



# Our work 2020



# Message from the Executive Director

**Thanks to our supporters, Heritage Vancouver will emerge from 2020 stronger and healthier and better able to serve our city by bringing together histories and meanings to place.**

2020 certainly was an unforgettable year at Heritage Vancouver. We had been building off the momentum of the previous year and preparing our programming, projects and exciting potential partnerships when March came.

The pandemic and the events in 2020 that spotlighted systemic inequality and racism have had a profound impact on both the non-profit sector and the culture and heritage fields. Availability of funding for non-profits is one large question. Another critical one is about the relevance of heritage beyond the building preservation audience and whether Heritage Vancouver is/will be successful at connecting with society at large.

We feel positive about our ability to respond to some of these challenges. We have been exploring how Heritage Vancouver fits into the complex societal issues of systemic inequality, privilege, and climate change.

We've also looked at how to breathe life into how we approach histories so that we are programming through more than one perspective in order to be interesting and relevant to diverse audiences. And we've realized the necessity of doing this with humility, empathy, and care for others. These are first steps.

Absolutely critical has been and will be our commitment to enact and stand up for our guiding principles. This is anchored by our belief that we need to fight for an equitable and inclusive conception of heritage. For us this means we need to reflect on our own values and approaches in order to become more inclusive.

This means bringing together the different ways that different groups of people understand and value heritage because heritage is broad with differing voices and worldviews. It goes well beyond the dichotomy of built heritage vs culture. Our letter on anti-racism has more on this: [heritagevancouver.org/anti-racism-letter/](https://heritagevancouver.org/anti-racism-letter/)



Our programming has started to reflect the above. This has led to good relationships and in turn they will allow for good, and maybe even great opportunities in the short and longer term for this organization to thrive.

Like many other non-profits impacted by the events of 2020, we will be spending time to strengthen ourselves by addressing how we achieve our goals, form and maintain relationships and safeguard the health of the organization.

Our main focuses will be a new strategic plan that will focus us on our potential, fostering justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in the organization, and fundraising to strengthen and increase our financial capacity to do the work we do.

Thanks to our supporters, Heritage Vancouver will emerge from 2020 stronger and healthier and better able to serve our city by bringing together histories and meanings to place.

I would like to especially thank Marie-Claire, Howard, Camilla and Katie for their generosity and wisdom, and Ben, Annie, Sabrina, Leah, Caroline, Ali, Sydney, and Jacqueline for their dedication and commitment.

We look forward to the time when we can all gather together again,

**Bill Yuen**  
Executive Director,  
Heritage Vancouver Society  
December 2020

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**Cover**  
St. Paul's Hospital, Burrard Building, once again on our Top10 Threat List  
Photo Ben Geisberg

**Above**  
Bill Yuen, Executive Director HVS  
Photo Ben Geisberg



With potentially major changes along Broadway, it is important that the Broadway Plan strengthens the diversity and characteristics that have made the neighbourhoods along it distinct.

No. 7 on our Top10 Watch List is the **Broadway Plan**

# 2020 A summary of our work, in a challenging year

## Interactive Map of small local businesses

For a number of years now, we have had a focus on local businesses as they are a key part of our collective social life.

Back in April during the early period of the pandemic, there wasn't a lot of information available about which businesses were open or not.

As a way to help, a few of us started an interactive map and list of neighbourhood businesses that were still open at the time by gathering information by walking around the neighbourhoods we were in.

When the public started contacting us with additions, our list eventually reached over 300 listings.

Credit goes to Annie and Ben for coming up with, creating and maintaining the list during those initial months when the map was an important source of information.

Our map was covered in City News 1130: <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/04/09/interactive-map-vancouver-neighbourhood-businesses-operating/>



**Above**  
Example of our Spring 2020 interactive map & list, showing open neighbourhood businesses during the early pandemic period

# Top10 Watch List of Endangered Sites

In early September, we made a decision to release two entries on this year's 2020 list that were especially relevant to the pandemic. They were the threats to Arts and Culture and the threats to local neighbourhood businesses.

On December 31st, 2020, we released the other eight to form the complete 2020 list. Many of these will be in the spotlight in 2021 and beyond. The Broadway Plan and Vancouver Plan will be significant in changing contexts for heritage places across the city as the plans will determine how future development will unfold across the city.

There is tremendous public history and identity tied to St. Paul's Hospital. Its move and the redevelopment of the site will mean substantial change to the character of the West End. The fate of the architecturally important Burrard Building also remains uncertain. False Creek South makes its third appearance on the list as there remains great uncertainty around the aspects that make this a significant living neighbourhood.

We also wanted to draw attention to some things that tend to be unnoticed by many people and have included an entry each on historic street elements and Postmodern architecture in Vancouver.

