

1. BYRNES BLOCK (ALHAMBRA HOTEL)

2 Water Street
Elmer H. Fisher, 1886-87



This expansive structure was once the cornerstone of Maple Tree Square, the meeting place for citizens of the growing metropolis of Granville. It stands on the site of Gassy Jack Deighton's (Gastown's namesake) second saloon, (which stood in the shade of the enormous maple tree, near the water where "a little to the east, you could paddle through to False Creek at high tide, avoiding the treacherous narrows.") The existing building was opened as The Alhambra Hotel, after the great fire of 1886, by George Byrnes, a colourful former Sheriff of Barkerville, and was so baroque and swanky it dared to charge over a dollar a night! Beside such inducements as a beautiful view of the harbour, ornate window pediments, top floor pilasters, a decorated cornice, and a chimney pot for every room, the Alhambra boasted two outdoor privies in the back alley. After The Great Fire of '86, most new buildings were constructed with brick instead of wood and this was one of the earliest. Cast iron was introduced to construction in order to support the added weight of brick and stone, as in the upper storey of the Byrnes Block.

DUNN BLOCK 2.

1 Alexander Street
N.S. Hoffar, 1889



This was once a warehouse serving the ship chandlery and hardware business of Thomas Dunn, a member of Vancouver's first city council. Its location meant that it was accessible to both the railway and the waters of Burrard Inlet, which today are at some distance to the north. The architect successfully harmonized arched and rectangular windows to create a handsome façade. Fine brickwork and decorated cast-iron pillars (inscribed with the name of Ross and Howard Ironworks) combine structural necessity with visual interest.

3. HOTEL EUROPE

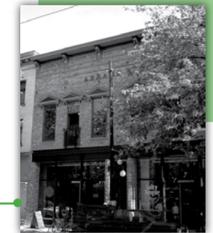
43 Powell Street
Parr and Fee, 1908-09



This was the earliest reinforced concrete structure in Vancouver, and was the first fireproof hotel in Western Canada. The style was called 'flatiron', the wedge shape being like that of an iron used for pressing clothes. It was constructed at the height of the elegant Edwardian Period, a marked change from the ornament of earlier designs, especially of the Victorian era. Its exterior walls of flat brick and sparse decoration, its impressive roof-cap and its looming shape when seen from Maple Tree Square, as well as its mode of construction, foretell the exciting century to come. The lobby retains its original tile, marble and brass finishes, as well as beveled glass and enameled wall tiles. The site was originally occupied by The Tivoli Saloon, which advertised free lunch with a 5-cent schooner of beer when the lowest denomination was 10 cents, forcing the customer to order two beers! In a police raid on the saloon in 1886 the grand sum of \$10.75 was seized from a game, apparently illegal, called 'stud-horse poker'. The temperance movement was strong during this early period in Vancouver's history but most establishments found their way around it in one way or another.

5. ABRAMS BLOCK (TREMONT HOTEL)

210 Carrall Street
architect unknown, c. 1887



There has been a hotel on this site since Vancouver's earliest days. The Tremont Hotel was a popular watering hole before it was destroyed in the 1886 Great Fire. It reopened just days later as a crude shack, but by 1887 the owners had rebuilt their hotel. They must have liked the original's Italianate style because the new building was almost identical in appearance to the original but this time in brick. In the 1887 Vancouver directory the Tremont was advertised as "the only brick hotel in the city... the bar is equipped with the best brands of imported wines, liquors and cigars. C.L. Carter (Louis), Proprietor." The exterior detail is interesting because it was constructed in wood, a departure from the usual galvanized tin seen on nearby buildings. A balcony running the full width was replaced by the small iron balconies installed during a major renovation.

MERCHANTS BANK / PIGEON PARK 8.

