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# HERITAGE VANCOUVER

## NEWSLETTER

Encouraging the study and  
understanding of heritage  
preservation with a local and  
regional perspective.

Volume 13 Number 1

January 2004

# The future of Woodward's

## Will city council turn against its own heritage principles?

by Susan Boissonneault

**T**he Woodward's building means different things to Vancouverites: some consider it a memorial to the neighbourhood's former glory days while others consider it crucial to that neighbourhood's regeneration. But we at Heritage Vancouver believe it is yet another building of historic and architectural significance that's at risk. With redevelopment proposals now before city council, decisions affecting this landmark will determine the next phase of the building and its neighbourhood, for better or worse.

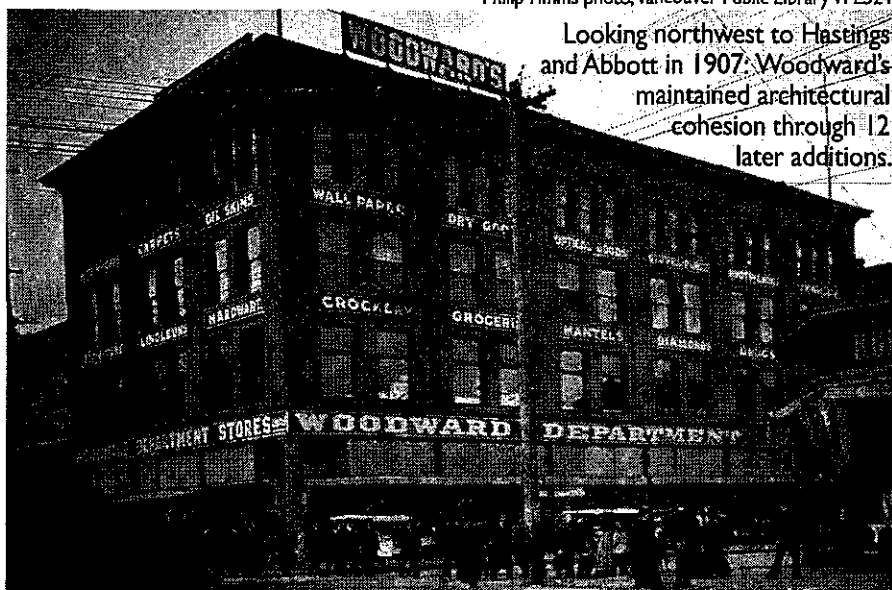
Woodward's has anchored the district since the building's construction in 1903, when Charles Woodward chose the northwest corner of

*By even considering the demolition of any part of this designated building city council contravenes its own heritage standards and guidelines.*

Hastings and Abbott to build his second department store. His first location, on Main Street, couldn't keep up with his thriving business. Despite 12 additions over the years, reflecting the success of this Canadian institution, the building maintains a strong sense of architectural cohesion. Of particular merit is its size and massing, the heavy timber frame in the oldest parts of the building, the consistent red brick facade and the red neon "W" on an 80-foot steel tower.

Since Woodward's bankruptcy in 1993, the building has remained vacant while a variety of development proposals came and went. The city designated Woodward's a heritage building in 1996, and purchased it in 2003. Last May the

city relit the neon "W" as a sign of commitment to the building's redevelopment and the neighbourhood's revitalization. Unfortunately, this commitment doesn't necessarily extend to the structure's preservation. The city's request for proposals omitted specific provisions for retaining any or all parts of this landmark, stating only that the city is dedicated to "[taking] advantage of heritage opportunities" and "[celebrating] the symbolism of this historic building." These principles do not mandate preservation,



Philip Timms photo, Vancouver Public Library VPL5248

Looking northwest to Hastings and Abbott in 1907, Woodward's maintained architectural cohesion through 12 later additions.

