



Heritage Discovery Day & House Tour 2023

**Sunday, June 4th
10am-4:30pm**

This guidebook is your ticket



VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION





ABOUT VHF

Vancouver Heritage Foundation inspires people to value and conserve our city's historic places and stories, and raises awareness of the vital contribution that heritage makes to a culturally diverse, vibrant and sustainable community.

We fulfill our mission by hosting engaging events and educational programming, creating and disseminating informative resources, and providing practical support through grant programs.

Visit our website

www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org

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#HeritageDiscoveryDay2023



WELCOME TO VHF'S HERITAGE DISCOVERY DAY & HOUSE TOUR!

The Heritage House Tour has taken place on the first Sunday in June since 2003. The event offers a chance to explore a selection of Vancouver's heritage homes, each with its own story, past and present, from early architects, builders and residents to more recent restorations and adaptations. It is a wonderful way to explore Vancouver's diverse neighbourhoods as well as architectural styles, design ideas, and garden landscapes.

The tour is self-guided and ticket holders can choose which stops to visit and in which order. Volunteers and your guidebook will offer historical information about each of the eight houses open on the tour, as well as additional neighbourhood insights. All tour sites will be within walking distance of each other. We encourage you to enjoy a meal, drink, or shop at the local neighbourhood amenities during your time in Strathcona.

ABOUT THE TOUR





HERITAGE DISCOVERY DAY & HOUSE TOUR GUIDELINES



Houses are open from 10 am to 4:30 pm only. No latecomers or early birds.

Please be patient as line-ups at houses are possible.



All attendees are required to take their shoes off before entering a home.

The only exception is House 3 - a working artist studio. **Please bring socks/slippers/indoor shoes and a bag for your shoes.** We ask that attendees avoid bare feet in tour homes.



All attendees must have a ticket. No children under 6 are permitted (infants in front carriers are allowed).



Photography on tour sites and within homes is strictly prohibited.

Please be aware designated VHF photographers may take photographs or live recordings during the tour, and these images will be utilized without notification by VHF for the purpose of promotion or communications.



Washroom facilities are NOT available at tour homes.

Check the map in this guide for recommended public facility locations or ask one of the volunteers to direct you to the closest washroom.



While visiting tour properties, please do not eat, drink, smoke/vape or use your cell phone.

Open food or drinks and pets are prohibited on tour properties. Strollers, wheelchairs, bicycles, dogs, and visible cameras are not permitted in homes. You will be asked to remove (and carry) large bags or backpacks before entering a tour home.



Unfortunately the tour is not mobility device accessible.

VHF reserves the right to refuse entry or ask any visitor to leave who does not adhere to these guidelines.



Present your guidebook at a participating site during open hours for a discount (valid June 4th only)

- Strathcona Beer Company - \$5.95 dine-in beers
- Luppolo Brewing - 10% off all dine-in orders





Parking

We **STRONGLY** recommend considering transit, biking, or ridesharing to the tour neighbourhood. Limited parking is available – please ensure you do not park your vehicle in a permit only zone. Ticket holders are responsible for finding and covering costs associated with vehicle parking.



Scavenger Hunt Instructions

- Certain sites on the route have a question marked by a magnifying glass. Look out for exterior signs, plaques and building details to find the answer.
- Submit your answers using this QR code for a chance to win tickets for next year's tour.
- Important note: Many of the sites are private homes and property. Please enjoy viewing the stops from the sidewalk and do not enter private property for any reason. Please be mindful of your surroundings, watch out for uneven surfaces, and ensure you are crossing roads safely at designated crosswalks or traffic lights.

Scan to access
scavenger hunt



ABOUT STRATHCONA

The area that is now known as Strathcona has a long history as a culturally diverse gathering place. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, it was a longstanding summer campsite for the $x^w m \theta k^w \acute{a} y \acute{o} m$ (Musqueam), $S k w x w \acute{u} 7 m e s h$ (Squamish) and $s \acute{o} l i l w \acute{e} t \acute{a} \acute{t}$ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. The southern part of the Strathcona Community Garden, along what is now Malkin Avenue was originally marshy, tidal basin and mudflats, while the nearby Cottonwood Community Garden had once been a wetland that was a foraging site.

The point of land on the north foot of Dunlevy, where Captain Edward Stamp established Vancouver's first industry, the Hastings Mill (originally the Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber & Sawmill Co.) in 1865, was known as Kumkumalay ("big leaf maple trees"). By the 1890s, the surrounding area had become a working-class neighbourhood that was home to successive waves of immigrants.



