



P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y3, (604) 254-9411

Attention: Mayor and Council,
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

April 15, 2004

Dear Mayor Campbell and Council

Re: Imminent and Unnecessary Demolition of PNE Livestock Building

We are writing to protest the demolition of the PNE Livestock Building. As outlined in our March newsletter, and further featured in our April newsletter, the Livestock Building has national significance for its history as a marshalling facility for the internment of Japanese-Canadians in 1942.

In addition, the Livestock Building is also architecturally significant, both as a superb example of the Streamline Moderne style and as part of the grouping of fireproof concrete structures at the PNE built between 1929 and 1940, three of which have already been preserved within Hastings Park (The Forum, The Gardens and Rollerland).

Designed by architects McCarter & Nairne (also known for the Marine Building and the Main Post Office) in 1939, this was a massive addition to the original Livestock Building (H.H. Simmonds, 1929) which still stands as the northwest corner of the current structure. In tandem with the Streamline Moderne Garden Auditorium, the Livestock Building is one of the city's the best surviving examples in this genre. Ironically, its sleek streamline detailing and striking columned portico are rarely seen because the rear of the building faces the Fair. The front façade faces the racetrack and Miller Walk, at one time the Fair's main axis. Now obscured by a metal walkway and overgrown plantings, this neglected facade is one of the glories of Hastings Park.

The City is currently in the midst of a public process to determine the possible continuation of an annual fair in a greener Hastings Park. A continued fair raises the potential for retention of facilities previously slated for demolition in the existing Hastings Park Plan. The planned demolitions were predicated on the assumption that the PNE would be re-located elsewhere in the region. Depending on the outcome of the current process, an annual fair might well require livestock accommodations. Alternatively, the Livestock Building could be retained for year-round community uses, and would be compatible with a revised vision for Hastings Park. But to demolish any structures at this juncture would prejudice the outcome of the public consultation and seriously compromise the integrity of the process.

Despite the obvious heritage issues in the visioning process and our previous involvement in the Hastings Park Plan, Heritage Vancouver has not been invited to participate as a stakeholder, although our members did attend the recent Ideas Fair held at the Agrodome. We added our comments to those of many others advocating the retention of the Livestock Building, the Roller Coaster, and other landmarks. The current process is not well-served if any demolitions implementing old directions occur prior to completion of public consultation. Therefore we request your written assurance that no structures will be removed until after Council adopts its revised Hastings Park Plan.

Please remember that ***demolition is forever***.

We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours Truly,

Donald Luxton
Director, Heritage Vancouver Society
For the Heritage Vancouver Heritage Advocacy Subcommittee

cc. Sue Harvey, Senior Social and Cultural Planner
Michel Desrochers, Research Planner, Parks & Recreation
Richard Keate, Chair, City of Vancouver Heritage Commission
Gerry McGeough, Senior Heritage Planner