

Heritage BC Quarterly



Summer 2012

41 BC LIGHTHOUSES NOMINATED
RESPONDING TO BILL C-38
HERITAGE BC BUSINESS CASE STUDY
2

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS
3

WHAT IS AN ÉCONOMUSÉE?
NEW (OLD) LIGHTS FOR IRVING HOUSE
4

HERITAGE AT RISK
5

STRATHCONA:
VANCOUVER'S OLDEST NEIGHBOURHOOD
6-7

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHC?
8

NELSON FOLDS UP CHC
9

MESSAGES
10-11

HERITAGE BC CONFERENCE 2012
OCTOBER 19 & 20
12

HERITAGE WEEK 2013

Heritage Homes and Neighbourhoods

Location, location, location. These, according to the wisdom of the real estate industry, are the three most important selling points when marketing a residential property.

But what about location? What makes a good one? What do you think is the ideal place to live? Maybe it's tree-lined streets, a neighbourhood that is walkable, pedestrian friendly, and close to shopping with a village atmosphere. A street with attractive homes and well-tended gardens. A neighbourhood that looks comfortable and lived in, and just feels right.

When you find such a place, it's probably an historic neighbourhood, a district established in an earlier era that, like good wine, has slowly arrived at a mellow maturity. Many of the homes could be called "heritage", but they are not necessarily grand or great examples of fine architectural design. There may be a variety of vintages, styles and sizes that combine in a pleasing blend.

It is not surprising that historic neighbourhoods in B.C. communities are usually considered very desirable places to live. Heritage homes generally sell well and command a premium price. They tend to hold their value, even during economic slow downs. The supply is limited and the demand is strong.

In this issue, we look at one such historic neighbourhood, Strathcona in Vancouver. The city's oldest, Strathcona exemplifies all the qualities of a mature and evolving residential district that continues to adapt to a changing world. *See full story page 6...*



LIGHTHOUSE PROTECTION ACT

41 Lighthouses Nominated in BC

After the federal *Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act* was passed in 2010, Canadians had two years to nominate lighthouses for protection. A year ago, Heritage BC Quarterly reported that, halfway through the process, things were going pretty slowly. Only 56 out of many hundreds of lighthouses across Canada had been nominated, and of these only three were in B.C.

Fortunately, the pace picked up considerably in Year Two. By the deadline of May 29, 2012, 348 lighthouses had been nominated nationally, with 41 in B.C. All nominations are listed on the Parks Canada website.

The next step is consideration of all nominations by the federal Minister of the Environment, assisted by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board. Decisions must be made within three years, by May 29, 2015. Lighthouses designated under the Act will be subject to protection and standards for conservation. The fly in the ointment, however, is the requirement that nominators must also come up with a business plan in the case of lighthouses that have been declared surplus by the custodial department, Fisheries and Oceans Canada. To receive designation, a viable business plan must be received and accepted within the three-year window. A lot of nominators will presumably be sharpening their pencils in the months to come.



ADVOCACY

Responding to Bill C-38

The federal omnibus budget bill enacted earlier this year, Bill C-38, included cuts to many departments and agencies, not least Parks Canada. The cuts include extensive layoffs, terminations and loss of positions. To take one example, there will be a “massive” reduction in the number of archaeologists employed by Parks Canada right across the country, according to the Canadian Archaeological Association

In a letter to Prime Minister Harper, the CAA states that after the cuts there will be only 12 archaeologists and eight conservators left to support 218 national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas. Interpretation staff will also be severely reduced. Collections of artifacts are being boxed up and sent from Calgary, Winnipeg, Cornwall, Quebec City and Halifax to a central storage facility in Ottawa.

Heritage BC wrote to Mr. Kent in June to express our concerns about the budget cuts and the continuing decline in support for heritage conservation by the federal government.



HERITAGE BC

Business Case Study Underway

The provincial government has commissioned Earthvoice Strategies Inc. to develop a business case for Heritage BC. The project involves identifying, evaluating and making recommendations on business and/or operational models that will establish a sustainable and increasingly self-sufficient organization and reaffirm Heritage BC's role within the heritage sector.

The project is divided into two phases, with the first being completed by mid September. The ministry and Heritage BC will then determine whether the study proceeds to Phase II.