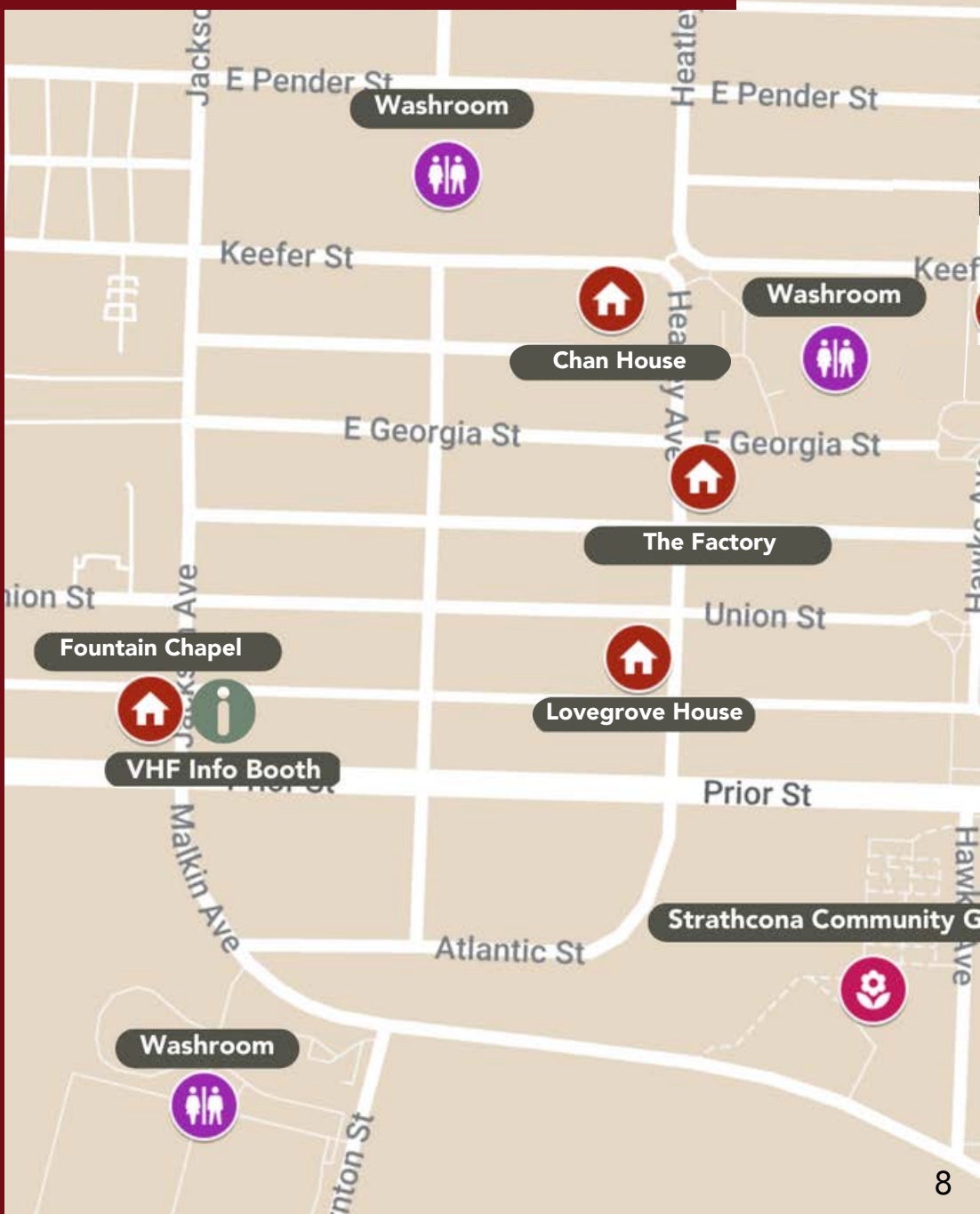
What started out as a collection of shacks and cottages around the Hastings Mill site has grown into a vibrant, multicultural community filled with historic sites, community spaces, artist studios and corner grocery stores. As a diverse area that many new immigrants once called home, Strathcona is a community that has managed to survive and thrive despite constant pressure for change.



