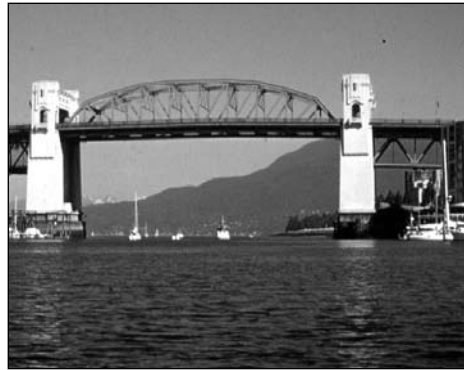


HERITAGE Vancouver N e w s l e t t e r



2007 TOP TEN ENDANGERED SITES

This is the seventh annual Heritage Vancouver Top Ten Endangered Sites, now recognized as the authoritative list of Vancouver's threatened heritage resources. It is, as always, difficult to keep the list to ten. Back this year in the No.1 spot is Burrard Bridge, now even closer to desecration by the City's current disregard. Also back are Malkin Bowl, the Vogue Theatre, St. Paul's Hospital, the iconic 2400 Motel on Kingsway, and our endangered schools. And, while we were so pleased to strike several sites — Evergreen, Kogawa House and Firehall No. 15 — off the list as saved, a host of new sites rushed into the vacant spots, including the apartments of South Granville, the 100 block of West Hastings, the 900-1000 block of Main Street, and old Japantown. Underlying the entire list is a significant theme — endangered districts and neighbourhoods.

1. Burrard Bridge

Completed in 1932 to provide a high-level crossing to the western neighbourhoods, Burrard Bridge is a triumph of civic architecture and a key gateway structure. Architects Sharp & Thompson, conscious of the bridge's ceremonial function, embellished the utilitarian steel superstructure with imposing concrete towers, art deco sculptural details, and torch-like entrance pylons that are a silent war memorial. Heavy concrete railings, originally topped by decorative street lamps, unify the parts.

Since the 1990s, the Engineering Department has brought forward repeated schemes — despite ferocious public opposition — to increase the capacity of the bridge. Over 15 years later, the pot still boils: in late 2006, the current Council voted
Continued on page 2 **Top Ten**

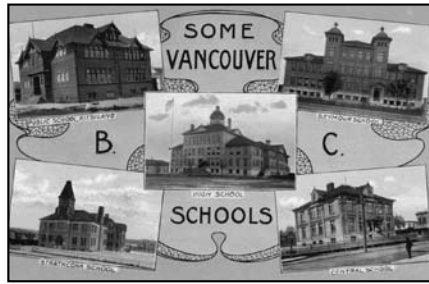
Please visit our website for more information and additional visuals of our Top Ten list. The website will be updated monthly to indicate any and all progress made in saving these sites.
www.heritagevancouver.org
And see the information about our third annual Top Ten tour on page 8.



to kill a proposed lane re-allocation trial to test an alternate solution. Instead this Council seems hell-bent on intrusive, expensive schemes favouring the single-occupancy car. Yet another consultant team is presently doing a detailed design of sidewalk expansion of this iconic Art Deco landmark.

The ill-conceived plans to widen the bridge’s sidewalks require — for support — massive cantilevered outrigger structures that would radically alter the bridge’s appearance by adding bulky appendages slicing horizontally across the bridge’s architectural features. The existing railings would be demolished to make way for new railings pushed out to the edges of the new sidewalks. Without its original railings, the bridge would lose its strong edges, and its defining architectural features would be isolated in a broad expanse of pavement.

For HV, the issues remain the same: how to accommodate increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians without compromising the heritage architecture and iconic status of the bridge. We are extremely disappointed that other, equally viable options are not being considered. We continue to urge Council to consider carefully the alternatives before rushing to implement a solution that will permanently disfigure this civic landmark. We continue to ask: “What will we show the world in 2010? A quick-fix hatchet job or a restored world-class gateway?”