HBC CONFERENCE 2012
Register Now

Forum
Friday, October 19
Shadbolt Centre
Burnaby

Walking Tour
Saturday, October 20
Strathcona
Neighbourhood



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Heritage BC



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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Nicolas Bawlf

One of the province's pre-eminent practitioners of heritage conservation and rehabilitation has died at the age of 74.

An award-winning graduate of the U.B.C. School of Architecture, Nick practiced in England, Ireland and Denmark before settling in Victoria in 1972. His iconic projects ranged from the creation of Market Square to restoration work on cathedrals, synagogues, Victoria City Hall, historic ranches and provincial heritage sites. In 1986 his firm won the design competition for the Victoria Conference Centre.

An accomplished artist with a passion for First Nations' culture, Nick was a larger-than-life personality who lived life on his own terms and was remembered by all who met him as a gentle and gifted man.

Bill Barlee

Well known politician, historian and heritage enthusiast Bill Barlee passed away this spring at the age of 80. A school teacher, Bill began his heritage career with his own magazine, Canada West, in the 1960s. Over the years he wrote a number of popular books on B.C. history, hosted the television program, Gold Trails and Ghost Towns, and ran his own museum. He entered provincial politics in 1988, being elected MLA for Boundary-Similkameen. When the NDP took power in 1991, Bill was appointed to the cabinet, serving first as minister of agriculture, fisheries and food, and then moving to small business, tourism and culture. In this latter post he was responsible for heritage, and initiated a number of projects to promote heritage tourism.

Heritage Branch Director Recognized

Heritage Branch Director Jennifer Iredale has been named a Fellow of the Cascadia Green Building Council for her work in the green building movement. The award, presented at the 2012 Living Futures Conference in Portland, Oregon, recognizes the efforts of Jennifer and the Heritage Branch to promote environmental sustainability in building rehabilitation. Most recently, the Branch has collaborated with Cascadia to produce training resources based on "The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse," a 2011 report that provides the most comprehensive analysis to date of the potential of environmental impact reductions associated with building reuse.

Jonathan Yardley Honoured

Last September, Jonathan Yardley of Salt Spring Island was presented with the Canadian Association of Heritage Professional's Lifetime Achievement Award for his "outstanding contribution and dedication to the field of Heritage Conservation". An architect specializing in conservation, Jonathan has practiced in B.C. since the 1960's, and has served as the president of Heritage BC. The award was presented in Victoria during the CAHP annual conference.



NICHOLAS BAWLF
1938-2012
(PORTRAIT BY JUDY MCLAREN)



JENNIFER IREDALE



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ON OUR WEBSITE:
» www.heritagebc.ca



MLA JON LES AND OWNER JANET DOCHERTY CUT THE RIBBON AT MERRIDALE CIDER ESTATE

The first two sites join the **Économusée BC** project: Merridale Cider Estate
Hazellwood Herb Farm



HERITAGE TOURISM

What is an **Économusée**?

What is an **Économusée**? According to the **Économusée** British Columbia web site, it is “a for-profit craft or agrifood business that uses authentic, traditional production techniques or know-how. It is a living environment that showcases artisans by opening their studios or workshops to the public and providing visitors with a unique and genuine learning experience”. Each **Économusée** operates a shop where it sells quality products representative of the business and its region.

The **Économusée** concept has been thriving in Quebec for two decades and is now popular in Atlantic Canada and northern Europe as well. Three years ago, the **Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDECB)**, ventured into Quebec to have a closer look at some **économusées** in action, travelling the backroads and byways to meet artisans and hear their stories. The result was **Économusée** British Columbia. Incubated by the SDECB, the project is overseen by committees with representatives from culture, tourism, agriculture and economic development.

So what does the **Économusée** offer the visitor? More than just a shopping experience, a visit includes interpretation of traditional craft or trade, a workshop where you can interact with artisans at work, the opportunity to taste, touch and smell, and, of course, to purchase the artisan’s product on site.

The project has brought its first two Vancouver Island artisans on stream this summer: Merridale Cider Estate near Mill Bay and Hazelwood Herb Farm near Ladysmith.

Économusée British Columbia has been working closely with the Heritage Tourism Alliance, of which Heritage BC is an executive member. This promises to be a productive and mutually beneficial relationship as the two organizations fulfill their mandates to provide a quality, sustainable heritage tourism experience.

