

HERITAGE
Vancouver
 Newsletter



One Grandview highlight is 1020 Victoria Dr., 'a fascinating amalgam of 19th century building tastes.'



This Honeyman and Curtis design at 2530 Point Grey Rd. is one of Kitsilano's more imposing Craftsman houses.

Walking through our past

Kluckner and Atkin present a step-by-step guide to heritage appreciation

Vancouver Walks: Discovering City Heritage
 By Michael Kluckner and John Atkin
 Steller Press Limited
 \$16.95

Review by Greg Klein



It was back in the early 1990s that Michael Kluckner and John Atkin first created walking tours for the Heritage Vancouver Society. In 1992 Kluckner, the HVS founding president, and Atkin, the founding vice-president, published their initial collection of tours, *Heritage Walks Around Vancouver*. Last month they came

out with *Vancouver Walks*, which offers 28 such tours, expanding on the authors' work as heritage advocates, historians and urban explorers. No matter how well you know this city, you'll find this book a great way to further your acquaintance.

With a few exceptions for theme-based tours, each chapter focuses on a different neighbourhood. The obvious choices — the districts best known for their architecture — are of course here. Nor is the North Shore ignored. Lower Lonsdale, Ambleside and Caulfeild each rate a chapter. But Vancouver's east side gets a surprising amount of attention too. And quite rightly — the onslaught of *Vancouver Specials* was by no means absolute. The Arts and Crafts haven overlooking the inlet at Beacon Hill, the relics of rural life along Wales Street

see page three **Vancouver Walks**

HERITAGE
Vancouver
PRESENTS

The St. Roch
A Talk by James Delgado
Tuesday, June 17, 7 p.m.
Vancouver Maritime Museum
1905 Ogden Avenue
Admission \$5 HVS members,
\$10 non-members

Heritage Vancouver's June event takes us to a local landmark that made its mark at sea.

James Delgado, executive director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, will discuss the St. Roch, its history, and efforts for its restoration and maintenance.

Built in 1928 for the RCMP by Burrard Drydock, the schooner was a police supply ship serving the Arctic. Sixty-three years ago this month, it set sail from Vancouver to Halifax, the first ship to travel the Northwest Passage from west to east. Its return voyage in 1944 made it the first to travel the passage in both directions. A 1950 journey through the Panama Canal was another first — the circumnavigation of North America. But the 104-foot, mostly wooden vessel is best known for asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Far North. It's now the focal point of the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

James P. Delgado, FRGS, RPA has written nearly 30 books, including *Across the Top of the World: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (1999) and *Dauntless St. Roch: The Mounties' Arctic Schooner* (1991). As an underwater archeologist, he has taken part in several shipwreck expeditions, including the polar exploration ship *Maud* in the Canadian Arctic, and is the first maritime archeologist to dive to the wreck of the *Titanic*. He's currently host of National Geographic International's television series, *The Sea Hunters*.

Don't miss this opportunity to break the ice while celebrating Vancouver's maritime heritage.

For late-breaking info on other summer events, visit www.heritagevancouver.org

VANCOUVER MODERN



Photo: R. Moffatt 2000

Vancouver's year-round jungle

by *Robert Moffatt*

Bloedel Conservatory
Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver
Underwood, McKinley, Cameron,
Wilson & Smith 1969
Thorson & Thorson
(structural engineers)

Crowning Little Mountain in Queen Elizabeth Park, the Bloedel Conservatory encloses plants and birds from all over the world within its triodetic dome.

Patterned after Buckminster Fuller's innovative geodesic domes, the space frame of tubular aluminum is 140 feet in diameter and 70 feet high at the centre, and is infilled by 1,500 triangular Plexiglas bubbles in 32 shapes and sizes. The conservatory was a gift to Vancouver by lumber baron Prentice Bloedel and his wife Virginia.

