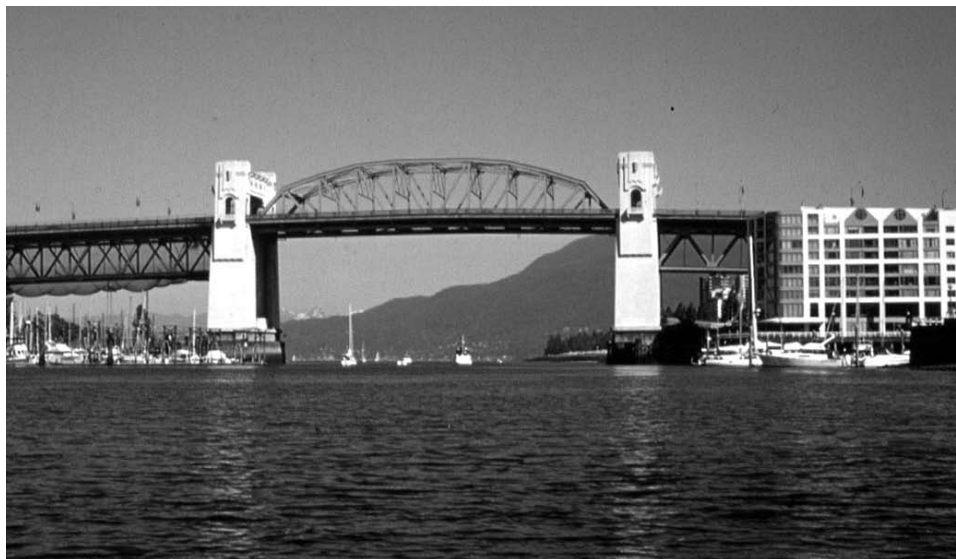


# HERITAGE Vancouver N e w s l e t t e r



## TOP TEN ENDANGERED SITES

Once again, Heritage Vancouver presents its Top Ten Endangered Sites. This is our third annual list. As this year's Heritage Week theme is public places, you'll notice that many selections include public buildings, structures, and spaces. You'll also notice that quite a few sites from last year's list are still endangered. In our March newsletter, we'll feature updates on what has happened to sites from 2002 not on this year's list. Stay tuned!

### 1. Burrard Bridge

Completed in 1932 to provide a high-level crossing to the western neighbourhoods, the bridge is a triumph of civic architecture and a key gateway structure. Architects Sharp and Thompson, conscious of the bridge's ceremonial *gateway* function, embellished the utilitarian steel superstructure with imposing concrete towers, torch-like entrance-pylons, and art deco sculptural details. Unifying the parts are heavy concrete railings, originally topped by decorative street lamps. To facilitate cyclist and pedestrian use, the City

is considering demolition of the concrete railings and the addition of *outrigger* sidewalks. Without the original railings, the bridge will lose its edges, and its architectural features will be isolated. The proposed outrigger structures will radically alter the external appearance of this landmark structure. A coalition of stakeholders, including Heritage Vancouver, have written the new Council stating that the proposals are unacceptable—from both a transportation and heritage perspective. The coalition is asking Council to instead consider dedicating the two outer traffic lanes to non-motorized traffic, a solution that would involve little alteration to the Bridge itself.

### 2. First Shaughnessy District

Vancouver's only residential heritage character area is fast losing its prime heritage stock of pre 1940's houses. A total of 44 *A* and *B* listed houses have been lost since the First Shaughnessy Official Development Plan was instituted in

see page two **Top Ten**

**HERITAGE**  
**Vancouver**  
**PRESENTS**

**Bryan Adams Warehouse Studios Tours**  
**100 Powell Street, Gastown**  
**Sunday, February 16, 10:00 - 11:00 AM**  
**Saturday, February 22, 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

Warehouse Studios is housed in a rehabilitated Gastown heritage building. There are only 30 spaces in each tour, so make a reservation on our hotline as soon as you can, 604.254.9411

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**from cover Top Ten**

1982 to preserve and protect the pre-1940 heritage character of the neighbourhood. The pace has accelerated in recent years, with grand old homes being replaced at a rate of 4-6 houses per year. The design guidelines were written in 1982 and offer the possibility of infill and conversion of large character homes into flats. Unfortunately, the guidelines, which have never been reviewed, did not anticipate that this area would return to its original prominence as a centre for luxury single-family homes. Land values and the resulting development pressure encourage owners to tear down original homes so as to achieve the maximum square footage allowable for the generous lots. First Shaughnessy has no cap on square footage (unlike Southlands with a cap of 9,000 square feet) and substantial old homes are being replaced with new houses of up to 23,000 square feet. Current bylaws ensure that these new homes are shorter in overall height than the originals, with larger footprints. This means that the quality and quantity of



Threatened Shaughnessy house

romantic estate-like landscaping that old Shaughnessy is also known for is being destroyed at the same rate as the houses.

