larks and robins safe in black-green conifers. Our hiking ritual included trekking down the steps of the Dipsea Trail for ice cream in our small village nestled into redwoods at the toe of the mountain.

Our move to Mill Valley, a monumental step in my *quest for the unknown*, opened my senses to the remarkable partnership of nature and village.

Experiences and observations over the decades were my silent textbook, each page an example of village life, that, in later years, influenced the design concept for Whistler Village.

Throughout Mill Valley, the redwood forest has been in command. In Old Mill Park, in addition to the replica of the original sawmill, the elegant Town Library slips graciously between redwoods. In exterior form and wood interior, the library has membership in the forest ecotone, a building true to its place in nature. Old Mill Park remains a favored destination for locals and international bike-riders hoping to see remnants of the redwood forest.

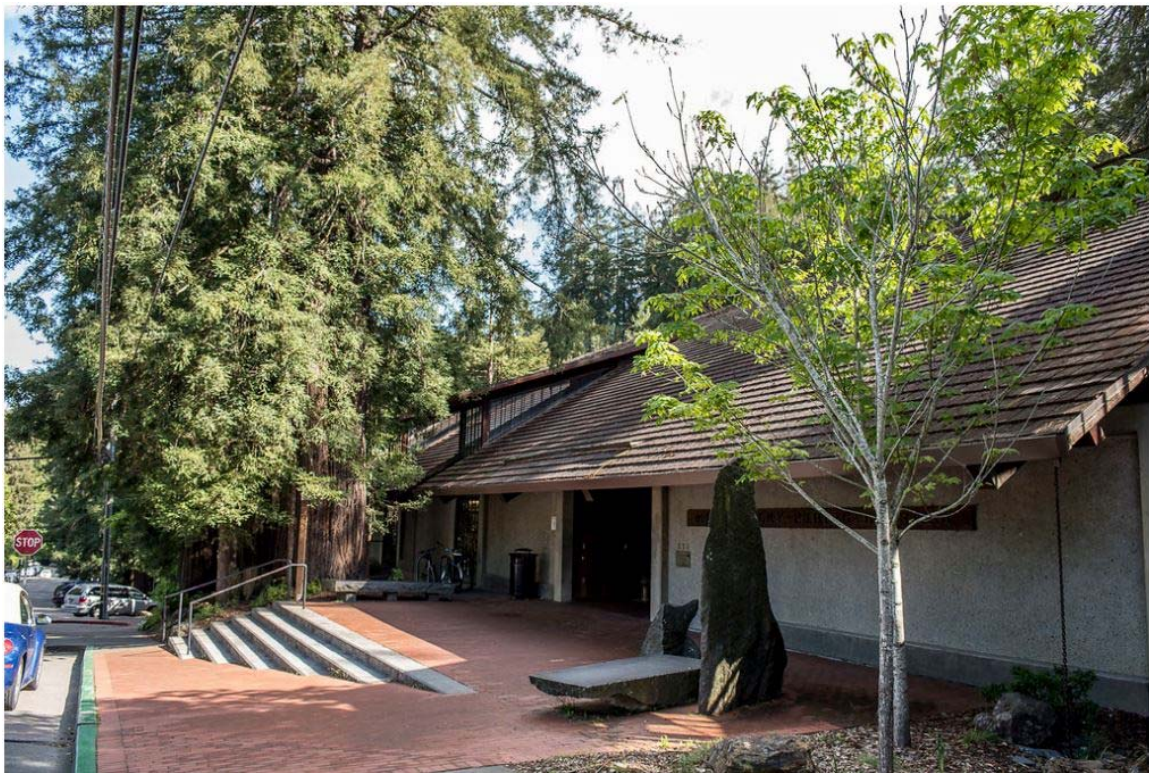


Plate 60 Mill Valley Library in Old Mill Park

Redwoods thrive, whimsically and somewhat illogically, in Lytton Square centered in Throckmorton Avenue, a bit like nature thumbing its nose at reality. Bicycle riders gather, sit on blocks of stone, drink coffee from nearby Peets and the Depot, tell tales of quick descent on the trails of Mt. Tam.



Plate 61 Cluster of Redwood trees in center of Throckmorton Avenue

*Quiet in the earth a drop of water came,
And the little seed spoke, "Sequoia is my name".*

William Stafford

Daily life in Mill Valley is flavored by the older buildings and the resurgent forest. A few very old redwood summer cabins remain. The Bank of America looks like a bank and the Spanish style City Hall leaves no doubt as to its function. The art-deco towered movie theater is a signal of a colorful past. The Outdoor Art Club, designed by Bernard Maybeck in 1904, is layered with the community's memories. When we are here, modern visitors share experiences with early residents, despite the passing of time.

