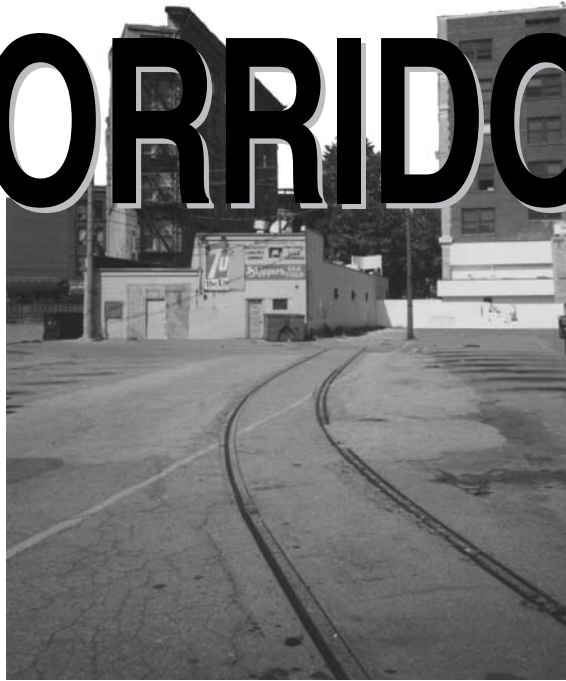


**HERITAGE**  
 Vancouver  
 Newsletter

# A FORGOTTEN CORRIDOR



by HUGH D. McLEAN

**T**he decision of the Canadian Pacific Railway to locate its western terminus in Vancouver in 1886 turned a one-block long logging outpost known as Granville into a city and provided a link to the rest of Canada. As part of bringing the proposed CPR terminus from Port Moody to Vancouver, large sections of land were provided to the company. Railway executives and the other elite located in what is now the West End (later migrating to Shaughnessy), railway workers were housed in Yaletown, while the CPR's first hotel was located to the west of Gastown in an effort to shift the commercial district on to the railway's land holdings.

The CPR had grand plans for a tunnel out to Point Grey and a deep seaport at Wreck Beach. Its rail yards were to be located at Kitsilano Point. Local merchants feared that development on the south side of False Creek would create a rival town. The City also realized that a rail bridge across False Creek would impede water navigation. It negotiated a 30-year tax break for the railway to locate the yards and roundhouse on the north side of False Creek next to Yaletown.

In spite of the tax break, the railway still extended its spur line across False Creek. The *official* western terminus, including a station and hotel, was to be at the foot of what

See Corridor on page 3

## UPCOMING EVENTS



photo from Greater Vancouver Book, C. Davies

Granville Street a blaze in the 1950s

**Wednesday, March 16, 8 PM**  
The Past, Present and Future  
of Vancouver's Historic  
Neighbourhoods  
Co-sponsored by the  
Vancouver Museum

### **Granville Street—From Main Street to Troubled Street to...?**

Once the city's main shopping and theatre street, Granville has seen hard times and been through numerous attempts to revive its fortunes. The latest moves involve new sign bylaws, and a focus on entertainment. Members of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, business owners and planning staff will take a look into the crystal ball and examine the street's future prospects.

**Walking Tour:** Sunday, March 19th.  
Heritage Vancouver and the Vancouver Museum present an evening walking tour of the area's neon with John Atkin, curator of the Vancouver Museum's City Lights: *Neon in Vancouver* exhibition.  
For info and reservations call 254.9411

Heritage Vancouver  
PO Box 3336, Main Post Office  
Vancouver BC V6B 3Y3

604.254.9411

<http://home.istar.ca/~glenchan/hvsintro.shtml>

## Vancouver Modern



photo R. Moffatt 1996

CIBC building, south elevation

### **CIBC building has (and is) a hidden treasure**

by *Robert Moffatt*

Canadian Imperial Bank of  
Commerce  
586 Granville Street  
McCarter & Nairne 1958

**F**amous for their Art Deco Marine Building, McCarter & Nairne was once Vancouver's largest architectural firm. During the 1950s they designed numerous downtown office buildings for Eastern financial institutions and insurance companies, and the CIBC building at Granville and Dunsmuir is the finest of the few survivors.

Probably the building's most notable feature is a stunning Venetian glass mosaic mural celebrating British Columbia's industries, crafts, and natural resources. Created by Vancouver artist B.C. Binning, the mosaic stretches 44 feet across the

rear wall of the banking floor and required some 200,000 pieces of glass to complete. Walnut paneling, terrazzo floors and marble counters finished the interior.

