

Heritage BC Quarterly



THE AUTHOR'S HERITAGE HOME IN VICTORIA, HERITAGE BC PHOTO



Heritage Goes Green

Upgrading Windows in Heritage Buildings

You Can Conserve Energy & Heritage at the Same Time

JENNIFER IREDALE, SENIOR CURATOR, BC HERITAGE BRANCH

Climate change action is something everyone is concerned with today. The BC government has pledged to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. A new BC Green Building Code is coming that will require higher energy efficiency standards for both new construction and rehabilitation projects. Can heritage buildings measure up to these new demands without sacrificing the very qualities that we value in them?

Many energy upgrades (such as installing energy star appliances) do no harm to vintage buildings. Some, however, such as window replacement, can have a significant negative impact:

“We tend to take windows for granted. Yet we recognize that heritage buildings whose windows have been replaced have been diminished. The depth and thickness of frames and sills, the width and visual weight of sash components, the materials, the colour and the pattern of light reflecting off the glass—all complement and elaborate the architectural style, texture and age of a building. Much of this character is lost when windows are replaced with modern versions that lack these features.” - *Craig Sims and Andrew Powter: Repair or Replace: Windows in Historic Buildings - Arriving at a Sustainable Solution*

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People in the News

Garry Anderson Awarded the Order of Canada

Garry Anderson was named a Member of the Order of Canada in the year-end announcement of honours by the Governor General. Garry has been recognized “for his contributions to heritage conservation, notably as the driving force behind the creation of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel and the Cranbrook Archives, Museum and Landmark Foundation.”

Garry has been recognized as a heritage leader in B.C. He is known for his work with the BC Museums Association, the BC Heritage Trust, the Community Pride Program, and many other initiatives. In 2001, he received the British Columbia Heritage Award.

But Garry is best known as the founder of the CAMAL Foundation, and the man behind the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel. With vision, ingenuity, and a dauntless attitude, Garry has for over 30 years led the museum project that has created an institution of national stature in the southeastern corner of our province. There is nothing else quite like it anywhere in Canada, and the museum bears its national designation quite rightly and proudly. The CMRT has twice won the Heritage Canada Achievement Award, most recently in 2007 for the Alexandria Hall.



GARRY ANDERSON, PHOTO COURTESY GARRY ANDERSON

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This recognition is a credit to Garry and the entire heritage and museum community in B.C. Well done.

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Heritage Goes Green

PROJECTS THAT PULL HERITAGE REVITALIZATION & SUSTAINABILITY TOGETHER

JENNIFER IREDALE, SENIOR CURATOR, BC HERITAGE BRANCH

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Five, 73-91 East 27th Avenue, Vancouver - These five houses all located on a single 50 foot lot were built in 1912 and are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. Their rehabilitation included an “on-demand” in-floor heating system (EnerGuide 82 rated) that is anticipated to reduce green house gas emissions by 12 tonnes per home per year. Also includes healthy interior finishes and extensive use of FSC sustainably harvested woods.

The Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at UBC - commonly known as the Main Library, is currently under construction. The heritage core of the library is being preserved, and the new portion of the building will feature a green system for air conditioning.

The Cornerstone Building, Fernwood & Gladstone - a two-storey, 1909 brick heritage building that has recently been rehabilitated by the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group. The heat for the building is now supplied via geothermal units. Water use is minimized through a number of conserving fixtures and a recycling and composting plan is in place for residents. The Cornerstone has been rehabilitated with low cost housing on the upper floors and commercial on the main floor. Original plate glass windows and doors are retained on the ground level to retain the heritage character of the building.

Mountain Equipment Co-op, Government and Fisgard - The 15,000 square foot renovation project was developed with LEED Commercial Interior compliance in mind. An air-to-air heat pump system combined with other efficiency measures resulted in a 35 per cent reduction in energy consumption. Dual flush toilets supplied by a stormwater catchment system along with low-flow fixtures reduced water consumption by 48 per cent. Interior finishes were minimized. It is anticipated that the project will achieve a LEED Silver rating.

Send us your stories on heritage conservation & sustainability: Jennifer.Iredale@gov.bc.ca

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The Hallmark Society awarded the Fernwood NRG (Victoria) the President’s Award 2007 “for the show-stopping rehabilitation of the Cornerstone Building in the heart of Fernwood’s commercial area.”

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THE CORNERSTONE BUILDING
HERITAGE BC PHOTO





WORK UNDERWAY AT AINSWORTH CEMETERY
PHOTO COURTESY COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST

Trust Introduces New Heritage Funding Program to Southeast BC

LYNDA LAFLEUR, COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST

The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) was established in 1995 and continues to encourage growth and self-sufficiency within the southeast section of British Columbia – the region most affected by the Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the United States. The region’s boundaries are generally defined by those watersheds which flow into the Columbia River within Canada.

CBT uses the returns from its investments to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to the people of the Canadian portion of the Columbia Basin region by funding and undertaking a wide range of programs and initiatives.

CBT supports the efforts by the people of the Basin to create a legacy of social, economic and environmental well-being and to create greater self-sufficiency for present and future generations. CBT achieves these goals through collaborative relationships and partnerships with stakeholders.