In the village, the few major streets remain where established, short and irregular, lined by small, individual retail shops with second stories that once housed residents. It has been important that the main street into Mill Valley, Miller Avenue, ends at a tee intersection; it is not a through road. Traffic stops, and pedestrians move freely. Mill Valley is a slow town.



Plate 62 Mill Valley Flower Shop

A delightful quality of Mill Valley is that “whimsy happens.” For example, the funky Throckmorton Theatre that showed Charlie Chaplin movies in 1914 still fronts the street, and the ageless flower shop clings to the wall over-hanging Corte Madera Creek.

Much like Interlaken, the small storefronts along Throckmorton Avenue have recessed entries adjacent to creative bay windows. Overhead awnings, shady



Plate 63 On Throckmorton Avenue diverse shop fronts create an urban ecotone, the flow along the sidewalk edged by the thicket of shops

carob trees, and colorful signs contribute to the intimate scale of this village habitat. Recessed nooks, all with benches, are safe places to relax and observe, like the boulder-punctuated edges of Gore Creek in Vail. This wandering walk alongside the textured facades achieves the connection typical of all ecotones. The sidewalks in Mill Valley are the streams of the community, bouncing their way to the Town Plaza, the symbolic pond in the center of the village. Perhaps “pond” is not the correct term, for it functions more like a meadow, an ecotonal clearing in a forest. Parents, grandparents and others retreat to the edges, to tables at the Depot, benches, raised planters under trees. From there, they watch

the performers, mostly kids, adventure into the plaza. This is much like an ecotone in nature: the edges are for retreat and safety, and the meadow is the place for activity and feeding.



Plate 64 Another urban ecotone, the connection of two habitats, sidewalk to shops to Pub



Plate 65a,b,c and d Historic Mill Valley Depot, now a coffee shop and bookstore, on the edge of the Town Plaza, family life on a warm weekend

Small in size but huge as an historic village symbol, the Depot at the edge of the plaza is in its third life. The Depot began as the train station, then survived as the

bus station when the trains became obsolete in 1930. In a stroke of civic genius, bus stops were relocated, parking was removed, and the parking area became the brick-paved plaza. The Depot assumed its new life as a coffee shop and bookstore; now, it is a center of socializing and village life. Nearby merchants feared economic disaster when parking was slightly reduced. Instead, life has been good for all.

The flexible, level space in the plaza, free of cars, breeds imagination. Above pavement scrawled with kid-powered chalk lines and crooked hopscotch boxes, toddlers explore the vertical world. Scooters and trikes fueled by shrieks and laughter mix with the parade of every size, shape and color of dog. Children board the rebuilt Gravity Car and pretend to guide it down precarious rails. Men cluster around six tables in the shade of the afternoon, intent on chess or backgammon, oblivious to the chaos around. The sun adds creative genius, painting the plaza with shadows from tips of distant redwoods. The tables and chairs at the edge of the Depot provide an admirable connection of observers to performers. All ages participate, and international visitors, as in past decades, merge with the local folks. The pace is slow and relaxing, full of the pleasure of the pedestrian world. Redwood trees poke up at the edge of the plaza, in streets and on the hillsides leading up to Mt. Tam. This village of Mill Valley blends comfortably into the ecotone of the redwood forest.

During my period of teaching at the University of California at Berkeley, I taught a graduate class in Landscape Architecture, informally called “a course in seeing.” Every Friday, we had the day to visit a variety of built projects: plazas in San Francisco, spatial organization of cluster housing, neighborhood parks,

elderly housing, and others. The last class was a hike along Rock Springs Creek on Mt. Tam. The lesson was that the stream, the riparian corridor, included many of the features of an interesting urban corridor. For example: the sequence of narrow, tight spaces opening to wide; diversity of sensation from light to dark, revealing the sun as a design tool; how visual focus varies from angular spaces to long views; and the value of overhead enclosure, important in the creation of human scale. The hike ended in a meadow at Laurel Dell with a lively discussion about what was seen, what were the sensory experiences, and about the design guidance embodied in nature. I found it the perfect way to end a class.



Plate 66 On Mt. Tam between Rock Springs and Laurel Dell



Plate 67 On Mt. Tam between Rock Springs and Laurel Dell

The search for my personal truth spans over half a century, carried by breezes of the mountain and the lilt redwoods. In this village setting, by its diversity and scale, community and nature blend. There is harmony, safety, and comfort in this place of sharing. I love that Mt. Tam and Mill Valley have been my teachers.