1 West Hastings Street
Somervell



The Canadian Pacific Railway had tracks running between their False Creek yards and Burrard Inlet along an alignment that cut through the regular street grid of the area. When the tracks were lifted in the 1930s the open space in front of the Mercantile Bank was landscaped and used as a park honouring the pioneers of the city. Better known to locals as Pigeon Park, it is a favourite gathering place in the neighbourhood. Standing in the park you can visually follow the former rail line through the blocks north towards Burrard Inlet and south to False Creek. The Mercantile Bank was designed in an odd shape to accommodate the rail line. The first-rate stone carving chiseled on site, is well preserved. Pilasters and frieze in cut stone conceal a fireproof steel frame designed to support an addition of seven stories that never took place. The grandeur of the building reflects the importance this part of the city had in the early 20th Century.

6. BOULDER HOTEL

1 West Cordova Street
R. McKay Frupp, 1890



This structure is an example of resistance to the prevailing and complicated Victorian style of its time. It is sublimely simple, with its plain stone façade ornamented by only a scarcely discernible cornice separating the ground floor from the one above. It was one of the two earliest buildings in Vancouver to have plain rectangular windows with no surrounding stonework to enhance them. The rusticated stonework alone is an interesting feature. The third storey was added to the building a decade after the structure was built.

11. PENNSYLVANIA HOTEL

1 East Hastings Street
W.T. Whiteway, 1906



If the Alhambra Hotel, with its two privies in the lane, wasn't good enough, you could by 1906, move up to what is now called the Pennsylvania but began as the Woods Hotel and then the Roger. Five stories of "every room with a view" bay-windowed rooms, hot and cold running water, 20 bathtubs, an elevator, and telephones for everyone! The architect was Newfoundlander William Tuff Whiteway who worked for a time in California, and one can perhaps see both influences in this building. Tiers of bay windows cover both facades, a fashion which typified San Francisco architecture of the period.

9. TEMPLETON'S BUILDING

1 East Hastings Street
perhaps C.O. Wickenden, c. 1895



William Templeton was a grocer from Ontario, and was Vancouver's sixth mayor. He built the first brick building in Vancouver on this site immediately after The Great Fire. The existing building was put up a decade later and shows an effort to dress up the plain brickwork with rugged stone trim, creating a richly textured façade. An interesting feature is that there are pilasters decorating the Carrall Street side of the building but not that on Hastings, indicating that the former was the more important thoroughfare in the 1890s. As with most of its neighbours, this building was home to a wide variety of businesses that came and went with the times, beginning with the original grocery store, harness shop and liquor outlet.



CARRALL ST
GREENWAY

10. B.C. ELECTRIC RAILWAY CO. BLDG

425 Carrall Street (or 2 West Hastings)
Somervell & Putnam, 1911-12



under construction, c. 1911 CVA M-14-61

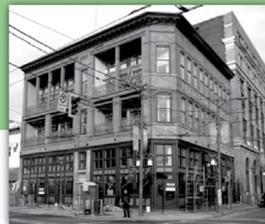


BC Electric Railway Co. c. 1928 VPL 22735

By the time the B.C. Electric built this depot the company's interurban system was the largest in Canada, reaching sixty miles up the Fraser Valley to Chilliwack. Streetcars, operating since 1890, entered through the enormous arched windows of the terminus while trains entered the building from the large square opening on Hastings Street. The Canadian Pacific Railway spur line went along the west side of the terminus. When streetcars were replaced by buses and the B.C. Electric (now B.C. Hydro) moved to Burrard Street, the ground floor was closed in for a bank. The design of the building reflects the trend toward plainer lines and geometric decoration that had occurred by 1912 with the influence of the Art Nouveau era, and of innovations in the manufacture of building materials.

CHINESE FREEMASONS BUILDING 13.