## 2020 Top10 Watch List:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Neighbourhood Businesses
3. Henry Hudson Wooden Schoolhouse
4. Holy Rosary Cathedral Complex
5. St. Paul's Hospital
6. False Creek South
7. Broadway Plan
8. Historic Street Elements
9. Vancouver Plan
10. Postmodern Architecture in Vancouver

 Since 2001, our Top10 Watch Lists: [heritagevancouver.org/top10-watch-lists](https://heritagevancouver.org/top10-watch-lists)

We would like to thank Terry Hunter of Heart of the City Festival, Chris Cheung of the Tye, Elia Kirby of the Arts Factory, Brenda Leadlay of BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, Patricia Barnes of the Hastings North Business Improvement Association and Amy Robinson of LOCO BC.



1. Arts and Culture



2. Neighbourhood Businesses



3. Henry Hudson wooden schoolhouse (1912)



4. Holy Rosary Cathedral Complex



5. St Paul's Hospital – Burrard Building



6. False Creek South



7. Broadway Plan



8. Historic Street Elements



9. Vancouver Plan



10. Post-modern architecture in Vancouver

## Hidden Gems series

In spring and summer, we ran Hidden Gems, ten social media posts introducing the public to ordinary and extraordinary places that we pass by sometimes without really noticing.

We intended for the posts to deliver some positive content during the pandemic by highlighting spots that a reader may want to go out and see or experience, especially because we were largely confined at home in the interest of public health.

We aimed for a range of places from the Vanier Park hidden bridge, to the Granville Street Bridge pillars that were “Blanketed” by Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow and the Burrard Street Bridge’s Stroboscope.

The two most popular posts on our Instagram and Facebook were **Rezullo Food Market** on Nanaimo and the dozen Tudor Revival Cottages that make up **Tatlow Court** in Kits. You can find all ten Hidden Gems on our Instagram and Facebook.

## Talks and Discussions

Because of the inability to gather in person, our annual **Shaping Vancouver** talks at SFU were put on hold. In the fall, we adjusted and transitioned to holding talks online with the generous support of St. John’s College at UBC in providing us the means to deliver online talks.

Shaping Vancouver is a very different experience online and we have taken extra time to adjust the format for online delivery.

Shaping Vancouver will return in early spring of 2021. In Fall, we started a separate series with different objectives called Reading Room.



Our award winning series on issues and dialogue on heritage in Vancouver, through a panel & audience discussion. Past events are available as either video or audio.

[heritagevancouver.org/resources/past-talk-synopses](https://heritagevancouver.org/resources/past-talk-synopses)



Above  
Social posting from our Hidden Gems series, this one of the Rezullo Food Market on Nanaimo Street

## Reading Room

Reading Room is a discussion-oriented series that engages current thinking and practices seen as existing outside the traditional ideas in heritage.

The heritage field has been presented with many difficult questions, particularly around diversity, equity, social justice and race and gender inequalities. To address these issues, we hold Reading Room to think differently about the concept of heritage and its existing practices in order to contribute to broader societal benefit.

In this series, we discuss questions such as:

- Who gets to tell their story?
- How do we confront our difficult histories?
- How has heritage contributed to inequality?
- Is the preservation of old buildings the ultimate goal of heritage?
- How do we develop heritage in order to respond to new societal demands?

We use a variety of reading materials, videos, and presentations as a basis for these discussions. Reading Room sessions are opportunities for participants to reflect on this material, discuss their reactions, and to apply this thinking to case studies in Vancouver and other cities.

Our goal is to provide a space to open ourselves to different ways of thinking and, through listening, honest debate, and personal engagement, make for a healthier public life. We hold discussion groups to a maximum of eight people per each discussion leader (we normally have two groups of eight).

We launched Reading Room with a two-part series on monuments and their uses and alternatives. Reception was very positive and we repeated each session because of the number of people wanting to participate.

There are more Reading Room sessions planned for 2021 including a discussion on “Why and What Do We Save?”

## A Seat at the Table

On at the Museum of Vancouver from Nov 2020 until January 2022, the exhibition A Seat at the Table, Chinese Immigration and British Columbia explores the stories of Chinese Canadians in BC and their struggles.

The exhibition uses food and restaurant culture as a common thread to tell stories about diverse Chinese Canadian immigrant experiences in BC. Through food, much can be told about discrimination, resistance, adaptation, organization and the will to seek justice and thrive.

We are very proud and fortunate to have been able to contribute to this extremely important exhibition about our shared heritage by serving on the Advisory Committee.

For more information, please visit <https://museumofvancouver.ca/a-seat-at-the-table> for the exhibition at the Museum of Vancouver and <https://museumofvancouver.ca/a-seat-at-the-table-ccm> for the sister exhibition in Chinatown.