The exterior is similarly well detailed. Clad in off-white marble and mixing punched-in and extended windows, the upper office block visually floats above the ground level. Corbusian pilotis covered with black granite support the upper stories and provide column-free floor plates, while patterned concrete sections form a decorative parapet.

A mix of fine design and enlightened corporate patronage, the CIBC is one of Vancouver's few significant postwar modernist office buildings in original condition. Now if someone would only clean it.

### **General Meeting third Wednesday of each month**

Vancouver Museum  
Ray Whittick Lounge  
(business meeting 7:30,  
speaker's program 8:00)  
There's plenty of free  
parking—please join us!

Non members are  
welcome by a suggested  
donation of \$2.00

### **Roedde House Salon Concert**

**Saturday, March 11th, 2 PM**  
*The Roedde House Trio*  
Rebecca Whitting - violin  
Anne-Katherine Coope - clarinet  
Janet Steinberg - cello  
Works by Albeniz, Gershwin,  
Weil and others  
Tickets \$25.00  
For tickets 684-7040  
Roedde House Museum  
1415 Barclay Street

## Mark Your Calendar

**Friday, March 17, 9 AM - 5 PM**  
**Preserving Wooden Structures**  
SFU Downtown \$195

The preservation of a wooden structure requires a thorough understanding of its construction technique and its materials. In an intensive one-day workshop, Martin Weaver will discuss the ways in which wood deteriorates in buildings—including physical, mechanical, chemical and biological forms of deterioration. The course provided a uniquely detailed insight into the technology involved in the conservation of historic and modern materials and structures, particularly as it is represented in North America.  
For more info: 291-5098.

**Wednesday, March 29, 7 PM**  
**SEATTLE ART DECO**  
*The Role of Regional Imagery in Pacific Northwest Modernistic Buildings*  
**Lawrence Kreisman**  
Vancouver Museum 1100 Chesnut

Seattle architects were designing buildings to complete aesthetically with those in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. They borrowed from the French decorative art vocabulary popularized at the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs and in contemporary journals. But they also incorporated distinct Pacific Northwest images which were interpreted by well-known local sculptors and crafts people. Notable among these motifs were water, mountains, trees and plants that would have been recognizable to residents of the region. They distinguish Seattle's Art Deco buildings from others built elsewhere in the world and provide a valuable lesson to modern day designers about tapping local and regional characteristics to develop unique and memorable architecture.

## City of Vancouver's 21st Annual Heritage Awards

**AWARD of HONOUR:**  
**Vancouver Heritage Foundation**, for the True Colours Program and the First Annual Heritage & Antiques Fair, **Allied Hotel Properties**, for interior restorations of the Hotel Georgia; **St. James Community Service Society**, for the St. James Cottage Hospice; **Lilia D'Acres and Donald Luxton** for *Lions Gate* the book; **Transit Museum Society** for the preservation of historic transit vehicles.

A full list of the winners is on the City of Vancouver's website at:  
[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/planning/heritage/Winners.htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/planning/heritage/Winners.htm).

from **Corridor cover**

is now Trafalgar Street. However, this extension was used only once in 1887 and then abandoned.

The CPR spur line from Burrard Inlet to English Bay was initially the only link to the sawmills, warehouses and other industry that grew up around False Creek. The railway knew that these businesses would be dependent on rail shipping, and it offered favourable lease rates to entice many to locate around Yaletown.

The spur line began at the top of Columbia Street and ran south-west, crossing Pender Street just west of Carrall Street. To this day, a large gap remains between buildings along Powell, Cordova and Hastings Streets. The spur line defined the eastern edge of Gastown and the western edge of Chinatown, and continued to Yaletown and beyond. Even before the Yaletown yards were completed, the first roundhouse and a hand-operated turntable were established near Shanghai Alley just south of Pender Street.

Rapid growth in Vancouver after World War I increased the number of automobiles in the city from 6,500 in 1920 to 36,500 by 1929. The main roads into the downtown from the east, such as Hastings and Pender Streets, were frequently blocked by trains shunting between the waterfront and False Creek yards. A controlled crossing at Carrall and Hastings Streets included gates and chains that were operated full-time by a CPR worker. By 1930, the CPR decided that a more efficient link was needed from the waterfront to False Creek. In 1932, the Dunsmuir Tunnel was opened, and to the delight of commuters, rail traffic no longer tied up the downtown.

