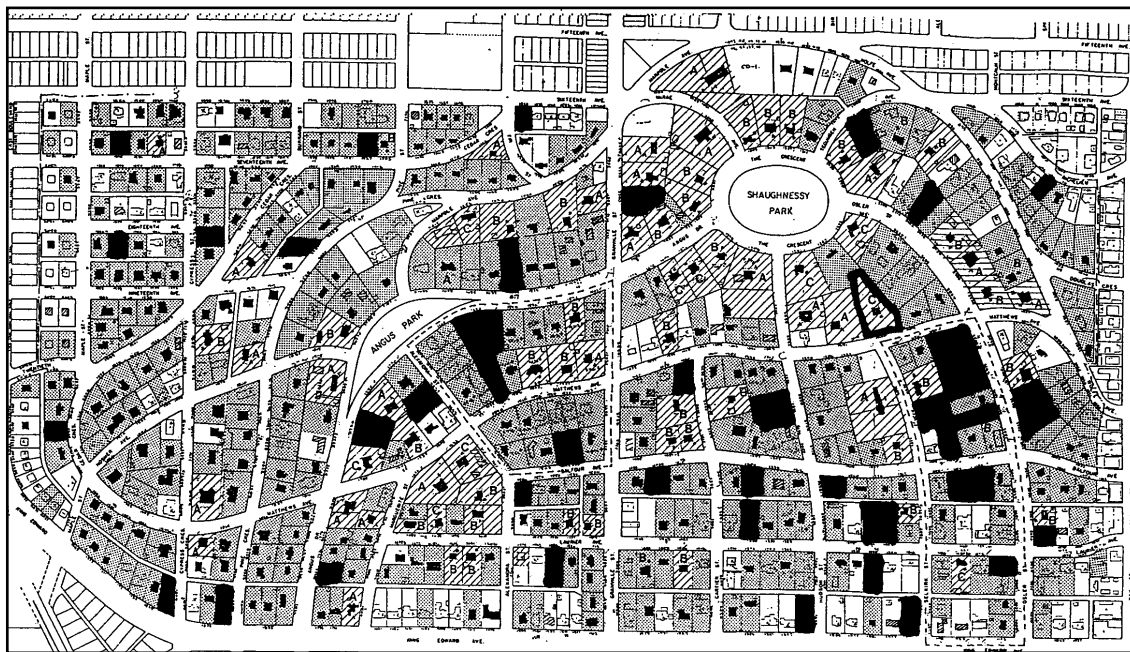


HERITAGE

Vancouver

Newsletter



■ demolished pre -1940 house □ demo permit issued for pre -1940 house

Down with Demolition

by *Richard Keate*

Wander through First Shaughnessy today and one quickly becomes aware that this heritage character area, Vancouver's only residential area to have its own development plan, is slipping away. The neighbourhood, defined by pre-1940 houses and their lush landscaping with 90 year old trees, is turning into an expensive subdivision of inflated faux heritage homes. The rich patina that only well maintained true character homes can achieve is being replaced by houses that don't have the quality of workmanship, careful attention to detailing, or thoughtful selection of materials that the original houses displayed.

First Shaughnessy, (described as the area between W.16th & King Edward, Arbutus & Oak) was originally developed by the CPR in 1907, and was designed to be an exclusive enclave from

the beginning; an area of large lots where a \$6000 minimum building value was required. However, the great Depression and two world wars took their toll on the area, and by 1960 the city had legalized rooming houses in First Shaughnessy, which was by then considered a *blighted area*. In the 1970's, an attempt was made by the city to loosen up the restrictive single-family residential zoning, by allowing the development of McRae Mews, in which spot CD-1 zoning allowed the construction of an assembly of townhouses on part of the Hycroft estate. Neighbourhood outcry over this project, and another similar project slated for the MacMillan estate *Duart* at the corner of Hudson and Balfour, urged SHPOA, the local neighbourhood organization, to push the city for a response.

see page three **Shaughnessy**

HERITAGE
Vancouver
PRESENTS

Tour of Bessborough Armouries
Wednesday, March 19, 2003
7:00pm sharp
Tour lead by: Vic Stevenson

The Bessborough Cavalry
& Artillery Armoury
Now the 15th Field Regiment Armouries
2025 West 11th Avenue
Richard T. Perry, Architect
1931-1933
Heritage Registry Status: B

Public apathy and opposition in Parliament made it very difficult for the military to construct any new facilities after the end of the First World War. In August of 1928 a private company, the Vancouver Armoury Association Limited, was formed to raise funds and acquire land, and build the shell of this building, then turn it over to the Crown. This task was complicated by the onset of the Depression, but plans were prepared in 1931 by Richard T. Perry, who was involved with the military and was later Commanding Officer of this regiment. Construction began the following year, and it was ready for use by early 1933. The official opening, however, was not held until March 27, 1934, when His Excellency, The Earl of Bessborough, The Governor-General, dedicated this structure that was named after him. The Seaforth Highlanders also used a private company, formed in 1931, to build their armoury on Burrard Street.