In the area of arts, culture and heritage, a relationship was forged with Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance (CKCA) ten years ago. Since that time, over \$1.9 million dollars has been delivered to a variety of programs in this sector, with CKCA serving as a delivery partner for CBT.

In January of 2007, the Heritage Federation of southeastern B.C. approached CBT with a request for additional funds designated for heritage-specific initiatives. Staff reviewed the request and evaluated the need for such funds. It was decided that \$110,000 be added to the budget administered by the CKCA for the sole purpose of heritage projects.

Then the challenge began!

First, the Heritage Federation met with CBT staff to discuss any concerns or issues relating to the funding and administration. Similarly CBT met with the CKCA to ensure they had the capacity and desire to add to their workload.

The first decision was that the CKCA would accept the administrative duties with the second being that two members from the heritage sector would be added to the CKCA selection committee.

CKCA and the Heritage Federation met many times to determine the areas of need in the heritage sector. Specific areas of need were identified that, unfortunately, would not work because of scheduling conflicts. The group decided that in order to promote the funds and to ensure the likelihood of success, the first year of projects would be attached to Heritage Week, February 18-24 2008.

This became a “pilot project” and it was advertised and promoted with great excitement. The CKCA and CBT staff was kept busy with phone calls and emails from museums, archives and other heritage-focused organizations throughout the Basin.

In October, the CKCA and CBT staff met to adjudicate the projects. A sampling of successful proponents includes: Historic Ainsworth Cemetery Board, Kootenay Doukhobor Historical Society, Castlegar and District Heritage Society, Cranbrook Archives, Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History, Creston Main Street Grain Elevator Society, Lower Kootenay Indian Band, Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society, Rossland Historical Museum and Trail Historical Society. In total, 48 projects were approved and the program was oversubscribed by \$68,000!

Based on the success of the trial program, the CBT has approved an expanded budget of \$200,000 this year exclusively for heritage projects.



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Heritage Legacy Fund Assists Projects Across BC

RICK GOODACRE

The third anniversary of the launch of the Heritage Legacy Fund (HLF) is coming up in March. In less than three years, the new funding program has already helped dozens of projects across B.C. achieve their goals.

A joint initiative of Heritage BC and The Land Conservancy, HLF was endowed with \$5 million by the provincial government to enable new programs that would support the conservation of historic places and the building of awareness. The fund, which by 2007 had grown to \$6 million, soon created new funding programs available to non-profit organizations and local governments.

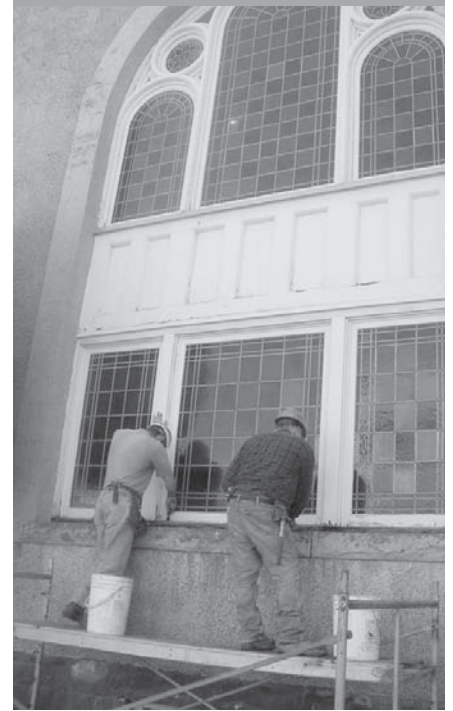
Offering funds on a fifty-fifty matching basis, the Heritage Conservation program has now provided grants to 37 projects to repair, maintain, rehabilitate and restore historic structures. The Heritage Awareness program has awarded another 11 grants. Together, the two programs have provided \$634,000 in grants, or an average of over \$13,000 per project, distributed to 37 communities.

Some projects have been quite modest in scope. With an upper limit of \$25,000, our conservation grants work particularly well in smaller communities where a few thousand dollars can make all the difference, and even determine whether a project goes ahead or not. But the HLF has also invested in some multi-million dollar projects, directing funds to specific elements to ensure high standards of conservation.

But the HLF is about more than money. Before the end of year three we expect to have supported and developed relationships with more 50 non-profit societies, heritage organizations, community groups and local governments. Some of these are members of Heritage BC, but many are not. The HLF is another way to build connections and become a part of what communities around the province are doing, and to support what they care about. We also use our funding role to provide information about good practices, and set the bar a little higher.

In 2008 we will continue to develop the grants programs, anticipating that we will provide on the order of a quarter of a million dollars to another 20 projects are so. We are also going to make a push to get the word out about the HLF, to make sure that more people know about this great project. Closely related to this objective, we will also begin in earnest a development program to build the fund itself and ensure an even stronger and better future.

RICK GOODACRE IS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE HERITAGE LEGACY FUND OF BC SOCIETY.