Above  
A Seat at the Table exhibition. Image MOV



## Commenting and Outreach

We submitted a number of positions this year on important heritage topics. In particular, our response to the **Climate Emergency Action Plan**.

In this time of ongoing crisis, urgent action to address climate change and its impacts are necessary. Heritage has a role in climate related actions particularly with full-cost carbon accounting relating to historic building retro fits.

Early in the year, we also wrote in support of the update to the **Vancouver Heritage Program**, which starts the City on a path to adopt current heritage practices that respond to the goals of Truth and Reconciliation, cultural redress, and the incorporation of values that recognize underrepresented groups.

We felt that our comments on the **Great Hall Renewal at the Museum of Anthropology** were important to make to push a better understanding to the wider public about heritage practices. In this case, the understanding of the reasonings for and against the rebuilding of historic places to retain the appearance of the original space.

Our intentions were similar with the **555 West Cordova proposal** to build a tower next to Waterfront Station and the Landing. In this letter, we made a point to discuss how to think about compatibility of contemporary buildings next to heritage buildings and contextualization. We also raised issues around the use of the site.


Two of the more publicly covered positions included the retention and rehabilitation of the compromised **Morrisette Farmhouse** and the vulnerability of the Kitsilano corner grocery and apartments at **2137 Yew Street**.

 Read our current and past letters:  
[heritagevancouver.org/our-letters](https://heritagevancouver.org/our-letters)



Above  
Our Living City: The Patty Shop, Arbutus Ridge  
Photo Ben Geisberg

## Our Living City

 A series capturing important meanings people have to places dear to them.

[heritagevancouver.org/resources/  
our-living-city-landing-page/](https://heritagevancouver.org/resources/our-living-city-landing-page/)

## Some Upcoming Work/Work in Progress

### 1. 1221 Thurlow Online Exhibit Project

As we reported last year, we were preparing an online exhibit of the original location of the **Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium** when it first opened in the 1980's at 1221 Thurlow Street in Vancouver's West End.

Anchoring the exhibition was a short film to be directed by two-time Genie Award winning documentary filmmaker Aerlyn Weissman, who directed *Little Sister's vs Big Brother* in 2002 to document the bookstore and the LGBTQ2+ community's 15-year fight against censorship.

Unfortunately, we have had to put filming on hold until the pandemic is over due to public health and safety. In the meantime, we have been working at a distance on exhibit content.

One of the high points included a wonderful partnership with a UBC Sociology class on historical research methods which examines whom and what is included/excluded from history and what can be done about the silences and gaps.

We were fortunate to have two incredible students from the class assisting us with research for our project on 1221 Thurlow. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to Renisa and Jeevan for considering Heritage Vancouver for this opportunity to work together.

Enormous thanks are due to Cherie, and Jacqueline who were extraordinary in their dedication and enthusiasm for this project.

Ben and Caroline, thank you deeply for providing collegial cheer, guidance and organization.

### 2. Living Through This: Community-Led Responses to a Pandemic

Early in the pandemic, we were reminded of how vulnerable and strong our neighbourhoods and communities can be.

We have seen communities come together to support one another, giving reason to hope that these enhanced communal bonds will outlast this crisis.

We felt that it can be easy to mistake heritage for a practice that ignores the significance of the present and as a heritage organization, we wanted to express that it is our actions today, the way we inspire empathy and togetherness, cultivate resilience, and act on ways that add to our lives and communities that will retain meaning in the future.

With that in mind, we undertook an oral history project to document what different people and organizations in the Downtown Eastside were doing to help the community there.

This series of oral histories is currently being edited.

We wish to thank Sydney and Ali for their tireless effort, resourcefulness and deep interest in making these histories possible. There are many others who are deserving of our gratitude and we will thank them in our release.

### 3. False Creek South

False Creek South has been on our Top10 list three times in the past four years. There is great uncertainty as to the nature of possible development, whether the urban design principles, values and spirit that created False Creek South -which live on today- can stay strong.

For a number of years, we at Heritage Vancouver have been dedicating ourselves to understanding and practicing heritage as cultural landscapes. It is fundamental to this approach to heritage 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.

Therefore, it is an amazing opportunity for us to work with RePlan and look into what makes False Creek South work as a living community shaped by its history, social philosophy, and environment around it.

### 4. Comics in Transit 2021

Comics in Transit is an anthology of one page comic posters placed inside of bus shelters across the city.

Cloudscape Comics puts this anthology together with their talented comic artists and we are extremely excited to be working with all of them.

