

HERITAGE

Vancouver

N e w s l e t t e r



WALK WITH US!

You probably know that walking is one of the best forms of exercise. It can improve circulation, increase bone density, and help reduce stress. But did you know that walking also stimulates the brain? Well, it can if you walk with us on one of our informative and fun tours!

- Expand your knowledge and view of heritage.
- Learn unique and little known facts about our city.
- Meet people who share interests similar to yours.
- Get some fresh air and exercise.
- Our guides are passionate about their subjects and always willing to answer questions.
- Our pace will suit everyone.

So, get off your duff and join us. Call HV at 254-9411 to register for the June and July tours. Check out HV Presents (on the next page) for more details.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery Tour- April 28, 2001

- 1 Lorraine Irving of the BC Genealogical Society explains the meaning of the clasped hands on this 1906 tomb stone. Depending on your point of view, the departed is either saying goodbye to this world or being welcomed to the next.
- 2 The Condren family gravestone is the largest in the cemetery. Our walkers listen intently to Lorraine recounting the tragic story of 18 year old Catherine Askew Condren's murder in 1897.

Mystery Tour- May 22, 2001

- 3 John Atkin, of HV, points at the cornices on this beautiful old brick building at 24 West 4th, a former Salvation Army Industrial workshop. The men worked on the first floor and had small sleeping rooms up above. A plaque on the front, laid by his Worship, Mayor Baxtor, dates the building at 1913.
- 4 This old warehouse serves as a backdrop for John's talk and also for the movie industry, which often films in this unique area just south of the Main St. Skytrain Station.

Reminder

In June and July, HV is offering our fabulous walking tours in place of our Wednesday meetings. In August, look for us at the Pride Parade. Regular monthly meetings will resume in September.

Walk the Heritage

Gateway to Our City

Saturday, June 23rd, 1:30 PM

- meet at King Edward and

Cambie (on the median)

Our town planning commission had the vision, over 70 years ago, to create a beautiful, linear park as a gateway to Vancouver. Join the President of the Cambie Heritage Boulevard Society, Ethel Karmel, as she relates the history of the boulevard and names the trees that grace the median.

Vancouver's Forgotten Treasures

Wednesday, July 18th, 7:30 PM

- meet on the Northeast corner of

Granville & Georgia (in front of the Bay)

Join us on a tour of the 500-600 blocks of Granville and Seymour, which contain some of the oldest buildings in the city, outside of Gastown. See some of Vancouver's most interesting landmarks: the BC Electric Showroom, the London Building, the Yorkshire Trust Building, the Bank of Montreal *temple bank* and more. We'll end the evening with a stop for a pint at one of Vancouver's oldest pubs.

Register for the above walking tours by calling HV at 254-9411. Leave your name, phone number and the name of the tour(s) you want to join.

\$5 members \$10 non-members/per tour



Flader house, 607 West 51st Avenue

Modernism in subdivision suburbia

by *Robert Moffatt*

607, 621, 626, and 638 West 51st Avenue, Vancouver
Various architects 1960-65

As Vancouver boomed through the 1950s, housing developments expanded through the Oakridge area of the city. Vacant scrubland and small farms were replaced by mid-sized bungalows on suburban lots and the sprawling Oakridge Centre. A few forward-looking residents commissioned architect-designed houses, and an interesting cluster of houses by some of Vancouver's key architects of the period surrounds the cul-de-sac ending the 600 block of West 51st Avenue.

Sites at the end of cul-de-sacs were often favoured for Modernist houses in suburban developments. The wedge-shaped lots had minimal front exposure, enhancing privacy to the street, and were wider at the more-private rear. Street traffic was also minimized. But even with these advantages, careful design and sensitive landscaping were needed to create suitable space, light and privacy within the often rather small sites.

