



Our work 2019



To the members & donors of Heritage Vancouver

We are growing, more focused, and dedicated to creating a diverse and inspiring future for city.

In last year's letter, I discussed some of the best practice approaches starting to make its way into local heritage and into the upcoming planned update to the City of Vancouver's aging heritage conservation program.

Meanwhile, the City of Vancouver's new Culture plan Culture|Shift: Blanketing the city in arts and culture includes a large focus on intangible heritage, reconciliation, and culture. While what all this will look like in heritage policy still isn't completely clear, what is clear is that heritage in Vancouver is and will be undergoing great change.

Heritage conservation has moved to issues beyond its traditional boundaries- sustainable development, climate change, equity, the housing crisis, and the spread of monocultures. There is also increasing attention to things that make places work that have traditionally been considered incidental.

Think about the retail aspect of the heart of Mount Pleasant, number one on this year's Top10 list. Not only is the form and the older

historic buildings important, but it's become clear that what makes the retail of Mount Pleasant Mount Pleasant is also tied to things like small local businesses, affordable rents, the nature of lot ownership, the range of demographic mix, and the diversity in the types of shops and services.

In our experience, there is a view that heritage has shifted to intangible heritage versus tangible heritage.

The dichotomy between intangible heritage and tangible heritage certainly does exist. But it is important to point out that this dichotomy was introduced in the heritage field as a corrective to include the things that the protection of great buildings did not protect or recognize.

What may be more useful for us is that we begin to care for the interrelationships between things that are built, and the human experiences, perceptions and interpretations that provide the context for why and how they are important.

Certainly, many of us can agree that we value places on our recent Top10 lists like **Commercial Drive, Dunbar Theatre, mansions in First Shaughnessy, Chinatown, Punjabi Market, the Fairmont Building, False Creek South, Powell Street, and South Granville** for more than the buildings themselves (which at times may not be well

known or well understood). And to protect these places as places will require a variety of different approaches in addition to building preservation and restoration.

A different way of thinking about what is happening in heritage is to think of it as a shift in focus from what we can observe to include more fully how we understand and experience it. All of this change is certainly not new, it's just happening here now.

Given these changes, you should know that we have been preparing for them.

Around four years ago, we started work updating our understanding and formulating our guiding principles in anticipation of the local shift in heritage and update to the city heritage program.

After our facilitated day-long board workshop two years ago, we adopted our current guiding principles to position us for the changes ahead. We continue to build upon and clarify these principles as we experience real-life events in heritage that prompts us to live these principles.

We have invested a lot of hard work, energy, and time over these four years to ensure that Heritage Vancouver is well positioned to deal with this shift.

Early in 2020, there will be another facilitated day-long board workshop where we will solidify our organizational strategy for the

next few years and translate our guiding principles directly into strategic actions.

For those interested, we will also be introducing **Reading Room** next year. These will be get togethers with those interested in learning and thinking about how we apply these “new” concepts to situations in our city.

As stated last year, First Nations and heritage is a major theme. To help us start our journey for relationship building and learning, we took an opportunity with Heritage BC's Taking Action program to help us build capacity and have access to resources where we can work towards diversity, equity and inclusion. We will report more on this next year.

Unknown to many of you are those who are dedicated to helping us with our administrative work and helping deliver ongoing programming.

Here I would like to especially thank Haroun, Ben and Annie. Haroun has been with us for over two years but has left for London for graduate studies. Ben, has been with us for close to a year and has been taking over for Haroun. And Annie, who after returning from graduate school in London, is willing to help us out with her time. Perhaps we have been able to create an organizational culture where we are able to have good and dedicated help from Haroun, Ben and Annie. Nonetheless, we are very fortunate to have them.

The following pages will detail what we have been involved in this year. These activities and their composition—whether obvious or not—are all a part of a larger strategy to grow and focus Heritage Vancouver into being an independent, sustainable, knowledgeable, and relevant organization regarded for being a leader.

