

**HERITAGE**  
**Vancouver**  
 Newsletter



Commodore Lanes opened on September 8th, 1930 and is still operating today.

# HERITAGE VANCOUVER GOES BOWLING



Vancouver Bowling News (Dec 1945, a monthly containing information submitted by league secretaries, proprietors and third party bowling articles.

**T**he Commodore Ballroom has long been a popular night spot. One of the finest Art Deco buildings in the city, it was opened in 1931 by the Reifel Brothers. The second floor ballroom is loved by generations of Vancouver residents as the location of numerous concerts, dances and events. Less well-known is a hidden gem at the lower level — the Commodore Lanes and Billiards. After seventy-three years, this intact interior is still used for its original purpose — a five-pin bowling and billiards hall.

On Thursday November 25th, at 7 p.m., join Heritage Vancouver for an evening of fun, history and bowling at the Commodore Lanes, 838 Granville Street. Darrell Baily, involved in bowling for almost 35 years, will speak for half an hour, then we'll bowl until 8.30. The cost is \$10 for members, and \$15 for non-members (this price includes shoe rental).

See you there.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### HERITAGE VANCOUVER EVENTS

Please note that there are no Heritage Vancouver meetings at Vancouver Museum until 2005. Our events are:

November 25/7 pm/Commodore Lanes,  
838 Granville Street

December 9/HV @ Roedde House,  
1415 Barclay St.

### TALKS & LECTURES

November 25/7:30 pm  
VHS @ Vancouver Museum  
Colin Preston, Reuben Ware & John Atkin,  
*Early Film Footage of our City*

November 26/7 pm/VPL 350 W. Georgia St.  
Transit Museum Society (TRAMS),  
*Recollections: A Cinematic Look at  
Vancouver's Early Rail-Transit Years*  
Free; no reservation required.  
Phone: (604) 331-3603

### TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

November 20/10:00 am/*Secrets of the City  
Series* Members \$15; Non-members \$20  
+GST. Pre-registration: 604.734.7368. Meet  
at Vancouver Museum.

November 21/10:00 am/*Nihonmachi* — A  
walking tour Tickets: 604.734.7368. Meet @  
487 Alexander Street. A tour of Vancouver's  
Powell Street District to place Puccini's  
Madama Butterfly in the context of  
contemporary Japanese life in Vancouver  
in the early 20th century.

November 27/7-11:00 pm/ *Neon Lights*  
Members/students \$20; Non-members \$25 + gst.  
Pre-registration: 604.734.7368

December 11/10 am ~ 4 pm/1st Annual  
*Open Vancouver: Sacred Sites Walking Tour*  
See <http://www.heritagevancouver.org/> or call  
604.264.9642

### HOLIDAY HERITAGE

The holiday season provides a great opportunity to visit some of our landmark buildings and historic neighbourhoods. As well as visiting one of the craft fairs, take a walk in the neighbourhood; see Michael Kluckner and John Atkin, Vancouver Walks: *Discovering City Heritage* (2003). Of particular interest are  
November 18-21/11:00 AM-9:00 PM/Hycroft Manor, 1489 McRae Avenue, Vancouver/

November 19-21/Eastside Culture Crawl  
Hours: Friday: 5 pm to 10 pm; Saturday & Sunday  
11 am to 6 pm. See: <http://www.culturecrawl.bc.ca>.

November 20 through December 12  
Saturday & Sunday  
Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street see <http://www.heritagehall.bc.ca/contentframe/events.html>.

November 30/10 am-3 pm/ Aberthau Craft Fair,  
West Point Grey Community Centre,  
4397 West 2nd Avenue.

## Roselawn Funeral Home Endangered

The Roselawn Funeral Home (1661 East Broadway near Commercial) may soon be six feet under — in a landfill site. This exquisite 1941 Mission-style building occupies four lots recently purchased by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. As the structure is not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, it has no protection against demolition. Although there is currently no development application, we assume Coastal Health intends to replace the existing structure with a new health-related facility.

Roselawn deserves better. By comparison, the former Imperial Oil Service Station (Malone's) on Cornwall, also Mission style, is listed as a 'B' on the Register. Roselawn, an East Broadway landmark, is at least as architecturally significant as Imperial Oil and should be in the Register. As such, it should be eligible for heritage incentives. As the structure occupies only a portion of the site, there may be many potential options for incorporating the architecturally significant portions of the building in a new development. Not only will we watch Roselawn closely, but we will also press for a major overhaul of the Heritage Register.

Roselawn Funeral Home photo back page

## Obit: Watson Street Houses Torched

On the night of September 27, in an appalling spree of destruction, a part of Vancouver's early history was lost. A spectacular blaze, deliberately set by evicted tenants bent on revenge, destroyed three workers' cabins on Watson Street, near the intersection of 12th and Main. An elderly woman still inside one of the burning houses had to be rescued. The near-riot conditions kept fire crews from getting near the cabins, which were the last of their kind in Mount Pleasant.

Heritage advocates considered the unique structures an essential piece of Mount Pleasant's neighbourhood history, particularly given the unusual

nature of Watson Street, which is more like a lane than a regular street. The cabins were dilapidated but "quirky and cute", examples of the 'hidden Heritage' described in the July/August 2004 HV newsletter. Their listing on the Heritage Register as 'C' category meant that any proposal for demolition required review by the City's heritage staff. The City could have offered incentives to keep and restore them; indeed, the Vancouver Sun (2/10/04) reported that heritage staff were optimistic that two cabins could be restored and converted to townhouses. Because the structures were among the

last examples of the small, utilitarian workers cottages common in Vancouver's early days, the City had asked developer Robert Wilson, a veteran of heritage conversion projects in Yaletown and Gastown, to consider the feasibility of saving the houses as part of a larger site assembly at that intersection.