2. Vancouver Schools

Dozens of Vancouver’s historic schools could be demolished under current plans to institute the provincial seismic mitigation program. Gearing up for the 2005 election, Premier Campbell promised \$1.5 billion, over 15 years, for seismic upgrades of the province’s schools. The Vancouver School Board (VSB) quickly requested about \$365 million to fast track the upgrades for completion in ten years. Although we welcome life-safety initiatives and especially seismic upgrading of heritage buildings, this program wields a double-edged sword. While promoting seismic safety, it doesn’t distinguish between heritage and non-heritage buildings. Also the School Board is



throwing into the mix costs unrelated to seismic upgrading. This means that, in virtually every case, it is more expensive to retain the heritage school than tear it down and rebuild a new school. Under current funding formulas, the new school is likely much smaller than the existing building and is usually of tilt-slab construction — of course it’s cheaper to demolish the heritage building. This is a lose-lose situation.

Concerns from community groups and HV prompted the VSB to undertake a heritage assessment of all schools with heritage status or potential. Although we have participated in this process, and commend the City

and the VSB for this comprehensive evaluation, this study in itself will not save any buildings. Dickens School, which has been featured in several HV Top Ten lists, is just the thin edge of the wedge. Currently at risk are — hold your breath — Kitsilano, Strathcona, Secord, Carleton, Gordon, Kitchener, Nelson, Queen Mary and Begbie. To quote the VSB: “Almost all of these schools will likely have partial or full replacement as part of their seismic upgrading.” Why? There is insufficient funding for the significant costs of structurally upgrading existing schools. This raises bluntly the questions of our commitment to heritage: do we value our public heritage buildings? and how much are we willing to invest to save them for future generations? It is now abundantly clear that, unless provincial contributions are increased or the program modified, only a small percentage of our historic schools will make the cut — so get ready for the wrecking ball in your neighbourhood.



3.

South Granville

Apartment District

The 15 square-block area — located roughly between West 11th and West 16th Avenues and Fir and Birch — is one of the only intact pre-WWII apartment neighbourhoods in the city, but only about 15 apartment blocks are listed on the City’s Heritage Register — an average of only one per block. Yet the district is chock full of handsome brick and stucco walkups, designed in period revival styles popular in the 1920s, including Tudor and

Spanish-Colonial Revivals, as well as the Moderne design of the 1930s and 40s. Many unrecognized sites are worthy of heritage recognition and protection: e.g., the stately 'Queen Mary' at 1465 W. 14th is a fine example of the lost art of architectural detail through the creative use of brick, in this case multiple shades of brick that form repeated verticals and arches, saw-tooth parapets, and other decorative elements. At the corner of 16th and Fir is the magnificent 'Willingdon Lodge,' looking as if it has just stepped off a plane from 1920s Los Angeles, replete with Mission parapets, tile rooflets, wrought-iron balconies and other Spanish-Colonial details, including an evocative bas-relief entrance off 16th Avenue. In the same block is the 'Casandra', a small but exquisite Tudor Revival with half-timbered gables, mullioned bay windows, and arched terra cotta entry. In fact, the entire 1500 block, north side of 16th Avenue, reads like an essay in period revival architecture and should remain as an intact streetscape — yet none of its addresses is on the Register. It's a similar story on other blocks — for example, the north side of the 1500 block W. 14th has only one of the richly detailed apartments listed. Ditto the south side of the 1100 block W. 12th, occupied entirely by the conjoined 'Montrose' and 'Randolph' apartments — urbane 'street-wall' buildings designed before zoning by-laws required front-yard setbacks.

As the area is zoned for high-density residential, sprouting condo towers now threaten its low-rise character apartments. The accelerating process is eroding the integrity and built form of the entire area: one particular developer has been steadily and aggressively buying up properties for redevelopment, most recently an apartment building near 11th and Birch and another in the 1400-block West 14th Ave. While neither building had heritage value, their acquisition and development underlines the obvious: South Granville has been discovered — and not just the unlisted sites are at risk. Last year, a large converted Craftsman house at Spruce and 13th was demolished for condos despite its 'B' evalu-

ation on the Heritage Register. Behold the coming tsunami: the area must be comprehensively evaluated, additions to the Register recommended, and zoning changes implemented to discourage towers and high density development unless part of a heritage preservation project. The time to act is now.