Built of reinforced concrete, the voluminous drill hall has two storeys of administrative offices on the south side. The main entry is on the south facade, leading by a vestibule into the armoury offices and the vast drill hall. Similar to the other drill halls in the city, a high steel truss roof system is used to span the drill field. A large oil painting from 1969, by E.R. Hoskinson, depicts field gun exercises in a rural setting. The regimental museum is located on the north side of the hall. Most ground floor offices fea-

ture tongue & groove wall and ceiling panelling. The staircase has tapered wood newel posts and simple wooden balusters. A staircase east of the main entry leads to the second floor Officers Mess. This room is substantially intact, with a wood beam ceiling; fleur-de-lis and rosette designs have been painted on the beams. The concrete fireplace surround has panelled sides and heraldic decorations. Four suspended electric chandeliers feature a pressed metal acanthus leaf motif. Two twelve pane windows on the east wall open outwards to allow a view of the drill hall itself.

REPORT CARD



Lost at Sea

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 provided one of the most spectacular street-end views in the Lower Mainland. Ignoring community protest, and in an act of wonton heritage destruction, the City of North Vancouver, which owns the water lot, towed the ferry from its moorings and had the vessel scrapped. Certain artifacts, such as the wheelhouses and the neon sign, were apparently saved.

Tiki Talk Totally Terrific

January saw the beginning of a fun year for Heritage Vancouver. We kicked off the year with a record shattering event hosted in the Waldorf Hotel's Tiki rooms. *An Evening at the Waldorf* was a smash hit by all accounts and provided an exciting evening of education, music and rum drinks. Once again heritage has shown its wide appeal. The event was attended by people from all age groups — from 19 years to 90 years, people from all ages and walks of life joined us to journey back to the time of Tiki.

Donald Luxton (Vancouver's only renowned Tiki expert) guided a captivated audience through the formative years of the outrageous Tiki movement and then headlong into leopard print upholstered bar stools and bamboo clad walls. President Scott Barrett helped to keep the evening light and fun as he visited with members and guest while dressed in a grass skirt and flip flop sandals.

The Tiki event also helped Heritage Vancouver break a number of its own records. Attendance records for HV events were shattered when 130 members and guests arrived to lounge amongst the velvet paintings and artificial palm trees. Everyone who attended was presented with a lei at the door and one of our beautiful new membership forms. The lounge was so crowded that many people had to sit on the floor during Donald Luxton's *Tiki Talk*. Mai Tais and other cocktails were the order of the evening and many people stayed on after the talk to soak up more of the atmosphere and alcohol.

Reaction to the event was very positive and members of both the Heritage and Architecture communities were positive. "*Heritage Vancouver finally looks sexy*", said one attendee. While our image was being massaged our mandate of preserving our heritage rang loud and true. Never has Heritage Vancouver been so effective in reaching the public and passing on our message of fun and hard work. Watch for more fantastic events in the future from Heritage Vancouver.

from cover **Shaughnessy**

In addition to the concern over spot zoning, Shaughnessy had another problem. Many of the large heritage houses were occupied by elderly couples or widow/widower and a housekeeper who were no longer able to keep up their properties. These houses, wonderfully unique to Vancouver, were suffering a slide into what would later be known as *demolition by neglect*. To meet the pressures for densification and to encourage the retention of this prime heritage housing stock, an Official Development Plan was passed by the city in 1982. In response to the current social and economic climate, the plan encouraged the conversion of large houses into suites (each to be a minimum of 1,678 square feet, with a maximum of 4 suites per house), and the new construction of coach-house-like infills on properties over 23,000 square feet, providing that the landscaping – grandly referred to as the estate-like quality of First Shaughnessy – was retained. A set of design guidelines that attempted to distill what was most important about First Shaughnessy was introduced, and a neighbourhood design panel appointed to oversee future development and to encourage good design (or more effectively to discourage really bad design).

Because the ODP provided First Shaughnessy with its own unique zoning, it was to be reviewed ‘from time to time’ in order to monitor the results. This review has yet to happen, and consequently, changing market forces that have resulted in centrally located Shaughnessy’s desirable large lots becoming so attractive for development, have yet to be addressed. Other rezoned areas such as Southlands and the University Endowment lands have learned from Shaughnessy’s mistakes and have enacted strict square footage limits and sightline restrictions. Shaughnessy, however, remains unencumbered by these, and has become the most desirable area in which to construct excessively large homes. Although the pre-1940 character houses that define First Shaughnessy rarely exceed .32 Floor

Space Ratio (FSR= built square footage / lot square footage) new homes are always maxed-out at .45 FSR, the result being that the landscaping that supports the park-like appeal is being eaten up. In one particularly ridiculous case, an award winning 1970’s Dan White house of 17,000 square feet was demolished to be replaced by a bloated faux-basilica style house of 23,000 square feet (until recently, the record holder for largest house in Vancouver). The irony is that these new large homes do not retain their value, whereas well-maintained old homes such as *the Hollies* (1388 the Crescent, built in 1913) have always led the market in resale value. The tragedy is that many of Shaughnessy’s character homes are not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. The Shaughnessy Architecture and Landscape Inventory, the earliest incarnations of which pre-date municipal and provincial heritage lists, has yet to be rolled into the City Register.