The Whistler Town Centre

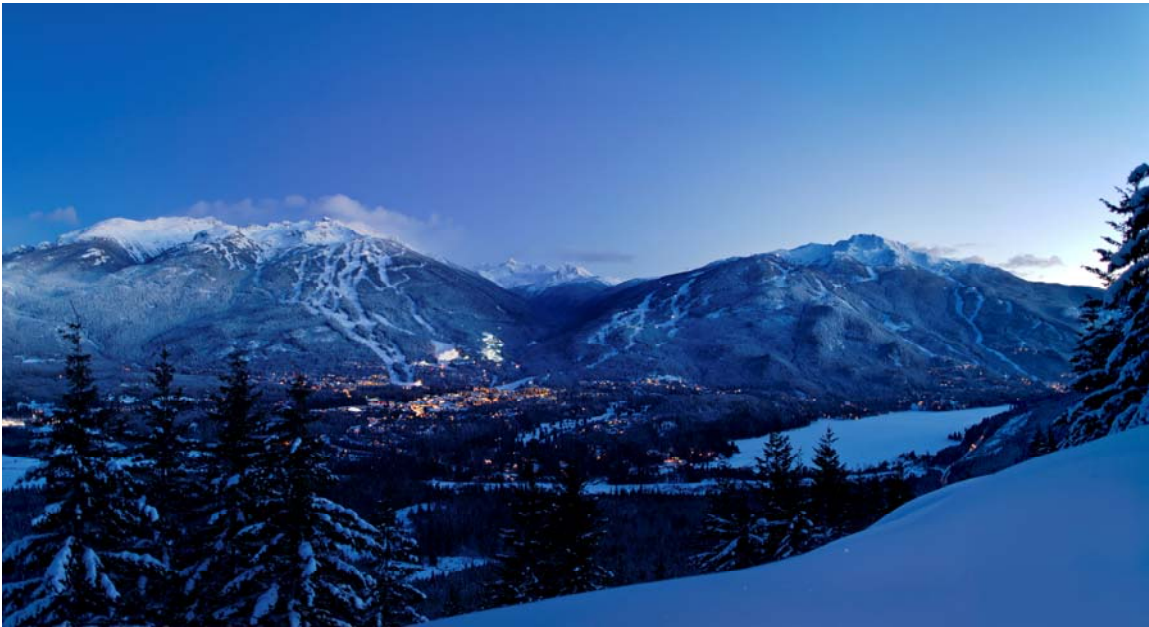


Plate 69 Blackcomb Mtn. (left), Fissile Peak (center), Whistler Mtn. (right), and Whistler Village

Where Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains touch, Fitzsimmons Creek slips down Singing Pass from Fissile Peak, careening through forests and meadows to flow through Whistler Village. Topped by glaciers, Whistler and Blackcomb rise over 5,200 feet (1585 m) from the valley floor. Whistler is about 70 miles (113 km) north of Vancouver, B.C., following the Sea to Sky Highway along the edge of the spectacular Howe Sound. The Highway turns inland at Squamish, alongside the Cheakamus River, leading into Whistler Valley. The scenic route lends a dramatic introduction to the mile-high mountains.

As in Mill Valley and the Miwoks, an Indian nation preceded western development in British Columbia by more than 10,000 years. In the Whistler

region, the Squamish and Lil'wat nations were dominant, calling themselves "The First Nations." First Nations historic and contemporary artworks are now preserved in the Audain Art Museum in Whistler. The 2010 Winter Olympics featured Indian figures on all Olympic products, in particular, the giant stone *Inuksuk*, a welcoming figure standing in deep snow near the top of Whistler Mountain.



Plate 70 Inuksuk on Whistler Mountain, symbol of 2010 Winter Olympics

Exploration and development of the western edge of North America, in relationship to much of the world, is quite recent. The first survey of this region of British Columbia was done by the British Royal Navy in 1860, to chart the route of a trail from Squamish to Lillooet. The route was used once for moving

cattle, but the terrain was too rough for further use. Near the turn of the century, trappers and prospectors established small camps. But it was not until 1914 when an adventuresome couple, Alex and Myrtle Phillip, established a summer resort, “The Rainbow Lodge,” on the shore of Alta Lake. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway route from Vancouver to Alta Lake was completed in the same year, providing access to loggers as well as to vacationing visitors. With the building of other summer camps, the area collectively known as Alta Lake, in Whistler Valley, became increasingly popular.

In 1960, four Vancouver businessmen, inspired by the Squaw Valley Winter Olympics, were excited by the qualities of the peak named London Mountain, in later years named Whistler Mountain. The most accessible part of the mountain was in the area now called Creekside, approximately 3,500 feet (1 km) from Alta Lake. Adventuresome Vancouverites and laid-back locals stomped up the slope as first lifts were under construction. By 1965, a rough version of the Sea to Sky Road was completed, and electricity, water and a sewer system were finally in place. A year later, the ski resort was opened. The first ski trails were carved into the slopes in the exact location of trails later improved for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

With increasing skier popularity and an expanding permanent population, it was apparent by the early 1970’s, that an unknown future loomed ahead.