That opportunity is now lost. Perhaps this act of anarchy could not have been anticipated, but it raises yet again whether further measures can be taken to prevent the loss of heritage through arson? The second in Mount Pleasant this past year.

## Woodward's

As reported earlier, the City narrowed the Woodward's development proposals to Concert/Holborn, Westbank and Millennium. Heritage Vancouver went on record as strongly favouring the Concert/Holborn proposal for its heritage conservation, respectful interventions, and appropriate scale of new development. HV could not support Westbank's and Millennium's token heritage retention, facadism, and insensitive interventions — not to mention spouting towers of 30+ storeys in a low-rise historic area. September 29 was decision day: unfortunately, Council chose Westbank; its key criteria were “measuring and assigning financial risk and uncertainty.” While recognizing that the Concert/Holborn proposal “Represented the most preferred heritage and urban design and architecture scheme,” the City concluded that Concert/Holborn “posed the biggest concerns in the area of financial performance.”

Despite the outcome, we believe that Heritage Vancouver's advocacy influenced Council, which instructed Westbank to “improve heritage Conservation” in its detailed design development. Moreover, we were not alone: Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee (GHAPC), while favouring Westbank, also called for increased heritage preservation. We understand that negotiations have already begun. Heritage Vancouver will continue to advocate for an increased level of heritage retention, an improvement in the design of interventions, and reduction in the height of the proposed tower. Letters to Council will articulate our concerns.

## Nat Bailey Stadium

Nat Bailey Stadium is under threat — the \$28-million curling rink for the 2010 Olympics, along with other proposed recreational facilities, could push the stadium into oblivion. The Park Board website posts 6

Riley Hillcrest Park Masterplan options: four retain, 2 demolish the stadium. Approximately \$3 million will bring the stadium up to modern building codes. Will this tip the balance against preservation? We hope not.

The numerous ‘Friends of Nat Bailey’ are protesting demolition. Their arguments have convinced the Park Board to direct staff “to work with the Friends of Nat Bailey to study the viability of preserving [the] Stadium to enable it to continue to serve the community.” Apparently the Park Board favours a preservation option that builds the curling rink in a current parking lot on the northwest side. The final vote will come in 2005.

## Water and Carrall Redevelopment Proposal

A large piece of Gastown's Water Street frontage and five pivotal buildings could be compromised, if developer Robert Fung has his way. On the west is the three-storey Terminus Hotel facade (1886), with its distinctive bay windows and pedimented parapet — all that remains after a tragic fire. On the east, at Maple Tree Square, is the Alhambra Hotel (1886/7), built by Victoria real-estate speculator George Byrnes and designed by architect Elmer H. Fisher — one of Vancouver's best examples of Victorian Italianate design. In between the Terminus and Alhambra are the Grand Hotel, a 3-storey Victorian commercial frontage; the Cordage, a four-storey Edwardian commercial building; and the ‘Garage’, a two-storey poured concrete building with simple Art Deco inspired details converted into a small retail court in the 1970s.

The good news is that the burnt-out facade of the Terminus Hotel will be incorporated into a new building. The bad news is the Grand Hotel will become but a facade. A new structure will be built behind both the Terminus and Grand

facades. Demolition of the Grand Hotel is apparently necessary because of existing rot in the junction points, the unworkable nature of the existing small single rooms and, finally, the need to demolish the building to excavate for underground parking. The parking rationale is interesting, as heritage incentives allow for relaxation of parking requirements. Moreover, the structural argument suggests a disturbing precedent: most Gastown buildings have a long history of neglect and probably have some structural decay. Is facadism the only solution? What do we mean by a preserved historic district? A district of facades?

The major issue involves proposed additional density. Fung proposes adding three storeys above the Grand facade, one of which would not be set back. Two additional (set back) storeys are proposed for the Terminus. The additional bulk, partly visible from the street and highly obtrusive from the west, would overwhelm the existing facades. The proposal also includes the addition of a one-storey glass atrium on top of the Alhambra, and three additional floors on the Garage. Under the previous zoning (kept on the books to appease Gastown property owners), Fung is entitled to build to a full height of 75 feet, with no set back, so the City's heritage planners are under some pressure to accommodate the current proposal.

HV believes that adding more floor space to the Garage is better than piling too much density on the Terminus and Grand sites. The Garage, a simple, exposed concrete building with a broad 50-75 foot frontage, can take additional height without looking clumsy. The additional height would reinforce the ‘sawtooth’ pattern, perhaps with the upper storey set back to reduce apparent height. We'll keep you posted.

## WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

It is a great honour to be elected to serve as the President of Heritage Vancouver. As one of the founding Directors of the Society, it has been my pleasure to work closely with all past Presidents, starting with Michael Kluckner. Our other past presidents, John Atkin, Jo Scott-B, Susanna Houwen and Janet Leduc, have all left a personal stamp on the society throughout the last 13 years. These are big shoes for me to fill, especially when Vancouver's unprecedented growth is putting enormous pressure on our fragile heritage resources.

Heritage Vancouver is **your** voice for preservation. I need your help and support to succeed in our mandate to advocate and educate about the value of heritage preservation. I look forward to the challenge of acting on your behalf.



Donald Luxton  
President Heritage Vancouver

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Roselawn Funeral Home

Photo: Richard Keate

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[www.vanmuseum.bc.ca](http://www.vanmuseum.bc.ca)

## Join Heritage Vancouver

Membership valid one year from date of issue. Members receive a monthly newsletter and reduced rates for tours and other activities.

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

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