



Heritage Vancouver

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October 2, 2020

Vancouver Board of Education
Attention: Janet Fraser, Board Chair

Re: Second letter – Yellow wooden school house at Hudson Elementary School

We are writing again to request that staff be asked to investigate the feasibility of retaining the historic yellow school house built in 1912, that is now used for Out of School Care. The structure could be renovated in the current location or if this area is required for the school entrance, it could be moved to another part of the site, renovated and leased to a public or private operator.

We appreciate that the subject of retaining the historic school house was discussed at a recent Facilities Committee meeting. Several reasons for demolishing the building were given: these and our answers are listed below. The issues that the building does not meet current seismic and accessibility standards can be solved during renovations. Likewise, the renovations can include removing asbestos and lead paint, upgrading mechanical and electrical systems and building new foundations. The budget will also have to include funds to compensate for years of deferred maintenance by the Ministry and the School Board.

Some staff have stated that the yellow school house lacks architectural and heritage merit. Clearly it lacks the quality of the brick school buildings, but all of the brick schools in Kitsilano have been demolished or will be very soon. Therefore we believe that this last historic structure whose future is dependent on the School Board, should be saved.

In our letter dated Sept. 15, 2020, we referred to two highly successful precedents for retaining the small historic wooden buildings that are found on some school sites. The Vancouver School Board (VSB) was planning to demolish these structures, but since they have been saved, they are often cited by the VSB as fine examples of heritage restoration. At General Gordon Elementary School the heritage yellow school house was retained, updated and leased to the privately operated Mosaic Montessori Preschool.

The second example is in the Collingwood neighbourhood, where the VSB announced that they were going to demolish the 1896 Carleton Hall after a fire. Instead, in 2010 the Green Thumb Theatre Company came forward and offered to restore Carleton Hall as well as an adjacent wood frame outbuilding into creative and administrative spaces. The restored historic facility has allowed Green Thumb Theatre to create an active arts engagement with both the local and wider community.

There appears to be increasing local support for restoring the yellow school house at Hudson Elementary School, due to its cultural and community importance to Kitsilano residents.

On the Feedback Forms for the new school plans that were submitted last summer, some residents noted the architectural / heritage quality of the existing school buildings. A high ratio (8 out of 48) requested that the VSB consider retaining the yellow school house. We encourage the VSB to consult with local residents to determine the ideal use for the building, such as a daycare or community meeting space which is lacking in Kitsilano.

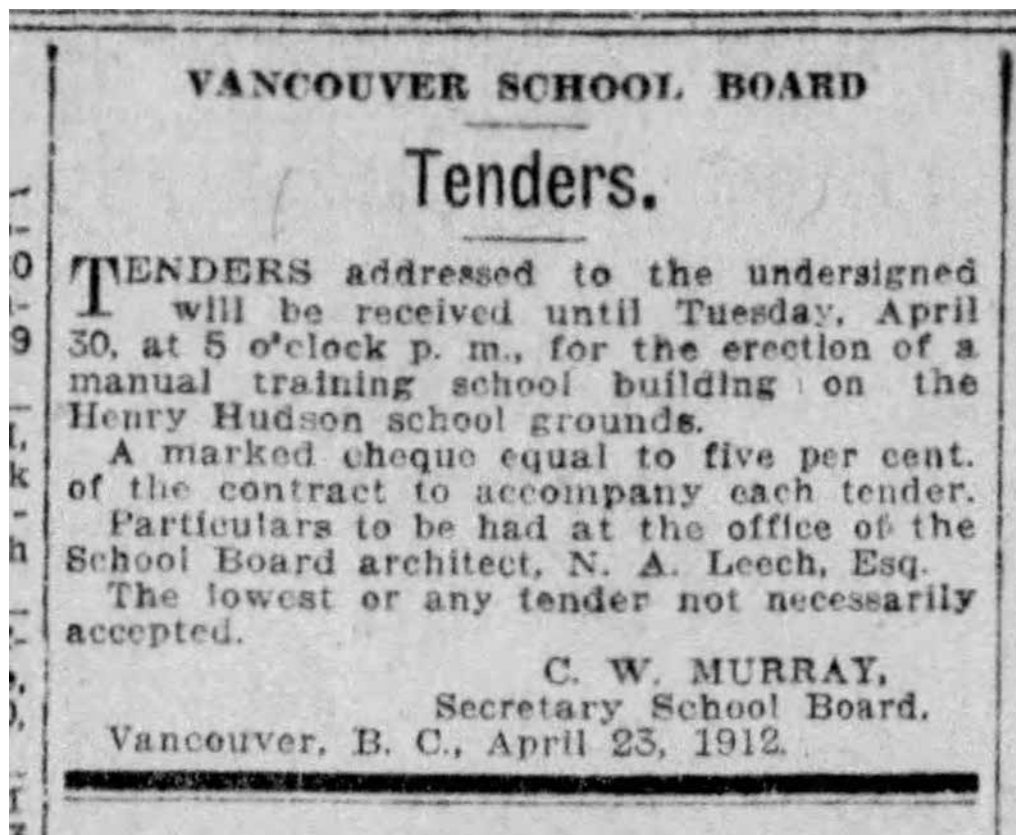
Respectfully submitted,
Heritage Vancouver Society

cc Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent
J. David Green, Secretary Treasurer
Jim Meschino, Director of Facilities
Vancouver Heritage Commission
Zlatan Jankovic, Senior Heritage Planner, City of Vancouver

Appendices

Henry Hudson School property Yellow wooden school building, north-west corner

- Tender call, The Province, April 24, 1912
- Designed by Norman Austin Leech, Chief Architect for the Vancouver Board of Education



Appendices

Henry Hudson School property Yellow wooden school building, north-west corner

- Constructed in 1912 as a Manual Training School
- The restored and repurposed wooden school building (1913) at General Gordon Elementary is a twin in design to Henry Hudson's wooden structure (1912), both originally constructed as part of the Manual Training School initiatives



Front; Henry Hudson wooden school building (1912), originally a Manual Training School



Side/rear; Henry Hudson wooden school building (1912), originally a Manual Training School