



## Heritage Vancouver

www.heritagevancouver.org  
info@heritagevancouver.org  
604 254 9411

309 - 268 Keefer Street  
Vancouver BC V6A 1X5  
Canada

October 20, 2020

UBC Campus and Community Planning  
Gerry McGeough, Director, Planning and Design  
2210 West Mall  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4

Re: Museum of Anthropology Great Hall Renewal DP19025

Dear Gerry McGeough,

Thank you for inviting us to several consultations this year regarding the university's plans to upgrade the seismic resiliency of the Museum of Anthropology (MOA). MOA is valued as a masterwork by Canadian architect Arthur Erickson and is considered to have important heritage value. The question of how to upgrade the building while retaining its heritage value is thought provoking and we appreciate the opportunities to provide input.

UBC's decision to rebuild the Great Hall and retain the appearance of the original space is an interesting one that puts attention on the role of reconstruction in heritage conservation. Under the traditional understanding, original building material is considered to be the physical evidence of history. There is a very basic tenet to respect the original physical materials of a building in order to ensure that the building's history and artistry is authentic. Therefore, professional heritage conservation guidance (such as Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines and/or the Venice Charter) tends to oppose reconstruction because of the loss of authenticity and the possible falsification of history. Instead, if alterations are needed, they should be distinguishable, acting as a record of the building's history over time.

Certainly, different circumstances will require different approaches. We understand that feedback from the Arthur Erickson Foundation has shaped the decision to rebuild a new version that looks like the original and that the Musqueam Indian Band has participated in planning meetings. At the virtual public open house in the summer, a museum representative also emphasized the importance of the intangible aspect of MOA: its use is a counterpoint to the loss of original physical material, especially its immense value as a means of holding and presenting the irreplaceable Indigenous cultural objects on display for visitors to learn from.

As discussed in our consultations, regardless of the different philosophies towards rebuilding historic places, we believe that it is crucial there be a comprehensive record of the original Great Hall to convey its time and significance. This record will need to differentiate it from the new rebuild, which will look the same, so that the public is aware of the two versions with two very different histories and meanings.

Since the original building will not exist to serve as a physical record, there will need to be innovative ways with which to perform this critical role in heritage conservation of keeping a record of place. We would be very happy to contribute input, ideas and support if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain', with a vertical line to the left of the first letter.

President, Heritage Vancouver