

HERITAGE Vancouver Newsletter



TOP TEN ENDANGERED SITES

Once again, Heritage Vancouver presents its Top Ten Endangered Sites. This is our second annual list—and we've shown this is an idea that really works to raise interest in, and awareness of, Vancouver's threatened heritage structures. Let's get to work on doing just that for the following ten, and make our tenth anniversary year one to remember.

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.

2. 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, upkeep and maintenance is minimal or non-existent and demolition has left ugly gaps along the street. Hastings Street needs help before all of it is lost to the wrecking ball.

Among the treasures of this stretch, 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 theatre interiors in Canada. The building has been empty and dark for over a decade and the future of this important building is still uncertain. Farther west, in the 100 block of

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Heritage Vancouver and the City of Vancouver Celebrate Heritage Week

Heritage Vancouver and the City of Vancouver are jointly sponsoring three free lectures during the week of February 18. We will kick off Heritage Week celebrations with a proclamation read in City Hall prior to Monday's lecture.

False Creek: B. C.'s industrial heartland Monday, February 18, Noon City Hall, Council Chambers

John Stuart of the North Vancouver Museum explores the industrial history of False Creek and will discuss possibilities for former industrial buildings.

Arthur Erickson's Garden Tuesday, February 19, 6:30 pm Architecture Centre, 100-440 Cambie St. Arthur Erickson explores the ideas and influences behind the design of his own garden.

Burrard Bridge Thursday, February 21, Noon City Hall, Council Chambers

Heritage consultant Don Luxton uncovers—through little known and never before seen photographs—the fascinating history of one of this city's best known bridges.

Also during Heritage Week: Night at the Orpheum Wednesday, February 20, 7pm Orpheum Theatre, Granville St.

Join us in the dress circle for the February meeting of Heritage Vancouver, to be followed by an extensive tour of the Theatre itself. This is your chance to see behind the curtains and hear about the backstage dramas. Meet at the Box Office on the Granville Street side of the theatre. \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members.

Chinatown by Night Friday, February 22, 8pm (rain or shine) Chinese Cultural Centre, 50 East Pender St. This Heritage Vancouver tour will offer another chance to take a different look at Chinatown, as John Atkin explores the history and architecture of this unique area in a series of evening tours. Don't forget to bring your flashlight. Meet in the courtyard of the Chinese Cultural Center, by the gate. \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members.

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Pantages

West Hastings, is the rotting hulk of the Ralph Block, an important cast iron facade and a 'B' on the City's Heritage Register. This block, devastated by the closure of Woodward's in 1992, is now in danger of demolition by neglect. Schemes have come and gone for this site, but time is not on this building's side.

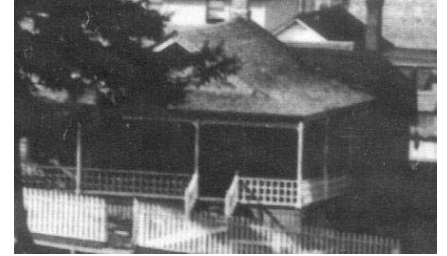
3. Giant Dipper Roller Coaster (PNE Playland)

Playland's Giant Dipper Roller Coaster is known across North America as one of the best coaster rides going, but when the PNE picks up and leaves Hastings Park the coaster's future is bleak. Landscape architects have suggested that it be broken up and used as garden *sculpture* in a redesigned 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."

4. Clark House (243 East 5th Avenue, Mount Pleasant)

The Clark House in Mount Pleasant, on 5th just east of Main street, is the oldest home in Vancouver. In 1888, Mount Pleasant was established as the first Vancouver neighbourhood outside of the downtown core. As the assessment records and city directories compiled in 1888 indicate, at that time the Clark House was one of the only homes south of False Creek. It has changed remarkably little since it was built. Unfortunately, it is not economi-



Clark House

cally viable for the current owner to retain the building on its current site. The City is looking for options to retain the house and move it to a new site, and for a group to champion restoration of the building.

5. North Vancouver Ferry No. 5 (Foot of Lonsdale Avenue)

Built in 1941, Ferry No. 5 was the last of five ferries built for the Burrard Inlet service between the foot of Columbia Street and Lonsdale. After the ferry service was discontinued in 1958, the vessel was converted for use as the Seven Seas seafood restaurant and remained berthed within metres of its original landing site at the foot of Lonsdale. The landmark *Seven Seas* neon sign, perched atop the ferry, is among the region's best surviving examples, and provides one of the most spectacular street-end views in the Lower Mainland. The City of North Vancouver, which owns the water lot and is concerned that the vessel is no longer seaworthy, in October gave interested parties six months to find either a purchaser or financing for rehabilitation. Without a solution, the ferry will be towed from its moorings and likely scrapped.