3-9 West Pender Street
Architect Unknown, c. 1901



The Chi Kung Tong, a traditional Chinese fraternal organization, first appeared in Canada in 1863 to provide welfare assistance to miners in the Cariboo gold rush. Built in 1901, the Chi Kung Tong purchased this building in 1907. The Chi Kung Tong changed its name to Chinese Freemasons in 1920 in order to forge links with European Freemasonry. Because of the way the structure blends the Chinese and Western traditions of architecture, this building is the perfect headquarters for an organization that sought to form bonds with Europeans. The Pender Street façade facing Chinatown has traditional Chinese recessed balconies and ironwork. The Carrall Street side of the building faces the entrance to Gastown and presents a Victorian Italianate façade. The Freemasons supported Dr. Sun-Yat Sen's attempts to bring democracy to China. During visits to Vancouver to increase support and raise money for his cause in 1910 and 1911, Dr. Sun-Yat Sen was hosted by this society. The building was even mortgaged to fund Sun-Yat Sen's 1911 rebellion.

15. SAM KEE BUILDING

8 West Pender Street
Brown and Gilliam, 1913

Sam Kee Building, c. 1925 VPL 21991



An act of defiance in 1913 resulted in the construction of this 6'2" (1.8m) wide building. To widen the road the city expropriated land on Pender Street, demolishing Chang Toy's grocery warehouse and leaving him with a very narrow strip of land. No compensation was offered and the furious Toy, rather than sell his prime location cheaply to his neighbour, hired architects Brown and Hillam to design a building for the site. The series of bay windows increases parts of the usable width of the upper floor. The basement, which runs the length of the building and extends under the sidewalk to double the square footage, housed public baths. The section under the sidewalk was cleverly lit by glass prisms set in the pavement. The building, made entirely of riveted steel, was restored in 1986 by the current owner, Jack Chow and architect Soren Rasmussen.

HOLDEN BUILDING 12.

16 East Hastings Street
W.T. Whiteway, 1910-11



under const., c. 1911 VPL 13682

This building served as Vancouver's city hall between 1929 and 1936, the fifth floor having been converted into a council chamber. Today the structure stands as an example of an early Vancouver 'skyscraper', and of the trend toward simplicity in 20th century architecture. It is faced with stone top and bottom, brick in between, and the middle floors are shorter in height than the ground level or attic.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

- 4. 200 Carrall St. SECOND FERGUSON BLOCK W.T. Whiteway, 1886-87**
This two-storey building replaced an earlier structure built of wood that was destroyed in The Great Fire of 1886. Both were erected by A.G. Ferguson who built railway tunnels for the CPR, and housed the railway's land offices. This relatively simple building is not without architectural merit. Stilted arched windows and keystones are imaginatively grouped into pairs on the Powell Street front, and a bracketed cornice in painted galvanized tin caps the façade.
- 7. 8-28 W Cordova St. LONSDALE/DUNN MILLER BLOCK N.S. Hoffar, 1889**
Originally built in 1889 for hardware merchant Thomas Dunn, this building housed Vancouver's first public library upstairs, consisting of a reading room with 400 volumes, a smoking room, a lecture series and, progressive for the time, a policy to admit 'ladies!' This Italianate style building later housed numerous fraternal groups and served as a meeting place for the Jewish community before an official synagogue was built on Heatley Avenue. Today it is the home to the Army and Navy Surplus Store.
- 14. 1 E Pender St. CHINESE TIMES BUILDING W.T. Whiteway, 1902**
Local businessman Wing Sang built this bay-windowed structure. The largest of Vancouver's several Chinese newspapers were published here from 1939 until the early 2000s. The printing press, which used 5,000 different characters, was visible through the window.
- 16. 525-531 Carrall St. LIM SAI HOR (KOW MOCK) BENEVOLENT ASSOC. BLDG., 1903**
The Lim Sai Hor Association building was constructed in 1903 for the Chinese Empire Reform Association, one of the most influential societies in early Chinatown. The four storey building fronts both Carrall Street and Shanghai Alley. The Reform members were the elite of early Chinatown, with links to politics in China and to Chinatowns around the world. From this building they published a newspaper, ran a school, and even a small clinic.
- 17. 578 Carrall St. CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE James Cheng Architects and Romes Kwan & Assoc., 1981 and DR. SUN-YAT SEN GARDEN Joe Wai and Don Vaughan, 1986**
The Chinese Cultural Centre is an ambitious project that reflects Chinatown's continuing importance for Vancouver's Chinese-Canadians. Opened in 1981, the Cultural Centre houses classrooms, meeting rooms, exhibition space, an activity hall, a bookstore and a reading room. The original gateway arch was erected in front of the pavilion of the People's Republic of China at Vancouver's Expo 86 and was moved to this location in 1987. It has since been replaced by a marble gate donated by the city of Guangzhou, China. Built by artisans from China employing traditional techniques and materials, the Dr. Sun-Yat Sen Garden is the first full-size classical Chinese garden outside China. The entrance to the public side of the walled garden is accessed off Columbia Street. Guided tours of the gardens architectural components and related buildings are available by registering at the Carrall Street entrance.