4. Stanley Park

Stanley Park has been big news since the catastrophic blow-down of trees during a recent windstorm. But the vulnerability of many of Stanley Park's cherished heritage landmarks goes unremarked: only two of its heritage sites have legal protection and the Parks Board has not shown any willingness to protect anything else. As the winds of expediency blow over the park, what will remain of its rich cultural and architectural legacy?

Malkin Bowl, no newcomer to the Top Ten list, is one of the park's many unlisted heritage sites. Built in 1934 with funds donated by W.H. Malkin, grocery wholesaler, former Mayor and Park Board Commissioner, in memory of his wife Marion, the Bowl, known for its crescent-shaped proscenium arch, is a rustic example of the Moderne style based on the design of the Hollywood Bowl. Originally designed as a band shell, Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) has been its long-term occupant. But the beloved landmark has been in serious danger



for several years: if Park officials and TUTS management have their way, Malkin Bowl will be demolished and replaced by a high-tech, telescoping, slab-mounted structure. The Park Board considers Malkin Bowl a liability — its isolated location and wooden construction are an open invitation to squatters, vandalism and arson. The Board's 2006-08 Capital Plan lists the Bowl for replacement but attaches a 'zero' dollar figure, suggesting that TUTS must raise all funds for replacement. It had been attempting to do so until a larger financial crisis emerged: last summer, TUTS cancelled its season due to financial difficulties, raising the possibility that Malkin Bowl could permanently lose its primary tenant. Without a tenant, and no heritage protection, the theatre could be levelled summarily as having no viable use.

- Other unprotected sites are vulnerable to inappropriate alteration and loss of original materials: a recent case is Brockton Point Lighthouse. The terraced viewing areas, staircases and walkways around the lighthouse have undergone a major repair and renovation. The terraced area has been altered to accommodate concession facilities and a 'faux heritage' retrofit has replaced the historic railings. Similarly, as part of a 'restoration' of the Rose Garden Caretaker's Cottage, the original siding was removed and replicated with seeming disregard for the value of the historic materials. Other unprotected sites are: the historic pedestrian bridge at the Lost Lagoon/Coal Harbour entrance to Stanley Park, slated for replacement. The bridge, framed by rusticated granite railings supporting post-top ornamental lamps, forms the familiar arched portal over Stanley Park Drive near the Rowing Club. Also unprotected is the Art Nouveau-inspired pedestrian bridge over Lost Lagoon Creek and the nearby 'twig bridge,' recently damaged by a falling willow. Also worthy of protection are the Beaux Arts stone balustrade that borders the seawall by the Rowing Club and the 1930s Pitch & Putt 'club-house', with its golfing motifs carved into the fascia boards.

It is clear that more than the wind

4 threatens Vancouver's beloved Stanley Park. A comprehensive heritage review of Stanley Park is imperative!

5. The 2400 Motel (Kingsway)

The future of the 2400 Motel, Kingsway's iconic landmark, is up for grabs. The 'Norquay Neighbourhood Centre' planning process, of which it is a part, focuses on encouraging higher density residential/commercial developments in the area around Kingsway and Nanaimo. Rezoning of the nearby Eldorado Motel for redevelopment as a high-density mixed-use project has already been approved. The 2400 site, which the City purchased some years ago as an investment for future re-sale as a development site, is probably next in line. When HV and local community groups expressed concern about the heritage value of the white stucco bungalows and the iconic '2400' neon sign, the City set up a stakeholder process to discuss preservation and/or development options for the future of the site. However, a favourable outcome is by no means assured, as all options — including demolition — are on the table.