2020 will see us continue with refining how we do things better—this is particularly true of Shaping Vancouver, our tours, and the Top10.

There will also be some new advancements such as our work on **1221 Thurlow Street** (and perhaps some new projects) as well as more purposeful effort on recent endeavours like Our Living City.

Our intention is for these to make marks—some deeper than others—in pushing us forward bit by bit.

We are proud of our vision, direction and efforts and feel that we make an outsized contribution despite being a small organization.

We hope you feel the same and will continue to support us in our efforts to contribute to heritage and culture across the city.

Thank you.

Bill Yuen

Executive Director,
Heritage Vancouver Society
December 2019

Cover photo Ben Geisberg

2019 A summary of our work

Top10 Watch List of Endangered Sites

The 19th year of Heritage Vancouver's Top10 list once again made it onto the cover of the Vancouver Courier the week of June 20.

Large scale planning programs currently underway such as the Broadway Plan to deliver the subway could have major impacts on the qualities that people depend on, love and appreciate about a number of neighbourhoods. The Heart of Mount Pleasant and the other Broadway Neighbourhoods -number one and two on the list- are key areas that are beloved for the combinations of small local businesses, streetscapes, public gathering spaces, older buildings, varied demographics, and more affordable spaces.

Number 4 is Dunbar Theatre which is an important neighbourhood gathering space with a social function. Much like Chinatown which has been on prior Top10 lists, Punjabi Market, number 5, is an invaluable part of the city's diverse history, culture and commercial identity. These four places all have a very contemporary heritage aspect to them because they are directly tied to our lives today.

The Fairmont Building and Powell Street, (Paeru Gai), a central part of the Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, raise interesting heritage questions around use, acknowledgement and public memory. City staff are exploring options to relocate the Vancouver Heritage Register "A" listed Fairmont Building as a part of reconciliation. The building



currently sits on the Heather Street Lands but should it be moved successfully, its use and role in public memory and public consciousness require much attention. Powell Street has immense historic meaning to the City and yet it has no specific heritage area planning to bring focus on the initial settlement by the first generation of Japanese immigrants, the expulsion during the Second World War, and its importance today to the variety of people who reside, visit and depend on the area.

This year's accompanying bus tour was once again a success and we would like to thank in particular Angus McIntyre for driving the bus for us once again. The list is possible through the hard work of the Action Committee and George, Anne, Jan, Stewart and Jurian all made it out to speak to the sites that they had prepared for the list.

Special appearances by Danielle of Mount Pleasant Heritage Group, Gulzar from Punjabi Market, and the celebrated Don Luxton really added to the learning and enjoyment of this year's tour. This is a newer format for the tour and one that we find to be working quite well.

Since 2001, our Top10 Watch Lists:
www.heritagevancouver.org/top10-watch-lists

2019 Top10 Watch List:

1. **Heart of Mount Pleasant**
2. **Broadway Neighbourhoods**
3. **Maritime Museum (1959, 1966)**
4. **Dunbar Theatre (1935)**
5. **Punjabi Market**
6. **525 Great Northern Way**
7. **Fairmont Building (1912)**
8. **Legacy of Expo 86**
9. **Powell Street (Paueru Gai)**
10. **Protecting Vancouver's Heritage**

Shaping Vancouver 2019: What's the Use of Heritage

This was the fifth season of Shaping Vancouver and we are extremely proud of our continued relationship as a community partner with SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement. Our intention with Shaping Vancouver is to bring heritage into the broader societal conversation and we focused the 2019 season on how Vancouver's heritage can play an important role towards creating a healthy, liveable city that protects our cultural and social resources. In a city facing immense development pressure, heritage is a valuable tool in the planning process. It is an active part of shaping the city, rather than the common assumption that it is an instrument for preventing change.

Conversation 1 examined how culture-led plans can fulfill economic, social and cultural objectives set for areas such as Chinatown, Punjabi Market and False Creek Flats. We were grateful to have Alisha Masongsong of Exchange Inner City in the DTES talk about how Community Benefit Agreements could potentially help maintain heritage and cultural assets.