WINDOW REPAIR AT ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN, NANAIMO, HERITAGE BC PHOTO



JONATHAN YARDLEY, MADELEINE HARDIN AND DON TONSAKER AT CLAYBURN SCHOOL, HERITAGE BC PHOTO

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NORTH VANCOUVER WATERFRONT
PHOTO: GORDON HARTLEY

North Vancouver to Demolish Designated Buildings

On January 21, North Vancouver City Council voted five to two in favour of a bylaw that will de-designate three city-owned industrial heritage buildings to allow their demolition. The buildings in question, in the waterfront industrial site known as the Burrard Shipyards, date back as early as 1911. The site was featured in the program and tours of the 2007 Heritage BC conference.

The extraordinary decision, probably unprecedented in B.C., is the result of a conceptual plan for a National Maritime Centre (NMC) presented to Council last December. Seeking substantial funding from senior governments, the City has been vigorously pursuing the NMC opportunity for some time. The parcels on which the doomed heritage buildings stand were recently acquired as the site for the proposed centre, which would be a multiple-purpose development, including a museum to tell the story of the City's maritime and shipbuilding heritage.

The shipyards story began in 1906 when the Wallace family moved its business from False Creek to the north shore of Burrard Inlet. The history of the business, which changed hands and names over the years, extended over most of twentieth century. The high point came during WWII when a workforce of over 13,000 turned out 109 Victory ships, the most of any shipyard in the nation. This, and the rest of the shipyard's eventful history, was detailed in an application by the City in 2001 for National Historic Site status, which will now presumably be denied.



While there have been a few isolated cases of individual buildings being de-designated in B.C. before, we know of no other where a grouping like this has had legal protection removed to permit demolition. A major piece of our industrial heritage will now be lost.



After the shipyards wound down in the 1990's, the City began work on a bold new plan for the rough-and-ready industrial site. The vision included over one million square feet of commercial, institutional and residential development with public amenities and a strong heritage component. In 2001 the City passed a bylaw designating eight buildings and two wharf structures from a list of more than 20 which had been inventoried. These eight were deemed to be the minimum necessary to retain the historic industrial character and establish a heritage precinct. Anticipating that most of the buildings would be rehabilitated through private development, a land title covenant was also drafted to set guidelines and minimum expectations for the proper treatment of the buildings.

With development under way, the City launched its drive for the National Maritime Centre, a centerpiece for the heritage precinct.

It was the NMC concept that brought the question of reuse and rehabilitation of the city-owned designated buildings to a head. The two parcels of land which the City acquired include four of the eight designated buildings. Under the NMC concept plan, the largest of these will be dismantled and then reassembled, in part, integrated into the NMC complex. But the three buildings on the adjacent parcel – a machine shop and a blacksmith shop linked by the smaller, third structure – were deemed by the NMC project to offer little potential and to be too costly to rehabilitate. The project also told Council in December that necessary site remediation would run to millions of dollars before the project could proceed. But if the three buildings were demolished, the site could be prepared through a technique called "dynamic compaction" which would save millions. The result has been Council's decision to demolish the very buildings which had been designated six years before to ensure the conservation of North Vancouver's, and Canada's, ship building heritage.

A bylaw to amend the earlier designation bylaw was prepared. A staff report to Council on December 17 pointed out that permitting demolition without an approved plan for new construction was a violation of the City's Heritage Procedures Bylaw. Nonetheless, the NMC project told Council that the window of opportunity to use dynamic compaction is very small – there was no time to wait until full plans for the NMC had been developed and approved. Council would also be proceeding contrary to the covenant established to guide the rehabilitation of these buildings, staff reported.

...continues on page 11

Victoria Store Renovation on Hold

Someone blew the whistle on a major renovation to the interior of an historic shop in Victoria just days before work was to proceed. Roger's Chocolates at 913 Government Street is a local fixture, a big hit with tourists, and a National Historic Site. The company was about to begin a quarter of a million dollar expansion and upgrade when the City realized the possible impacts of their plans on the remarkably intact 90-year-old shop interior.

While the store is in the Old Town district, and therefore under heritage protection, the City's program has no oversight of interiors unless specifically designated, and this one is not. The project did not therefore require a Heritage Alteration Permit, just a building permit, which the City had issued without any fuss. Rogers was legally "good to go".

But then things quickly changed. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the project architect, Alan Lowe, is also the mayor. Now that the City is getting involved, Mr. Lowe has stepped back.

The City quickly contacted Rogers and asked for a meeting. The company and city staff sat down to review the situation, with representatives from the provincial and federal government (Parks Canada) sitting in, the latter because of the National Historic Site (NHS) status. Shortly after, Council held an in camera meeting where they reviewed the City's options.

While the NHS status says a great deal about the significance of the Rogers store, it has no direct effect in terms of regulation. The designation is commemorative only; the federal government has and seeks no powers to control future changes. There is, nonetheless, a handsome NHS plaque imbedded in the sidewalk directly outside the store entrance, specifically naming the shop interior as having special interest, and Rogers is evidently proud of their heritage credentials.

An essential issue here, from a heritage resource management point of view, is the fact that the project concerns just the interior. Interiors of heritage buildings, designated or otherwise, are of course altered all the time. Interiors are not covered by most heritage designations (although this seems to be changing), and considerable latitude is routinely given to interior rehabilitation, making allowances for change of use, code-based upgrades, new services, and a host of other factors. But this interior clearly is not routine.