The 2400 Motel, built in 1946, is simply the best of the post-war Kingsway auto-courts. Ten years earlier, completion of the Patullo Bridge and King George Highway had made Kingsway the final leg in a modern highway system linking Vancouver to the States. When the late 1940s and 50s ushered in an age of unprecedented mobility, auto-courts sprung up across North America to capture the market for highway-oriented accommodation. Typical of the early motels, the 2400 was built as a cluster of cottages on a lawn around a central office, with a freestanding roadside neon sign to attract passing motorists. An early example of the trend to modernism, the motel's Streamline Moderne design — most notable in its flat-roofed office building — evokes the post-war world of speed and personal mobility. The 2400 Motel has been scrupulously maintained over the years and is virtually unchanged. With savvy management, it could continue as such into the future, marketed internationally as a unique travel experience.



6. 900 to 1000 Block Main Street

When Westminster Avenue (now Main Street) and Westminster Road (Kingsway) provided the primary connection to New Westminster and the U.S. border, hotels and commercial establishments stretched south as far as the old bascule bridge that crossed False Creek before the land was filled to build the Canadian National (now Pacific Central) Station. An isolated vestige of that early development still exists south of the Georgia Viaduct, featuring everything from miraculously intact boomtown structures, such as the 1907 Main Sheet Works with its detailed wood façade, to substantial brick and masonry buildings such as the Ivanhoe (VanDecar) Hotel built the same year. The streetscape was — and still is — unique for its double-sided buildings designed to front both Main and Station streets. However, this stand of buildings is extremely vulnerable: over the last decade, large chunks of the 1000-block have been flattened, leaving numerous gaps in the east side of this historic streetscape. Unfortunately, the Heritage Register includes only a few of the buildings in the group. Without recognition, and the preservation incentives that accompany it, we will lose the remaining structures through abandonment and decay, or through redevelopment under the inundating wave of East False Creek condo towers. Even the Register buildings are vulnerable to development, particularly the small ones like Main Sheet Works.

The redevelopment process has already begun, and so far with a 'good news' story: abandoned for many years, the former Bank of Montreal (1929) at 906 Main — its Heritage

Register listing aided its retention — has undergone complete restoration for retail and commercial use as part of a wrap-around condo development. But other sites may not be so lucky: inexplicably, the Register does not list the B.C. Electric Railway Men's Quarters (1913) at 901 Main. This skinny brick tower is instantly recognizable just south of the Georgia Viaduct and has an important history as a sleeping facility for BCER motormen. Next door, and also unlisted, is the 1911 Cobalt (formerly Royal George) Hotel at 917 Main, the last hotel still retaining its rear passageway for receiving horses and carriages. Across the street, the boarded-up American Hotel has faced an uncertain future since revocation of its pub liquor license. Also unprotected is the Station Hotel at 1012 Main which, with its white glazed brick, Corinthian pilasters and intact cornice, is a perfectly preserved example of Edwardian commercial architecture — matching its 1911 architectural drawings in every detail. We fear that the end may be at hand for these sites unless a comprehensive review is undertaken and missing sites are added to the Register. Given the similarity to sites in Gastown, Chinatown, and the Hastings Corridor, we urge the City to extend the tax incentive program to include this historic portion of Main Street.

7. 100-Block W. Hastings Street



Once the commercial heart of Vancouver, the south side of West Hastings between Cambie and Carrall is one of the city's best surviving

turn-of-the-century streetscapes, with ten Register buildings, including the former Carter-Cotton (later Province newspaper) building. Since the 1993 closure of Woodward's, almost the entire block — dubbed "Vancouver's worst block" — has sunk into a deep malaise noted for its derelict buildings, boarded storefronts, and dodgy street scene. The empty turn-of-the-last-century buildings desperately need rescue before all is lost to decay and demolition. Among the block's treasures is the moldering hulk of the conjoined Ralph and Henderson blocks, featuring an important cast-iron façade designed by prominent architects Parr & Fee (1899). Abandoned for many years, the building, structurally compromised, could be beyond rehabilitation, as may well be the case of other buildings on the block, including the building that housed the once-popular Perel Tailors at 112 W. Hastings (later the Perel Gallery).

There are, however, signs of life: on the northeast corner of Hastings and Cambie, the heritage tax incentive program, recently extended to the Hastings Corridor, is helping to rehabilitate the rusticated-stone Flack Block. Just to the east, the new Woodward's complex will rise, regrettably, on the site of the historic department store but it will bring new economic life to the street. One block east, the 1907 vaudeville gem, the Pantages Theatre, will, it is hoped, be restored to its original glory as a performing arts venue. And the Ralph and Henderson blocks have new hoarding over their upper-floor windows, a signal of possible development interest.