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New (Old) Lights for Irving House

Located in the historic heart of New Westminster, the 1865 Irving House is one of B.C.’s earliest and finest surviving homes. Owned and designated by the City of New Westminster, Irving House is operated as a historic house museum.

Anyone familiar with restoring such a treasured historic site will appreciate the challenges involved in bringing the electrical system up to code. Irving House is in the midst of an upgrade — repairing some historic light fixtures and replacing others that are inappropriate or missing.

The house was first wired around 1908 to 1912, and it is not an easy task to find fixtures from that era that are historically correct and certified to current standards. Waterglass Studios in Victoria had prepared a fixture plan that included a number of stylistically appropriate replacement fixtures which would be “correct” for the house and era, and effective for site interpretation. Some would be restored fixtures, others would be replicas.

As luck would have it, Waterglass is also involved with a project to rehabilitate the Wentworth Villa on Fort Street in Victoria. Dating from the same era, Wentworth was originally wired about the same time as Irving House, and remarkably many of the original light fixtures are still in place. Some of them, however, must be removed as part of the rehabilitation project.

Waterglass Studios has proposed that three of the Wentworth fixtures are right for installation in Irving House, and project architect Eric Pattison and museum curator Oana Capota have supported the idea. So three rare, century-old light fixtures will be restored to find a new home in the entrance hall and two of the bedrooms of Irving House: one will hang over Capt. William Irving’s original Victorian bedstead.

This is a good story about the importance of the careful research, attention to detail, and sometimes just plain opportunism that are part of any good restoration project.



PARAMOUNT THEATRE c1950
CREDIT: P2573 CHILLIWACK MUSEUM

HERITAGE AT RISK

Saving The Paramount

Chilliwack's Paramount Theatre is hanging by a thread. The 1949 single-screen movie house has been standing idle for almost two years since the last show in November of 2010. Accepted by the City as a gift from the owner, it has become something of a white elephant. A call for proposals in 2011 generated just a couple of ideas and no business plan. When an adjacent, structurally interconnected building was slated for demolition, the crew offered to take down the theatre along with it, free of charge. With no good prospects in the offing, and faced with costs for repairs, staff recommended that Council accept the proposal.

People, however, get attached to their movie theatres, especially those older mainstreet venues like this one. Chilliwack is no different, and a predictable ground swell has emerged in a bid to stop demolition. On March 6, Chilliwack Mayor and Council revealed their own ambivalence about the Paramount. Not seeing much hope for the old theatre, they remained reluctant to pass sentence of death. The predictable result was a stay of execution. On June 21, the newly-formed Save the Paramount Theatre group submitted a business proposal to operate the venue once more as a movie house, showing vintage and non-mainstream films. There has been a lot of community support and media coverage. A fund raising campaign has garnered more than \$10,000 in pledges.

Chilliwack's Paramount Theatre is a classic story of small town, mid-20th century life in Canada. This may be one of the reasons why it was selected for Heritage Canada's 2012 Top 10 Endangered Places list.

The Sikh Temple, Paldi

A failed development scheme has put the Sikh temple at Paldi, west of Duncan on Vancouver Island, at risk. The temple, or gurdwara, and adjoining land are the subject of a court-ordered sale; the Sikh community, meanwhile, says the temple must be saved and should be a National Historic Site.

Paldi is a company town, founded by entrepreneur Mayo Singh almost a century ago, who named it after his home village in the District of Hoshiapur in Punjab. The sawmilling operation he established there prospered and attracted many workers and their families. At its zenith, Paldi had 1,500 inhabitants and its own school. The temple was built by the community in 1917. While the temple filled important religious functions for the largely Sikh population, it also served as the community centre.

Paldi was reduced to a ghost town after the booming forest industry waned. Mayo Singh's grandson, Davinder Mayo, is the president of the temple, but the family is unable to keep up with repairs. Now that an ambitious development scheme by another descendant to build a new residential community of 500 homes has fallen through, the temple is threatened by a court-ordered sale. The asking price is \$1.65 million.

Members of the Sikh community from the Cowichan Valley, Surrey, and even from the state of Punjab in India have responded to the plight of the Paldi gurdwara. The president of the World Sikh Organization, Prem Singh Vinning, has called on the Cowichan Valley Regional District to extend heritage protection to the temple and adjacent lands. The organization also says the temple should be designated as a National Historic Site. The Gur Sikh temple in Abbotsford was designated a National Historic Site in 2002.