One fateful day in 1994, a developer stymied by the planning department’s insistence on meeting the spirit of the FSD guidelines, asked the legal department if the city could prevent the demolition of any house in FSD. The answer was no, any house, listed or not could be demolished (with the exception of designated houses, of which only a handful exist). As word got out, the assault on character homes escalated. Since the inception of the ODP, 44 of First Shaughnessy’s existing 375 character homes have been lost, with the rate accelerating every year. Last year, approval was given for four more character houses to come down. Seventy two houses in First Shaughnessy are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, 280 remain unprotected, and they are all targets for redevelopment. Unfortunately, as Michael Kluckner pointed out to the First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel, First Shaughnessy is a heritage character area, not a heritage conservation area, where replicating the character of the area is *good enough*. There are a numbers of ways that this problem could be addressed, but they all demand action on the part of the City.

What’s needed is a fresh look at the overall development plan; new incentives such as an ability to transfer density out of the area, tax incentives, or a freeze in property assessments on restored pre-1940’s houses should be put in place. For new houses replacing post 1940’s houses, there should be a bylaw review. For example, the roof line height should be determined by the surrounding buildings, not by the standard city limit of 35 feet. Taller houses would mean smaller footprints, and the result would be massing much more like the houses built pre-1940. A taller slimmer profile would also provide more, not less space for landscaping while allowing higher ceiling heights per floor. Other by-laws, such as the one that rewards underground garages with extra square footage, should also be reviewed as they serve only to bulk up new houses. Another aspect that needs to be added to the ODP is the need for informed enforcement; a bond against the approved development building and landscape plans seems to be the only way to stop the proliferation of added features such as chain link fences on top of granite walls, or impervious surface in excess of the approved amount of paving. Vancouver’s heritage houses are almost too recent for us to see their distinct regional take on North American styles such as neo-Tudor, Federal Colonial, & Arts and Crafts. Shaughnessy is a valuable record of our city, and its unique regional response to architectural styles; it deserves to be kept for future generations.

Richard Keate

- *Keate & Co. Designers, Principal*
- *Former Chair of First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel*
- *Heritage Commissioner*

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Heritage in the Spotlight

Dear Members,

Once again February played host to Heritage Week, an annual opportunity to celebrate our heritage. Each year heritage groups and committees rally together to create awareness of our built culture and history. From advocacy groups to city hall, there were many groups providing opportunities to celebrate the week. This year's theme was the heritage of public places and spaces.

Heritage Vancouver was proud to celebrate our local heritage and help promote sustainable reuse of buildings in Gastown with a tour of Warehouse Studios, Bryan Adams' recording studio on Powell Street. With two tours book ending heritage week, Heritage Vancouver has proven once again that heritage need not be mundane. Following in this year's theme, the Oppenheimer Building, which now houses the studios, was also home to Vancouver City hall for 3 years in the late 1800's.

Heritage week also saw Paul Merrick speaking as a guest of the City of Vancouver, and our friends at the Vancouver Heritage Foundation celebrating the official launch of the True Colours heritage colour card with Benjamin Moore Paints. The True Colours program helps restore heritage homes to their authentic colours.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Heritage week and made it so successful. Lets look forward to next year!



Scott Barrett:
President, Heritage Vancouver

Heritage Vancouver Focus of Student Research

Heritage Vancouver Society has caught the interest of university student Eunice Joseph. A Community Economic Development (CED) student at Simon Fraser University, she has a passion for history that has led her to a research project focusing on heritage preservation in the community.

Why heritage? *"I've always been fascinated with architecture."* Eunice replied with her trademark smile and laugh. *"I remember visiting castles in Europe and temples in South India and Malaysia. I used to imagine how those buildings were constructed, who worked on them, and what were the people like that lived in that era?"*

The research paper will focus on how a community organization, such as Heritage Vancouver Society, was formed with the interest of advocating for the preservation and restoration of heritage sites, landscapes and buildings. Although not specifically about the built heritage of Vancouver, this project explores a very different side of the society.

If you would like to comment on why you are interested in Heritage Vancouver Society, you could e-mail her at emjoseph@sfu.ca. More details on her research paper will be featured in a future newsletter.

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 _____

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Individual: \$25
 Supporting (no newsletter) \$5
 YES
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 Corporate: \$50
I would like to volunteer
 Donation: \$
 Patrons: \$100
for Heritage Vancouver

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