

HERITAGE
Vancouver
 Newsletter

HERITAGE VANCOUVER LAUNCHES TOP TEN ENDANGERED LIST



To mark its upcoming Tenth anniversary, HV has released its first annual *Top Ten Endangered Sites*. The purpose of the list is to raise awareness of our threatened heritage by heightening media exposure and by providing a focus for our ongoing activities. Buildings in the Top Ten list have already been featured in articles in the Vancouver Sun and the Courier (lead article in the Feb 21 issue).

Because demolition, redevelopment, or neglect threatens so much of our heritage, it was tough to limit the list to ten. Sites were selected on the basis of urgency, importance and their ability to generate public interest. Each year, HV will feature a new list of endangered sites within the City of Vancouver, a look back at the year's success stories, and a *post mortem* of endangered sites lost during the previous twelve months. We will also be consulting with heritage groups around the Lower Mainland to produce a regional Top Ten Endangered list.



Firehall #15

2001 Heritage Vancouver Top Ten Endangered Sites

1. Firehalls #13 and #15 -

24th and Prince Albert / 22nd and Nootka
 c.1914. The hose towers and distinctive bracketed eaves of these Craftsman-influenced fire halls were once features of pre-WWII neighbourhoods across the city. These Eastside landmarks are the last two of their kind still in use (one other, in Marpole, is now a seniors' centre). The interiors feature extensive woodwork and ornate pressed-metal ceilings. Destruction is imminent.

2. Shaw House - W. 7th and Ash

see **Top Ten** page two

HERITAGE
Vancouver
 PRESENTS

Special Presentation:
THE ULTIMATE BUNGALOW: The Gamble House-High Art and Careful Craft: *The California Architecture of Greene and Greene*
Wednesday, March 21st
7:30pm, Vancouver Museum

A lecture by Edward R. Bosley, from the Gamble House, Pasadena, CA \$15 for Heritage Vancouver and Vancouver Museum members and \$20 for non-members. Call the Museum at 736-4431 for tickets and information.

THE ART OF DYING: Behind the Scenes at Mountain View Cemetery
Wednesday, April 18th
7:30pm, Vancouver Museum

Once threatened with closure, Mountain View has a new lease on life. Find out what's in store for this great burial ground and get a peek at the modern world of cemeteries. We'll also explore the history and heritage of Mountain View and check out a who's who of its more prominent residents.

FYI
 You're on the list. This year, rather than issuing membership cards, we have provided the Vancouver Museum with a membership list. Just give your name on the way in to the meeting. All Heritage Vancouver meetings start at 7:30pm, the 3rd Wednesday of each month at The Vancouver Museum. Free for members and \$5 for non-members.

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from cover **Top Ten**

1894. This Queen Anne style house is the oldest in Fairview on its original site, appearing much the same as it did in 1894. The house has stood vacant since being purchased for redevelopment ten years ago, and is now in an advanced state of decay and at risk of arson. Scavengers have removed most of its ornamental Victorian fretwork.

3. Alexandra Park Cottages -
 1320 and 1324 Bidwell (at Harwood)
 These tiny Victorian beach cottages are the last two survivors from English Bay's early days. Together they provide an eccentric backdrop for Alexandra Park and Bandstand. Their new owners have applied to develop condos on the site. The cottages have no legal protection as they were missed for inclusion on the City's

examples of Streamline Moderne and early modern architecture like the former Children's Hospital and Nurse's Residence.

5. Opsal Steel -
 West 2nd Ave and Quebec
 T.H. Bamforth, Architects, 1918. Opsal Steel is the derelict red industrial building near 2nd and Main. The main building with its heavy timber construction, pitched roof, and rooftop *lantern vents* is one of the best remaining examples of turn-of-the-century industrial architecture, and one of the last remaining in south-east False Creek. The little *Moderne* corner office building still has its original 1940s signage. The site was A-listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register but the previous owner successfully applied to de-list it as uneconomic. The new owner will soon be seeking approval to redevelop the site.

6. BC Electric Showroom -



Vancouver General Hospital

Heritage Register. A purchaser willing to move them may be their only hope.

4. Vancouver General Hospital
 VGH has applied to rezone the entire hospital site for new hospital buildings and biomedical research facilities. None of the older buildings, except the original Heather Pavilion, would be retained. Treasures that would go include the old UBC Fairview Campus administration building, and

Granville and Dunsmuir / Lower 600 Block Granville
 Hodgson & Simmonds, Architects, 1928. The *jewel* in the 600 block is the BC Electric Showroom, which despite its derelict condition is one of Vancouver's most elegant commercial buildings. The exterior features delicate cast stone ornamentation and grand brass-framed windows spanning the second and third stories. It was last occupied in the 1980s by the predeces-



BC Electric Showroom 1940s

sor to Science World. Abandoned for over ten years, the building is crumbling from water damage and may soon be beyond repair.

The balance of the 600 block has some of the oldest buildings in the city, including the 1889 Crewes Block (occupied by the Hudson's Bay Co. 1891-95) and the 1948 Saba's facade, its Streamline Moderne design foreshadowing the modernist revolution of the 1950s and 60s. The row has sat abandoned since the early 1990s, headed for demolition.

