

## HERITAGE

Vancouver  
N e w s l e t t e r

Greencroft, 3838 Cypress Street

by Maida Price

Greencroft, like every artifact, is about time.

At the moment, this artifact speaks most eloquently of time ignored. From the street, it looks like the prototypical haunted house. The wooden slats atop the boundary walls are rotted and awry. Overhanging trees and plantings are dark and lopsided and the house itself is virtually invisible behind them. Mutant spiders have apparently uprooted the light globe on one of the gateposts. The sections of the house visible through the gates are curiously blank and the house looms close to the property edge on the Cypress Street side. Grass grows a foot high in the arc of the driveway between the gates.

When the Eric Hambers lived in the house the driveway was circular and outlined by miniature begonias. That detail itself, considering the driveway was large and the begonias small, speaks of the care and attention to detail the house once had; it makes possible the vision of the exotically-titled Viscount Alexander of Tunis and Lady Alexander, in black tie and long gown, arriving to lights and music and a twelve-course dinner. It's quite likely that, at the time of their visit to Vancouver, ladies were still retiring to the drawing room

after dinner while the gentlemen enjoyed their port and cigars in the dining room.

And Greencroft in the future? In its present condition it is an illustration of the inexorability of change. Its placement on the two-acre lot disguises its size; it is huge, built for a household of silver tea sets and many children and live-in help—expensive to run and maintain and no one's cup of tea today. But why let it be destroyed when it's been promised a facelift and the chance to again become a home? Let's be flexible and adapt. Let's have two families and lights and music and a beautiful mansion, and two more families with their lights and music in structures that are no more intrusive than the auxiliary buildings on other Shaughnessey properties.

This is a way to resurrect Greencroft without destroying it. Few of us would have had, or have, the financial and social advantages enjoyed by the Hambers, but some did and some didn't and all of it is part and parcel of what we are as a city today. The size of the fireplace and the light coming through the leaded glass windows of Greencroft give us, by their very difference, a sharper understanding of contemporary lives

see *Greencroft* page three

## Reminder

In August, look for us at the Pride Parade. Regular monthly meetings will resume in September.

### 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.

### Turn Back the Clock

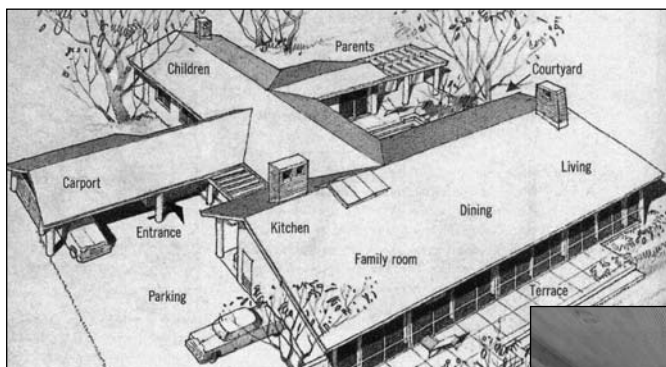
**Sunday, August 19th, 1:30 PM**

- meet on the Southwest corner of Granville & 6th Avenue

Join Bud Kerr, an HV member, as he takes us on a walk down memory lane. Listen to stories of growing up in Vancouver in the '40s. As we amble between Fir and Hemlock and 6th and 7th avenues, we'll remember buildings past and present through Bud's photos and experiences. Don't miss this unique walk.

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



Bird's-eye view illustration showing placement of interior spaces



Living/dining area, c. 1961

## Seattle master Roland Terry builds in Vancouver

by *Robert Moffatt*

Culter house  
6120 Glendalough Place, Vancouver  
Roland Terry 1957-58

One of the most significant yet least-known Modernist houses in Vancouver is the Culter house, designed in 1957 by Seattle architect *Roland Terry*.

Terry was one of the most renowned architects to emerge from Seattle's vibrant postwar architecture scene which, like Vancouver's, fused Asian design principles and the rainy Pacific Northwest climate into a unique regional architectural form. Terry's houses and particularly his interiors are still timeless elegant yet comfortable, livable and unpretentious.

The Culter house features many key Terry design elements. Largely hidden from public view, the house sprawls across its site in a series of overlapping wings which frame an internal courtyard, the focus of the design. Sliding glass walls open to the courtyard and exterior terraces, linking the indoors and outdoors. Solid walls provide privacy to the street and counterpoint the transpar-

ency of the glass.

In the main living areas, Terry created a Japanese-like sense of serene well-being through meticulous detailing and richly contrasting natural materials. Rough-sawn ceiling beams and posts of peeled cedar logs offset the fine built-in teak cabinetry and the luxurious golden-beige colour scheme. Linear patterns of reeds lining the high, sloped ceiling draw the eye along the length of the room, terminating in an unadorned fireplace wall.

Although Terry completed many projects on the West Coast and in Hawaii, the Culter house is his only Canadian project and, despite the physical proximity of the two cities, is likely the only Modernist house in Vancouver designed by a major Seattle architect. The Vancouver firm of Hale & Harrison supervised construction.

