

HERITAGE Vancouver Newsletter



Outriggers from below (Wrap-around)



Outriggers with 'Pinch Point' at towers



Deck level (note aluminum railings)



Outriggers (Wrap-around) option

EDIFICE WRECKED

The City's Engineering Services Department has finally released its vision of an improved Burrard Bridge — widened with outriggers that would hang 3.5 metres off each side. This widening will completely destroy the heritage integrity of our landmark Art Deco Burrard Bridge. In addition, the City has refused to attach a price tag to its proposal and is basically asking the public for a blank cheque. We have therefore taken the extraordinary step of releasing an estimated cost of this major intervention to the public. In 2000, the project costs were in the range of \$14.5 million; since that time the costs of steel and concrete have more than doubled, and construction costs have been soaring at the rate of up to 2% a month.

We did the math and concluded that a reasonable estimate is \$50 million in today's costs. Moreover, actual costs will likely be more by the time the project actually gets going and improvements that are desperately required to each end of the Bridge will drive the price even higher. Can you say "Fast Ferries"?

For over a decade, HV has actively participated in the debate about Burrard Bridge, supporting just about every other option that has been proposed — EXCEPT this widening. We continue to oppose this expensive, wasteful and horrific intrusion to the landmark Burrard Bridge and to support other options that preserve and celebrate this unique heritage resource.

ADVOCACY UPDATE



Photo: Mike Wong

Budget Rent A Car (aka 'Fido' outlet)

450 West Georgia

The former 'Fido' building at 450 W. Georgia — a 'B' on the City's Recent Landmarks Inventory but unfortunately not on the Heritage Register — stands vacant and boarded, facing an unknown future. The unique 'Streamline Moderne' structure, designed in 1948 by architects Watson & Baxter, deserves sensitive care. One of the earliest examples of the modernizing trend in Vancouver, it is notable for its striking cylindrical sign pylon, stainless steel fascia, horizontal banding, curvilinear surfaces and extensive plate glass. With much of the site presently a car lot, it should be possible to build on the lot and retain the existing structure.

Firehall No.15

Last year we celebrated when City Council instructed staff to report back with options to retain the historic Firehall, either as part of an expanded new facility or for community use. To our (and the Renfrew-Collingwood community's) dismay, the staff report dismissed Council's instructions as fiscally and operationally impractical. The Report recommended demolition of the existing structure and, at best, construction of a replica. Since then, HV, the community, City staff and others have explored alternative options to address outstanding issues such as Fire Department operational issues, heritage impacts, and financial considerations. Agreement on incorporating the existing Firehall on the current site was elusive. Subsequently, City staff presented a replication scheme for consideration by the Heritage Commission. The Commission could not support replication and, with no other alternative, recom-

mended some form of commemoration. The community supports moving the Firehall to the Fieldhouse location in Renfrew Park, but the Park Board is so far not receptive. Meanwhile, the historic building is covered in tarps due to water leakage caused by lack of roof maintenance.



Photo: Bob Hare

Heatley Block

In order to fulfill its promise to the Strathcona Community Plan, the City recently purchased a site for the Strathcona Library. Unfortunately, the site chosen is Heatley Block, a stucco 1920s character building at East Hastings and Heatley. While not on the Register, the Heatley Block — including two early houses on the property — is highly valued by the community. We hope that either an alternative library site can be found or the existing structures can be configured to incorporate the library.



Photo: Patrick Gunn

Maxine's (aka Balthazar)

1215 Bidwell at Davie

A developer is proposing a high-rise condo tower on this large B-listed site that includes the storied Maxine's, notable for its beautiful Mission-style façade. A key issue is the active restaurant/club use wrapping onto Bidwell, which creates a rare sense of urbanism not often experienced in this town. The developer has met with neighbouring residents, but so far no application has been filed. We encourage the City and the developer to

explore options to incorporate the lively and long-standing restaurant/club venue.