For their latest installment, we have partnered with them to capture expressions of the hopes of individuals for enduring and positive social changes emerging from the pandemic that positions us all to work through our societal challenges with greater cooperation, collaboration, creativity, kindness, and empathy.

We are extremely appreciative of Cloudscape Comics, and in particular Jean, for sharing our sentiment that the heritage of the pandemic is something that we are creating in the now that will retain meaning in the future.



## 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 75,000 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](http://www.permits.heritagevancouver.org)

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

**City of Vancouver** (1901–1928\*)

**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](mailto:patrick@heritagevancouver.org)



# Remembering Ian Waddell

It is with great sadness that we mark the sudden passing of Ian Waddell.

Ian contributed greatly to public life and public discourse through his many years as an MP and MLA, his films, and his many editorials.

He was a great supporter of Heritage, as Provincial Minister responsible for Heritage, committed citizen, and long-time member of our board until 2020 at Heritage Vancouver.

Most recently, Ian dedicated significant time and effort to celebrating the remarkable legacy and community-minded values of Eric and Florence Pierce through his efforts to have their former house in Kitsilano operated for affordable housing and community use.

Among his many passions beyond Heritage, Ian fought for Aboriginal Treaty Rights, promoted youth voting, and advanced environmental causes.

Ian was a great lover of dogs and Golden Retrievers in particular.

His counsel and friendship will be missed.

Javier Campos, President



Ian Waddell: November 11, 1942 - March 15, 2021

# About Heritage Vancouver Society

We're an independent non-profit society dedicated to inspiring people through the thoughtful layering of old and new, built and non-physical qualities that make places across our city meaningful. We fight for an equitable and inclusive conception of heritage that makes for a diverse and inspiring place for all of us to live and experience.

We publicly comment on heritage issues in the city, deliver an education program that opens up thinking about what heritage is and how it can benefit wider society, and work with community groups to communicate and protect heritage that has significant public meaning.

Our conception of heritage is broad and we value the differing voices and worldviews that different groups of people have in understanding heritage and making sense of what is meaningful to them. To us, heritage extends well beyond the dichotomy of built heritage vs culture. We are concerned with helping people present, protect and/or create meaningful connections to histories, stories, cultures, identities, ways of life and experiences.

## Support Heritage Vancouver Society

### Donate

Donations over 20 dollars receive a charitable tax receipt and help preserve Vancouver's heritage and support our programs.

Make a secure gift online at [www.heritagevancouver.org/donate](http://www.heritagevancouver.org/donate) with automatic receipts (via CanadaHelps) or send cheques payable to Heritage Vancouver Society to: 309 – 268 Keefer Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 1X5. **Thank you for your support.**

## Become a member

Members benefit from reduced priced events, 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, Couple, Friend, and Corporate Memberships available:

Join online: [heritagevancouver.org/membership](http://heritagevancouver.org/membership)

Contact: [membership@heritagevancouver.org](mailto:membership@heritagevancouver.org)

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Follow us on



See [heritagevancouver.org](http://heritagevancouver.org) for links

# Donate



**YES! I want to help Heritage Vancouver create a future for heritage!**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & Province \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**I want to become a **monthly** donor.**

**Please take the following amount on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month\***

\$10    \$25    \$50    Other amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /month

A donation each month adds up to a big difference and is an affordable way to create sustainable revenue for Heritage Vancouver.

**Or I'd like to make a **one-time** gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Payment method

Visa    MasterCard

Pre-authorized bank withdrawal (please include a void cheque)

Cheque payable to Heritage Vancouver Society (for one time donations only)

Credit card # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Or donate online via CanadaHelps at [heritagevancouver.org/donate](https://heritagevancouver.org/donate)**

**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 inspiring people through the thoughtful layering of old and new, built and non-physical qualities that make places across our city meaningful.

We fight for an equitable and inclusive conception of heritage that makes for a diverse and inspiring place for all of us to live and experience.

Here are just a few of our activities made possible through your support:

- Changing the public conversation on how heritage can represent all members of our society
- Connecting our work to larger social goals including equity, cultural redress, climate change and urban inequalities such as housing
- Publication of the annual Top10 Watch List to raise awareness for at-risk heritage places
- Assisting community groups in initiatives to conserve and protect heritage places
- Promoting different ideas in the heritage field and giving voice to diverse stories and histories
- Delivering programming to open ourselves to different ways of thinking, listening and having honest debate
- Free online database search to help find out when your house was built, from over 70,000 historic building permits, transcribed for public accessibility:  
[www.permits.heritagevancouver.org](http://www.permits.heritagevancouver.org)

HVS charitable number 1073758-52

Heritage Vancouver Society, 309 – 268 Keefer Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 1X5

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/donate](http://www.heritagevancouver.org/donate)

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