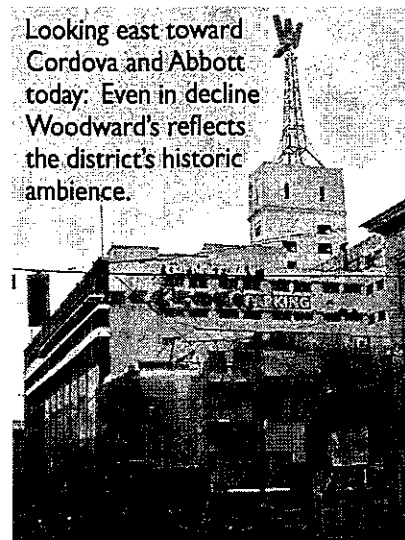
but appear to reflect a desire to use the concept, rather than the reality, of heritage to help promote the building.

As a result, many of the proposals currently being considered do not respect the heritage character of the building or the streetscape. The building stands as an anchor on the Hastings, Abbott and Cordova streetscapes, a landmark for Vancouver and a symbol of a prosperous commercial past. There's serious risk of degrading the district's overall historic ambience if the building's exterior, or major parts of it, are demolished.

By even considering the demolition of any part of this designated building city council contravenes its own heritage standards and guidelines.

For updates, visit the City of Vancouver's Woodward's page at [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/corpsvcs/realstate/woodwards/index.htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/corpsvcs/realstate/woodwards/index.htm)

Looking east toward Cordova and Abbott today: Even in decline Woodward's reflects the district's historic ambience.



Jan. 15 **Heritage Vancouver presents: New Money for Old Things.** See page 4 for details.

Jan. 21 **Gertrude Lawson House and the Lawson Family.** Discover the architectural features and family history related to this designated house. \$5. 7 p.m. 680 17th St., West Vancouver. <http://wvma.net/public/index.html>

Jan. 21 **Where Did You Find That Photo?** Historian Archie Miller discusses the detailed close-ups he pulls out of archival photos. Free. 7:30 p.m. New Westminster Public Library, 716 6th Ave. (604) 526-6113.

Jan. 22 **From Opium Dens to Safe Injection Sites: A History of Drug Use in Vancouver.** Historian Catherine Carstairs brings her perspective to the Vancouver Historical Society. Free. 7:30 p.m. Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut St. (604) 878-9140.

Jan. 22 **Steveston: A Community of Fishers and Packers.** Historian Mitsuo Yesaki discusses the lively history of this fishing community. By donation. 7 p.m. Richmond Museum, 7700 Minoru Gate. (604) 231-6460.

Feb. 4 **The Carlu: A Jewel Restored.** Architects Michael McClelland and Scott Weir discuss their restoration of one of North America's finest examples of Art Moderne design, in Toronto's College Street Eaton's building. \$10 Vancouver Museum and Art Deco Society members, \$15 non-members. 7:30 p.m. Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut St. (604) 734-7368. [www.johnatkin.com/index.htm#wed](http://www.johnatkin.com/index.htm#wed)

Feb. 7 **How to Look at Neighbourhoods.** John Atkin explores some districts that aren't always associated with history and heritage. \$5 Vancouver Museum members, \$10 non-members. 10 a.m. Meet at the westbound 99B-line bus stop on Broadway at Willow. [www.johnatkin.com](http://www.johnatkin.com)

Feb. 12 **Old Friends: Revisiting Heritage Conservation in Vancouver.** Former city councillor Gordon Price looks back at heritage conservation during his 15-year term, reflecting on the politicians, developers and community groups who influenced policy. Free. Pre-register: (604) 291-5100 or [city@sfu.ca](mailto:city@sfu.ca). 7 p.m. SFU at Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings St. [www.sfu.ca/city/](http://www.sfu.ca/city/)

Feb. 14 **How to Look at Neighbourhoods.** A departure from his 99B-line tours, John Atkin leads this walk from New Westminster SkyTrain station. \$5 Vancouver Museum members, \$10 non-members. 10 a.m. [www.johnatkin.com](http://www.johnatkin.com)

Feb. 14 **Neon Tour.** Hop aboard a vintage bus with John Atkin for an illuminating look at Vancouver's neon nightlife. Then sample some traditional East End fare at Wally's Burgers. Prizes and give-aways. \$20 Vancouver Museum members and students, \$25 others. Bus leaves 7 p.m. from Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut St. Pre-register: (604) 734-7368. [www.vanmuseum.bc.ca/event\\_excursions.htm](http://www.vanmuseum.bc.ca/event_excursions.htm) [www.johnatkin.com/index.htm#wed](http://www.johnatkin.com/index.htm#wed)

Feb. 16-22 **Heritage Week.** Heritage gets hectic during seven days of events presented by societies, municipalities and museums throughout B.C. See our February newsletter or [heritagevancouver.org](http://heritagevancouver.org) for more details.