Although many people in Whistler and in the Province were participants in the evolution of Whistler, one gentleman, Al Raine, played a quiet but sterling role. Al was the former coach and program director for the Canadian National Alpine Ski Team. As an early resident of Whistler, he was appointed by the Provincial

Government as a technical advisor to evaluate British Columbia mountains for skiing potential. He rated Whistler and Blackcomb as having the greatest potential. Al's conclusion led to the Provincial designation of Whistler as the "Resort Municipality of Whistler" in 1975, the first such designation in Canada.



Plate 71 First Whistler Council 1975. From left to right: John Hetherington, Garry Watson, Bob Bishop, Al Raine, not identified, Mayor Pat Carleton

The title of Resort Municipality carried with it some special privileges along with special obligations. Funding was made available for infrastructure, a new sewer plant, and construction of parking facilities. In return, it was expected that the Municipality would design the Town Centre to serve the broader community, to excite and attract a Canadian and international audience, thus, increasing the tourism industry in British Columbia.

The first Town Councils, 1975 to 1978, led by Mayor Pat Carleton, established far-sighted guidelines for the planning and development of the Town Centre. After 40 years of success and increasing popularity, it is apparent to me that those guidelines were well-founded. My thoughts in reaction to the guidelines are:

- The Town Center was to be a pedestrian oriented village, with plazas and lanes free of vehicles. I feel this was critical, because innovative places become possible when public spaces are not dominated by the scale, sounds, movements, conflicts and odors of cars. People can move freely, connect with one another, and connect with nature in the exuberant mountain setting.



Plate 72 Village Square, free of cars, as viewed from Araxi's restaurant terrace

- The sizes of buildings adjacent to public spaces were to be small, so that local residents would have the ability to buy parcels

and develop individual buildings. I observed that smaller buildings reflect the scale of structures typical of many Alpine villages, including older buildings in Interlaken. Smaller buildings imply ownership by individuals rather than corporate entities.



Plate 73 Variety of building sizes and ground floor uses in the Town Centre

- Ground floors of buildings related to public spaces were for retail shops, restaurants, coffee shops sports shops, or other public-serving uses. Upper floor levels were for visitor accommodation units, rather than for permanent residents. I felt that this combination of uses, as seen in other recreational villages, would generate the ambience and diversity of a vital and economically-successful recreation-based community.

- In all seasons, the Town Centre was to serve the local residents as well as visitors. It was to appeal to all ages, to the world-wide audience.



***Plate 74 Base area of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains
at the top of Village Stroll***

- The connection of village to mountain was to be convenient and dramatic, with the sense that the mountains were permitted to flow into the village. I believed the village's relationship to the mountain went beyond physical access. The link was a spiritual connection: the mountains are places of adventure and mystery where every person could search for meaning.

Beneath the practical goals were layers of subtle, less quantifiable objectives that touched on the spirit of the Town Centre. In casual conversations, people talked about the project with phrases that called out their deeper wishes: *harmonious; a family place; different than in daily life; a place of memories; true to British Columbia; village and mountain become one; a village in the forest...* Overall, the desire was strong for a Town Centre that would shout – *this is Whistler.*