At 626 West 51st is Arthur Erickson's Chess house, completed in 1965. An oddly banal two-story elevation finished in white stucco faces the street; only the Japanese-style front entrance with posts of peeled tree trunks hints at anything unusual. At the rear, though, the house opens up with huge skylights illuminat-

ing the interior and multi-level decks extending outwards across the site. High cedar fencing, bamboo and natural West Coast plantings provide screening.

The team of Barry Downs, Richard Archambault and Blair MacDonald designed the Chu house next door at 638 (previously 642) West 51st. The house is the most conservative of the group, based around a standard split-level plan. Wright-influenced detailing like the broad roof overhangs and a massive chimney enliven the façades, while vertical wood fins on the glazed areas and the gently bermed landscaping increase the sense of separation from the street.

Ron Thom was the architect of the Flader house at 607 West 51st and likely of the Cohen house at 621 West 51st. Built in 1960, they illustrate two very different ways of creating privacy on small sites. Thom designed the Flader house in a horseshoe shape, wrapping the low-roofed structure around a rear-facing central courtyard. The broad white stucco and orange brick walls facing the street are blank except for a thin band of clerestory windows under the eaves and a narrow slit window. By contrast, the Cohen house achieves privacy by concealment; its tall two-story profile is nearly hidden behind earthen berms topped with low fences and densely planted with trees and natural vegetation. High-set windows allow sunlight to penetrate the interior.

Heritage Vancouver Updates

811 Columbia St., New Westminster

At our May board meeting, Christopher Bell of the Heritage Preservation Society of New Westminster shared concerns about the proposed development of a casino in New Westminster, which would destroy the Salvation Army building at 811 Columbia Street. Commissioned in 1938 by McLennan, McFeely and Prior Ltd - a hardware company, the building was completed in 1939. Designed by McCarter and Nairne, who also designed the Georgia Medical - Dental building, it is one of the best examples of the firm's later work and foreshadowed their trend to modern-functionalism. HV is offering support and assistance to preserve this building.

Christ Church Cathedral

On May 11, 2001 a group of HV members went on an in-depth tour of Christ Church Cathedral followed by a meeting with the Cathedral's planning team, which is proposing changes to the interior of the Cathedral. The team is seeking a heritage bonus in exchange for designating specific heritage features. HV is in the process of preparing a position paper on the Cathedral. (The paper will be available to members by the end of June).

Burrard Street Bridge

HV was invited by the City of Vancouver to join the False Creek Crossings stakeholder group, set up to ensure a new pedestrian crossing will be sympathetic to the preservation of the Burrard St. Bridge. As a result of the first meeting we will write a letter outlining our position. HV plans to write a paper, monitor the deliberations of the stakeholder group, and attend meetings as required to ensure this important heritage structure is preserved.

Heritage Vancouver Appointments

HV congratulates Sharon Halfnight and Stephen Brouwers, recently appointed by Vancouver City Council to represent us on city heritage committees.

In March, Sharon Halfnight was appointed to the City of Vancouver's Heritage Commission. Sharon, a heritage colourist, co-authored along with Donald Luxton, True Colours, Authentic Heritage Colour & Placement, for the Vancouver Heritage Foundation. Sharon is a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and chair of the *Architects in the Schools* program of the Architectural Association of British Columbia. The commission meets the first and third Mondays of every month and provides advice to Vancouver City Council on the conservation and preservation of heritage buildings, structures and land in Vancouver.

Stephen Brouwers was named to the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee in May. Stephen has been a strong heritage advocate since moving to the Strathcona area seven years ago. His company, Shunt Restorations, has been involved in a number of heritage restorations. He is currently collaborating with other local advocates to better assist the general public in restoring and maintaining historic buildings in the Downtown East Side. The committee meets on a monthly basis as part of the City's development application process, reviewing proposed changes to buildings within the provincially-designated historic area of Chinatown.