St. Paul's Hospital

Providence Health Care met recently with community groups to propose a 'two-site' solution for the future St. Paul's Hospital. Main hospital operations would be moved to the proposed new state-of-the-art hospital in the False Creek Flats; other health care functions would remain at the current St. Paul's site and the historic Burrard Building would be restored. We are cautiously optimistic that this story may have a happy ending!

The Schools

This spring, the Vancouver School Board, City staff and consultants concluded a heritage evaluation of Vancouver schools. The purpose was to inform decision-making around the retention or demolition of those schools slated for seismic upgrade. Heritage Vancouver provided commentary, asking the City to reconsider schools undervalued in the process, particularly Modernist schools from the post-1940 era. The public consultation process is now underway on a school-by-school basis*. At high and immediate risk are Strathcona, Kitsilano, and many others. But, regardless of their heritage evaluation, all schools are threatened by the skewed provincial funding formula that favours new construction.

**Please note: volunteers are needed to represent Heritage Vancouver at these meetings.*

2400 Motel

The City of Vancouver and its consultant have now held several meetings regarding development options for this iconic Kingsway auto court. Having purchased the site some years ago for re-sale as a development property, the City wants to maximize its return and sees significantly increased density on the site as the means to achieve this. Currently, three options — Full Retention, Partial Retention, and Redevelopment — are up for consideration. Heritage Vancouver is participating in planning discussions to advocate for heritage retention on this site, and we await the City's next report regarding feasibility of the various options.



Photos: Mike Wong

Yaletown Houses

Our worst fears are coming true: the Yaletown houses are truly “going, going, gone.” Among Vancouver’s earliest houses — some built as early as the 1880s — the last holdouts are disappearing rapidly and without a trace. Recent demolitions include 909 and 1078 Richards, 1052 Seymour, and, most recently, an

identical pair of homes at 1083 and 1087 Richards. The last occupied house on Richards (1062) has been sold, is boarded up, and awaits a similar fate. Few of these houses were or are listed on the City’s Heritage Register. Yet they all merit retention as a record of the city’s earliest residential development. Their value cannot be underestimated and urgent action must be taken. Heritage Vancouver has written the City of Vancouver to call for the immediate evaluation of ALL remaining historic houses in the downtown peninsula for inclusion in the Register.

Heritage Vancouver Presents



Thursday, Sept. 20th

Brent Toderian, City of Vancouver Director of Planning.

A Vision for Heritage

7.00 pm Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut St.

Admission: Non-members \$5.00; HV Members free.

No pre-registration required.

Heritage Vancouver welcomes Brent Toderian, Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver, to its September meeting and his first public presentation on heritage since becoming Director in 2006. Following his presentation will be a conversation on various heritage interests; the future direction of the Heritage Density Bank; heritage conservation and EcoDensity, and accommodating cyclists while enhancing the iconic Burrard St. Bridge.

Thursday, Oct. 18th

Heritage Vancouver Society

AGM & Reception

7:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut St.

Admission: Non-members \$5.00;

HV Members free.

No pre-registration required.

Following the election of officers, President Donald Luxton will introduce special guests and exciting new initiatives for the upcoming year. The evening is an opportunity to mix and mingle with old friends and colleagues while enjoying a wine and hors d’oeuvres reception.

Policy Alerts

EcoDensity Initiative

The City’s EcoDensity Initiative, launched in June 2006, focuses on options to address climate change by increasing the housing density in existing neighbourhoods. The recently released EcoDensity Charter outlines the general implementation directions. While opportunities to create and transfer density could provide needed tools for heritage conservation in single-family neighbourhoods, the proposed sweeping zoning changes alarm heritage advocates and neighbourhood groups. Increased zoning allowances threaten already approved Community Vision plans, contemplate townhouses and multi-family developments along all arterials and around residential parks, and propose infill homes on existing single-family lots. As well, the revised neighbourhood zoning would permit additional densities outright. Unlike the existing heritage bonus density, or bonus density for housing and cultural facilities etcetera — which must be earned by providing a public benefit — EcoDensity would simply be built without providing any other public benefit. This threatens to undermine the very basis of heritage and other incentives programs, because developers may no longer need the bonus density incentives. Of equal concern is the anticipated frenzy to re-develop entire established neighbourhoods, because the current proposals do not specify what happens to heritage and character stock when new construction is proposed. For example, it appears that an infill proposal for two houses on

