

HERITAGE Vancouver N e w s l e t t e r



Pantages Theatre interior



HV Treasurer Karen Russell and President Don Luxton with President's Fund donation cheque



Salsbury Drive houses circa 1930

The Voice of Built Heritage

October 20, 2005 was a big day for Heritage Vancouver. At our Annual General Meeting — and First Annual Gala event — the heritage and architecture communities got an insider's look at our new neighbourhood programs and fundraising campaign. After wine and food, catered by board member Doug McKay, the main event began with our always-brief AGM, led by John Atkin. President Don Luxton then presented Heritage Vancouver's strategic plan, developed over the past year by the Board of Directors.

First are three initiatives to ensure that Heritage Vancouver is "the voice of built heritage" in Vancouver:

- **LINK (Local Increase in Neighbourhood Knowledge)** — the goal is to increase knowledge and awareness of local heritage at a community level.
- **HELP (Heritage Emergency Local Program)** — the intent is to become the heritage resource for community groups requiring immediate assistance to preserve endangered local landmarks.
- **Landscape Branch Program** — the aim is to broaden our activities to include cultural landscapes of significant historical connection to the city.

These exciting initiatives will integrate a broader audience into the heritage community and improve our capacity to advocate on behalf of built heritage. Our programs will support City initiatives such as the updating of the Register on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis, and community initiatives such as the Friends of Salsbury Garden.

Then there was more exciting news! The Board has a plan for supporting and funding the new initiatives. First, HV now has an Executive Director, Janet Leduc. (Janet, a Past President of Heritage Vancouver, is focusing on grant applications and moving the organization forward with administrative tasks). Second, Patrick Gunn, a local graphic designer and heritage buff, has become our new webmaster and is redesigning the HV website to become the "go-to" site for heritage information and news in Vancouver. Third, but absolutely not least, we have started actively to raise money. Don kick-started the President's Fund with a donation of \$10,000, and has bequeathed 5% of his estate to Heritage Vancouver. (We hope not to see that money for a very long time!). Other longtime HVS supporters have made similar bequests. In addition, HV has received a \$5000 grant from 2010 Legacies Now and a donation from the Architectural Institute of B.C. So we're well on our way: these funds will support the advocacy and educational programs and initiatives of the organization, and help us remind people that "Demolition is Forever."

It is an exciting time to be a member of Heritage Vancouver. Our presence in the world of extraordinary rapid development in Vancouver is vital. We know that our role is significant — we need the support of anyone who believes that preservation must be central in the planning and development of Vancouver.

If you would like to contribute to Heritage Vancouver financially, and/or if you are interested in more information on bequests, please contact Janet at info@heritagevancouver.org. As well, we welcome the contribution of time from volunteers, to help out on committees or special projects. Please contact us for more information.

GOOD NEWS AND LOTS OF IT



Photo: Rowly Johnson

The Rand House then — January 2005

Houses, Gardens, Parks & Trees

Two 'B'-designated houses are being splendidly restored: first, a Craftsman, B-designated house at 2nd & Blanca, is a great success; congratulations to Betty Murphy who headed up the project. HV will be nominating it for a Heritage Award. The **Rand House** (995 Bute Street), named after Edward Ethelbert Rand, one of the building's early owners and the founder of Rand Bros. Real Estate in 1888, is another exciting restoration project for a Vancouver 'B' house. The suites, which are destined for executive rental, use reclaimed fir flooring and feature reclaimed heritage interior doors and trim. A 100-year old elm tree is also part of the heritage preservation. Tours are available; completion target is early 2006. The **Kogawa House** (West 64th Ave.), childhood home of Joy Kogawa, author of *Obasan*, has a reprieve: with support from the current owners, City Council granted a stay-of-demolition to end of March 2006. Preservation of this non-Register site, which includes heritage fruit trees, continues to enjoy strong support. The Writers' Union of Canada champions its preservation and conversion to a writers-in-residence retreat. The "Save the Kogawa House Committee" is forging ahead with fund-raising and the Vancouver Heritage Foundation is administering the Rescue Fund. Heritage Vancouver sent a letter to City Council, commending "the Committee for its efforts to secure and preserve this national cultural landmark." The **Salsbury Garden & Houses** site is still intact after the favourable decision by the Board of Variance in September. Since then we

have discovered that the two houses (seen below circa 1930) are BC Mills early prefab structures, a pedigree that greatly enhances their heritage value. As well, we are encouraged to hear that this site has attracted the attention of The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC). TLC has purchased historic urban sites elsewhere, most notably Victoria's Ross Bay Villa and the Abkhazi home and garden. The Parks Board has assured the Friends of Salsbury Gardens that it is still interested in purchasing the property. To date, the developers, the Niebuhrs, have not agreed to sell the property to the City. They have evicted the tenants and plan to do minor renovations and then temporarily rent the



