

Thoughts about Building Workshops from a Certificate Graduate

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Vancouver Heritage Foundation's Old School Courses are a virtual gold mine of knowledge covering the entire range of Vancouver's wonderful historic buildings and landscapes.

Being the project architect for the conservation and restoration of the Roger's Mansion at Shannon Mews, *Navigating City Hall* with the city's Senior Heritage Planner and learning about *Researching the History of a Building* at the Vancouver Archives and the Vancouver Public Library provided me with essential tools I apply on a daily basis in my profession.

By attending a wide range of Old School courses I not only met a community of like-minded individuals and heritage enthusiasts, but the courses also provided valuable networking opportunities which helped to connect me with other professionals in the conservation field.

VHF's *Heritage 101* class provided a broad overview of Vancouver's history and heritage, combined with up-to-date conservation philosophies applied throughout Canada, and a glimpse into the City of Vancouver's heritage planning strategies. I can definitely recommend this great introduction, not only for home builders, architects and students, but for all professional consultants working in the historic built environment.

The practical hands on courses with local craftsmen (e.g. *Repair and Maintenance of Wood Windows*) helped me to understand the subtleties and details of the construction methods used to create Vancouver's heritage buildings.



Ivonne, far right, on a Mount Pleasant neighbourhood tour during the House Exteriors course with Planning Consultant, Jeannette Hlavach, and Architect, Eric Pattison, June, 2012.

I highly commend VHF on organizing two Sustainability Symposiums where leading North American professionals shared their knowledge on sustainable building technologies in historic settings.

In summary, it was a wonderful experience spending Saturdays out learning, earning professional development credits and completing the Old School Certificate while at the same time having fun, meeting new friends and staying connected to the local heritage scene.

I truly believe Vancouver's heritage, while young in context, is already endangered and some parts are entirely lost. As a student of VHF you are not only exposed to a plethora of stories and traditions, but learn to understand and appreciate an entire city's history and evolution spanning the past 125 years.

Ivonne Voelkel is the 15th Graduate of the Old School Certificate in Heritage Conservation program.



Repair & Maintenance of Double-Hung Wood Windows course with Jim Stiven of Vintage Woodworks: assessing the exterior condition of a building's windows. Ivonne, bottom left. April, 2011.