GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS

- Houses are open from 1 - 5pm only, no earlybirds or latecomers.
- You may visit the homes in any order, but you may only visit each home once.
- Photography is strictly prohibited on tour properties.
- All attendees must have a ticket & be at least 6 years of age (infants in front carriers are permitted without a ticket, no other exceptions).
- Please do not bring large bags & backpacks.
- No food or drink, smoking or pets on tour properties.
- Cell phone usage is not permitted inside homes.
- Do not park in driveways, or block driveways or streets.
- Refrain from touching furniture, art and household items.
- Expect a line-up outside some of the homes.
- No washroom facilities are provided in the houses.
- You will be asked to remove your shoes at each home.
- We regret the tour is not mobility device accessible.

THE VANCOUVER SPECIAL

After Vancouver Specials first appeared around 1965 as a way to provide quick, inexpensive housing for a rapidly increasing immigrant population, the estimated number swelled to over 10,000 dwellings by the mid-80s. These homes were a unique Vancouver product designed to optimize standard Vancouver lots under the RS-1 District Zoning Schedule. Standard designs could be purchased from a stock plan office for about $65. Building permits were issued quickly and construction was often completed in a few weeks. The flexible floor plan and large footprint provided room for extended family to live together, or for an entire floor to be rented out as a mortgage helper.

The Vancouver Special flat front, above-grade basement, boxy shape and low-pitched roofline make them ideal for personalization. Modern homeowners are making alterations to suit their own lifestyles, including taking down interior walls to create light and airy spaces, installing state of the art mechanical systems and updating their energy efficiency with modern technology. All of this makes them an excellent fit for common goals of flexible living space and sustainable building practices. We hope you are inspired by the creativity found in the homes on the tour and enjoy learning about a piece of Vancouver's architectural history.

Vancouver Heritage Foundation
402 - 510 W. Hastings St. Vancouver BC V6B 1L8
604 264 9642 www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org
Facebook.com/TheVancouverHeritageFoundation Twitter.com/VanHeritage

1 W 19th Ave

"Vancouver Specials are just great houses to make more modern. They are so versatile inside."

The owners of this park-view home have spent the last decade working specifically with Vancouver Specials. While living in a different Special, they found this one for sale and saw the chance to create a long-term family home in an amazing location. The original owners had witnessed the demolition of the neighbouring identical home some years earlier, but the new owners of this Special saw its potential.

The homeowners put everything they have learned about renovating Specials into this house. They wanted a light-filled, open, uncluttered and airy feeling in an energy efficient home that included a home office and a separate suite. The top floor saw the removal of only a few walls and the ceiling, and the ground floor saw small alterations. Their modest renovation budget of $130,000 was well utilized as their skill with carpentry, contracting, design and sourcing knowledge enabled them to do much of the work themselves. For the work that needed to be done by other trades and professionals, such as tilers and electricians, the sourcing and storing of materials in advance meant there were no delays in the project. They bought the house in August of 2014 and moved in that November.

Original features include the exterior stucco, fireplaces and living-room hearth, most of the upstairs layout and a revamped entry door where wood panels were replaced with glass. Wood panelling was removed and the flat ceiling upstairs opened up to create vaulted ceilings with ten new skylights that required a fresh torch-on roof. The original soffits and aluminum windows were replaced, a high-efficiency furnace was installed and clerestory windows added. The kitchen and bathrooms were all updated and new bleached oak flooring was installed. Insulation was added and in-floor radiant heat laid under new porcelain tile in the foyer, kitchen and bathrooms. On the exterior, the original siding is intact under new metal siding. They experimented with LED bulbs until they found ones, used throughout the house, that gave the most pleasing light.

Finishes and fixtures were carefully chosen and affordably sourced to fit the comfortable feel of the home. They reused as much existing material as possible for both economy and sustainability. They even retained original drywall, only adding new where the wall heights were raised to accommodate the vaulted ceilings.

SATURDAY APR. 18th 1pm - 5pm

THIS BROCHURE IS YOUR 2015 TICKET

VANCOUVER SPECIAL HOUSE TOUR

VANCOUVER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

THIS BROCHURE IS YOUR 2015 TICKET

PRESENTED BY
Royal LePage Westside
SEBASTIAN ALBRECHT
TheVancouverSpecial.ca

IMPORTANT TOUR REMINDERS

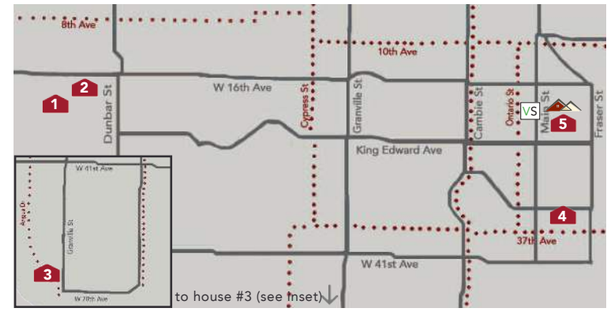
- **Wear Slip-on shoes** that can be easily removed. You will be required to remove them at the entrance to every house.
- Bring a **Vancouver street map** to help you find the houses.
- **Bring this brochure to every house.** Volunteers will check off each house upon arrival.
- **No photography or cell phone use on tour properties.** Anyone who does not adhere to these guidelines may be asked to leave and tickets will not be refunded.