Photo: Rowly Johnson

The Rand House now — November 2005

houses again. The Friends remain optimistic that the City will, in the end, acquire the property. A further note of cheer concerns **Firehall No.15**. Retention of the Firehall is an integral part of the Renfrew-Collingwood Community Vision, supported by a large majority of the residents. We understand the Park Board may be willing to consider moving the structure to adjacent Renfrew Park after all where it will continue its usefulness as a community building.

Commercial Buildings

We're very pleased with the news about The **Flack Block** (163 West Hastings), an important building in the Gastown/Victory Square area. Salient Group has purchased the property in order to restore it for retail and commercial use. The proposed Conservation Plan, which both GHAPC and VHC endorse, preserves the character, detailing, and built form of the building and restores a number of building elements that have been damaged or removed over the years. Finally, there

is agreement about the Conservation Plan for the **Wing Sang Building** (51 East Pender Street). The proposed measures incorporate much of the historic fabric including retention of the passageway, window conservation and storefront period restoration (specific pieces are still being developed), as well as consideration of re-opening "Market Alley" to its former public function. Most significantly, a number of the Wing Sang interiors, so significant to Chinatown's living history, will be retained. We believe that this proposal goes a long way toward "commemorating the rich history of the building and the Sang family's contributions." The future is looking slightly better for the **Evergreen Building** (1285 West Pender Street): as directed by City Council, heritage planning staff and John Laxton are exploring opportunities to save this "pioneering example of the greening of public buildings." The current proposal, endorsed by the Heritage Commission, is to designate the building, adapt it for residential use, and to add a lantern-like 4-or-5 storey addition atop the original structure designed by Arthur Erickson. Complicating matters, however, is Laxton's parallel development application to replace the Evergreen with a new residential tower designed by architect Peter Busby. On Nov. 7, the Development Permit Board considered this parallel application and approved it, withholding issuance of a demolition permit to allow the retention application to work through the process. Stay tuned!

Theatres & Hotels

Perhaps the best news all year is that the **Pantages Theatre** has been purchased by Worthington Properties with the intention of fully restoring the theatre to performing arts use. (Restoring the theatre's once resplendent ornamental plasterwork will be a major challenge, as the interior has seen extensive water damage in the past year.) Worthington has also purchased adjacent properties immediately to the west for a non-market/affordable housing development, and he plans to apply unused and bonus density to help fund the restoration. Worthington has assem-



Inside Pantages

bled an impressive roster of civic and cultural allies, led by City Opera and a coalition of potential resident arts groups. As well, the project to revive and restore the **Pennsylvania** (most recently called the Portland) **Hotel** (412 Carrall Street), is good news. This project, which has languished since mid-2001, has been revived with a new architectural firm. The plan is to restore the designated 'B' heritage building — located at a prominent corner in this pivotal area for the City's revitalization efforts — complete with its original turret. "The rehabilitated building will accommodate 43 self-contained supervised housing units for disadvantaged people from the immediate area. The ground floor layout is sensitively designed to accommodate the supervising lobby at the same location as the original hotel lobby, and retail/commercial use, with a restaurant extending into an areaway space at the basement level.

BAD NEWS

— AND THERE'S ALWAYS LOTS OF THAT!

It's been fun to lead with the good news in this issue of the newsletter. But this doesn't mean that all is rosy out there. It ain't! We're keeping our eyes on a plethora of endangered sites, many of which you know about but some of which are new. Here are the current hot spots!

Charles Dickens School — The good news is that a portion of the original school building may be retained — sadly not as a school, but for some other use. Key groups support retention of some portion of the school — the City's Urban Design Panel, the Vancouver Heritage Commission and the Development Permit Board. The bad news is that only part of the original 1913 building is being considered for retention.