We await with both fear and anticipation — new investment is urgently needed before decay becomes terminal. Yet how much of this precious streetscape will be saved if the economics of redevelopment trump the economics of retention, as happened at the Woodward's site?

8. St. Paul's Hospital



1081 Burrard Street

Political debate continues to boil around the issue of whether or not St. Paul's Hospital should be moved from its original site in downtown Vancouver to a completely different location in the False Creek Flats. If so, what happens to the venerable redbrick hospital building on Burrard Street, a landmark in downtown Vancouver?

The first St. Paul's was a wood frame structure built by the famed Mother Joseph in 1894, just eight years after incorporation of the fledgling city; a new, Renaissance Revival-style structure replaced it in the great Edwardian-era boom. The German-born architect, Robert F. Tegen, had worked in architectural offices in New York and other eastern cities before moving to Portland. Tegen's earlier work for the American Sisters of Providence made him a natural choice to design their new Vancouver facility. With a floor plan shaped as a cross, the hospital was built of red brick, banded at the base, with extensive terracotta trim and a pantile roof. Terracotta came from Gladding, McBean & Company in Lincoln, California, and the new hospital opened in 1913. Flanking wings were added between 1931 and 1936, designed by architects Gardiner & Mercer. The hospital was later greatly expanded to the side and rear.

St. Paul's Hospital is one of the city's most significant heritage buildings and yet it is not legally protected. Serious alteration or even demolition is a possibility. Providence Health Care has worked to maintain the core heritage building with new roofs and partial upgrades but significant challenges remain, including the need for seismic upgrade, additional space to handle projected patient volumes, and the need to provide modern patient-care

standards. If the hospital continues to operate in its current location, will the hard decisions sacrifice heritage? On the other hand, if the hospital moves, the fate of the historic structure is at best uncertain, as retrofitting a former hospital for new purposes would likely prove challenging.

9. Vogue Theatre



916-920 Granville Street

Heritage Vancouver continues to be concerned about the future of the Vogue Theatre — our civic treasure that is both a Vancouver Heritage Register A-listed building and a National Historic Site. This 1940 landmark, designed for the Odeon chain by architects Kaplan & Sprachan, is a magnificent example of the Art Deco style. The Vogue's towering prow-like signage etched in neon and topped by goddess Diana's golden silhouette, has been a defining image on the Granville streetscape for over 60 years. A herald of the new modern age, the theatre's crisp stylized architecture and streamlined forms provided both a glimpse of the future and a vicarious experience of Hollywood glamour. This message was carried through to the exquisite lobbies and the auditorium, and expressed with sinuous curvatures and detailed in fine woodwork and distinctive period lighting. Of particular note is the auditorium ceiling, an undulating swirl of stepped tiers back lit with neon tubing. The auditorium's sidewalls are finished in padded fabric mounted with stylized Diana silhouettes and flanked by murals painted by master decorator Ernest Prentis.

In recent years, the Granville Entertainment Group operated the Vogue as a live performing arts venue. During that time, the owners partially restored the theatre, including exterior



Heritage Vancouver Goes to the Penthouse

On January 17th, our members and friends soaked up sixty years of entertainment history at the Penthouse, Vancouver's Oldest Exotic Nightclub. This historic building on Seymour, in celebration of its 60th anniversary, was decked out with balloons and streamers to welcome the Heritage Vancouver crowd. Danny Fillipone, owner and son of one of the original owners, intrigued guests with his tales of the past – from Uncle Joe's VIP room with its wonderful kitschy green-flocked wallpaper and fifties lampshades, to the popular restaurant, the Steak Loft, with walls of photos reminiscent of the Penthouse glory days. UBC professor and author Becki Ross captivated the sold-out crowd with her riveting stories and anecdotes in her presentation, "The Shake, The Rattle, and the Pole: Vancouver's Striptease Past." To top off the evening, guests were treated to strippers evoking the heady days of nice but naughty Vancouver supper clubs, dance halls and bottle clubs.