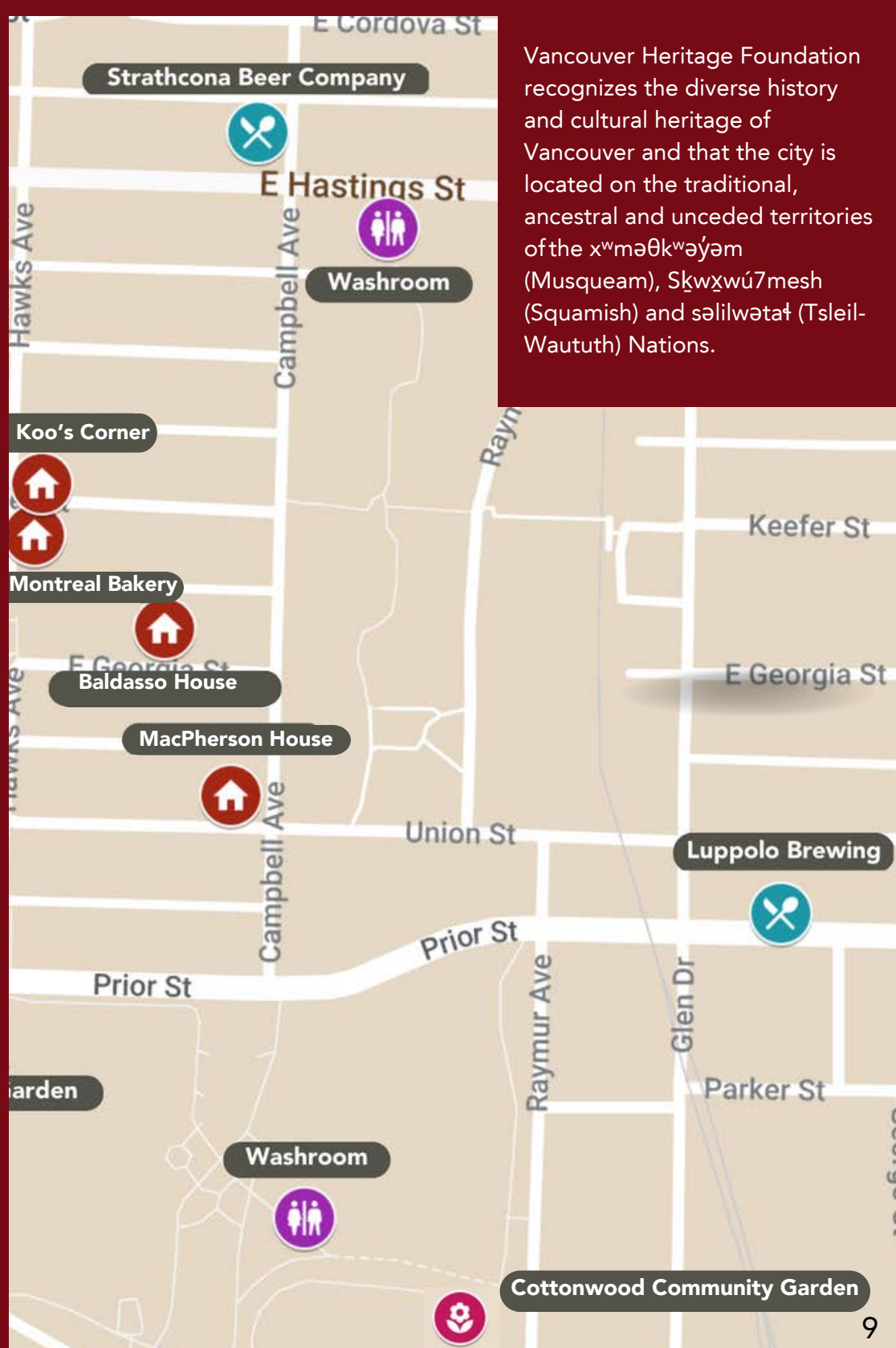
Looking west from Hastings Mill, 1886. Source: City of Vancouver Archives Wat P3

MAP OF STRATHCONA

This map is for illustrative purposes only.



Vancouver Heritage Foundation recognizes the diverse history and cultural heritage of Vancouver and that the city is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



FOUNTAIN CHAPEL



Designed by Frederick Mellish in 1910, 823 Jackson is a rare example of an institutional Arts and Crafts building with architectural details including a steeply pitched gable-roof building form, shingle siding and trim, wood brackets, and half timbering.