Feb. 19 **Heritage Vancouver Presents: Looking Back and Forward.** See page 4 for details.

See [www.heritagevancouver.org](http://www.heritagevancouver.org) for the Lower Mainland's most comprehensive list of heritage and history-related events

**mark your calendar**

## Ongoing events and attractions

**Hidden Treasures Tours.** Explore the depths of the Vancouver Maritime Museum basement, where 95 per cent of the museum's artifacts are stored. Tours take place most Tuesdays and Thursdays until end of April. Free. 4:30-5:30 p.m. 1905 Ogden Ave. Contact Marian Toft to pre-register: (604) 985-7566 or [donorrelations@vancouvermaritimemuseum.com](mailto:donorrelations@vancouvermaritimemuseum.com)

**Chinatown Walking Tours.** Tues.-Sun. 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. \$6 adults, \$4 seniors, students and kids. Chinese Cultural Centre, 50 East Pender St. Call (604) 658-8883 to confirm. [www.cccvan.com/](http://www.cccvan.com/)

**Sustainability 2003-2004.** A showcase of architectural design that integrates a viable economy, protection of the environment and social well-being. Jan. 9 to Feb. 20. Free. Mon.-Thurs. 9-5:30 p.m., Fri. 9-1 p.m. Architectural Institute of B.C. 440 Cambie St. (604) 683-8588. [www.aibc.bc.ca/](http://www.aibc.bc.ca/)

**Roedde House Museum,** 1415 Barclay St. Tour this 1893 Queen Anne Revival house. Wed.-Fri. 2-4 p.m. \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, students and children, free for kids under 5. Phone (604) 684-7040 to confirm, arrange group tours or inquire about concerts and special events.

**Irving House,** 302 Royal Ave., New Westminster. Tour an 1865 home. Sat.-Sun. 12:30-4:30 p.m. By donation. The adjacent museum opens the same hours.

**Fort Langley National Historic Site.** Take a one-hour tour of this restored 1840 HBC fort. Phone for tour times: (604) 513-4777.

**London Heritage Farm,** 6511 Dyke Rd., Richmond. Tour an 1898 house and 4.6-acre farm. Closed through Jan. 31. Starting Feb. 1 open Sat.-Sun. 12-4 p.m. By donation. (604) 271-5220.

VANCOUVER  
museum  
presents

**Unmentionables**  
HELD OVER!  
UNTIL JANUARY 25, 2004

**Unmentionables**  
A revealing look at the history of underwear

Torturous, luxurious, sexy or prudish, underwear can be all of these things (sometimes, all at once). From the waist-thinning corsetry of the Victorian era to the earliest known pair of sexy men's briefs, this exhibit takes us through the trends, trials and travesties of the garments that know us most intimately.

[www.vanmuseum.bc.ca](http://www.vanmuseum.bc.ca)  
1100 Chestnut Street,  
Vanier Park, Vancouver  
604.734.7368

On now until  
January 25, 2004

# Kits outraged by Y frontage

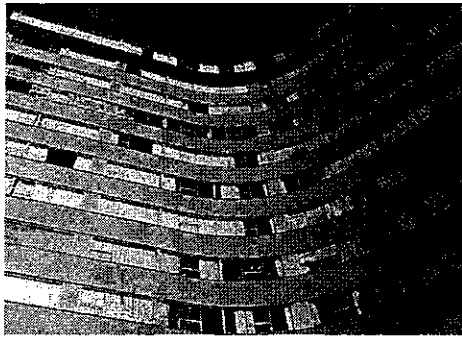


Photo credit: Docomomo.bc 2001

**Parkview Towers**  
1450 Chestnut St.  
Peter Kaffka 1960

In 1956 height restrictions were lifted for buildings in Vancouver's West End, and within a few years dozens of newly built apartment towers transformed the quiet residential neighbourhood into the highest-density area in Canada. Built across English Bay at Kitsilano Point, Parkview Towers was a particularly controversial extension of this growth. Prominent real-estate developer (and future Vancouver mayor) Tom "Terrific" Campbell obtained special rezoning for this Y-shaped tower, causing a furious public outcry over the intrusion of such an outscaled building into a neighbourhood of single-family homes and other low-rise buildings. The 14-storey tower's bulky massing and colour