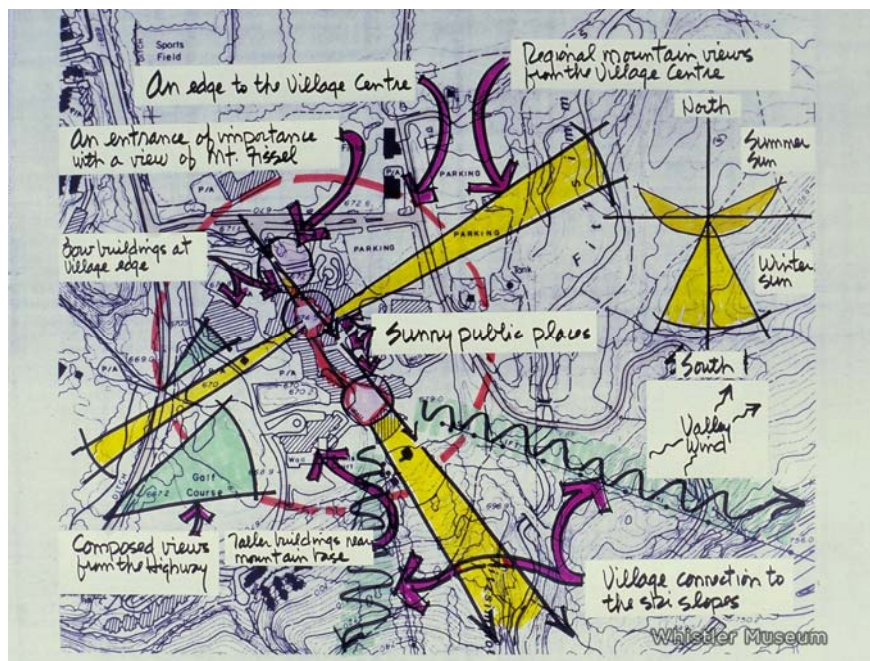


Plate 75 Whistler Town Center Site Analysis 1978

In September, 1978, the Town Council asked that I prepare the Master Plan for the Town Centre. (This was not a one-person job; please see Acknowledgements for a listing of the design team and Council members. Preparation of the Master Plan was an exciting, collaborative adventure that marshalled the work of many.)

The concept that would guide the organization of the Village was that the location of public spaces, the shared community places, would control the structure of the Village. Often-times, a site tells designers how to take the first step. This certainly was true of this location. The Town Centre site, rather than being defined by property lines, extended as far as one could see: Wedge Mountain to the east; Rainbow northward; Callaghan in the distant west; and the stage setting of Blackcomb, Fissile Peak, Singing Pass, and Whistler Mountain spanning the south-facing view from east to west. Our Village design oriented the pedestrian lanes toward these memorable peaks, an invitation for the mountain views to enter the Village, a connection of the Town Centre to the monumental landscape. Plazas and lanes were shaped for best relationship to sunlight, since warm, sheltered sunlit places reap the magic of year-round use. Sites for buildings included guidelines that encouraged designs in harmony with neighbors, and heights were controlled to limit blocking of the sun in public spaces.



Plate 76 Whistler Village, places and spaces

Arriving at the symbolic “front door” to the Village from Village Gate Boulevard, we placed a short street, Whistler Way, to align with the view of the shining spire of Fissile Peak. Passing through the entrance into Village Square, the view of Fissile reappeared above the roofline of Fitzsimmons Lodge, like a tower marking the center of the village. Village Square was placed in this location near the entrance, slightly distant from the base of Whistler and Blackcomb, because the views of the peaks were the best. Village Square was like the marketplace in older European villages, featuring the crossroads of lanes; edged by restaurants, dining terraces, and the informal stage of buskers; faced by the grocery/liquor store, which served as the magnet of economic return and vibrant social life.



Plate 77 Fissile Peak over Fitzsimmons Lodge, Village Square



Plate 78 Gore Creek

Village Stroll flows from the Whistler/Blackcomb ski base, winding its way northward until reaching the Market Place near Lorimer Road. The Stroll, like Gore Creek in Vail, Colorado, flows with irregular edges resembling the erratic texture of a natural creek. The Stroll

intersects Village Square, angles eastward, bounces off the steps of the Village Commons, floats above Village Gate Boulevard, and has various adventures on its way through the Northlands. (Planning and development of the Northlands, officially titled Village North, took place 12 to 16 years after the Town Centre's first steps in 1978.)



Plate 79 The flow of people on Village Stroll

Meandering into Village North, with connections to community destinations, the Stroll explodes into Olympic Plaza. Along the way, quiet retreats eddy out of the flow like the beautiful creek of East Park, flowing under the Stroll. Works of art glimmer along the edges, and gaps between buildings let in unexpected splashes of sunlight. The surprising views of peaks and forests cascade down the landscape, a bit like small streams tumbling over stones feeding the flow of the Stroll. The mountain forest, at the Village edge, waits for an opportunity to march into the townscape. New plantings appear along Village Stroll, at the Village front door, and by the side of new buildings. The original concept has become a reality after decades of growth: Whistler is a village in the forest.



Plate 80 Village Stroll crossing the East Park stream

Watching the Town Centre mature since 1980 is like reading a good book. The book's introduction promises an experience that is enticing and satisfying. Deep in the book, there are unexpected stories and thought-provoking richness. Life along Village Stroll is like turning pages of the book, illustrated by shops and restaurants that welcome, a bench in the sun, the view of Wedge Mountain to the east. Surprise follows happy surprise. Skiers, bikers and groups walk comfortably in the Centre. There is plenty of space to move quickly if desired; however, most people move slowly as though nothing is to be missed. Eyes meet, smiles exchange. The edges of the Stroll are like honey, a bit sticky, but oh so sweet.