In 1921, the former Norwegian Lutheran church became the spiritual home to Vancouver's black community. Fountain Chapel, a chapter of the African Methodist Episcopal church, was known for its work with local youth. Located at the eastern end of Hogan's Alley, the church became a cultural hub of the community. Nora Hendrix and her husband Ross, musician Jimi Hendrix's grandparents, helped to raise funds to purchase the building which would serve the community well into the 1950s.



In the 1960s, changes to the neighbourhood caused numbers to dwindle and Annie Walker (later Girard) bought the building and started her own non-denominational congregation, "Cry in the Wilderness Church." From 1985-2008, the Basel Hakka Lutheran congregation offered services in Chinese and English. In 2008, the site was decommissioned and converted into a private residence.

In addition to undertaking extensive research on the history of the building, the current owners have lovingly maintained the building while adding their own creative touches to the space – using the upstairs for an art studio and the downstairs as their residence. A few unique features include the curved wood altar windows, designed and patented by one of the owners, as well as the blue painted underside of the gable that resembles looking at the sky.

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WALTER & MARY CHAN HOUSE



Built in 1906 by Ontario-born carpenter John Walter McMeekin, this Gabled Vernacular-style home with its wide porch and 2-1/2 storey profile was typical of the working class housing built in Strathcona in the first decade of the twentieth century. The neighbourhood was home to many different immigrant communities who found work in the mills and railyards nearby or in the growing downtown to the west. The first resident of 658 Keefer was David Inches, a foreman and later an engineer at the Post Office Building on West Hastings Street, who remained in the home until 1920.



**PTM
SITE**

While typical of the style of the Strathcona neighbourhood, this house has special historic significance as the home of Walter and Mary Chan. They moved here with their family in 1954 after the home that they rented on Dunlevy was demolished by the City as part of the plan for ‘urban renewal’ that intended to clear much of their neighbourhood for a new freeway and social housing. Walter and Mary Chan were instrumental in organizing grassroots resistance to the plan, forming the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) and ultimately halting the destruction.

The house has remained in the family and is currently owned by Walter and Mary Chan’s son and daughter-in-law. As part of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, the house was fully preserved in 2015, the basement suite finished, and a strata-titled coach house was built behind the home. Exterior restoration work included removing asphalt shingles to reveal much of the original exterior cladding and trim. Once repaired, rather than returning to a 1906 colour palette, the exterior was repainted in the familiar pink of Walter and Mary Chan’s time.

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MONTREAL BAKERY



The house in the centre of this property was built in 1894 and was a residence for the first 40 years of its life. In 1935, this became the location for the Montreal Bakery which functioned on the site until 1955. The owner was Italian born baker Lucien Zanon. Lucien and his wife Cecilia had started the Montreal Bakery across the street on Hawks (since demolished along with all the buildings on this block for the creation of McLean Park in 1963), and moved to Keefer for the potential to expand their business. The Zanon family built the Art Deco inspired additions along the perimeter of the property, creating both a retail outlet at the corner and an industrial capacity bakery in the back.



In 1956 Willibald Taerner took over the bakery and renamed it Willy's Bakery, while the Zanon family ran a grocery store in the corner retail space. You can see the entryway to their shop in one of Fred Herzog's photos, *Black Cat* (1968). This configuration of bakery in the back and grocery store at the corner lasted for 10 years until 1966.

The current owners have been here since 1993. A group of long-term local artists (among the founders of First Saturday Open Studio and the East Side Culture Crawl), named the building *Panificio*, from the Italian word for bakery, as an homage to the Zanon family and their descendants who continue to visit the site on occasion.



KOO'S CORNER



Originally built in 1947 with additions and adaptations for new use made in 2002, Koo's Corner is a six-unit townhouse project that combines retention and conversion of a historic commercial building using green construction principles. Rather than mimic the heritage architectural details in the neighbourhood, the project manages to put a subtle twist on many of them such as the asymmetrical roofline, which respects the angle of the surrounding traditional homes but also reflects the commercial history of the site.



Prior to the 2002 development, Koo's Automotive was a car repair shop and a neighbourhood institution (a.k.a. Koo's Garage). It had been operated since 1973 by owner Gordie Koo, who still lives with his family next door. The history of the site goes back much further. Originally it was the location of a Victorian-style house built in 1900 but lost early on, fire insurance maps and city directories at the City Archives show the lot empty from 1922-1947. In 1947 the commercial narration of the site begins when Western Cartage Company builds its depot on the corner. Apart from trucking services, the premises also unofficially provided boxing ring training, especially attended by local residents of the Italian community.