a lot need not retain the existing house. In addition to the risk to heritage houses, valued character neighbourhoods are up for grabs. This is a potential threat to the entire Heritage Register, as the evaluation of heritage structures is significantly compromised when their surrounding context is removed. As we have written to Mayor Sullivan and Council, “heritage conservation is a creative and valuable way to reduce Vancouver’s ecological footprint, not an impediment. For every building that is conserved and repaired, rather than demolished and replaced by new construction, the lesser the impact on landfills and global energy consumption. By adopting a strategy of rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, the City of Vancouver would not only advance the ecological goals of the EcoDensity Charter but would also secure added value in economic and social benefits.”

Transfer of Density

At its July 26 meeting, City Council placed a six-month freeze on density transfers for most heritage rehabilitation projects, pending further study of the transfer policy. Moreover, the policy study will use the funds previously earmarked for the Heritage Register Upgrade — which is now postponed for six months. This is disturbing news: density transfers are a key financial incentive available for heritage projects. Without them, many projects will either not go forward or go forward without heritage retention components.

PLEASE NOTE

Effective October 19, membership rates will increase as follows: Individual: \$35; Family: \$50. Be sure to renew your membership on or before Oct 18th to benefit from the current lower rates!

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's September and school's in — if it's still standing. There's little good news to report on the School Seismic Mitigation Program — it steam-rollers ahead, threatening to make rubble of many of our historic neighbourhood landmarks. Unless the provincial funding formula is radically altered, the construction of new, smaller, utilitarian structures will always appear cheaper than rehabilitation. Meanwhile, despite the City strike, ominous things continue to stir at 12th and Cambie. At the last minute, Open Houses on the Burrard Bridge widening were cancelled — perhaps to avoid the appearance of slamming the outriggers through when no one was looking. We have gone public over the spiralling costs and will continue to oppose this gross intrusion on our Art Deco landmark. In other news, Council put a 6-month freeze on the Density Bank — our most effective and successful preservation tool — ironically triggering concerns that the Bank is filling up too quickly. A new study on that issue will delay the long-awaited Heritage Register Upgrade for six months or more. Heritage Vancouver has its work cut out, so stay tuned as we unveil our new communication strategy, which will be more responsive to evolving situations. We have a great fall program and look forward to seeing you at our September 20th event, a lively discussion with the City's new Planning Director, Brent Toderian. See you then.

Sincerely,
Don Luxton
President Heritage Vancouver

Heritage Vancouver Thanks Its 2007 Donors

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The Vancouver Museum Store

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Open Tuesday-Sunday 10-5
1100 Chestnut St., Vancouver
(just over the Burrard St. Bridge)
tel: 604-736-4431 ext. 387
www.vanmuseum.bc.ca



Photo: Janet Leduc

Councillor Suzanne Anton chatting
with HV President Donald Luxton

Community Supports Heritage Vancouver

Vancouver City Councillor, and Council Liaison to the Vancouver Heritage Commission, Suzanne Anton again this year hosted at her home a gala Garden Party and Fundraiser on behalf of Heritage Vancouver. This year's event attracted an even wider and more eclectic group of individuals, politicians, professionals and corporations who share an interest in heritage. Our thanks go out to this diverse group of movers and shakers in our city both for their sincere interest in and financial support for the work of Heritage Vancouver. Such individuals and events are essential to achieve the goal of protecting and celebrating the built heritage of our great city of Vancouver.