6. 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, which was propped up by a steel frame in the hope that the owners would be able to save the facade as part of a new building. Three years have passed, and the burned-out hulk continues to deteriorate, its prospects weakened by low demand for upper floor uses in



Terminus Hotel

Gastown. If the situation does not change soon, pressure for the facade's demolition will complete what fire left unfinished several years ago. With the *Spaghetti Factory* development going ahead across the street, perhaps there is still hope.



Opsal Steel

7. Opsal Steel (West 2nd Ave & Quebec)

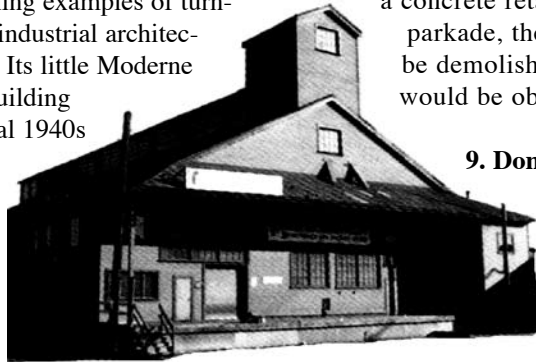
Since the theme of Heritage Week in

Vancouver this year is our industrial heritage, it is particularly fitting that the Opsal Steel building makes a reappearance in this year's Top Ten. Time continues its work on the heavy timber construction, pitched roof and rooftop lantern vents that make this one of the best remaining examples of turn-of-the-century industrial architecture in the city. Its little Moderne corner office building with the original 1940s signage also continues to deteriorate. Once a Class A listing, the future of this site has been uncertain

since it was removed from the Vancouver Heritage Register. Rumor has it that the current owners are working on redevelopment plans for the site.

8. 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 end of the original 1915



Domtar Salt Bld.

9. Domtar Salt Building

(85 West 1st Avenue near Manitoba)

With the pending redevelopment of Opsal Steel, the Domtar Salt

building is likely to be the last remaining piece of industrial heritage in the southeast False Creek area. This 1931 Class B heritage site still has its original single-glazed multi-pane windows and red wooden siding. There is a movement afoot to make this a *model sustainable building*. Keeping heritage from the landfill is sustainable, but plans for the building could well involve replacing or concealing original cladding, windows and other features, and the addition of unsympathetic hardware such as solar generating devices. As industrial heritage is this year's Heritage Week theme, we plan to keep a close eye on this well-intentioned, but potentially misguided makeover.

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.

10. First Church of Christ, Scientist (1100 block Georgia Street)



First Church of Christ, Scientist

Built in 1918, this has been the First Church of Christ, Scientist since its construction. The design is Second Renaissance Revival and the interior is an intact music hall, with

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WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Celebrate & Reflect

Dear Members,

It's February! It's Heritage Week! It's Heritage Day! No holiday yet but still a time to celebrate and reflect. For Heritage Week we have organized a range of heritage events and topics to get us in the celebratory mood. This year we host a series of three free lectures in partnership with the City of Vancouver's Heritage department. We kick off the series on Heritage Day in the Council Chambers with a presentation by John Stuart on Industrial Heritage, this year's national theme. Prior to the talk, the Deputy Mayor will read a Heritage Day Proclamation and make a presentation to Heritage Vancouver to mark our 10th anniversary. In addition to this series we also have two very special Heritage Vancouver tours scheduled for you. (See Heritage Vancouver presents for more details). Plan to attend as many of these events as possible.

To mark Heritage Day we are publishing our second annual top ten list of endangered heritage landmarks. It was difficult to make our decisions with unfortunately so many to choose from. I would like to commend our advocacy committee for their rigorous work in coming up with this year's list. Our selections are based on the following criteria: importance of the structure, urgency of threat to the building and public appeal. When the day comes when there is nothing to put on this list, we will truly have something to celebrate. In the meantime, let's enjoy our hard won victories and reflect on our favorite landmarks that are no longer with us.



Janet Leduc
President, Heritage Vancouver

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an organ of classical design as the centerpiece of the church. It's surrounded by pews laid out in a half-circle arrangement and is well lit by clear glass arched windows on the upper portion of both the Georgia and Alberni sides. The building is of particular value because of the integral relationship between the interior and exterior. It has now been sold to a development corporation, but it would be good to see this Heritage Register B Listing preserved as a cultural resource, an option the City is now investigating.

Photos:

Pantages, *John Atkin*
Terminus Hotel, *Albert Lunshof*
First Church of Christ, Scientist, *Albert Lunshof*
Burrard Street Bridge, *Vancouver Public Library*
Clark House, *unknown*
Opsal Steel, *Brock Piper*
Domtar Salt Bld., *Brock Piper*

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

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