1 2 3 4 5

WELCOME from VHF

VANCOUVER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

As a registered charity working to promote heritage conservation, some may wonder why VHF loves the Vancouver Special. With a relatively young history of about 60 years, the Special is representative of a unique era in the development of Vancouver. The building boom of the 1960s led to this uniquely Vancouver style, which is once again seeing a revolution of popularity. The elements that made it popular in the 1960s are once again in vogue: good sized lots and large homes with flexible floor plans which are ideal for renovation and adaptation. Their retention keeps building materials out of the land fill, preserves an interesting and important piece of our city's history and shows how older buildings can be a big part of a sustainable future. For more information on VHF and our innovative programming, we invite you to visit www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org



Road
Designated bikeway
Tour home
Vancouver Special VS
3612 Main St.
(see back page for special offer)
VHF Info Booth
Prince Edward Park
E 22nd Ave at Prince Edward St
(day-of ticket sales and information)

THANK YOU

The Vancouver Special House Tour is only possible through the tremendous effort of over 80 volunteers. We appreciate all of their contributions to ensure the success of this tour. Special thanks to all of the gracious 2015 homeowners and to Martin Knowles for providing tour photography. www.mkphotomedia.com

Jack & Debbie Allen
Don Archibald
Neil Armitage
Carol Attenborrow
Christine Austin
Gloria Burgess
Anna Camporese
Ada Con
Lexie Evers
Pamela Francis
Peter Genge
Shahab Ghandhari
Carol Gordon
Imbi & Phillip Harding
June Harrison
Jeannette Hlavach
Sydney Hughes
Heidi Hunchak
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Adele Oliver
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Chris Petty
Valerie Reed
Steve Rom
Yuko Sakata
Cass Sclauzero
Isla Steele
Rai Talib
Hillary Taylor
Bev Taylor
Sarah Taylor
Melania Taylor
Bonnie Thiele
Lindsie & Curtis Tomlinson Foreman
David Toole
April Underwood
Cara Wang
Lindsay Wilkinson
Helen Wood

2 W 17th Ave

photo credit: Martin Knowles Photo/Media

Having spent many years as a rooming house, this 1966 Special came with a lock on every bedroom door and was in rough shape. The owners were keen to jump in and return it to a two-family home.

The first step was to open up the original entry with its small foyer and enclosed room to the right. A new guest room with ensuite bath and a door to the utility room reclaimed the front part of the main floor, while a two-bedroom rental suite with separate entrance and its own efficient washer/dryer comprise the back. A beam was added to structurally reinforce the new open-plan entry, which highlights the original fireplace.

Returning the top floor to living space for a single family included converting a wall between the kitchen and living room to a pony wall and rotating a closet for additional kitchen storage. New cabinetry and a farmhouse-style sink from Ikea, along with hardwood flooring selected to match the original, update the kitchen. Mahogany wall panelling in the living room had been scarred from shelving, so holes and grooves were filled, the walls painted and the popcorn finish removed from the ceilings. The skylights and newer windows were updated previously, but the living room clerestory window and transom is original. The bathrooms all received modest updating of new faucets, toilets and mirrors. While the main bathroom counter, cabinets and wall tile are still vividly retro, there are plans to replace them in the future.

When the owners moved in, they wanted to increase the efficiency of the home. A relatively new high-efficiency furnace had already been installed, to which they added a Nest thermostat, and Nest CO_2 and fire detectors. One of many energy monitoring uses of the integrated units are motion sensors which can be programmed to recognize when no one is home to adjust temperature. The owners also opted to install a solar reflecting metal roof.

Outside, the owners wanted to create a comfortable garden, so they removed bamboo and a pond and utilized a landscape architect's trick of planting already large trees to accelerate the maturing of new landscaping. Perimeter drain tile was replaced and an oddly located sump under the interior stairs was relocated to the back yard, away from the house. They love and make abundant use of their covered patio, except when it is occupied by the equally appreciative resident racoon.

3 Adera St

photo credit: Martin Knowles Photo/Media

"It was the ugliest thing I had ever seen, I called it 'the mobile home'."

The owners of this Special came to the conclusion that getting into the Vancouver real estate market would be easier by keeping her parents' 1974 home, but they weren't fans of the Vancouver Special style. They got ideas from an architect about how they could alter its aesthetics to make it feel contemporary and less like the traditional Vancouver Special.

To modernize the upper floor, the owners were able to retain most of the layout, except for a few interventions. A wall between the living room and dining area, unusually focused at the south end of the house and not along its length, as well as the wall between the kitchen and dining area, were removed to create an open floor plan. The back bedroom has been opened up to create living space off the back deck, but could easily be restored to a bedroom by a future owner. A peninsula-style counter was removed, and an eating area was incorporated to create a new large kitchen with custom cabinets and Blanco sink. New finishes, including the removal of popcorn ceilings, along with deeper windows in the existing window locations, made a huge difference to the feel of the home. Custom shutters in the living room add privacy while still allowing lots of natural light.