Slowing, stopping, talking, watching, or sitting quietly are the pleasant duties along the edge. The diverse edge protects places to be alone, out of the flow of activity. Snippets of conversation are overheard: *Say, how about coffee? Got to go, flow along this stream of memories. Be cool!*



Plate 81 Relaxing alone on the edge of Village Stroll

Village Square can erupt with enthusiastic shouts, or it can be a calm place where kids and families find comfort, like braving the changing moods of a spring snow. Buskers in the Square are the seasonal entertainers, and at times music or small theater performances are scheduled. Village Square has edges abundant with tables, chairs and benches. Some are in sun, others are sheltered, but all say *stop, stay awhile, why hurry?* It is a place of free movements and joy, as friends collect, after hours on the slopes, to swap stories layered with exaggeration, bellowing laughs, teasing giggles. I remember when the gathered crowd exploded with cheers, at the end of the 2010 Winter Olympics, when the Canadian Hockey

team beat the U.S. team. That night, over 1,000 spectators crunched into the Square watching a giant screen. The Village rocked with success and exuberance.



Plate 82 Busker entertaining families in Village Square



Plate 83 Village Square, edges abundant with tables, chairs, and restaurants



Plate 84 Canadian audience celebrates in Village Square after Canada beats the U.S. in the 2010 Olympic hockey finals

Whistler Village was revealed to the international audience by the Olympics. People from around the world filled the lanes and plazas, waving flags and banners in celebration of every victory. With the departure of the Olympics, the building of the Olympic Plaza followed. It was a privilege for me to participate in the preparation of the concept plan, my final professional project, with detail design prepared by Perry + Associates, Vancouver, B.C. My team's plan conceived of a family place in a forest-like setting, with cedar trees dotting the perimeter, boulders and stone steps providing an erratic edge to the circular meadow, a public fire pit, and an exciting kids play area. The Olympic Rings overlook the Plaza from a cranny alongside Village Stroll, like a great boulder in the eddy-edged stream. In warm months, the Vancouver Symphony, rock music groups, and serious theater productions attract thousands.



Plate 85 Canada Day, 2015, Olympic Plaza



Plate 86 Olympic rings on the edge of Olympic Plaza

Olympic Plaza exemplifies a major goal of Village North, the hope that local residents and seasonal visitors would find shared facilities and mutual interests. A shared Whistler offers a richer experience for everyone. Nearby, the Town Library and Town Museum are universal destinations, as the Town Hall brings locals into the heart of the Village.

In the initial years of Whistler, the hope was that skiing would succeed as the dominant industry. And it did! As Whistler matured, the population grew and diversified, more permanent residents settled, and cultural goals changed. The arts community grew. Olympic Plaza fulfills many of the community needs by satisfying all ages, meeting needs of locals and visitors, and providing a multitude of free or low-cost events. It is a place of community freedom.



Plate 87a Olympic Plaza



Plaza 87b Skaters on the track



Plate 87c Warming station



Plate 87d Winter in the Plaza

In winter months, snowy mountains and white topped boulders frame the snow-packed plaza. Below the performance canopy, the skating surface wriggles free with a glazed path that rises and falls, hinting at the unpredictability of nature. In the Plaza center, a mountain of snow is speckled with kids on tubes and sleds imagining daredevil adventures. The hot chocolate stand is a tasty respite alongside the outdoor fireplace. Though the Olympics have passed, the village continues to resound with shouts and laughter.

The indefinable spirit of Whistler Mountain flows into the inescapable aura of Village Stroll, and the narrow corridor unites with the broad slope of the mountain. One brave tower rises above a building, perhaps wishing to be a tree, or in a fleeting thought, the peak of a grand mountain. The form of the Village, its spaces, buildings and shapes of roofs, find harmony with forms visible throughout nature. The forest is the grand connector. Edges in the village find companionship with edges of mountains, forests and creeks.



Plate 88 The mountain and forest seem to flow and connect to Village Stroll

The design freedom generated by the creative program established by the first Town Councils was the license to dare the unknown, to test the fabric of a village based upon intangibles, to play with the romance of uncertainty. Like a well-built home, Whistler Village will never be finished, but will be adapted to suit its times. Since 1975, the community has shifted and grown under the guidance of thoughtful mayors and council members, as well as dedicated members of the town staff. The most recent addition, the Audain Art Museum, houses a leading collection of the art of British Columbia from early times to the present day. The growth of the art community in Whistler adds to the extraordinary diversity of a remarkable community. Whistler is the home of one of the most vibrant recreational and cultural communities in North America.