MAPLE TREE SQUARE, c. 1886 (VPL 819)

This is where an enormous maple tree stood that gave the square its name. The tree became the town meeting place and notice board. Gassy Jack Deighton's saloon was in the shade of the maple tree towards the water. This area was also part of the Coast Salish village called "Luk'luk'l". Vancouver's first strike meeting (Hastings Mill workers) was held at Maple Tree Square. The tree was lost during the great fire of June 13th, 1886 however the intersection of Water and Carrall Streets where it was located has retained its importance to the city and is still known as Maple Tree Square.

VPL 819



The Carrall Street Greenway is an important feature in Vancouver's public realm, forming a water-to-water connection of the city's recreational seawall path around the downtown peninsula, including Stanley Park. One can trace the history of Vancouver along the Greenway, which extends from False Creek (Pacific Boulevard) in the south to Burrard Inlet (Water Street) in the north. This map guide highlights some of the significant heritage resources along the Greenway, which help tell the story of the city.

Carrall Street provides a fascinating glimpse into Vancouver's origins. Established in 1870 as the easternmost boundary of the Granville town site, it has been, and remains, home to many diverse cultures and communities as well some of Vancouver's most historic buildings. Enjoy this walk as an opportunity to learn more about the architecture of this area that reflects the diverse people and cultures that have come together in this place to help shape Vancouver.

Begin by looking around and replacing the buildings and streets with a pristine beach, a beautiful variety of trees and a mud flat that connected False Creek to the Burrard inlet. It was the water access that made this particular spot important to early settlers and First Nations. The southbound course of present day Carrall Street once led to False Creek. The tidal waters of False Creek originally came north to what is now Pender Street and in some places reached as far north as Hastings Street. This mud flat was used by First Nations and the early European settlers to take their small boats from one body of water to the other.

The ground was so wet when the original construction of Carrall Street began that the entire area was raised, and built on wooden piles. The sidewalks for Carrall Street are 8 feet above the level of the mud flats.

At the north end of Carrall Street is Maple Tree Square which was originally called Luk'luk'l ("beautiful grove"). This spot was a traditional summer food gathering and preserving camp for aboriginal Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Musqueam First Nations. The arrival of European settlers and the opening of sawmills in the 1860s began the dramatic transformation of this area's landscape.

Maple Tree Square is sometimes referred to as the birthplace of Vancouver. This is the spot that on September 30, 1867 John "Gassy Jack" Deighton arrived by canoe from New Westminster and built a saloon. He chose this spot because it was just outside the boundary of land controlled by Edward Stamp's sawmill.

Within a few years of Deighton opening his saloon, the local working population—mostly hand loggers, mill workers, and entrepreneurs—had built a small village, dubbed Gassy's Town - Gastown for short - in Deighton's honour. (Deighton's nickname comes from his very talkative nature.)