Thank you to everyone who responded to last month's survey. Keep your comments and suggestions coming! Send them to: Janet Hansen, Newsletter Co-ordinator c/o Heritage Vancouver, P.O. BOX 3336, Main Post Office, Vancouver, BC V6B 3Y3
Or email Janet directly at j_i_hansen@hotmail.com

Volunteers Needed for Parade

HV is proud to be participating in the Pride Parade for the first time. The parade begins at Denman and Nelson, at Noon on Sunday, August 5, 2001 and winds up with a festival at Sunset Beach. Last year there were 154 entrants and over 110,000 spectators. We hope to raise our public profile as an organisation by joining this community event. It's tons of fun and we're looking for some volunteers.

We need people to march in the parade, carry our banner, hand out HV newsletters and balloons, and set up and staff our booth at the beach (it will be similar to our successful booth at the Heritage Fair). We also need help designing and making costumes. Interested? Call Don Luxton, 688-1216, to find out how you can be part of the fun.

New Heritage Resource!

Maurice Jassak, a local photographer and HV member has put together an impressive new website, www.seevancouverheritage.com. This site includes beautiful pictures of designated buildings on the Vancouver Heritage Registry and approximately 100 structures in Gastown (not confined to designated or registered structures). The purpose of the site is to provide a visual resource for individual use. New sections are in the works, so that heritage imagery from Howe Sound to Hope will be included. Check out heritage related pages at www.seethewestend.com. If you have comments or questions about either site you can contact Maurice at images@infinet.net.

Christ Church Cathedral: Authentic Historic Building Or Tarded-Up Glassy Fake?

Dear Members,

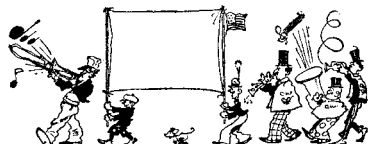
Astonishingly, Vancouver's oldest surviving church, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral has come through over a century of continuous use substantially intact. Despite having been altered a number of times, much of the original fabric remains and the Gothic Revival design intention has been, on the whole, respected.

In a rapidly changing and developing urban core, it remains one of the most significant buildings in the city. Constructed between 1889 and 1895 as a parish church, it was later designated as the cathedral church for the Diocese of New Westminster. During the 1970s, high land values in the downtown core led to the threat of demolition. Luckily, its survival has been ensured by an innovative City Council decision, which allowed for the transfer of density rights to an adjacent site, in exchange for designation of the building.

The question now is, will the Cathedral be conserved as an authentic historic building or a tarded-up glassy fake? It is being threatened by a proposal for substantial changes to both the interior and exterior. Some of these changes will restore original features while others may destroy or diminish the building's historical integrity. The latter can be avoided. The exceptionally sensitive restoration of St. Paul's Anglican Church in the West End, built in 1905, shows that a church can be updated to suit the needs of the parish without sacrificing its historic character. It is still early in the proposal process and HV is determined to play a significant role in ensuring the Cathedral remains an authentically conserved historic building.



Janet Leduc
President, Heritage Vancouver



Volunteers Needed for Parade

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Wednesday, June 13th,

Fire Walk

7:00 PM

Trace the infamous route of the great fire of 1886. Sponsored by the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Museum. Space is limited. Call 734-7368 for details and to register.

Tours of the Hotel Vancouver

Thursday, June 21st,

Tours on the half-hour,

from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

These tours of the hotel mark the launch a new book and film by Lynx Images, *Castles of the North*. The book chronicles grand hotels across Canada. This landmark has evolved from a glorified farmhouse in 1888, to the majestic hotel that is today. **FREE!**

Call 443-1816 to register.

Change of Date for this Special Event!

Don't Miss Out.

NOW - Thursday, June 21st

Wine & Cheese Reception

7:00pm

Vancouver City Councillor Lynne Kennedy has generously offered to host this reception for Heritage Vancouver at her home in the West End. Councillor Kennedy is a past-Chair of the Heritage Commission and will discuss *the evolution of heritage in Vancouver over the past decade*, followed by a dialogue on directions for heritage in the next decade. Tickets \$25

Call HV President, Janet Leduc at 331-8430 or e-mail her at kinexus@telus.net, for reservations and directions.

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