SIKH TEMPLE, PALDI

Heritage Homes & Neighbourhoods is the theme for Heritage Week 2013. Historic neighbourhoods are more than a great place to live – they provide a sense of pride and stability for the entire community.



Strathcona Vancouver's Oldest Neighbourhood

The adjective “unique” crops up much too often, but in the case of Strathcona, Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood, it is entirely appropriate, even essential.

Strathcona is a residential neighbourhood of older homes, and much more. It encompasses a cosmopolitan mix of ethnic communities and social and economic classes, combines blocks of quiet, pedestrian-friendly streets and traffic-choked thoroughfares, has heritage houses alongside industrial buildings, and rubs shoulders with some pretty tough neighbours. And if you think you know Strathcona, just wait a while as it changes and evolves once again.

Beginning as a rough-and-ready community that grew up in close proximity to the Hastings Mill, Vancouver's first commercial enterprise dating from the 1860s, Strathcona expanded south and east from the mill site on Burrard Inlet. It wasn't called Strathcona then, just the East End. After the arrival of the CPR in 1887, Vancouver boomed and the burgeoning wealthy elite soon colonized other more salubrious locations. The East End became a working class neighbourhood, one that included the whole mix of immigrant populations drawn to the city looking for work. Much of the vintage housing stock that remains today reflects this period, expressed architecturally in modest one and two-story wood-framed houses in Victorian and folk styles seldom found in other parts of Vancouver.

As a working class, ethnic neighbourhood, the East End, or Strathcona as it eventually came to be called, probably because of Strathcona Elementary School, did not get a lot of respect from City Hall. Vancouver's first zoning bylaw zoned much of the area as six-story industrial, sending the residential neighbourhood into decline. The resulting blight was characterized as a slum in the 1950s and Strathcona became the target of a City urban renewal scheme to demolish whole blocks of housing to be replaced by new, multi-unit developments.

The urban renewal plan did not succeed, just as later plans to run a freeway through the area that would have decimated neighboring Chinatown and Gastown were resisted and eventually defeated. It is because of this tradition of community activism in East Vancouver that the city still has its urban historic districts and the neighbourhood of Strathcona.

Eventually, the city listened to the residents of Strathcona and the result was a unique zoning called RT-3. The zoning is designed to promote the conservation of streetscape and neighbourhood character by encouraging the rehabilitation and restoration of heritage homes and buildings. Opportunities for appropriate redevelopment encourage affordable housing and eco-density, two important objectives for the City.



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE, GARDENS, CORNER COFFEE SHOPS AND TREE-LINED STREETS ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISTINCTIVE STRATHCONA APPEAL. FAR RIGHT: THE HOUSE AT 502 ALEXANDER STREET IN NORTH STRATHCONA, BUILT IN 1888, IS CURRENTLY THE SUBJECT OF A DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATION

In recent years, Strathcona has been undergoing another phase in its continuing evolution. As house prices in Vancouver skyrocketed, making it the most expensive place in the country to live, many homebuyers, especially younger people looking for a way to get into the market, were attracted by the (comparatively) more modest cost of houses available in Strathcona. For those willing to accept a somewhat funkier lifestyle, Strathcona has a lot to offer: heritage homes, and a pleasant, informal “neighbourly” feel with small parks, corner stores, and many tree-lined streets. The result has been an influx of keen new homeowners and a general trend towards “gentrification”. And of course, this new interest brings in investment, pushes up house prices and increases the residential tax base.

Strathcona’s status as a “neighbourhood on the rise” was confirmed earlier this year when it made the This Old House 2012 Best Old House Neighbourhoods list: “The neighborhood is a few minutes from downtown Vancouver (pop. 600,000) and adjacent to Chinatown. Many houses have detached garages set along alleyways; thanks to new zoning laws, these can be converted into rental properties if desired.”

But Strathcona is a long way from getting too precious. It remains an alternative lifestyle to more conventional expectations of suburbia, shopping malls, security and stylistic uniformity. For many, this is all part of the feisty charm of Strathcona. In the true Strathcona tradition, residents are proud of their neighbourhood and determined to preserve its many values and complex character. Like a unique old heritage home, Strathcona is full of quirks, not everything works the way it should, and sometimes the owners wonder why they live there, but ultimately they couldn’t live anywhere else.