Mark your calendar, Wednesday, January 16, 2008 for next year's event at the Penthouse. 2008 is bound to be a sell out as well.

repainting, neon replacement, and restoration of interior lobby finishes. Last year, news that the Vogue had been sold prompted fresh concern about the theatre's future. Gibbons Hospitality Group, the new owner, proposes to convert the theatre into a licensed 1,000-seat supper/entertainment club. Although the building clearly requires substantial investment and restoration, the proposed business model may require significant alterations or additions to the theatre's precious interiors, including replacement of the existing sloped theatre-style seating in favour of the stepped table-seating found in supper clubs and revue stages. The new owners have stated that the stepped seating would be removable, and that interior features would be protected by designation. The Vogue's future awaits a City decision as to whether to approve the liquor license that is central to the Gibbons business plan. Until that happens, considerable uncertainty remains regarding

the proposed level of conservation, what interior features will actually be retained, and whether intrusive additions are planned. On a positive note, the theatre would undergo complete structural and mechanical rehabilitation, including a seismic upgrade. Stay tuned!

10. Old Japantown –



Powell, Alexander and vicinity
It seems as if Japantown is fading away — without anyone caring or

noticing. This distinctive area, centred on the 300-400 blocks of Powell Street, was the community's historical centre. Thriving businesses lined these blocks. One landmark, the Tamura Building, also known as the New World Hotel, 394-396 Powell Street (Townsend & Townsend, architects, 1912-14), with its graceful sheet metal ornamentation, anchors one corner of Oppenheimer Park. Other, more modest buildings — with distinctive setback upper-floor balconies — were common in the area. Still remaining in the 400-block Powell is a remarkable stand — and highly vulnerable — of two-storey wood 'boomtown' frontages reminiscent of early Gastown and Chinatown before the great fire. The green space, originally called the Powell Street Grounds and later renamed Oppenheimer Park, has always been the focal point. During the Depression, the Vancouver Park Board declared Oppenheimer the only park where political, religious or other views could be publicly voiced. In the 200-block Jackson, a cluster of early houses still borders the east side of the park, and on the south-west corner of the park at 385 E. Cordova, the Sisters of Atonement occupy a house reputed by some to be the oldest in the city.

In 1942, Japantown was devastated when the federal government interned the Japanese and expropriated, and later sold, their property. Businesses and assets were either closed or confiscated. The formerly bustling enclave never recovered from the treatment it received during WWII. Perhaps the last building still used by the community, Japanese Hall, at 475 Alexander Street, is also the only designated heritage building on Alexander. The general lack of protection is worrisome, as vestiges of the street's 'other' history — at one time, Alexander was home to a number of 'houses of ill-repute' — still survive in the 500 block. Numbers 502 (a 'C' on the Register) and 514 Alexander are long, narrow turn-of-the-century structures with flat roofs, brick façades and bay windows. They are an oddity in Vancouver — a strange cross between house and apartment. Although the

Continued on page 8 **Top Ten**

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Heritage Vancouver would like to extend a special **THANK YOU** to the wonderful donors who supported our Society in 2006. It is your generous and continuing support that will allow us to achieve our mandate **To Protect the Built Heritage of Vancouver**. We are the organization that provides a voice for heritage in this city. We thank each and every one of you for your contribution.

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other 'houses' have been replaced by social housing or industrial buildings, other unusual structures still provide company, such as the Edwardian apartment buildings at 504 and 666 Alexander.

Over the past two decades, the accelerating decline of the Downtown East Side has hit Japantown particularly hard. The years of neglect have taken their toll and recently there has been a noticeable erosion of the building stock. If something isn't done — and fast — there will be nothing left. With heritage incentives available for Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street and Victory Square, we ask: "Why not Japantown?"

Credits

Photos: *Burrard Bridge, Main Street, St Paul's, Japantown, Vogue, Hastings Street, Penthouse*, Patrick Gunn

Vancouver Schools Postcard, Private Collection
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