In 1870 the village attracted the attention of the colonial government which formalized matters by surveying a six-block town site known as Granville. Virtually all of this was consumed in Vancouver's Great Fire on June 13, 1886. In the direct aftermath of the fire a number of historic buildings were constructed, including the Byrnes Block/Alhambra Hotel, on the site of the Globe saloon, and across the street the Ferguson Block. These buildings were a reflection of the growing and maturing of Gastown from boom town to permanent townsite.

Cordova Street, which intersects Carrall, was the early city's main shopping street, but the construction of the BC Electric Company's streetcar depot at Carrall and Hastings in 1891 shifted focus farther south. The area grew and became the city's entertainment district with numerous theatres, movie houses, bars and restaurants. Neighbouring Chinatown also expanded out to the south side of Hastings. Throughout this growth Carrall remained an important and diverse street.

Carrall Street served as an important entry point to Vancouver for people and cargo arriving by sea. The Union Steamship Company was established in 1889 to serve northern communities. The dock was at the foot of Columbia Street, just one block off Carrall. It took tourists north and was the mail and supply link to Vancouver for logging camps, canneries, and many communities along the BC coast.

At the end of the logging or cannery season, the Union Steam Ships brought thousands of seasonal workers back to Vancouver. Some of these workers had family in the city, but a significant number found lodging near the docks. They lived in the residential hotels and rooming houses that still line the streets of Gastown and the Downtown Eastside. Not only was Carrall Street important for workers, but it was also a significant part of the financial district. Just before the First World War financial institutions and major business had begun their westward shift.

Since its heyday in the first part of the 20th century, Gastown and the surrounding area entered a slow decline. The biggest blow came in 1958-59 when in short order the interurban station at Carrall and Hastings closed with the end of streetcar service; Union Steamships ceased operation and the North Shore Ferries were withdrawn. The neighbourhood never really recovered from this substantial loss of pedestrian traffic.

By the early 1960's, plans for a city-wide freeway system, including an elevated section along Carrall Street, and a major redevelopment project would have destroyed a large portion of Gastown and neighbouring historic areas including Chinatown and Japantown. City-wide protests from all levels of society managed to stop the plans, and by 1971 Gastown and Chinatown had been declared provincial heritage districts. Beautification efforts added the distinctive streetlights, maple trees and brick streets.

Attracting new development or active reuse of heritage buildings through the City of Vancouver's Heritage Incentive Program has helped to restore part of the area's important heritage assets, improve the physical environment, create new business opportunities and bring more life and people into the area.

Buildings in the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program include the Byrnes Block (# 1), the Abrams Block (# 5), the Pennsylvania Hotel (# 11, including the historic areaway and replication of the neon sign), the Chinese Freemasons (# 13), the Dunn Block (# 2, participated only in the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program), the Merchant's Bank (# 8), and the Boulder Hotel (# 6).

These rehabilitation projects have already begun to make a positive impact on the neighbourhood by bringing more residents, visitors and new businesses into the community. Today, the area is a tourist destination but has a new vibrancy that appeals to locals as well.

The area surrounding Carrall Street is the oldest part of the city and comes with some of its most entrenched social challenges such as drug abuse and homelessness. The City and provincial government have purchased and are upgrading a number of residential hotels to provide secure housing. But there's more to do and the solutions will be part of the future of Carrall Street.



402-510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1L8
tel 604.264.9642 fax 604.264.9643
mail@vancouverheritagefoundation.org
www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org

The Vancouver Heritage Foundation is a registered charity committed to the conservation of Vancouver's heritage buildings in recognition of their importance to the culture, economy and the sustainability of our city. The VHf supports the conservation of homes, commercial and public buildings, and sacred sites by:

- Giving the public practical tools, information and incentives to be successful in conserving heritage buildings.
- Creating opportunities for the public to access and learn about Vancouver's historic buildings.
- Attracting public and private sector support for an endowment to protect buildings into the future.
- Developing strategic relationships that nurture a civic culture supportive of heritage conservation.



CARRALL ST GREENWAY HISTORIC MAP GUIDE