Within the dome, pathways wind through three distinct ecological zones: tropical rainforest, subtropical forest and arid desert, all maintained by precisely controlled tem-

perature and humidity. The thickly enveloping trees and vines, the soft rush of water into Koi-filled pools, and the chattering of brilliantly coloured birds enhance the exotic environment year-round.

The large concrete plaza adjacent to the conservatory covers one of two major water reservoirs atop Little Mountain and displays renowned sculptor Henry Moore's bronze *Knife Edge — Two Piece*, one of Vancouver's most important public artworks. Reflecting pools, wood decks and covered post-and-beam walkways frame viewpoints and provide shelter on the otherwise exposed expanse. Perched cliffside is the Seasons in the Park restaurant (1972), also designed by Underwood, McKinley, Cameron, Wilson & Smith. The lush gardens below were begun in 1949 from abandoned basalt quarries and are a favourite spot for wedding photographs.

from cover **Vancouver Walks**

and the erratic clutter of strange buildings and stranger streets in Cedar Cottage all have stories to tell.

It takes special people to tell those stories. Kluckner and Atkin focus on architecture, but in a historical context that brings out all sorts of related info. Buildings are examined independently and as part of the streetscape, the streets as part of the neighbourhood and the neighbourhoods as part of the city.

Well-established architects, obscure builders, eccentric occupants and lots of ordinary people share space in these pages. We hear of flamboyant characters like the bootlegging Reifels, politician Gerry McGeer and revolutionary Sun Yat-Sen. But there's also a wistful sense of a time when a family's sole breadwinner, possibly a clerk or labourer, might afford to buy a house or even have it custom-built.



The clutter of residential, retail and industrial buildings along Commercial Street, south of Commercial Drive, barely hints at the neighbourhood's remarkable past.

Interesting too is the way the same buildings can reflect different social mores over time. Some examples are the pre-1913 houses of Stephens Street between Sixth and Seventh, "one of the best heritage enclaves in the city," Kluckner writes. "In the 1970s this was a 'funky' street — most of the houses divided into suites and rooms with Beetles and Volkswagen vans lounging against the curb — but it has since been restored and gentrified, having come full circle back to its respectable middle-class beginnings."

Not so the rundown buildings at Seventh and Fir — not yet, anyway. They were built in 1906 and 1907, but their "deteriorated state" better reflects the hippie era that Stephens Street left behind.

As for Vancouver's natural landscape, most of it is gone for good. A streetcar service along Broadway went bankrupt soon after its 1891 inception, partly due to the cost of bridging seven gullies between Granville and Main.

The authors encourage keen observation to help readers spot a fine Craftsman buried under stucco, see how "the hint of a turret still lingers in the roof line" or notice "that jog in a road or strangely angled building that hints at a story yet untold."

While celebrating what's survived, the book doesn't ignore what we've lost. Not all of it has been to demolition or renovation. Although it's probably unintentional, the Downtown Eastside chapter has some disturbing implications.

That can encourage an almost ethereal sense to this description of the view along Sixth Avenue, east from Arbutus: "With the old houses, stone walls and period fences, the gravel swales on the edge of the curbless roads, and the railway crossing, the tableau is very evocative of old Vancouver."

For some readers, neither the Kitsilano idyll nor the Downtown Eastside jungle really reflects old Vancouver. But that fact just emphasizes the diversity this city offers urban explorers.

The great value of Vancouver Walks is its celebration of heritage, in the more obvious places like Mole Hill, Barclay Square, Delamont Park and Stephens Street, in the less pretty but still fascinating areas like Strathcona, Gastown, Chinatown and Yaletown, and throughout the rest of the city in some supposedly uninteresting areas. As Kluckner and Atkin discuss architecture for its esthetic and historic value, buildings come across as living monuments. Readers get a strong, and ultimately encouraging, sense of historical continuity. That might be the best reason for advocating heritage issues.

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www.heritagevancouver.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 28 How to Look at Neighbourhoods: A Multicultural Perspective. Vancouver Museum. 10 a.m. Members free, non-members \$5.