Charles Rogers began his confectionary business in 1885. The company is now owned by a group of shareholders, and there are several retail outlets, but the museum-quality Government Street shop remains the flagship store. The Queen Anne style interior with a variety of dark woods, tiled floor, stained glass, art nouveau fittings, and glass-topped display cases stuffed with beautiful arrays of the company's trademark "Victoria Creams" and other delectables is a unique shopping experience probably unequaled anywhere else in the country, certainly in B.C.

But the floor space is small, less than 1,000 square feet, for this popular outlet. The company wants to push the retail area into the back of the building, and upgrade the second floor administrative area at the same time.

At the time of writing, the City and Rogers continue to discuss the situation, looking for a mutually acceptable way forward. The alternative would be a showdown, which probably neither party wants. Meanwhile, the shop has been re-opened for business, and Rogers has bought another vintage Government Street retail outlet in a prominent heritage building, their third within a couple of blocks.

After the dust has settled, Victoria may be motivated to give some thought to other known but unregulated historic interiors, something other communities may wish to consider as well.



HERITAGE BC PHOTOS

Heritage Week 2008: Taking Care of Business

Mouat's Trading Company, Salt Spring Island: Heritage Asset or Just Another Business?

LYNN SMITH



Originally, the store supplied farmsteaders with the products they needed... but, as the economy and demographic of the island changed, so did the inventory. Today, they are landlords to 32 other businesses, including Thrifty Foods and Sears, and are part owners in four restaurants.

Determining significance in the world of heritage can be a complex and, sometimes, perplexing task. It is often difficult to define those elements that make a certain building, area or monument of value to us, but when the subject of concern is cultural and, therefore, abstract, the matter takes on an emotional overlay that can be fraught with complications.

Recently, the Times Colonist newspaper reported on a living, vital entity that is not only cultural but also a thriving business. Mouat's Trading Company has just celebrated their 100th anniversary on Salt Spring Island and, it would seem, the heritage value of this Salt Spring cornerstone is not at issue.

The original Mouat's Store opened in Ganges in 1907 when Jane Mouat and her son, Gilbert, purchased a previously existing store. By 1911 a new building was under construction and the elder brother, William, had joined the firm, followed a few years later by Gavin, the youngest Mouat. This tradition of keeping the business in the family continues today as the running of the operation has passed from children to grandchildren and now on to great-grandchildren and their families.

Originally, the store supplied farmsteaders with the products they needed such as groceries, meats, livestock feed, lumber, dry goods and petroleum products but, as the economy and demographic of the island changed, so did the inventory. In 1912, they became a Ford dealer and for 30 years sold cars, including the Model T. Today, they are landlords to 32 other businesses, including Thrifty Foods and Sears, and are part owners in four restaurants. Their Mouat's Clothing Co. has garnered patronage from local residents and Vancouver Islanders as well tourists from as far away as North Carolina. Rather than supplying the utilitarian in fashion, they now appeal to a more up-scale but eclectic market. They continue to supply hardware to the community through their Home Hardware franchise.

So, beside the fact that they have survived 100 years, you may ask, why should we think of Mouat's as valuable within the context of the heritage community? Well, their history is intricately enmeshed with that of Salt Spring Island. They have registered births and deaths, sold coffins and picked up bodies, lobbied to save land from deforestation and fought for sewage and ferry service. They have reclaimed land for a town center parking lot and anchored the business community in Ganges with the services they provide. They have participated in the debate over incorporation and the controversy of establishing the location of the town center. They continue to provide a free meeting room for the community and to support local arts, sports events and social gatherings.

Mouat's have a well-developed sense of their own history as well as that of Salt Spring Island. In their stores they display an informal "Museum of History" with photos, memorabilia and artifacts from the past century on the island. Some would say that Mouat's have had an undue influence on the development of Salt Spring, and Ganges in particular; others that they have been given special consideration at times because of their position in the community. What cannot be argued, however, is that Mouat's Trading Co. and all of its previous incarnations are an intricate part of the heritage of Salt Spring Island. The business, the families that run it, the people who work for it and the community who uses its services are inextricably interwoven into the place that is today's Ganges. They embody Salt Spring Island heritage past and present as they continue to project an influence into the future.

BELOW, TOP: PHOTO JONATHAN YARDLEY
BELOW, BOTTOM: MOUAT'S IN THE 1920'S
PHOTO SALT SPRING ISLAND ARCHIVES



General Store, Ganges, B. C.



Heritage Week 2008: Taking Care of Business

Swinging Girl to Swing Again

PAMELA MADOFF

A landmark neon sign that has long graced the 4100 block of East Hastings Street in Burnaby is proposed to rise again. An agreement between the City, the retiring business owners, the sign company and the Height's Merchants' Association will see the iconic sign, which has identified Helen's Children's Wear for over 50 years, restored and retained as a heritage landmark. Due to the sale of the commercial property the sign will be installed in an adjacent public location.

Helen and Elgin Arnold purchased the property in 1955. Mrs. Arnold enlisted the assistance of her friend, Mr. James Wallace, owner of Vancouver's Wallace Neon Company, to build and install a sign for her business. Mr. Reeve, a designer with the firm, conceived and created the neon sign. The sign was listed on Burnaby's Heritage Registry Inventory in 1988 and, upon being relocated, will be considered by Council for heritage designation.

