

Final
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Coast Forest Products Association and Heritage Vancouver Supporting the Preservation of the Forestry Education Centre at VanDusen Botanical Gardens

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VanDusen's Botanical Gardens' Forestry Education Centre is a modernist, award-winning, historical and architectural masterpiece – and in danger of being demolished.

Built in 1976, it was originally known as MacMillan-Bloedel Place, named after its donor who wanted to promote understanding about the important role forests play in British Columbia's environment, culture and economy. However, in 2013, the Centre was listed as #1 in Heritage Vancouver's Top 10 Most Endangered Heritage Sites. Today it sits as a forgotten jewel hidden in VanDusen Botanical Gardens, quietly showcasing stunning natural and sustainable wood and stone throughout.

When Coast Forest learned last year that the Centre was slated for demolition, we joined forces with Heritage Vancouver and others like renowned writer and artist, Michael Kluckner to request that the Centre be restored and once again used for educational purposes. President and CEO Rick Jeffery wrote to Mayor Gregor Robertson pointing out the significance of this landmark by highlighting Vancouver's iconic public buildings and art donated by the British Columbian forest industry.

In addition to the Forestry Education Centre, landmarks such as: the Bloedel Conservatory, HR MacMillan Space Centre Planetarium, and Knife Edge Two Piece are all gifts to the people of Vancouver and British Columbia from forestry. Not only are they highly valuable in terms of replacement cost (combined estimate is \$200 million) but they represent a long and rich history forestry shares with Vancouver and the province.

Due to public support for the Centre, the City now has no immediate plans to demolish the building. This is good news, however, more work still needs to be done. There are currently no plans for much-needed upgrades and, if these don't come soon, the building will simply be demolished by neglect.

Recent discussions have expanded from city officials to industry and community groups in order to determine what could be the best use of this magnificent building going forward. Within these discussions, a point Rick made last year still resonates strongly with the group and guides much of the work, "Philanthropy isn't just for today. It is for today, tomorrow and for years to come."

To learn more about the Forestry Education Centre, visit:

Heritage Vancouver http://www.heritagevancouver.org/topten/2013/topten2013_01.html

A Walk in the Forest (Blog by Michael Kluckner) <http://awalkintheforest2013.blogspot.ca/>

Photos by Jason Vanderhill <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jmv/sets/72157632857884271/>