Strathcona North: Endangered?

Heritage Vancouver’s 2012 “Top 10 Endangered” list includes Strathcona North.

What sets the north of Strathcona apart, literally, from the rest is Hastings Street, an east-west divide that has set the two areas of the district along different paths. While the rest of Strathcona, under special RT3 zoning, is experiencing residential renewal and some gentrification, bringing in new homeowners and new investments, the north side of Hastings, bordering Burrard Inlet with its rail yards and port facilities, has a decidedly more industrial character. Nonetheless, says Heritage Vancouver, North Strathcona holds some of the city’s oldest homes. Few are protected, and some are threatened with demolition. The overall heritage and character of the area “face possible erosion due to continuing pressure to build social housing and other amenities...”. Generally, City policies and planning have treated Strathcona north and south very differently. Closer to the east side of downtown Vancouver, social problems are also undermining the economic viability of Strathcona North.

Heritage Vancouver is proposing a number of steps to turn things around, among them extending the RT-3 zoning north of Hastings and establishing a clear definition of Strathcona that incorporates the areas on both sides; maintaining a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses; and finding a creative way to revitalize East Hastings as a retail zone.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

What Makes a Good CHC?

“A well functioning CHC can be an invaluable asset to a community heritage program... but it cannot be expected to function in isolation, in the absence of a program with clear objectives and the necessary resources...”

There is a story on the next page about Nelson’s Community Heritage Commission, or CHC, which recently was disbanded by City Hall . As often happens in such cases, there is some contentious debate about the move, the motivations, and the potential consequences.

One of the good things about this sort of controversy is that it encourages us to revisit some basic questions. What is a CHC and what does it do? Who should be on a CHC? What makes a good one?



RICK GOODACRE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HERITAGE BC

The 1977 Heritage Conservation Act first empowered local government to set up heritage advisory committees. Under the 1994 Heritage Conservation Statutes Amendment Act, these became Community Heritage Commissions.

The fundamental purpose of a CHC, I believe, is to advise Council. In a province where the balance of responsibility and authority for heritage conservation has been delegated by the province to the local level, this is clearly an important function. While a CHC may be charged by Council, under the establishing bylaw, to carry out a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities, the essential thing is that the CHC is the creation and creature of local government. It is not an independent agent, like a heritage organization registered under the Society Act. So the focus of the CHC should always be on the municipal program. Of course, where there really is no program, this is a challenge for CHC members, who may end up feeling that somehow it is their job to create one. It isn’t. In the end, it is Council that must make the decision to establish a heritage program. A CHC can only function as part of a well thought-out whole. Here, staff play a critical role, working with both Council and the volunteer CHC, in a supporting and advisory capacity.

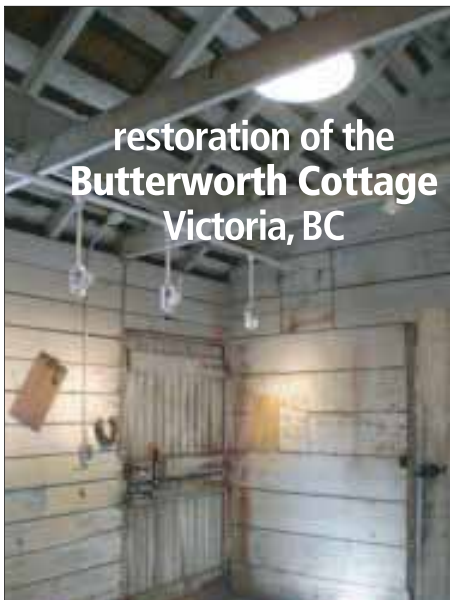
Membership is important. While many CHC members bring a special knowledge of history and heritage, I would say that, while this is important, the CHC is more than a body of “experts”. It is meant to be a citizen’s advisory panel that should broadly represent the various interests of the community, including business, development and commerce.

A well functioning CHC can be an invaluable asset to a community heritage program. But it can only achieve this end if it is given sound terms of reference and is regarded with respect by the Council it reports to. And a CHC cannot be expected to function in isolation, in the absence of a program with clear objectives and the necessary resources, including at least a minimum of staff support.

If you look around the province, you will find that CHCs can only be effective when part of a sound overall program, while in every good heritage program there should be a CHC that provides essential support, perspective and community feedback.