That this much-loved community landmark has survived at all is miraculous in that this type of signage was vilified in the 1950s as a "public enemy" by Vancouver City Councillor Warnett Kennedy who called upon the public to become "nuisances on the subject of (its) ugliness". This political campaign (there is no record of a surge of public outcry) resulted in bylaws that restricted any overhanging street signs in Vancouver from including neon. Business owners could not even install a strip of neon in their shop windows. It was not until the 1980s that Vancouver reversed its anti-neon ordinances.

Vancouver was once known as the Neon Capital of Canada. The buildings on Granville Street, Hastings Street and Chinatown, in particular, became the background canvases for the artists who worked for the sign companies. Rain-soaked streets reflected the fire and flash of neon and created a vibrant and exciting environment for shoppers and theatre-goers. Streets that were once awash in light went dark upon the implementation of the new sign bylaw.

The magic and artistry involved in creating neon signs has once again become appreciated and cities such as Vancouver, Los Angeles and Philadelphia have galleries that are devoted to collections of neon signs. In addition, CityWalk, a vibrant shopping area in Los Angeles, showcases a collection of historic signs that recall the glamour and excitement of the heydays of neon.

Benjamin Franklin once stated that "from electric fire spirits may be kindled" and nowhere can this be better evidenced than in the artistry associated with the alchemy of neon signage. The atoms of the inert gases of neon, argon, xenon, krypton and helium are "tickled" with an electrical charge that creates a unique range of colour and quality of light that current technology, such as LED, cannot compete with.

Neon signage in the Vancouver area has been celebrated in the excellent documentary film "Glowing in the Dark" featuring previous Heritage BC Board member, John Atkin, the leading expert on the history of neon in Vancouver. The book "Neon Eulogy" by Keith McKellar (the gifted artist better known as Laughing Hand) celebrates the social history and neon signage of Vancouver's vintage cafes and theatres in both text and illustration.

PAMELA MADOFF IS A VICTORIA WRITER, HERITAGE ADVOCATE AND NEON ENTHUSIAST. SHE IS A MEMBER OF VICTORIA CITY COUNCIL AND THE BC GOVERNOR FOR THE HERITAGE CANADA FOUNDATION.

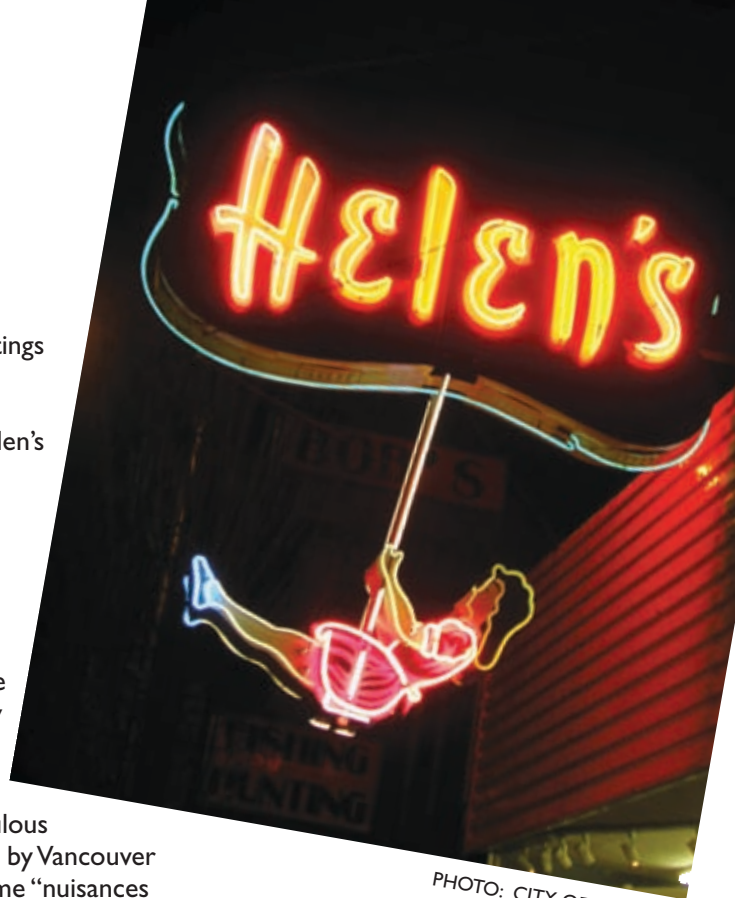


PHOTO: CITY OF BURNABY



Vancouver was once known as the Neon Capital of Canada. Rain-soaked streets reflected the fire and flash of neon and created a vibrant and exciting environment for shoppers and theatre-goers.



Heritage Conservation or Architectural Restoration?

BY ALASTAIR KERR, BC HERITAGE BRANCH

Heritage conservation is a broad social endeavour which encompasses the repair and rehabilitation of historic buildings and structures, downtown and main street socio-economic revitalization, social connections to place, urban design, environmental sustainability, cultural tourism and yes, architectural restoration as a part of the mix. The problem with heritage conservation in British Columbia, and for much of Canada for that matter, is the prevailing belief that heritage conservation equals architectural restoration, not the conservation of what exists, but a recreation of the past as simulacrum.