***Plate 89 North coast British Columbia historic Indian masks,
Audain Museum, Whistler Village***

AFTERWORD

Plate 90 *A wobbly mountain trail at the base of the Jungfrau glaciers*

Is there any better way to explore the unknown than by walking? Moving along a village walk, hiking a rock-strewn mountain trail, or wandering across a lupine-filled meadow sounds tame, yet each trip is stoked with the unexpected. There are some paths that are straight, orderly, and predictable, that go directly from one place to another. Other paths are designed with lovely curves that make them pleasant, predictable, and in love with their own beauty. My favorite is the wobbly meander;

alive with freedom

clattering off ragged edges

futzing along the way

the rule breaker who lets go

follows the path least known

Eldon Beck

This is an apt description of my visits with edges as I have traveled along the way. Being in touch with the texture of the earth, keeping quiet to hear songs of distant birds slipping from the forest, absorbing the fragrance of wet grasses and aged leaves at a meadow's edge, tasting huckleberries, and being overwhelmed by the drifting of clouds across the face of the Eiger – sensations like these connect me to the earth.



Plate 91 Edges, celebration of sunlight

As Diane Ackerman writes, “*our senses define the edge of consciousness.*” My personal and professional life has been filled with awareness of natural and built places with certain, often undefined, features that trigger emotions. When nature is a friend of built form, like blueberries added to ice cream, the result is delicious. My task has been to find the correct recipes to form livable and

delightful communities. This book, “Edges: Mountains, Forests, Creeks,” marks the route I followed leading to the development of the Whistler Town Centre. Many friends and team members have explored the path with me. Seeing the beauty and vitality of this remarkable village that I helped to build has exceeded my hopes as I “*quest for the unknown.*”



Plate 92 Alongside the wobbly path

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eldon Wren Beck's discovery of the world of design began in 1953 with a B.S. in Landscape Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1960's and 1970's, as a partner in the firm of Royston, Hanamoto, Beck and Abey, an eighteen year relationship, his design work included park and recreation projects, college campus design and community planning. Eldon found that as his design philosophy matured, the forms in the natural landscape became increasingly important, eventually guiding his approach to design at every scale. In 1978, Eldon was invited to become an Adjunct Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Also, in 1978, he became involved in preparing the master plan for the Town Centre of Whistler, B.C., leading to establishing his firm of Eldon Beck Associates, thus, combining practice and teaching.

Though Eldon's practice continued to be diverse, with significant work in Australia and New Zealand, his focus was on the preparation of master plans and design of villages similar to Whistler, i.e., those populated by auto-free public spaces. As a design consultant to Intrawest, a Canadian development company, master plans for pedestrian oriented villages were developed throughout North America and in France. Articles describing the villages including Whistler, Tremblant and Village 1950 Les Arcs, have appeared in many publications, including the magazines *Conde Nast Traveler*, *SKI*, and *Snow Country*. The book, *American Ski Resort, Architecture, Style, Experience* by Margaret Supplee Smith, included descriptions of his work in Vail, Colorado and Whistler, B.C.

Family back-packing trips in the California Sierras and the Colorado Rocky Mountains were an important family activity with his wife, Helen,

son, Fredric and daughter Jean. These trips also reinforced his appreciation for Nature and the way that mountains, forests and creeks inspired his philosophy of design.

Eldon has published a chap-book of poetry, *The Wind Blows White*, and has had numerous poems published in anthologies and on-line. In 2011 he received a Milley's Award from City of Mill Valley Art Commission for Creative Achievement. He is a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects. He and Helen live in Homestead Valley, an unincorporated neighborhood of Mill Valley, California.

Printed copies of *EDGES* are available for \$24 by contacting: mfc77edge.ewb@gmail.com. The \$24 includes shipping and handling.

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WHISTLER MUSEUM AND DESIGN ARCHIVES SOCIETY

John Alexander, Collections Manager

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All other photographs taken by Eldon Beck from 1976 to 2018

WRITTEN CREDITS

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With appreciation to three authors for phrases that inspired:

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PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My conscious fascination with Edges began in 1967 on a family trip to Western Europe, ignoring shouts from son Fredric and daughter Jean in the back seat of our car, crying out, "don't stop, don't take another picture!" I thank my family, my wife Helen, Fredric and Jean, for their patience and years of encouragement. Fredric and Jean are now both skilled observers and competent photographers.

This book would not have been produced without critical advice from Fredric, his assistance in developing the structure of the book and talent in guiding me through the mysteries of the computer. I thank Miriam [Mimi] Beck, wife of nephew Chris, for her marvelous editorial assistance, every word was evaluated. A warm thanks to Thomas Singer, M.D., for support and encouragement over many years, our conversations were fun and inspirational. Thanks to two close friends in Whistler, Mike Kirkegaard, Director of Resort Planning and Martin Pardoe, a Whistler Parks and Recreation Planner, who provided years of support and encouragement and assistance in securing essential photos of Whistler Village and Olympic Plaza. I thank the many friends along the way who offered encouragement. Friends of my son, Fredric, were constantly interested and helpful, namely Troy Burns and Frank and Leslie Bevans. Frank and Leslie helped with photos, ideas and wonderful words. Great appreciation to my friend, Karen Benke, who taught me about poetry and writing. Finally, appreciation to my close friends in the Mill Valley Vimala Sangha, supporters over many years.

PROFESSIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the early 1970's my firm was retained by the Town of Vail, Colorado to assist in valley wide landscape/reforestation planning and to assist in planning to remove vehicles from the village center to create a pedestrian village. Terry Minger, the Town Manager, was the author of these concepts and my close working companion for over six years. We spent many hours discussing the nature of villages in the mountain resort setting. In 1978, he was hired to be the President of the Whistler Land Company, the designation of the British Columbian entity responsible for building the new Whistler Town Centre. Terry introduced me to Al Raine, an Alderman on the Whistler Town Council. My work with Whistler started with that introduction. Leading, eventually to my 45 year career in village planning and design. I cannot thank Terry and Al enough for their influence in my life. Al Raine and his wife, Nancy Greene, friends from the first days in Whistler, were inspirational and enthusiastic. I often said that I only drew what they were thinking.

Over the years, many individuals have been clients, companions and teammates. Whistler had the political will, starting in 1975, to move forward. Members of the early Town Councils contributed to the form and success of the village.

- 1975-1976: Mayor Pat Carleton, Alderman: Bob Bishop, Al Raine, John Hetherington, Garry Watson, Clerk/Treasurer: Geoff Pearce
- 1977-1978: Mayor Pat Carleton, Alderman: Frans Carpay, Al Raine, John Hetherington, Garry Watson, Clerk/Treasurer: Geoff Pearce
- 1878-1980: Mayor Pat Carleton, Alderman: Rolly Horsey, Garry Watson, Sid Young, Al Raine, Clerk/Treasurer: Geoff Pearce

Terry Minger led the design team for several years with support from Planners Sutcliffe, Griggs and Moodie. Neil Griggs and I became close team-mates.

Surviving economic ups and downs, Whistler had two significant periods of change. In the late 1980's, expansion north of Village Gate Boulevard was proposed, the development called Village North. The design team included Jim Moodie, a gentleman guided by his own brand of humor, as Planner. We worked closely together under the competent leadership of Mayor Drew Meredith. In later years, I had a close working relationship with Mike Vance, Whistler Planning Director.

The next surge of change preceded and followed the 2010 Winter Olympics. I appreciate that Mike Vance involved me in design of the Olympic Athletes Village. I was impressed by the skill of Jim Godfrey in guiding the collaboration with the Olympic Committee. After the Olympics, I worked with many in the development of the Olympic Plaza. Design was guided by town staff members Mike Kirkegaard, Martin Pardoe, Bob MacPherson, Kevin McFarland and others, working with Kim Perry+Associates, Landscape Architects who prepared construction documents and guided the site work. During these creative years I was impressed by the dedication of Whistler staff members, including Bill Barratt, Jan Jensen, Keith Bennett, Tom Barratt, Annie Oja, Melissa Laidlaw, and Sarah McJannet. For years I enjoyed working with members of the Whistler Municipal Advisory Design Panel with respect for their contributions to the

success of the village. The list of names of community members who are a part of Whistler is endless. Mayor Nancy Whilhelm Morden has contributed years of energy to the community along with other mayors and Council members, Annie Popma, Garry Watson, and John Rae must be recognized. Any discussion of Whistler must include Hugh Smythe, an early Blackcomb presence and long-time community supporter.

During my years of work with Whistler I met a community member, Gary Raymond, with the development company, Intrawest. Intrawest owned Blackcomb Mountain for a number of years. Intrawest expanded in development of ski resort villages in other parts of Canada and in the United States. In 1991, Gary invited me to prepare the master plan for re-do of an existing village at Mont Tremblant, Quebec. This was the start of a sixteen-year working relationship that included Village 1950, Les Arcs, France. The various villages were similar to the Whistler concept in that public places were free of cars and that the philosophy of Edges was important to concepts of design. My working companions remain good friends. Some of these from Tremblant days include David Greenfield, Roger McCarthy, Lorne Bassel, Jean Beaulieu, Marc Perrault, Patty Xenos, Bruno St. John and George Leahy. Lorne Bassel has been an especially close working companion and friend as we shared time on a village in Sandestin, Florida and Les Arcs, France. Others on various projects were Connie Wynne, Robert Jerome, Nicholas Garnier, Bill Green, David Kleinkopf, J.F. Garneau and Craig Waters. Close companions were Ray Letkemaan, Architect and Richard Stevenson, Landscape Architect.

I give my thanks and heartfelt appreciation to many not listed and to partners and members of my offices over the years.