## modern movement

scheme of glossy olive green and black did little to placate area residents. Development controversies in Vancouver have come and gone, but 40 years later Parkview Towers is still an isolated sentinel by the Burrard Bridge.

### References

Kluckner, Michael. *Vancouver The Way It Was*. Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1984 and 1993.  
Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor. *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938-1963*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1997.

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## A Marpole house evokes bittersweet memories

Despite being overshadowed by far more grandiloquent residences, a modest south Vancouver home has been attracting national media attention. The Joy Kogawa Homestead Committee wants the building, at 1450 West 64th Ave., designated an historic site and converted into a Japanese-Canadian cultural centre.

Writer Joy Kogawa lived there until she was six when, in 1942, her family was expelled from the coast along with others of Japanese ancestry. The federal government confiscated their property before selling it off at bargain prices. The house figures in Kogawa's 1983 autobiographical novel *Obasan*.



Last summer the house came up for sale, prompting Kogawa and some supporters to try buying it. They failed, however, and the new owner began renovations,

leading to fears that the home's character would be lost.

Following contact from the JKHC, city staff found the owner lacked necessary permits and issued a temporary stop-work order. Staff considered nominating the building for an "A" listing on the Heritage Register. But the Vancouver Heritage Commission now prefers to develop a long-term preservation plan with the new owner. Future inclusion on the Register remains a possibility. Meanwhile, the JKHC is collecting donations and still hopes to buy the house.

For more information, visit the JKHC Website at <http://kogawa.homestead.com/>

## Ottawa takes a tentative step towards commercial heritage

It's not the tax credit many heritage advocates had hoped for, but Ottawa's long-anticipated announcement of a \$30-million national heritage incentive program is exciting news indeed.

The federal government, through the Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund, will now reimburse up to 20 per cent of eligible costs for the rehabilitation of commercial properties, up to a maximum of \$1 million. Parks Canada administers the fund, which will have an annual budget of \$10 million over three years.

To qualify, a property must be on the Canadian Register of Historic Places and be owned or leased by a taxable Canadian cor-

poration. Once a property is accepted in the program, all rehabilitation and conservation work will be subject to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places. This new incentive program is linked to the Historic Places Initiative which the federal government administers with provincial governments to create Canada's first Register of Historic Places.

Thirteen B.C. municipalities are now working with the Heritage Branch of the provincial department of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services in order to identify properties for B.C.'s first register. This will become part of the Canadian Register of Historic Places.

Ottawa defines an eligible property as "a structure, building, group of buildings, district, landscape, archeological site or other place in Canada that has been formally recognized for its heritage value." Considerations include "esthetic, historic, scientific, educational, cultural, social or spiritual importance, or significance for past, present or future generations."

Although \$30 million over three years isn't significant on a national scale, it does represent progress. It's hoped that this program will give Ottawa greater confidence to launch tax credits for the rehabilitation of commercial heritage properties — a program that's been so successful in the U.S.

## A true tribute to False Creek

Sure, you know Granville Island, the Roundhouse and the world's narrowest building. But what about the buildings under the Granville Bridge, the almost legendary Hogan's Alley or the powerfully beautiful Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church?

That's just to name a few of the sites along the False Creek Urban Heritage Trail. Yet you could circumnavigate the route any number of times without knowing what's been documented. There's simply nothing in place to mark this trail.

There is, however, an excellent 23-page downloadable guide, available from [newcity.ca/Pages/false\\_creek\\_trail.pdf](http://newcity.ca/Pages/false_creek_trail.pdf). Check it out and appreciate the fine work of Don Alexander, the New City Institute and others who have documented False Creek's history and heritage for walkers, cyclists and anyone else who wants to amble through our past.