Conversation 2, *What do we do about Neighbourhoods?* explored characteristics that make up neighbourhoods. How we could engage with people and conduct difficult conversations around neighbourhood change and individual and neighbourhood responsibilities to the housing crises were major discussion points.

This was followed by *Is Heritage Relevant?* which looked at the state of local heritage and the changes it is facing. The issue of different identities that make up Vancouver and how our heritage and planning systems recognize and do not account for those identities was a major point of discussion.

Conversation 4, *What's Happening to Heritage*, closed off the season by how a new City-wide plan might carve out a larger role for heritage and integrate current heritage thinking into a wide range of the City's social aims.

For summaries, photos and audio recordings of these talks, visit heritagevancouver.org/resources/past-talk-synopses/

Beyond Pender

Our important partnership with the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC (CCHSBC) and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden continues with the second year of Beyond Pender. Beyond Pender presents contemporary and evolving perspectives of what constitutes heritage in general and as it applies to Chinatown, particularly with the current Chinatown planning process. It will also be exploring the UNESCO application process and the possibilities

of what UNESCO World Heritage status could mean and do for Vancouver's Chinatown and the city.

There were three Beyond Pender sessions this year which featured a variety of guest speakers. The first, Cultural Landscapes: What Could UNESCO Mean For You took place in February at the Museum of Vancouver. This conversation with panelists from the City's Chinatown Transformation Team and UBC's Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies who draw from their research experiences in Asia delved into the "ecosystem" way of thinking about heritage in Chinatown.

For What is Cultural Tourism in Chinatown?, we invited representatives from Indigenous Tourism BC and Tourism Vancouver to share their experiences and insights about why cultural tourism is gaining momentum as a strategy for sustainable community building and how it is relevant to Chinatown.

Beyond Pandas: History Vs. Popular Imagination of Chinatowns featured Imogene Lim from Vancouver Island University who talked about developing meaningful cultural programming and experiences based upon accurate representations of the voices and stories of Chinatown. This is in contrast to the typical media depictions which emphasize a locale veiled in "mystique" that tends to act as a back drop to an action crime thriller that includes gambling dens, tunnels, pandas, and "exotic" foods.

Together with CCHSBC and Sun Yat-Sen Garden, we have been preparing for next years Beyond Pender programming in 2020.

Tour and Talks

We held six tours this year in the spring and summer all of which have been on our Top10 throughout the years. Heritage Vancouver Board Member Jan Fialkowski along with Gerry McGeough, Director, Planning and Design at Campus and Community Planning led this Tour and Talk to discuss the future of War Memorial Gym as well as the general context for heritage conservation at UBC. The gym as well as a selected mix of old and new sites on Main Mall were used as examples of the heritage conservation approach there.

The Top10 Bus Tour, South Granville/Kitsilano Neighbourhood Tour led by Michael Gordon and the Heritage Heart of Mount Pleasant Tour led by Christine Hagemoen all focused on sites on this year's Top10 and highlighted the pressing issues facing these neighbourhoods and sites. The Broadway Plan for the extension of the Skytrain could have a major impact on these areas.

As part of the Railvolution conference in September held in Vancouver this year, Translink invited us to lead a tour on heritage. We organized the tour Understanding Heritage in the Changing City and offered it twice- once to conference attendees and once to the general public. The tour looked at the different heritage contexts for four places- First Shaughnessy, the Fairmont Building, Chinatown, and Mount Pleasant around Main and Broadway- and applied different approaches in heritage to understand and respond to the issues at those sites. We would really like to thank Chinatown Concern Group and Mount Pleasant Heritage Group for leading the Chinatown and Mount Pleasant sections of the tour. We also extend our thanks to Translink for sponsoring the tours and approaching us with this opportunity. An accompanying online PDF of the key concepts covered on the tour will be made available soon.

Connections, Collaborations and Representation

In addition to our continued relationships with LOCO BC who we worked on the Legacy Business Research with, as mentioned in the Beyond Pender section, our important partnership with the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Gardens continues.