Let's think about this for a bit. In architectural restoration the values of architectural history trump all others. Issues of architectural style matter most. Conservation becomes an exercise of returning a building back, as closely as possible, to its original appearance – its architectural style. An accurate facsimile becomes more important than inherited, historic fabric.

Sure, in many cases the restored buildings do look attractive and a number of architectural restorations are valid. But if heritage conservation and architectural restoration amount more or less to the same thing, how do other aspects of heritage conservation fit into this model? Quite simply, they don't. What is perhaps more distressing is that many people involved in architectural restoration don't see this as a problem.

If you and I own historic houses and want to restore them back to the original, we should be able to make this choice, right? After all, they are our homes. The problem comes when we want our personal values to become public values and impose them on others. Let's say our neighbour owns a historic home too, but he isn't interested in restoring his. Instead, to our shock and horror, he wants to put vinyl siding on it! Quick, let's get his place designated, we might think, and control what he can do. But why can't he make choices about his place according to his tastes as we have about ours?

Often such conundrums are thrown on municipal councils which invariably want to do the right thing. But what is the right thing? Since you are reading the Heritage BC Newsletter right now, you may well side with the advocates of restoration. If this article was published in, say, Western Report, you might side with the neighbour. The point is that there isn't a right and a wrong answer, but a multiplicity of possible answers which are constantly negotiated and re-negotiated in the public forum.

Valuing a place for its architectural history is a choice in values-based management. The mistake we make is to assume this choice is absolute and permanent instead of relative and temporary. That many historic buildings were slip-covered in the 1950s and '60s did not occur because there was a generation of people with bad taste, but because architectural history was not widely valued back then. Modernity was. These buildings looked old fashioned and needed to be modernized. Future generations may take a different view from today's preoccupation with stylistic purity and pedigree.

A point about architectural history values is that for the most part they are values held by white, urban, middle-class elites. Generally they are not values shared by Aboriginal-Canadians, blue collar workers, members of ethno-cultural communities and new Canadians who bring their own sets of values with them. For the majority of people cultural and social values predominate, with heritage constructed as a hybrid between tangible places and intangible traditions and beliefs. A number will buy historic houses with no intention of restoring them back to the original. Instead,



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The point is that there isn't a right and a wrong answer, but a multiplicity of possible answers which are constantly negotiated and re-negotiated in the public forum.

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Education

Old School: New Learning Opportunity

DIANE SWITZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VANCOUVER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Do you work on restoring and renovating older buildings? Do you live or work in an older building? Then this may be for you! “Old School: Courses in Heritage Conservation” is a brand new program created by the Vancouver Heritage Foundation that will provide courses to prepare trades, professionals and homeowners for work on heritage projects.

The goal of the program is to teach the principles and guidelines for heritage conservation and illustrate how they work at a community level. The target audience for the program is building industry professionals and trades, building owners, and the interested public. The course has been approved for Architectural Institute of BC Core Learning Units and Planning Institute of BC credits. We are currently also working with Engineers and Landscape professionals to secure similar accreditation.

To date there are three corporate sponsors of Old School: Timberline Construction, Dexter Associates Realty, and Robert Lemon Architect Inc.

Courses will be taught at the designated 1906 Mission to Seafarers, or former Hastings Mill Show Home at the Port of Vancouver. The owners, the Anglican Church, are enthusiastic for us to use the mission as a ‘lab’ for Old School. The first Core Course for 30 participants will be offered on Saturday, May 3 from 10 am to 5 pm. If the course is over-subscribed we are hoping to run a second session later in the spring.

Courses will combine illustrated lectures, site visits, technical demonstrations and hand outs. There will be a compulsory one-day Core Principals course in the spring, and several half-day elective options in the fall: exteriors overview, interiors overview, windows and doors, masonry and foundations, electrical upgrades, “green” building technologies, anatomy of a heritage project, project management, and gardens and landscapes.

You can sign up for one, some or all of the courses. Completion of the core course and seven electives earns the VHF Old School Certification. For more information or to enrol, visit www.heritagevancouverfoundation.org or call (604) 264-9642.



The goal of the program is to teach the principles and guidelines for heritage conservation and illustrate how they work at a community level.



MISSION TO SEAFARERS
PHOTO: VANCOUVER HERITAGE FOUNDATION



...continued from page 6

At a January 14 public hearing a number of individuals appealed to Council to save the buildings. Heritage BC emailed a letter to Mayor Mussatto and each councilor, and also spoke at the public hearing. Nonetheless, a week later Council voted five to two in favour of demolishing all three buildings, rejecting a staff proposal to dismantle one for possible reuse as part of the NMC. The fourth, also a machine shop, will be dismantled and stored as originally planned.

While there have been a few isolated cases of individual buildings being de-designated in B.C. before, we know of no other where a grouping like this has had legal protection removed to permit demolition. A major piece of our industrial heritage will now be lost. There are likely to be wider implications as well. Other local governments will undoubtedly learn of the case. Private developers in North Vancouver and elsewhere may be less receptive in the future when they are urged to incorporate heritage structures into their plans. It could be some time before the fallout from this episode is fully understood.