7. Pantages Theatre #1 -

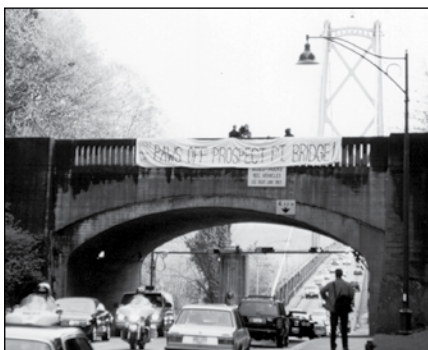
100 block East Hastings near Main E.E. Blackmore, Architect, 1907. *Pantages #1* is the city's the oldest existing theatre. Its humble brick exterior and 1970s lobby belie a stunning house interior embellished by ornate, classically-inspired plasterwork. In recent times it has been the *City Nights* theatre, and finally the *Sun Sing*, a Chinese language cinema. A victim of tough times on East Hastings, the theatre has been empty and decaying since the early 1990s. Moisture is now causing the plasterwork to fall, and its new owners face an immense challenge in getting monies and expertise

to rehabilitate the building as a music/entertainment venue.

8. Stanley Park

Various projects continue to erode Stanley Park. Most recently, the Provincial Highways Ministry and the City of Vancouver propose straightening and raising the roadway through the Park entrance at Georgia Street. This would radically alter the entrance landscape by transforming the level approach into an elevated expressway. The work involves destruction of the three 1938 causeway overpasses (at Prospect Point, Rose Garden and Georgia St.) that formed part of the original Olmstead-inspired *Parkway* system — the only example of its kind in Western Canada.

9. 100 block West Hastings

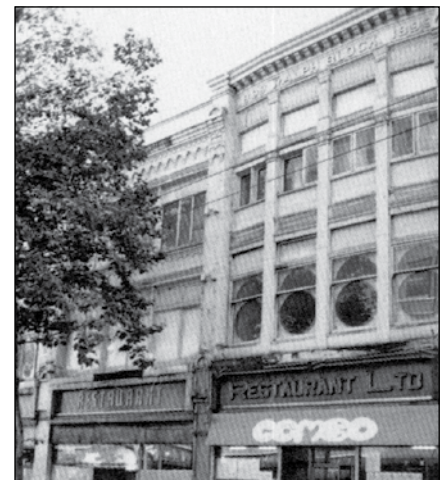


Prospect Point overpass

/ Ralph Block

At the turn of the last century, this block was at the centre of downtown Vancouver, and had some of the city's most sophisticated early commercial buildings. Among the best was the Ralph Block, designed by architects Parr and Fee, the initial frontage completed in 1899. The highly detailed masonry and cast iron facade is unusual for Vancouver. It is listed as a *B* on the Heritage Register but sits vacant and in an advanced state of decay. Across the street is the also-vacant Woodward's building.

10. Ridley House - 1752 W. 5th



100 block West Hastings / Ralph Block

On architectural merit alone, this 1911 Craftsman house should be ranked high on the Vancouver Heritage Register. The last historic house remaining in what is now a light industrial area, this *orphan* was missed for inclusion in the Register, so has no legal protection. The house has recently been sold and will likely be demolished for an industrial development.

Photo credits: Ralph Block, Vancouver General Hospital, Firehall #15 from *Exploring Vancouver* both book editions by Robin Ward, Harold Kalman and Ron Phillips

Photo: Prospect Point overpass Peter Vaisbord
Photo: BC Electric Showroom, Vancouver Public Library

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Our Ten

Dear Members,

March is an important month for Heritage Vancouver. We are launching our first annual *Top Ten Endangered Sites* list, participating in the Second Annual Heritage Fair, and planning events to mark our Tenth anniversary. To celebrate these occasions we are publishing 2,000 copies of this month's newsletter. If you are one of the many people who have picked this newsletter up at the Heritage Fair or at one of our events, we thank you for your interest in Heritage Vancouver.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our current members for their outstanding support over the past ten years and invite new heritage enthusiasts to join our organization during this, the year of our tenth anniversary. It is only with your continued support that we can hope to save *Our Ten Endangered Sites* and raise the profile of heritage issues in our community.

Janet Leduc
President, Heritage Vancouver

Saturday, March 17th, at 1:30pm
Romancing the Stone

Join our experts as they explore the world of jade. Known as The Stone of Heaven, it has been carved for tools and beautiful intricate works of art since Neolithic times. Bring a jade object or specimen and have our experts help to determine your object's age and origin and enhance your general appreciation of it. The afternoon includes a tour of the Museum's international travelling exhibition, *Jade: The Ultimate Treasure of Ancient China*. Call the Vancouver Museum for information, at 736-4431.

Don't Forget!

March 23rd -25th,

The Heritage Antiques Fair

Seaforth Armoury, 1650 Burrard Street
Friday, March 23rd - Gala Opening Reception
6:00pm- 9:00pm

\$100 limited tickets available-call 685-4888

Saturday & Sunday, March 24th & 25th -
10:00am - 6:00pm

Admission \$10 at door (\$15 for both days)

Check out Heritage Vancouver's Booth: Look for our casino wheel, informative displays and knowledgeable volunteers. Support Heritage Vancouver and join the fun!

There's Still Time

Grab the opportunity to participate at our Heritage Vancouver Booth at the Heritage Fair, March 24th & 25th. This is a chance to meet new people, have some fun, and promote our cause. There are lots of different opportunities to help out and everyone is welcome. Give Art Perret a call at 261-6767 to find out how you can get involved.

Heritage Vancouver
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604.254.9411

Join Heritage Vancouver

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

Charitable donation #891636664RR0001. Membership fees are not tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Individual: \$25

Family: \$30

Donation: \$ _____

Supporting (no newsletter) \$5

Corporate: \$50

Patrons: \$100

YES

I would like to volunteer for Heritage Vancouver

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