The units are all of modest size, a compactness needed in a growing city and fitting to the budgets and lifestyles of most Strathcona residents. Although innovatively modern inside, the exteriors feature the style of porches and front yards typical to the historic rowhouses on the 700 and 800 blocks of Hawks Avenue. The unit open on tour is in the new yellow portion. There are numerous green building and sustainable development features in the project including adaptive reuse of existing garage building, extensive use of reclaimed materials (flooring, cabinetry and framing), recycling of over 80% of construction waste and reduced use of finishing materials.



THE FACTORY



First known as 706 Heatley when constructed in 1951, this building stands testament to the mixed use of the neighbourhood where the odd light industrial building was located on predominantly residential blocks. It was built by Continental Carriers Trucking in 1951, a new (1948) company that specialized in trucking between Vancouver and Calgary. Other trucking companies used the premises including Canadian Freightways Ltd. (1954), White Transport (1961), Salmon's Transfer (1971) etc. The big concrete chunk at the lane was built up over time by residents of the Joe Wai at the corner of Union, to stop trucks from turning in too close to their parked vehicles, and this survives till this day as testament to the daily movement of commercial-sized freight trucks in and out of that building, accessing it from the lane.



By the 1990s, the building was used as a produce warehouse and became known in the neighbourhood as the Garlic Warehouse. When it was developed in 2005, converted to loft-style townhouses, its industrial past was used in its branding to be known as The Factory - the retention of the truck transfer openings pay homage to the original shape of the factory. Some locals even call it the Garlic Factory to this day.

The current owner of this unit actually owned the building between 2000-2004 and had planned turn it into one large artist live-work space with plenty of room to display their unique circus collection before selling it to a developer. This unit retains a number of its original features, including the kitchen and bathroom tile. One standout feature is the timber ceiling – it is the only unit that has kept the original ceiling.

LOVEGROVE HOUSE



Constructed in 1894 by Henry Lovegrove, this is one of several early Victorian-era cottages that were constructed around the same time. They feature decorative shingles in the gable, bay windows (in this case canted but in others square bays) and partial front porches - typical of the era. Their elevated siting speaks to the original topography of the neighbourhood which included hills and dips. If you walk in Strathcona's lanes, you can sense how topographically diverse the area was, but the streets were all levelled to accommodate wagon, car and in some cases streetcar traffic, meaning that some houses are below street level (like the 700 block of Pender and some are high above street level, like many blocks of Union Street).



Union Street was originally called Barnard Street until 1911. In Strathcona, Union Street gained a reputation for having many brothels, illegal taverns and bootlegging businesses, especially in the first blocks past Main Street. The residents of the eastern sections of Union Street wanted to distinguish themselves from this reputation, and ultimately managed to get their street name changed to Adanac in 1930 (Canada spelled backwards).

Fun fact! On April 1, 1903, the house was listed in The Province Newspaper as having 7 rooms for rent for \$15 a month.

The current owners have undertaken several renovations to reconfigure the lower floor, including refinishing the wood floors and relocating the clawfoot tub from the corner of the kitchen. The tile vestibule in the entryway is a reminder of the former layout when the house was a rental.



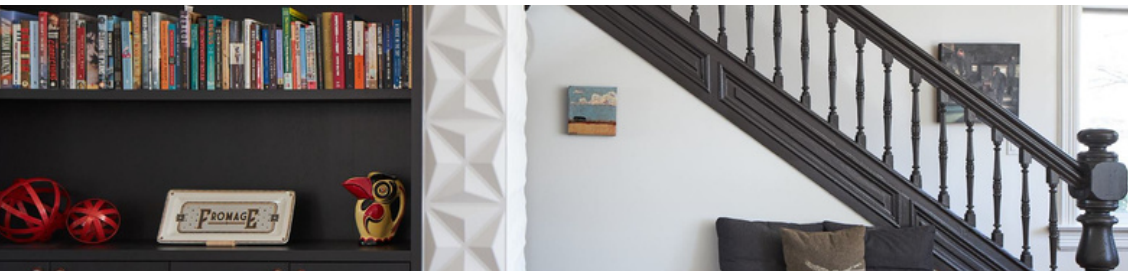
BALDASSO HOUSE



The 800 block of Strathcona streets were amongst the earliest developed blocks in the neighbourhood because the first BCER streetcar ran along Campbell Ave in 1891 connecting Venables and Hastings and getting people to downtown (Gastown) and the working waterfront.