With Shaping Vancouver, 2020 will be our fifth year as a community partner with SFU's Vancity Office for Community Engagement.

Those at Mount Pleasant Heritage Group are major friends of ours as we work together to communicate the importance and value of Mount Pleasant. On their end, Alyssa, Christine and Danielle helped us immensely with information for this year's Top10 listing and with leading several of our tours.

We also have some new friends at Punjabi Market and False Creek South. We met our friends from Punjabi Market at our First Shaping Vancouver Talk this year and at City Hall when the Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future went to City Council in the summer. They too assisted us in the writing of this year's Top10 listing.

False Creek South was on our Top10 list in 2017 due largely to uncertainty around renewal of the leases. We followed up on that with a Shaping Vancouver talk last year and continue to have conversations with Richard and Nathan from RePlan.

These friendships continue to develop and we aim to be able to be as helpful to them as possible in their work surrounding how they value their heritage.

We also need to send our thanks to Heather and the City of Vancouver Archives for letting us use the archive space for our get-together events. Heather and the archives do great work keeping the records that tell the story of the people of Vancouver.

We participated and/or continue to participate on:

- The Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
- The Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee
- The Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group
- The Vancouver Heritage Commission
- Advisory Committee for the upcoming Museum of Vancouver Exhibition "A Seat at the Table"
- Dynamic Cities Group
- The Florence and Eric Pierce Society

Garden Tour

Special thanks are due to Donna McCrea, Penny Noble and this year's Garden Tour Committee Chairs Joan Stewart and Ruth Reynolds for their energy and effort organizing the tour this year.

There were many, many positive comments about the tour and wanting to come back in future years.

We could not have done this without the help of all the volunteers involved. Many tour-goers appreciated the range of gardens on display—we featured 15 gardens from across the city, from a large professionally designed estate garden to a tiny townhouse courtyard showing what can be achieved in a small space. We even had a community garden on the tour.

We would like to give thanks to our sponsors this year:

Home & Garden Realty, Just Mulch, Rakes and Ladders, Atlas Pots, Gaia Green Products Ltd, Bartlett Tree Experts, Adera Natural Stone Supply, and BC Landscape and Nursery Association



Our Living City

Over a year ago, we released **Our Living City**, our attempt to capture and show what different people who make up our different communities value and what feelings, meanings and emotions the heritage that is important to them evokes in them.

We've so far compiled six features with much more planned.

It is very much a work in progress and we've kept them under a bit of a low profile. But that will change in 2020 as we start to more formally roll this out. Visit heritagevancouver.org/resources/our-living-city-landing-page

We feel that we have been able to capture important meanings people have to places dear to them.

We would really like to express our gratitude to:

- The McHardy family of the **Patty Shop**
- Christine from Mount Pleasant for describing her feelings about **Mount Pleasant** through photos
- Theresa from the **Pacific Heights Housing Co-operative**
- Nancy, Dani and Matt, Christie, Mike and Jesse from **False Creek South co-ops**
- Trish, Richard, Bill, Lelani, Kimit, Luke, Lisa, and Stacey who participated in the **Downtown Eastside Community Fair** held by the City of Vancouver in June
- Elia from the **Arts Factory on Industrial Avenue** just off Main in the False Creek Flats

Our ongoing project: Historic building permits online database

Launched Nov. 2011, and recipient of the City of Vancouver **2015 Heritage Award of Honour**, our ongoing Vancouver Building Permits Database, currently contains over 58,000 manually transcribed, searchable online historic permits from handwritten original City ledgers, dating back to 1901.

With thanks to a *Vancouver125 Grant* for making the project launch possible, the *City of Vancouver Archives* for making the original ledgers available, and *volunteers* for ongoing transcriptions!

www.permits.heritagevancouver.org

This searchable online database, covers the three pre-1929 historic boundary districts:

City of Vancouver (1901–1904; 1909–1925*)

Municipality of Point Grey (May 1912–1928)

Municipality of South Vancouver (Nov 1911–1928)

*As transcriptions are completed, additional years will be uploaded online.