Seventy-two homes in First Shaughnessy are on the Vancouver Heritage Register, which means that nearly 280 pre-1940 character homes are left without any form of recognition or protection. Aggressive developers and architects are advising clients that any house can be demolished in First Shaughnessy, as long as they are willing to maneuver their way through the city's Planning Department and the Advisory Design Panel. These two bodies have no power to prevent the demolition of heritage buildings and more importantly, they have no convincing incentives for retention to offer to the owners of these homes. One has only to look at the William Astley House at 3638 Osler St. to see a first rate craftsman house bracketed by bloated, historically inaccurate McMansions to understand the potential threat that this trend poses to this grand old neighbourhood.

*More on Shaughnessy next month.*



Canterbury House

**3. Canterbury House**  
**(Vancouver School of Theology**  
**6090 Chancellor Blvd.)**

One of Vancouver's finest examples of the English Arts and Crafts movement, this *Voyseyesque* design was built for the Anglican Theological College in 1927, two years after development of the UBC Point Grey campus. The building's landscaped, informal profile projects a sensibility

very different from the massive *collegiate gothic* Iona Building commenced the same year (the latter perhaps better-known because of its granite façade and landmark tower). The VST grounds contain a remarkable collection of architecture, both period and modern, but all or some are threatened by School of Theology redevelopment plans.

**4. Hastings Street (Cambie to Main), including Pantages Theatre, Ralph Block, Woodward's**

Once the commercial heart of Vancouver, East Hastings Street between Cambie and Main is the city's best surviving turn-of-the-century streetscape. However, the buildings are empty, with little or no maintenance, and demolition has left ugly gaps along the street. Hastings Street needs help before all of it is lost to the wrecking ball. Among its treasures, behind a modest brick facade at 152 East Hastings, is the oldest remaining *Pantages Theatre* in North America. Built in 1907 by Alexander Pantages as part of his emerging vaudeville and movie empire, this theatre is one of the oldest purpose-built vaudeville interiors in Canada. The theatre has been dark for over a decade and its future is still uncertain. Farther west, in the 100 block of West Hastings, is the rotting hulk of the *Ralph Block*, an important cast iron facade designed by prominent architects Parr and Fee (1899) and a B on the City's Heritage Register. The 100 block, anchored by the historic *Woodward's* building and devastated by the store's closure in 1993, is now in danger of demolition by neglect. The former department store has suffered from ten years of failed schemes, both private and public, culminating in calls for its demolition. The good news is that the current City Council has purchased Woodward's from the Province with the intention that the landmark building be rehabilitated for needed housing, and for the commercial and institutional activities needed to jump-start the area's economic revitalization.



Beatty Street Drill Hall

**5. Beatty St. Drill Hall (620 Beatty) / Bessborough Armoury (2025 W. 11th Ave. near Arbutus)**

The Beatty St. Drill Hall, built 1899-1901 as the headquarters of the BC Regiment, Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, is Vancouver's oldest surviving drill hall. The structure, with its massive brick walls, crenellated turrets and original interiors is an A-listed heritage building. The Bessborough Armoury, a B-listed heritage site, was constructed 1931-33, and officially opened by the Earl of Bessborough in 1934. This later structure is re-inforced concrete rather than brick, and features cast Art Deco motifs. Both the Beatty Street and Bessborough facilities are threatened by Federal plans to consolidate military reserve operations in new utilitarian structures adjacent to the Seaforth Armoury at 1st and Burrard. Both buildings retain their historic military reserve functions. Maintaining the original function is crucial not only to their historic significance but ultimately to their survival—otherwise at risk to abandonment, decay, demolition, or at best conversion.

**6. Beatty Street Escarpment/ Viaduct Park/ CPR Tunnel Portal**

The *Escarpment* below Beatty Street is among the few remaining natural features in the downtown and provides a commanding site for the historic Beatty Street Drill Hall. Set into the base of the cliff is a concrete *Art Deco Portal* marking the eastern entrance for old *CPR Dunsmuir Tunnel*. The portal, now sealed, is an important monument to Vancouver's early railway history. South of the Drill Hall, marking the

western approach to the original 1915 Georgia Viaduct, is a commemorative plaza called *Viaduct Park*. The park, created in 1970 after the old Viaduct was demolished, incorporates the original concrete railings and street lamps. Under the proposed rezoning (to permit a Costco store and residential towers), the Beatty Street grade would be extended outward in a plaza structure, *burying* the escarpment, and marooning the Drill Hall on a flat surface. The escarpment would become a concrete retaining wall for a parkade, the tunnel portal would be demolished, and Viaduct Park would be obliterated.