Ongoing

Walking Tours with John Atkin. The historian and heritage advocate has a full slate of events. Many take place Wed. evenings & Sat. mornings. www.johnatkin.com

Building a Province: Early Architects of B.C. An exhibit based on Donald Luxton's book *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. AIBC, 440 Cambie St. Mon.-Fri. to June 20. 8:30-5 p.m. Free. (604) 683-8588

AIBC Walking Tours. UBC student Mona Jahedi leads tours to six neighbourhoods. 440 Cambie St. Tues.-Sat. to Aug. 31. 1 p.m. \$5. (604) 683-8588, ext. 306

Roedde House, 1415 Barclay St. Tours through this 1893 Queen Anne Revival house Wed.-Fri., 2-4 p.m. \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, under 12 free. Phone (604) 684-7040 to confirm, arrange group tours or ask about Sunday teas. Afterwards, walk along Barclay Heritage Square.

Irving House, 302 Royal Ave., New West. Tours through an 1865 home Tues.-Sun. & holiday Mondays, 11 to 5 p.m. By donation. The adjacent museum is open the same hours.

London Farm, 6511 Dyke Road, Richmond. Tour an 1880s house and 4.6-acre farm. Sat.-Sun 12-4 p.m. From July-Aug. open 7 days, 10-4 p.m. By donation. Call (604) 271-5220 for group tours or teas. Nearby heritage sites include Steveston village.

Walking tours of Westminster Quay until Aug. Maritime and industrial heritage. (604) 521-8401

Downtown Historic Railway takes passengers between the Science Centre and Granville Island. \$2 adults, \$1 kids. Sat.-Sun. & holidays 12:30-4:30 p.m. (604) 665-3903

Lower Lonsdale Lookabout walking tours in North Vancouver. Weekends, July-Aug. Free. Call (604) 987-5618 to register.

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Great opportunities for summer fun at Heritage Vancouver

Dear Members,

As we prepare our summer and fall programming schedule, as well as many other events, we need your help more than ever. A great variety of plans are underway to ensure our city's heritage is celebrated throughout the summer.

This year Heritage Vancouver will once again be participating in the Vancouver Pride Parade. This is a tradition of sorts for us, and it is now that we have to start preparing. Heritage Vancouver has participated in the Pride Parade for the last two years and has received great feedback about our involvement. Although this is a truly fun event, it also requires a great deal of work and volunteer effort. This is an excellent opportunity to participate not only in Heritage Vancouver, but also in Vancouver's largest parade. Gay, straight or in between, all members of the heritage community are encouraged to help us show support for the diverse community groups within our city.

If you would like to volunteer with Heritage Vancouver for the Pride Parade, you can leave a message for Jennifer Pecho, our programming chair, or Donald Luxton, member at large, at (604) 254-9411. As always, if you would like to volunteer in other capacities we can refer you to the society's various committee heads. Here's to a great summer,



Scott Barrett
President, Heritage Vancouver

REPORT CARD



Photo: Greg Klein

No concession?

Kitsilano Lifeguard Station and
Concession (1305 Arbutus)

The Kitsilano Lifeguard Station and Concession was built in the mid-1960s to replace an earlier wooden structure on the same site. The present facility, resembling an airport terminal with control tower, is a familiar landmark and a delightful example of expressive modernism.

Though not readily apparent, the lifeguard station and concession are separate buildings. The concession is supported by a series of interconnecting Y-beams suggesting flight, tree branches and even Gothic arches. This structure is repeated in the design of the observation tower (visible through the tower's plate glass windows).

In a revenue-generating deal, the Parks and Recreation Board plans to replace the existing structures with a two-storey facility accommodating a full-service restaurant on the second floor.

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: _____

Individual: \$25

Family: \$30

Donation: \$

Supporting (no newsletter) \$5

Corporate: \$50

Patrons: \$100

YES

I would like to volunteer
for Heritage Vancouver

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