TLC Poised to Take Over Binning House

An icon of early west coast modern residential design may soon become another property of The Land Conservancy of BC. The future of the Binning House in West Vancouver has been up in the air since Jessie Binning died last May at the age of 101. Her husband, B.C. Binning, had a remarkable career. As a painter, muralist and architectural decorator, his works adorned many of the landmarks of early modern architecture in Vancouver. He was also a founder of the School of Fine Art at UBC. Through his works and ideas, Binning had a significant influence on the emergence of the modern movement in Vancouver in the mid 20th century.

The small bungalow Binning built for himself and his wife in 1941 (they had no children) is a testament to his own artist accomplishments and distinctive personal style, as well as a forerunner of much that was to come in modern architectural design on the west coast.

More than a home, the house was also an incubator for young talent, explains Binning authority, Adele Weder: "It nurtured people like [Arthur] Erickson and others who would gather there. It was inspirational, and it was a demonstration piece for modernism. It was an open house; [Binning] had salons there for artists and writers and musicians and architects. That lends it a historic significance beyond its mere built form." (quoted in "Historic house may become scholars' home", John Mackie, Vancouver Sun, December 22, 2007)

Designed by Binning and notable architects Ned Pratt and Bob Berwick, the house has been compared, according to Weder to the work of Corbusier, Gropius, and other masters of the modern architectural aesthetic. In travels not long before the house was built, Binning was exposed to a number of modern influences, studying under sculptor Henry Moore in 1938, and taking in a show of avant-garde housing design at the Museum of Modern Art in 1939. But Weder sees the house as a more idiosyncratic work, a home, gallery and personal expression of artistic ideals: "it defied both popular taste and the rigorous tenets of early Modernism" ("Binning House", Canadian Architect, August, 2006).

Whatever the final analysis as to style and influence, the Binning house is undeniably a significant personal statement by one of B.C.'s most influential figures in the arts. As an important contribution to modern design and architecture it has been designated a National Historic Site.

The executors of the Binning estate have been looking at setting up a foundation to manage the house, possibly using it for visiting scholars. But this could be costly, and an outright sale has also been considered. Now with TLC involved, there may be a solution at hand. They have indicated they are willing to take it on, and are waiting for the executor's response.

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meanings are created connecting the place to the owners' cultural traditions and their sense of community, instead of to a past with which they have no connection. Sometimes this is the right conservation choice to make.

A problem with many advocates of architectural restoration is that they do not see value in other traditions and in different ways of conceiving historic places. When they go before public fora, they are not aware how their zealotry alienates others who should be their allies. Architectural restoration is fine as a personal value and as one aspect of public heritage policy, but too much of it skews the multifaceted nature of heritage conservation and limits the broad social endeavour it really is.

THE NINTH INSTALMENT IN A SERIES ON "THE NEW HERITAGE CONSERVATION" AND VALUES-BASED HERITAGE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TLC



JONATHAN YARDLEY
BOARD PRESIDENT
HERITAGE BC

President's Message

Another New Year. As everyone is no doubt by now aware, 2008 is a year of celebrations as we mark the 150th anniversary, or sesquicentennial, of the birth of the province of British Columbia.

Anniversaries can be an occasion for looking ahead as well as back. Passing a significant milestone is always a good time to think about where we are headed and consider our options. And celebrating our accomplishments charges us with energy and a renewed sense of purpose.

Consider 1958, the year of the big B.C. Centennial. Those who are old enough will remember Century Sam, the centennial mascot attired in his comical "gold rush" era outfit. The provincial government created the "Stop of Interest" sign program to raise awareness and to encourage British Columbians to get out on the road (a 1950's sort of thing to do) and discover the province. The development of Barkerville Historic Town got underway. This was the real start of heritage tourism in B.C., and British Columbians gained a new sense of pride, and a new respect for our heritage.

Communities got into the act, too. Centennial squares, fountain, and parks were the order of the day. A lot of museums date from this time (many called "Centennial"), as does the BC Museums Association, all part of the new-found interest in B.C.'s past.

Subsequent centennials – the amalgamation of B.C. and Vancouver Island (1966), confederation (1967) and B.C.'s entry into confederation (1971) were further occasions for new initiatives.

So as we begin this year of celebrations, let's encourage all British Columbians to renew their interest in and respect for our history and heritage – all of it, going back 10,000 years, not just 150 - and make 2008 a year of new beginnings.



RICK GOODACRE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HERITAGE BC

Executive Director's Message

In the depths of winter we look forward to the first signs of spring: longer days, the first flowers, and the federal budget.

What will the next federal budget bring for heritage? In 2007, after federal program cuts the previous fall had caught everyone off guard, we were somewhat apprehensive about the new federal government's intentions. Critically, were looking for signs of the fate of the Historic Places Initiative (HPI) launched by the Liberals in 2001.

In the end, the 2007 budget didn't shed any light shed on this burning issue. What we got was the totally unexpected announcement of plans to create a National Heritage Trust, along with \$5 million to get things going. But not a word about the HPI.