**7. Giant Dipper Roller Coaster (PNE Playland)**

Playland's Giant Dipper Roller Coaster is known across North America as one of the best coaster rides going, but if the PNE becomes history the Coaster's future is bleak. Landscape architects have suggested that it be broken up and used as garden *sculpture* in a re-designed Hastings Park. This rare wooden coaster deserves better—much better. The Giant Dipper is constructed entirely of specially treated fireproof woods and was built from scratch on the PNE Grounds. It's 75 feet high at its tallest point, and in 1958, the year of its construction, it was one of the two highest roller coasters in North America. Walker LeRoy, of Oaks Park, Oregon, oversaw construction using the plan created by Carl Phare, the world's foremost roller coaster builder and designer. This was the last coaster that Carl Phare designed and he said, "*I'm really proud of this ride, I know I'll never build another so I put everything I have learned over the past 56 years into this one. There'll never be another one as good*". Suggestions that the PNE (or annual fair) might continue at Hastings Park in temporary structures could bode well for the Coaster if the ride were allowed to stay as the Fair's only permanent structure. Otherwise, its only hope is another municipality willing to adopt.

**8. Terminus Hotel (30 Water Street, Gastown)**

Constructed on Water Street just after the Great Fire in 1886, the Terminus Hotel is a Gastown landmark and one of the oldest buildings in the city. In

March 1998, a tragic fire destroyed all but the brick, bay-windowed facade, now propped up by a steel frame in the hope that the owners might try to save the facade as part of a new building. Four years have passed, and the burned-out hulk continues to deteriorate, its prospects weakened by low demand for upper floor uses in Gastown. Exposure to the elements will soon complete what the fire left unfinished. However, with approval of the new Gastown heritage incentives, the economics of development have suddenly improved, and with it renewed interest in Gastown investment. (The first heritage project to utilize the new incentives—and a reported market success—are the recently completed loft residences across the street at 65 Water St.) City staff should be doing their utmost to help the owner utilize the new incentives to save this A-listed site.

**9. 900-1000 Block Main Street**

When Westminster Avenue (Main St.) and Westminster Road (Kingsway) provided the primary connection to New Westminster and the US border, hotels and commercial establishments stretched south along the thoroughfare. An isolated vestige of early development still exists south of the Georgia Viaduct in the 900-1000 blocks, featuring everything from miraculously intact wooden *boomtown* structures, to substantial brick and masonry buildings. The east side of Main has unique double-sided buildings designed to front both Main and Station Streets. Recently, a large chunk of the 1000 block was flattened, and the rest is ripe for the wreckers ball. Without recognition, the street will disappear under the approaching wave of False Creek condo towers. Inexplicably, neither the skinny *BC Electric Railway Men's Quarters* (1913) at 901 Main, nor the *Cobalt* (Royal George) *Hotel* (1911) at 917 Main with its passage for carriages, nor the *Station Hotel* (1911) at 1012 Main are on the Heritage Register, so these and several others are extremely vulnerable. Listed buildings include

continued on back page **Top Ten**

## WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Heritage Vancouver Watchdogs Hard at Work

Dear Members,

This month Heritage Vancouver once again is publishing the definitive listing of at risk structures in our city. Now an annual listing, the Top 10 list will help you know what is happening in Vancouver's heritage scene and what Heritage Vancouver will be focusing on over the next year.

It is no coincidence that the Top 10 list comes to you in February. Heritage week, a week in which we celebrate the heritage of our province, is held every year at this time. This year's theme is the heritage of public buildings and spaces. Heritage week also allows us to show you some of the lesser-seen heritage sites in Vancouver. This year, Heritage Vancouver is presenting two tours of Warehouse Studios — Bryan Adam's recording studio, housed in a rehabilitated Gastown heritage building. Tours are from 10 am to 11 am on February 16th and 22nd. There are only 30 spaces in each tour, so make a reservation on our hotline as soon as you can.

Finally, many of you came to our fantastic Tiki evening at the Waldorf Hotel. It was Heritage Vancouver's best attended event to date and everyone had a great time, proving once again that heritage need not be boring. Thank you to the Waldorf Hotel and everyone who was involved. Watch next month's newsletter for a full review of the event.



Scott Barrett:  
President, Heritage Vancouver

## Top Ten

the Ivanhoe (VanDecar) Hotel (1907); Main Sheet Works, with its detailed 1907 wooden façade at 1024 Main; and the abandoned former Bank of Montreal (1929) at 906 Main, all B-listed. It's almost too good to be true, but a current plan for the former bank proposes its complete restoration for retail/commercial use. Could this signal renaissance for Main Street's historic frontages? Hopefully it's not too late.

### 10. Jericho Beach Marginal Wharf

One of the last vestiges of the Jericho Seaplane Base, and a hive of activity during WWII. In 1976, shortly after transfer to the City, the base briefly sprung to life as *Habitat Forum*, with railings for the wharf provided by the 1938 guard rails from the Lions Gate Bridge, whose north deck had recently been replaced. The Park Board, which has provided little or no maintenance, wants to spend money to demolish rather than rehabilitate the Wharf.

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Ralph Block  
Beatty Street Drill Hall  
Canterbury House

Burrard Bridge / D. Luxton

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