Crime Lab — As we reported earlier, one of the earliest modernist commercial buildings in the City is in grave jeopardy. Currently occupied by the "Crimelab" restaurant, this 1940 wedge-shaped building designed by Percy Underwood will soon become a plaza fronting a new condo tower ironically named the "Flatiron". Even more irony, the developer was required to move the tower east of its originally proposed location because of complaints from nearby residents concerned about view blockage. This frees up the apex of the site, which would have left room for retention of the 'Crimelab' as a pavilion structure. Instead we get an architectural crime scene. Only hope: We hear Arthur Erickson is not happy about the proposed demolition. It's down to the 11th hour.



Pennsylvania Hotel

Photo: Vancouver Archives

Dufferin Hotel — we recently discovered that the Dufferin Hotel (Seymour and Smithe) is not on the Heritage Register. With the current downtown condo building boom raging unabated, this 1910 Parr and Fee hotel is vulnerable to redevelopment. The Dufferin also has period neon signage, including the city's last large-scale rooftop neon sign.

The Garage — A three-storey addition is proposed for the existing two storey unadorned concrete building, a 'C' on the Heritage Register, adjacent to the Alhambra (Deighton) building off Maple Tree Square. To preserve the internal courtyard space, the developer proposes to position the additional floors flush with the existing façade, rather than set back the addition from street-level sightlines. This proposed break with accepted

policy would set a dangerous precedent and would be visually obtrusive. A win-win solution would be a transfer of density to a site elsewhere in the downtown.

VGH Nurses' Residence — going, going, gone. . . except for the east-facing centre block, where the exquisite original 1950s interiors have been brutally and completely obliterated leaving only the exposed concrete structure.

Vogue Theatre — This 1940 Art Deco theatre — a designated National Historic Site — has been purchased by Allied Properties with the intent of converting the theatre to a supper club/cabaret. We fear the theatre's interiors will be irrevocably compromised in the conversion process, which involves removal of the theatre seating (to be replaced by tiers and tables) and installation of a commercial kitchen on the location of the existing stage.

Woodward's — The proposed Woodward's redevelopment appears to have gone from bad to worse, as revised plans sprout yet another tower, and there has been zero improvement from a conservation standpoint. Only the small original 1903/08 structure at the Hastings and Abbott corner will be retained, ignoring directions for an improved heritage response.



HV PARTY

Join HV to celebrate
the holidays.

Bring a friend!

Thursday December 8
Roedde House
1415 Barclay Street
From 5.30-8.30 pm.



Photo: Lindsey Donovan

A lovely time was had by all

The Age of Opulence

Imagine... the date is 1915, the Stanley Park Pavilion is newly built, and you are enjoying tea and an afternoon performance of music and song in the Stanley Park Pavilion Rose Garden Tea Room. Well, that is just the unique experience that Heritage Vancouver and Turning Point Ensemble offered on November 6. "The Age of Opulence" was the season-opening concert for Turning Point, illustrating perfectly the Ensemble's concept of combining music and architecture in a special manner. HV and Turning Point determined that the Pavilion was the right venue to recreate the 1915 ambience.

The afternoon began with a walking tour led by HV President Don Luxton. Then followed a 90-minute recital in the Pavilion that magically wove music and narrative. Featured were arrangements of early BC parlour songs, concert music composed by Vancouver's first internationally trained composer Jean Coulthard, as well as music of Ravel, Rachmaninoff, and Jelly Roll Morton — all featured guests in

Vancouver in the 1920's. Guest performers included soprano Heather Pawsey and trumpeter/pianist Alan Matheson.

The event attracted a standing-room-only audience and enthusiastic kudos. One participant wrote: "Very many thanks to everyone involved in putting together the Heritage walk and concert yesterday. I only heard about it by chance on the radio, checked out the website, and came — along with the proverbial 'cast of thousands'. Not only did someone do a great job organizing the weather, but the whole idea of putting such an afternoon together was wonderful. The talk was great, the concert was most enjoyable, and because of the huge number attending, the Pavilion looked and felt like a soiree in someone's rather large living room. Adding to the ambience, the tea and goodies really left me feeling I HAD stepped back into the Age of Opulence for a couple of hours (till I hit the traffic on Georgia Street on the way home afterwards)! Please give us more of the same. Kudos to everyone concerned!"

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