On the lower level, the owners pushed out the north basement wall to create space for a large basement suite, installed new stairs, a high-efficiency furnace and hot water tank. Vapour barrier and insulation were added throughout and low-flow toilets installed. They also had an energy audit performed to make use of energy conservation grants.

While the side-entry and extended length set this home's exterior apart from the typical Vancouver Special, the owners wanted to ensure modern curb appeal. They kept a modest south-facing balcony but added new off-set railings to increase usable space, replaced sliding doors with French doors, added a ground level entrance on the south side and changed out the metal siding for rock-dash stucco and cedar.

The owners elected not to retain many original features, however a fireplace in the basement and established Magnolia planted by her parents reflect the history of the home. The flexibility inherent in the Vancouver Special has allowed the owners to embrace their family home while ensuring it suits a new generation.

**essay updated as of April 2nd*

4 E 35th Ave

This 1962 home is a fascinating combination of Mid-Century Modern roots and what later became typical Vancouver Special layout and design. The house has bedrooms on one side, living spaces on the other, low-pitched roof and combined masonry and stucco siding, all of which are hallmarks of the Vancouver Special. The substantial façade glazing, vertical masonry, split-entry stairs and vaulted exposed ceilings are features of Modernist residential design. The original construction plans show the centrally-located fireplace was intended to be on an exterior wall, which would have been similar to Vancouver Special design, whereas its central location fits with the Mid-Century Modern aesthetic. When the home was built, the neighbourhood behind was still forest and a creek, a picturesque setting for this family home.

The current owners felt very lucky to secure the house. The listing only mentioned the main floor square footage at a modest 1000 square feet, not including the below-grade basement. Perfectly intact when purchased from the original owners, the new homeowners loved the original style and floor plan and decided to retain many features. The first owner had installed shag carpet throughout the house, including the kitchen, only two days after construction, preserving the oak floors and making them prime for refinishing. Most of the original kitchen cabinets were left in place but updated with new replica hardware. One set of upper cabinets was removed to create a view to the back yard, and storage was added to the interior wall which also incorporates the fridge and two ovens. A Corian counter and new low-profile stove finished the renovation with a mix of original and modern features.

The homeowners did decide to make significant modifications to the energy efficiency of the home. The furnace was replaced with a 96% efficient unit, plus a three-stage electrostatic air filtration unit, a new hot water tank, LED lighting, air sealing of the top floor, with plans to air seal the basement level, new side and rear windows, a new layer of insulation on the roof and insulated soffits. An EnerGuide audit was conducted, which showed a rating increase from the 50s to the 70s. They received Home Energy Rebate Offer funds for the new furnace, windows and hot water tank.

The efficiency upgrades created a cozier home, with much lower energy bills, while the light-touch approach to renovation maintained the retro charm unique to this home.

5 E 22nd Ave

photo credit: Scott Massey Site Photography

The owners of this home were looking for a Special to renovate, inspired by Architect Stephanie Robb's early embrace of the Vancouver Special with her 2007 home renovation. Built in 1975, and bought by the current owners in 2008, this home was renovated in two stages. In 2008, the original entry was removed and the existing 8-foot opening was used to install two doors, one for the updated rental suite and one for the main floor. In 2013, the owners reclaimed the basement suite, removing the separations and creating a sizeable entry with new custom steel door and sidelight.

The first renovation was the more substantial, taking the house to the studs and fir shiplap to add vapour barrier and insulation, as well as replacing all the windows with double glazed units. All of the plumbing and wiring were also updated. The house has a truss roof with no load-bearing walls on the second floor, which is very unusual for a Special, but made it easy for the homeowners to open the upstairs floor plan at this time. Only two walls were removed on the upper floor to create the open floor plan and expanded door openings.

The owners were intent on respecting the Special's history, so many original features were updated instead of replacing, such as painting the fireplaces, patching and sanding the white oak floors and retaining some of the popcorn ceilings. The kitchen saw new drywall to patch where cabinets and walls had been removed.To expand the main bathroom, floor space was incorporated from the master bedroom powder room.

On the exterior, the homeowners kept the identifiably Special roof ridge and porch configuration. They trimmed the front porch back but kept the joists exposed and new custom railings help with a modest but striking update of the façade.

The owners wanted to be economical with finishes, and so became regulars on Craigslist. All appliances and bathroom fixtures, many windows, half of the interior lighting and the rear exterior siding were found online. They did splurge with custom kitchen cabinets but the owners did a considerable amount of work themselves to great savings. One of the owners was also able to showcase his carpentry skill in the butterfly-style dining table constructed from 115-year old first growth lumber salvaged from a Wing Sang Building lintel.

VS Special offer tour day only!

Vancouver Special, a locally run home furnishings store, has a special offer for all Vancouver Special tour ticket holders. Stop by their shop at **3612 Main St.** between 11am and 6pm April 18th to receive 10% off all items, and 20% off all books. They will also have complimentary coffee and water for all tour goers!

vancouver special