The spur line also defined how many of the area's early buildings were designed, such as the front of the Anchor Hotel on Powell Street and the Merchants' Bank building at 1 West Hastings Street. Almost 70 years after the tracks were closed, the former rail right-of-way still affects development in the area. The recently completed condominium at the south-east corner of Cordova and Carrall Streets is set back and an enclosed courtyard maintains the *view corridor*.

Today, most of the CPR spur line is lost and forgotten. South of Pender Street, the only remaining evidence is the Kitsilano Trestle ramp on the south side of False Creek, the Roundhouse Community Centre and the *Dunsmuir Tunnel* entrance near the north end of BC Place Stadium. A small section of railway track that remained across Pender Street was recently removed. To the north of this, however, parking lots and open space fill the void of the railway, and one can still imagine the rumbling of freight trains all those years ago.

*Hugh McLean is a heritage planner for the City of Surrey and a Heritage Vancouver Officer.*

## BOOK REVIEW

**Made to Last:** *Historic Preservation in Seattle and King County*  
Lawrence Kreisman  
Published by Historic Seattle Preservation Foundation and University of Washington Press, 2000

A revised version of the original 1985 publication, this book is primarily about how preservation works in the Seattle area, rather than an architectural history. However, part inventory, part history, once you have read this text you will be familiar not only with how the preservation movement developed but with the features of key buildings. The number of tools available to protect these buildings is mind-boggling and Mr. Kreisman has obviously been a witness to many of the struggles and triumphs himself. The different means of preserving structures is illustrated in the fractured structure of the book. Seattle is discussed separately from King County; designated buildings are discussed separately from historic districts and self-preserved structures. Chockfull of anecdotes and insights, this inspirational book is a must-read for preservationists looking to see how to do it north of the border as well. Unfortunately, the title is misleading: Mr. Kreisman shows that in fact historic buildings do not tend to last unless subject either to benign neglect or the determined efforts of sympathetic developers and preservation advocates.

*Lawrence Kreisman is a respected Seattle author on the subject of conservation who will be speaking to the Canadian Art Deco Society this month.*

# Bringing Heritage to the People

Dear Members,

Last month, the City of Vancouver gave-out its annual heritage awards. As you can see in the list included in this newsletter, there was an eclectic mix of recognized projects, from books and exhibits on one end of the spectrum to buildings on the other. Especially gratifying was to see the Vancouver Heritage Foundation being recognized for the enormous amount of work that went into raising their profile this year through the True Colours Program and the First Annual Heritage and Antiques Fair. More and more often, I am hearing heritage conservationists pointing out that at conferences, courses, and lectures we are preaching to the converted. How to reach people who are not generally active in heritage conservation? The Heritage Awards themselves, as well as the Heritage Fair, which invite a wide variety of attendees, work to correct this. To the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Heritage Foundation: Keep up the good work!

*Susanna*

Susanna Houwen  
President, Heritage Vancouver

## 65 WATER STREET RECONSIDERED

At the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment meeting of February 18, Council voted to refer a revised development proposal for this site to public hearing. The site includes the Malkin Building (Old Spaghetti Factory) and vacant properties immediately to the east and west. The original proposal involves construction of a residential mid-rise tower on the site to the east, conversion of the upper floors of the heritage building to condominiums, and the addition of three floors to the original structure. While the proposal was praised for its potential to help jump start Gastown's economic revitalization, the addition was criticized as compromising the integrity of the heritage building, and there were concerns that the proposed tower would overwhelm Gastown's historic scale and character.

The revised proposal would involve approval of the first transfer of density (buildable floor space) in Gastown. The proposed sale and transfer of density (to elsewhere in the Downtown) would allow the developer of 65 Water Street to economically scale down its original scheme by removing the proposed 3-storey rooftop addition to the Malkin Building, and reducing the height of the proposed tower (to the east). While the scale and precedent of the tower is still cause for some concern, the possibility of retaining the heritage integrity of the Malkin Building is very good news. A date for the public hearing has not been set. The conversion of the existing building to a live/work use as opposed to condo, is a very significant adjustment and a new use in Gastown.

## Join Heritage Vancouver

Annual membership runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>. Members receive a monthly newsletter, free admission to monthly speakers' programs and reduced rates for tours and other activities.

Charitable donation #1073758-52. Membership fees are not tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$25       Supporting (no newsletter) \$5

Family: \$30       Corporate: \$50

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_       Patrons: \$100

Please send cheque or money order to: Heritage Vancouver, P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC V6B 3Y3