Interested to help transcribe handwritten ledger pages? The more volunteers that we have to transcribe, the more data we can publish and publicly share.

Contact: patrick@heritagevancouver.org



1221 Thurlow Street (1899), demolished 2018



1221 Thurlow Online Exhibit Project

1221 Thurlow is the address for the original location of the **Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium** when it first opened in the 1980's. It did more than sell books—it was a centre for the LGBTQ2+ community in Vancouver. The bookstore was a gathering space for community members, where people could come to connect with others and feel that they belonged. During this time, Canada Customs began seizing books and magazines heading to the store, Little Sister's fought this and it eventually went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, leading to the landmark Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium v Canada ruling.

In Fall 2018, the original location of the bookstore was demolished to make way for an office building without recognition of its deep mark on public history.

We received funding from the City of Vancouver Cultural Grants Program and Heritage BC for an online exhibit that present the stories, attitudes, and emotions around 1221 Thurlow as an important site in Vancouver's social history.

The exhibit will include a film and a series of public events presenting and discussing peoples' relationship to the bookstore at its first location.

Two-time Genie Award winning documentary filmmaker Aerlyn Weissman will direct this short film. Aerlyn directed Little Sister's vs. Big Brother, a 2002 documentary capturing Little Sister's and the LGBTQ2+ community's struggle for their literature to be respected, including the 15-year fight against censorship that went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. This new short film will be a followup and explore the personal stories and living heritage of a community that still resonates beyond the demolition of the original store.

We are extremely excited to be working on this project with Aerlyn and to also cover underrepresented heritage.

Commenting

The **Heritage Incentives Program (HIP)** went to Council in March when we noted that a program for the preservation of tangible assets was a crucial component of the heritage strategy. Given the challenges heritage sites face in the city, there needs to be some form of support so that key build heritage assets can provide citizens a sense of place. We strongly supported the reintroduction of the transfer of density program with the HIP. We currently are looking forward to the review of the program after the first cycle of intake for the incentives.

A report to council was originally scheduled for April focusing more on the social and cultural aspects of heritage including the integration of heritage with community planning, values based approaches and the City-Wide Plan. This is an important part of the update to the heritage program and we continue to wait for more information.

In October, we sent in our letter and spoke at council in support of an urgent re-examination of the City of Vancouver's policies related to **character homes and neighbourhood retention**. We suggested that the review and revisiting of the character homes and retention policies considers how to revise RS zoning to help retain the characteristics of neighbourhoods

as a whole. This includes trees, local serving retail, parks and schools while still increasing housing options for all, including the addition of low rise, townhomes, and other forms of housing tenure while still keeping significant heritage homes, character homes and streetscapes. We feel this contextual view of neighbourhoods is important in taking into account the pressures and changes our city is facing.

We also submitted a position and spoke to council in the summer in support of the motion: **Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future**. As many look towards a **City Wide Plan** with hope for a city that better provides for its citizens, we noted the importance of the variety of distinct, identifiable places across the city which still remain for everyone to experience. **Punjabi Market** is certainly one of these places as an invaluable part of the city with a significance spanning from being a historic place elemental to the identity of the South Asian community, to the first and largest South Asian Market outside South Asia with its unique commercial identity, to a location for the important Vaisakhi celebration. We look forward to supporting our new friends from Punjabi Market looking to do important work revitalizing the market.

Connections, collaborations and representation

We continue to work together with LOCO BC, an organization that aims to build stronger communities with applied research of the policies and practices of a fair and just economy. They work largely in the area of independent businesses and buying local. LOCO BC was our partner on the Legacy Business Research commissioned by the City of Vancouver in 2017. We are currently working on some programming we hope to deliver in 2019.

As mentioned in the Beyond Pender section, we have a very exciting partnership with the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Gardens. We will be continuing programming for Beyond Pender in 2019.