There are over 40 CHCs in B.C. and many of them will be at the annual CHC Conference in Nanaimo this fall. Look for details on the HBC website:

» www.heritagebc.ca/////



restoration of the
Butterworth Cottage
Victoria, BC

Jonathan Yardley
Architect

Professional Heritage Consultant
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COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSIONS

Nelson Folds Up CHC

On May 30 the City of Nelson released a backgrounder outlining some recent changes to municipal commissions. Included was the termination of the Community Heritage Commission, the functions of which are to be taken on by an expanded Cultural Development Commission (CDC) and staff.

Nelson is something of a legend in the B.C. heritage world. This mid-sized West Kootenay town led the way in the 1970s and 1980s with Mainstreet and downtown revitalization programs that used heritage to shape a new identity and renewed prosperity.

Nelson's heritage committee, and later heritage commission, has been part of that story from the early days, and many members, past and present, probably see themselves as the keepers of the heritage light. So for some, there was something personal in the shutting down of the CHC.

The change was driven from within Council, where at least one member mounted a campaign to do away with the stand-alone CHC, characterizing it as redundant and inefficient, as much a drag on business, commerce and development as a champion for heritage.

The City's backgrounder provided some further details. Heritage policy is to be managed within the framework of the CDC, which will bring heritage, arts and culture under one roof. The move, it states, is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Cultural Policy which states that "arts and heritage should be married in terms of their development". Routine permits for alterations to heritage buildings, on the other hand, will now be dealt with by staff without benefit of an independent advisory body.



A key motivation for the changes, says the backgrounder, is greater efficiency: "These changes will result in development proposals being considered in a more timely fashion under the same high standards that are currently being utilized".

Not all councillors agree about the "same high standards", however. Councillor Robin Cherbo expressed his reservations about the folding

up of the CHC at the May 7 council meeting when the decision was made. In an opinion piece published in the Nelson Star on May 29, he expanded on his concerns, saying "Going ahead with the re-organization of committees for expediency of accommodating developers and businesses who want to construct or renovate the buildings may not be a good idea."

Regardless of the merits of the arguments on either side, in a June 12 letter to Nelson Mayor Dooley and Council, Heritage BC noted that heritage conservation is dependent at least in part on good civic leadership, and sound advice from community members is essential for that leadership to function. The upshot of recent changes to Nelson's heritage program will depend to a considerable extent on how well the new order results in sound advice and good leadership.



5TH ANNUAL CHC CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2012

HOSTED BY

THE CITY OF NANAIMO
COMMUNITY HERITAGE
COMMISSION

This one-day event is designed specifically for members of CHCs.

If you are a member, or want to know more about CHCs, this is a good event to put on your calendar.

Taking place at the exciting new Nanaimo Museum, the program includes a presentation on the award-winning Nanaimo heritage program, and a fun and informative walking tour of the historic downtown commercial district.

Download the program
and register online:

» www.heritagebc.ca/events

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Heritage Canada Governor's Message

As summer ends and we look forward to fall, I am very excited about the membership offer for Heritage BC members. I hope you will consider becoming a member of the Heritage Canada Foundation – at the reduced rate. You will find that the magazine alone is worth the cost of membership. The new website is like icing on the cake.

Heritage Canada is embarking on an ambitious plan of regeneration. Our first activity will be the National Heritage Summit: Heritage Conservation in Canada: What's Working? And What Needs to Change. Based at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth in Montreal, Quebec from October 11-13, 2012, it will be an opportunity to reflect on what has gone on in the 40 years since the World Heritage Convention, and to look forward to the next 40 years. As in past years, the conference has many cooperating partners: this year, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP|ACECP), Canadian Forum for Public Research on Heritage, and Canada Research Chair on Built Heritage.

As usual, the conference will feature a series of interesting speakers, dynamic workshops and entertaining tours. That it is set in the historic city of Montreal is a bonus. This will be my first trip to Montreal and I am very excited about that. I know I will be spending time wandering the streets of old Montreal with my camera, documenting what I see.

2013 marks an important anniversary for the Heritage Canada Foundation – our 40th birthday. I am honoured to have been chosen to chair the 40th anniversary committee. We are hard at work, developing events that will both honour the past and look forward to the future. I am particularly pleased that we are planning to create a student scholarship as a lasting legacy of the anniversary. Look for special events throughout the year, beginning with the launch of the anniversary on Heritage Day, February 18, 2013. We hope to hold activities in each province in a truly national celebration. Heritage magazine will feature special articles throughout the year and the festivities will come to a climax at a special conference banquet and dessert auction at the conference next year in Ottawa.