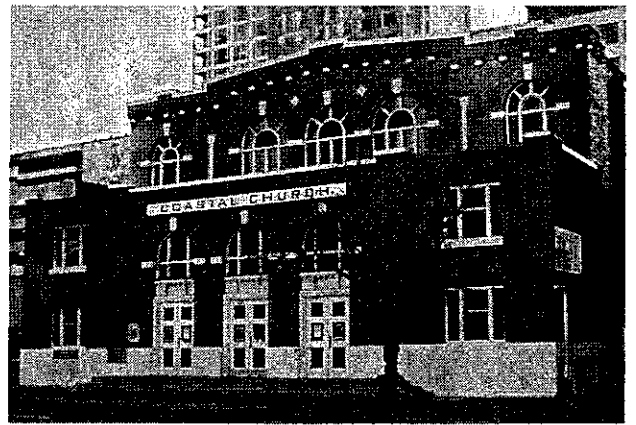
An update on a specific heritage structure

## report card

**First Church of Christ, Scientist (Now Coastal Church) 1160 West Georgia St.**

Built in 1918, this Heritage "B" listing features a Second Renaissance Revival design and an intact music hall. An organ of classical design stands as the church's centrepiece. Pews form a half-circle arrangement and clear arched windows on the upper portion of both the Georgia and Alberni sides provide plenty of light.

The building's special value comes from the integral relationship between its interior and exterior. After being bought by a devel-



The Georgia Street entrance: Classical features in a forest of glass and steel.

opment corporation, the church was placed on our 2002 Top 10 list. But development may spare the building's interior and exterior under a proposal for a mixed-use tower that would be one of Vancouver's tallest.

Interior photos can be seen at: [www.coastalchurch.org/webphoto/](http://www.coastalchurch.org/webphoto/)

## B.C.'s heritage gets some tender loving cash

The new \$5-million B.C. Heritage Legacy Fund comes under scrutiny at Heritage Vancouver's Jan. 15 event. Now that Victoria has delegated its heritage responsibilities, provincial money will be administered by a non-profit group co-managed by The Land Conservancy and the Heritage Society of B.C. Bill Turner, executive director of TLC, will discuss the kinds of projects taking place, eligibility criteria, the viability of this new fund and the future of B.C.'s past.

This is a chance to hear directly from someone with his hand on the purse strings.

**And there are more events to come, the third Thursday of each month at the Vancouver Museum**

Thursday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m.

Looking Back and Forward

Here's a retrospective look at the many influential projects funded by the former B.C. Heritage Trust over its 25-year history, including some of the province's best restoration work. The future role of the province and Ottawa will also be examined, with a look at the Historic Places Initiative, an important new federal program.

**HERITAGE VANCOUVER**

presents

**New Money for Old Things**  
A presentation by **Bill Turner**  
of **The Land Conservancy**  
**Thursday, Jan. 15 7:30 p.m.**  
**The Vancouver Museum**  
**1100 Chestnut St.**

Admission free for Heritage Vancouver members, \$5 for non-members

We'll also learn more about the exciting work undertaken by The Land Con-

servancy. A conservation agency modeled on Britain's National Trust, TLC protects natural habitats as well as sites of historical, cultural or scientific interest.

So far unconfirmed is a possible speaker from the Heritage Society of B.C.

New Money for Old Things is part of Heritage Vancouver's current speaker series, The Mechanics of Heritage Preservation. Talks take place the third Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m., at the Vancouver Museum.

The museum galleries will also be open those evenings.

Thursday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.

Vancouver's Heritage Commission

This volunteer group advises city council on heritage projects and policy. Did you know they have influence in other ways?

Former commission chairpersons will offer insight into their work, their influence and the role of politics in heritage preservation.

Thursday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.

The Future:

Where Do We Go From Here?

Our final event in this series features a panel discussion with various experts on what the future holds for heritage in Vancouver and throughout B.C. and the rest of Canada.

Quite simply, this is about what's going to happen next.

**join us!**

Individual membership \$25, Family \$30, Corporate \$50, Patron \$100

Members receive a monthly newsletter, free or reduced rates for Heritage Vancouver events and a 10-per-cent discount at the Vancouver Museum Gift Shop.

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