Built in 1893, this house reflects the Victorian-era it was developed in with its tall, narrow form, vertical, narrow windows and double-storey canted bay. Further Victorian features include its complex roof system with steeply-pitched gables, and its partial front porch with matching verandah above. The decorated fascia boards are also typical of the Victorian aesthetic. Typical of early Strathcona homes, it was stuccoed in the 1950s and its porch columns were replaced with decorative cast iron posts typical of the mid-century. The house is relatively large in Strathcona standards and actually stood on two lots for the first 10 years of its existence until the property to the west was constructed in 1902, which was demolished and replaced by a Joe Wai Special in the 1970s.



As early as 1900 the house was advertised for rent. By 1907, individual housekeeping rooms were advertised for rent in the house. This is likely a reflection of the fact that Harris Street got a streetcar line along it in 1906. The streetcar lines were removed in 1962, but if you look at some of the hardscaping of the gardens on this block, you'll see granite loaves (or blocks) that were salvaged by residents when the streetcar lines were removed. The tracks were lined with these granite loaves.

The home has undergone a full restoration, including the restoration of the wood cladding and wood columns to the façade, under the careful supervision of the current owners and has beautiful modern interior design including an open main floor plan with stunning kitchen and vibrant wallpaper in each of the upstairs bedrooms.

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MACPHERSON HOUSE



Built around 1895, the MacPherson House was one of the first houses on the 800-block of Union Street, which was at the time named “Barnard St” but was later renamed because it sounded too much like Burrard Street.

Robert MacPherson, a Scottish-born carpenter who became a local politician and represented the City of Vancouver in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia from 1894-1900, is listed as the original owner and builder of the house. There were few houses on the street before 1899 and MacPherson chose this lot at the eastern end of a developing neighbourhood to take advantage of the interurban line along Campbell Avenue which had begun operation in 1891.



This one and-half storey wood framed house is double gabled and has Queen Anne-cottage style features. The combination of its prominent bay window, brackets and decorative shingles and shiplap siding make it a unique in Strathcona.

Updates to this house have included a contrasting paint scheme, an extension on the back for a kitchen pantry and a modern fireplace. The original fir floors have been painted and some of the brick from the original fireplace have been retained in the floor. If you look closely, you may be able to notice an ironing board nook on the main floor.



HISTORY OF STRATHCONA SCHOOL

Lord Strathcona School is Vancouver's oldest continuously used school site. Established in 1891 as East (or East End) School, the school was built in stages between 1897 and 1972.

Students in the area originally went to Hastings Mill School. After the fire of June 1886, the families scattered. A new school opened in January 1887 at 522 Oppenheimer Street (now East Cordova Street) with an enrollment of 250 pupils.



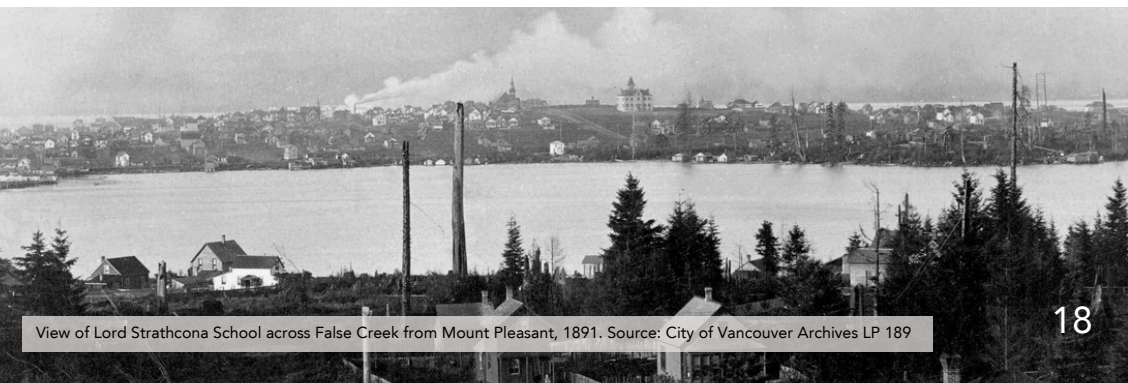
Group portrait of students and teachers outside Strathcona School c. 1923. Source: City of Vancouver Archives Sch N11

In 1891, the East End School was replaced by a new red brick building, sitting at the highest point of the land in the neighbourhood at Jackson and Pender. Designed by Thomas Hooper, the school's tall central tower could be seen from both the north shore and Mount Pleasant across False Creek. This Second Renaissance style building from 1897 was designed by architect William Blackmore. Although the building lost its front steps and tower roof, it still features stone trims, arches and sheet metal cornices. The gable cheeks include a sunburst motif, which was popular in the Victorian era.