Meanwhile, last December I made a presentation to the federal Standing Committee on Finance when it visited Victoria during a pre-budget tour of consultations. I said Heritage BC had one issue only to bring to the committee's attention: HPI, and the much-anticipated introduction of a permanent federal program of direct investment in the rehabilitation of Canada's heritage resources. Our historic buildings need investment, I explained, and that financial burden is borne principally by owners and developers. But government also has an interest, and a responsibility. At present, the public burden falls largely on local government, and they are straining under the weight. To date, the Government of Canada has not accepted a share of this responsibility. Whether a federal program would use tax measures, grants, or some combination, we need our national government to become involved, or face the consequences: more under-utilized, derelict or demolished heritage buildings.

The committee heard similar messages as the heritage community made its pitch at various hearings across the country. This information has now been, presumably, been considered, analyzed, and funneled into the budget process. Let's hope that it includes some good news for heritage – it is long overdue.

Heritage Canada Governor's Message

I will always recall 2007 as the year that we marked the passing of Rod Clack, the City of Victoria's first planner. In particular, Rod will be remembered, along with then-mayor R.B. Wilson, for undertaking a monumental scheme to preserve, restore and revive downtown Victoria. The scheme saw key heritage buildings, such as City Hall and the McPherson Theatre restored, public squares created and stunning new architecture introduced into the cityscape.

Centennial Square, created adjacent to City Hall, marked the 100th birthday of Victoria. The perimeter of the Square was defined by the restored McPherson Theatre (with its now heritage-designated lobby addition of 1965) and the 19th century City Hall, which was expanded by the addition of a dazzlingly contemporary addition.

A fountain, gifted to the city by its neighbouring municipalities, provided the focal point for the Square. The fountain featured mosaic monoliths, created by the artist, Jack Wilkinson, and was surrounded by a tiara-like balustrade. The balustrade was at once reminiscent of a royal crown and, looking forward, showed elements of Oscar Niemeyer's government complex in the futuristic city of Brasilia.

The Square itself has survived reasonably intact over the ensuing 40 years. Recent redevelopment of two of the flanking building sites still kept the intended design spirit in place.

For some time Centennial Square has been the subject of discussions by Victoria City Council (of which I am a member). In the early 1990s a design competition was held to consider options for the future of the Square. The winning scheme, by Roger Hughes, Architect, of Vancouver has never been fully implemented (although some of its principles were used to inform the replacement of buildings and the creation of mid-block walkways).

Current Council discussions have focused on ways to further animate the Square. Consideration is being given to either removing or disassembling the fountain as it is seen by some as an impediment to programming the Square (It is interesting to note that the once smooth surfaces of the tiara balustrade provided comfortable seating for those interested in sitting close to the water. A previous City Council ordered that the surfaces be reclad in roughcast stucco in order to discourage use by those deemed the undesirables of the day).

Victoria's Heritage Advisory Committee recently requested that Council authorize the drafting of a Statement of Significance for the fountain. These statements have become an increasingly routine process for identifying the heritage value of our built heritage. The statement carries no regulatory authority but is used as a tool for making informed decisions. The fact that Council declined the request, indicating a lack of appetite for informed decision making, is very troubling. As I have written in previous columns, our post-war built heritage is very vulnerable to demolition. Although becoming increasingly valued through a variety of books and exhibitions it has perhaps not yet become part of popular culture. We only need to think of the wholesale demolition of Victorian buildings that occurred prior to them becoming increasingly prized by the public at large. With far fewer iconic post-war buildings in existence we do not have the luxury of waiting until their wholesale demolition becomes the topic of general public concern.



...our post-war built heritage is very vulnerable to demolition. Although becoming increasingly valued through a variety of books and exhibitions it has perhaps not yet become part of popular culture.



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Clarification

The Wild Duck Inn

The Fall 2007 issue of Heritage BC Newsletter stated that a study by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Ltd concluded that moving and upgrading the Wild Duck Inn in Port Coquitlam would be too costly. We have since learned from Hal Kalman of Commonwealth that, based on historical research, community consultation, and physical investigation, they in fact had recommended conservation. Hal said further that they did not address safety or cost, and did not find unsafe conditions.

Heritage BC learned from a subsequent conversation with the provincial Gateway Project that a number of other studies done on the property were the source of the concerns about safety and costs to move and rehabilitate, which led to the demolition decision.

Update

Lighthouse Legislation

Senator Pat Carney reintroduced the Lighthouse Act (now Bill S-215) in the Senate on November 1st. The bill passed through the Senate's National Finance committee in early December where it received a number of significant amendments, before passing Third Reading in the Senate on December 10th. The bill now goes back to the House of Commons. If the Senate amendments are not deemed significant enough to require another first reading, it will go to committee. At this point it is not certain which committee, but Fisheries and Oceans is the likely destination.

Heritage Canada is working with Barry McDonald of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Protection Society and Senator Carney. The senator, however, is near retirement, and another champion within government will be needed to push the bill onward.

Anyone interested in seeing this bill become law could consider emailing his or her MP, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Loyola Hearn: Min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Thanks to the Heritage Canada Foundation.

Heritage BC Newsletter

Heritage BC Newsletter is published four times a year. Contributions are accepted at any time, and must be submitted by email. Photographs should be in jpg format and of sufficiently high resolution for good reproduction. Heritage BC reserves the right to edit or reject any submission.

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