Reconnecting with a colleague at the National Trust conference from Entremise, we look forward to deepening connections with this group in Montreal that makes use of vacant sites in the city for ideas and possible joint programming as they do have a national focus.

We have been meeting with Mount Pleasant Heritage Group to listen to issues arising in Mount Pleasant and look to be able to be as helpful to them as possible. On their end, they helped us immensely with information for the Shaping Vancouver talk on Mount Pleasant. We are thankful to Alyssa, Christine and Danielle for their help.

We participated and/or continue to participate on:

- The Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
- The Vancouver Heritage Commission
- The Florence and Eric Pierce Society
- Dynamic Cities Group
- Flats Arterial Community Engagement by the City of Vancouver
- Regulation Redesign Roundtable 2018
- Heather Lands Dialogue sessions with City of Vancouver
- Creative City Strategy discussions with Arts and Culture, City of Vancouver



Our yearly Top10 Threat List bus tour of all sites, thanks to TRAMS for supplying the vintage transit. Photo Ben Geisberg



About Heritage Vancouver Society

We're an independent non-profit society, encouraging the community to preserve, restore, and appreciate Vancouver's heritage, and are dedicated to "Creating a Future for Vancouver's Heritage". We carry out a wide range of activities to create greater appreciation for our rich historical legacy and work with the community to conserve Vancouver's heritage.

Our heritage sites are community landmarks and are tangible expressions of our past that contribute to the character, attractiveness, and quality of life in our neighbourhoods. They define our communities, connect us to our history, and create a legacy for future generations.

Heritage Vancouver creates relationships with the architectural, business, arts, historic, cultural, conservation, and development communities. Together we create ideas, initiatives, and enterprises that contribute to creating a future for our heritage.

Support Heritage Vancouver Society

Donate

All donations are tax deductible and help preserve Vancouver's heritage and support Heritage Vancouver's programs. Donations of any size are welcome and make a difference. Please send cheques payable to Heritage Vancouver Society to: 309 – 268 Keefer Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 1X5 or make a secure gift online at www.heritagevancouver.org. Thank you for your support.

Become a member

Members benefit from reduced event tickets, advanced notification of events, regular updates, and opportunities to become involved. All membership fees support the on-going services and programs of Heritage Vancouver Society. Individual, Student, and Corporate Memberships available:

Join online at www.heritagevancouver.org/membership.html or contact: membership@heritagevancouver.org

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See heritagevancouver.org for links

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Please take the following amount on the 1st of each month*

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Thank you for your support of heritage in Vancouver

*You may cancel your monthly payment at any time by calling Heritage Vancouver Society at 604 254 9411

How your donation helps

Heritage Vancouver is dedicated to “Creating a Future for Vancouver’s Heritage”.

We create greater appreciation for our rich historical legacy and work as a community to conserve Vancouver’s heritage.

Just a few of our activities made possible through your support:

- Input to Heritage Action plan and educational updates about the Plan
- Protecting at-risk heritage sites
- Publication of annual Top10 Watch List of Vancouver’s most endangered heritage sites
- Identify and recommend sites to be listed on the City of Vancouver’s Heritage Register— assess and comment on public policy regarding heritage conservation
- Work with community groups to explore actions to protect specific heritage sites
- Prepare position papers to inform the community about threatened heritage sites
- Host forums to engage the community in conversations about opportunities to protect heritage sites
- Free online search function to find out when your house was built through historic building permits
- Increasing community appreciation of our built heritage:
- Events in heritage buildings, talks on our heritage sites and neighborhoods, tours of historic neighborhoods
- Reports on the history, significant features, and importance of individual heritage sites
- Assisting individuals, businesses, and community groups in initiatives to conserve community heritage
- Developing community relationships to create a future for our heritage

Heritage Vancouver may recognize donors on our website or newsletters or I would like to remain anonymous

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To donate online, monthly or one time, including options to honour a person or a special occasion and send them an e-card, and get an instant tax receipt: **visit www.heritagevancouver.org** and click DONATE

Heritage Vancouver Society

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