I believe that the Heritage Canada Foundation is becoming stronger as an advocate for heritage through the numerous partnerships that have been developed over the past few years. I know I am proud to represent the province of B.C. on the national board and I pledge to work very hard to bring your concerns to the HCF's attention. If you wish to contact me for any reason, send me an email to heritagelady@gmail.com.

To find out more about the discount on Heritage Canada Foundation membership, Heritage BC members can visit: » www.heritagebc.ca/membership



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HERITAGE CANADA



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Next deadline October 15, 2012

President's Message

What will heritage conservation look like in the years ahead? Early heritage “bulldozer battles” are now themselves part of history. In those years the public and governments weren't very interested in dusty old buildings that weren't “modern”. It took high-profile events like the mid-1960s demolition of New York's Pennsylvania Station to galvanize a popular movement.

Communities grew to understand the value of respecting and revealing the shared past embodied in our “old buildings”. Historic places were “saved”, restored and often interpreted for public appreciation. Restoring heritage homes and commercial buildings became a source of family and business pride. A heritage sector of specialists, trades, regulations and guidelines, academics and popular culture grew around the idea of sustaining our historic places.

As the heritage field and the roles historic places played in our communities matured, an infatuation with heritage building fabric evolved. A deeper appreciation for the true values embodied in the “Character-Defining Elements” of a building emerged. Attractive old buildings became more than a pleasant backdrop; they now had authentic cultural meaning.

Today things heritage are still evolving, and just as in those earlier years, no one really knows where we are headed. But there are a few clues.

We aren't finished with conserving historic buildings: “Preserving the Modern” has emerged as 20th century buildings cross the 50 year threshold and become candidates for conservation. Locally we see this with the buildings of architect Arthur Erickson. In Victoria simply placing 11 modern-era buildings on the Heritage Register garnered much opposition and comments that they were not “heritage”. Conserving more recent buildings has opened up new areas of debate, inquiry, conservation techniques, heritage values and historic interpretation of those times.

“Sustainability” is a sound credo of an era that insists on meaningful places to live. Comparing downtowns of, say, Detroit and Vancouver demonstrates we can get it right, and what happens when we don't. Sustainability is commonly defined as a three-legged stool: environmental, economic and social/cultural. Heritage conservation finds a home in all three areas: keeping and repurposing existing buildings makes environmental sense; heritage projects support specialized skills, tourism and commercial economic activity; and proud historic places strengthen our local identities and shared culture enterprise.

Finally, and importantly for Heritage BC, are the economic realities and priorities of governments. As demographics evolve, the management of public resources must respond. What is the role of government in “social enterprises”? Resource reallocation means creative solutions must be found for community groups to achieve their goals. To this end, the HBC Strategic Plan has evolved into a Business Case Study sponsored by the province that is exploring these ideas. Undeniably the will for heritage conservation remains strong in our communities. How it will manifest and draw on broader trends will perhaps be as exciting as those heady early years of heritage conservation.



ERIC PATTISON
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Conference 2012

Friday, October 19
Shadbolt Centre for the Arts
Burnaby

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Saturday October 20
Walking Tour
Strathcona Neighbourhood
Vancouver

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Heritage BC



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www.heritagebc.ca

The Forum continues...

Since the 2011 Conference, a number of things have happened. Heritage BC completed a new strategic plan in March, and a business case is currently in the works. In February, the provincial government announced significant new investments in the Heritage Properties.

Yet the situation is far from resolved, and the future far from certain. Whatever the outcome, the impact will be felt at the community level. This year's conference continues the discussion about the threats and opportunities facing heritage conservation in B.C. today in a forum designed to give you the latest information and an opportunity to express your views on the best way forward.

...plus a neighbourhood tour

Strathcona is Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood. A community with a checkered past, Strathcona has endured and this year was named B.C.'s "best old house" neighbourhood by This Old House. Come and see what makes this unique community a great place to live and a model of contemporary heritage conservation in the historic heart of the province's largest city.

Register Now!

Join us for another important Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony. Visit the Heritage BC website and register online today.

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