For more about Terry's work, check **Roland Terry: Master Northwest Architect**, recently published by the University of Washington Press.

Photos: (University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division)

## Heritage Vancouver Update

### Wine & Cheese Reception

On June 21st, about 30 people attended a Heritage Vancouver wine and cheese reception generously hosted by Vancouver City Councilor Lynne Kennedy at her condominium on the edge of Stanley Park. This fine building, a recent landmark, provided the ideal setting for an incisive overview from an individual who has often been at the epicenter of heritage in this city. Coun. Kennedy's informed and at times humorous talk was followed by a discussion that provided an opportunity for all to participate in articulating a vision of heritage in the next decade. Councilors Don Lee and Sandy McCormick were also in attendance, contributing to the breadth of civic perspective on heritage issues. The evening was a great success with special thanks to Coun. Lynne Kennedy, the volunteers and all of those who attended. Given the popularity of these evenings with City Councilors, (last year Coun. Gordon Price welcomed the group to his home) an annual tradition may have been established.

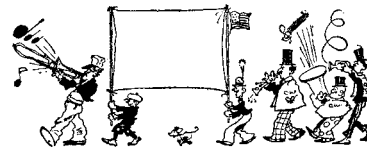
### Greencroft from cover

and homes. And while we cannot know which artifacts of today will be considered of value to our progeny, we can let them know, by what we do, that we valued the life examined.

*Maida Price is an editor and writer in Vancouver*

## Good news for Greencroft

We applaud Vancouver City Council's decision of July 10, after four evenings of public hearings, to approve the restoration proposal for the A listed Shaughnessy Mansion known as Greencroft. Janet Leduc, our President, spoke at one of the hearings in favour of the proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement which, now that it is approved, will ensure the preservation and designation of Eric Hamber's former residence. This is a huge victory for heritage and a signal that the city is prepared to come up with creative solutions to preserve Vancouver's significant heritage buildings. Our congratulations to city staff and city councilors.



## 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.

## Join Heritage Vancouver

Membership valid one year from date of issue. Members receive a monthly newsletter, free admission to monthly speakers' programs and reduced rates for tours and other activities.

Charitable donation #1073758-52. Membership fees are not tax deductible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$25   | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (no newsletter) \$5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family: \$30       | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate: \$50                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donation: \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Patrons: \$100                 |

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

# Christ Church Revisited

Dear Members,

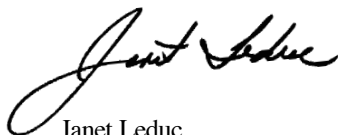
The following is a summary of the letter sent by Heritage Vancouver in response to letters and e-mails received following last month's letter on Christ Church Cathedral

We note that there has been great offence taken to remarks published in the June Heritage Vancouver newsletter about potential alterations to Christ Church Cathedral. It was not our intention to question the credibility or good intentions of either the church members or the professionals involved in the project.

We applaud the open discussion that has occurred, and realize the importance of embarking on a process that will enable a significant upgrading of this historic building. We are indeed glad to see how seriously our remarks were taken, and are very pleased that everyone wants to do the right thing for the Cathedral. This is extremely good news. We also applaud the creation of a civic committee, which is reviewing the current restoration and renewal initiative.

We are, however, still very concerned with the extent of alterations that are being proposed for Christ Church and the total accumulated impact on the building once this work is completed. We recognize the need for some functional changes, and realize that some of the design development is still in a preliminary stage, but as advocates of heritage conservation we still question some of the proposed ideas. Specifically, the attachment of glass canopies to the exterior, the removal of the balcony and some of the pews, and the stripping of the finish from the interior woodwork are all issues that need to be more fully discussed. We wish to cooperate in these further discussions. However we must recognize that the potential impact to the heritage character of this significant structure could be enormous. We must also recognize that the proposed work is being undertaken in exchange for a density bonus and transfer and that it should therefore conform to the highest standards of heritage conservation.

We apologize for any remarks made that could be misinterpreted as offensive to the people involved in this project. We hope to continue to work with the Church and the City, and have positive input into this process.



Janet Leduc  
President, Heritage Vancouver



## BINNING RESIDENCE A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Some sixty years after it first shocked conservative neighbours, the West Vancouver home of renowned artist B.C. Binning has been officially honoured as a piece of Canadian history. The Historic Sites & Monuments Board of Canada proclaimed the house a national historic site in a ceremony on May 27.

Many members of Vancouver's architectural and heritage community were present to pay tribute to Binning's artistic legacy and to his widow Jessie, who at the age of 93 still lives in the house. Arthur Erickson eloquently described to the crowd Binning's role as an artist, educator, and a leader of Vancouver's arts community.

Designed in 1941 with the assistance of Ned Pratt and Bob Berwick, the Binning house was one of the first Modernist houses in Vancouver and strongly influenced postwar residential architecture across Canada. The house also served as Binning's studio and as a salon for artists and cultural figures from around the world.



Arthur Erickson and Jessie Binning unveil the National Historic Site plaque

Photos: Robert Moffatt 2001

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