The school was renamed in 1900 for Lord Strathcona – Donald Smith, a director of the CPR – and it is from the school that the neighbourhood eventually took its name.

Strathcona was known as a cosmopolitan neighbourhood and the school body provided a good indication of this diversity. In the 1920s, the school was frequently referred to as the League of Nations.

In 2013 Lord Strathcona School received \$25.6 million for seismic upgrades to three of the schools' five buildings. The brick building received a unique seismic retrofit, a technique known as base isolation, which essentially cuts the building in half horizontally at its base and inserts rubber buffers to mitigate the shaking.



View of Lord Strathcona School across False Creek from Mount Pleasant, 1891. Source: City of Vancouver Archives LP 189

CULTURAL HERITAGE DISCOVERY ROUTE



Learn more about the Places That Matter plaque project: placesthatmatter.ca

To delve into the multicultural history of Strathcona during your visit, look for the East End Stories and Black Strathcona plaques. For more information on historic Chinatown and the historic Japanese district, visit our website: vancouverheritagefoundation.org/discover-heritage/map-guides

LEGEND

1 **Hendrix House** (827 E Georgia St)


From 1938 to 1952, this was the residence of Nora Hendrix, grandmother of Jimi Hendrix, American guitarist of importance in the 1960s. She was a founder of the Fountain Chapel, a focal point of black cultural activity in Strathcona.

3 **Ukrainian Hall** (805 E Pender St)

Located a few blocks from the Russian Orthodox Church on Campbell Avenue, many Eastern European immigrants put down roots in the Pender Campbell area of Strathcona.

5 **Former Schara Tzedek Synagogue** (700 E Pender St)

Built in 1917 as the first permanent synagogue in Vancouver, this Romanesque Revival style building was the centre of Jewish life in Strathcona. When the synagogue moved to Oak Street in 1948, the sanctuary was converted into a gymnasium and later converted into condominiums in 1986-88.

 **How many arched windows are along the top row of the front of the building?**

7 **Militant Mothers of Raymur Pedestrian Bridge**

The railway tracks by Raymur Housing (now Stamps Place) were the site of a major community victory in 1971. Dubbed Militant Mothers of Raymur, a group of local mothers whose kids had no safe way to cross train tracks to get to school each day, took their fight with the railways to City Hall and the courts, leading to the construction of this overpass.

2 **Bezzasso House** (620 Keefer St)

Built in 1902 for an Irish immigrant named John Clandenning, who was a foreman at the Hastings Mill, this home has a long history with immigration in the Strathcona community. Purchased by Angela Bezzasso in 1938, the home has been in the family ever since.

4 **Nellie Yip Quong House** (783 E Pender Street)

A feminist and social activist, Nellie Yip Quong spoke five Chinese dialects and became an advocate for her adopted community, serving as a midwife and interpreter. Nellie and her husband moved here from Chinatown in 1917.

 **How many women did Nellie help while at 783 E Pender Street?**

6 **623 E Pender St**

From 1961-1975, Margaret J Gee, the first Canadian woman lawyer called to the bar, lived in this house. She was also the first Chinese Canadian woman pilot officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

8 **Raymur Public Housing Project** (512 Campbell Ave)

After fleeing Vietnam in 1978, Châu Thi Ho Huyn brought her cooking to Vancouver in the 1980s and started her business selling beef balls out of her apartment in what is now called Stamps Place, where she lived with her husband and three children. Read more here:



BOULEVARD GARDENS OF STRATHCONA

B Y S A B A F A R M A N D

While you enjoy the architecture on this tour, take a moment to notice the other built and natural elements you see. How do their patterns emerge and impact your overall experience in Strathcona today?

When you start observing these elements of your surroundings you begin to appreciate the streetscape. Not only the homes, but also the fences, the trees, shrubs, flowers, and garden walls — even things like the paving material on the road and sidewalk, street lamps, garbage receptacles, etc. — all these things together make up a *streetscape*.



You may notice the varying patterns and configurations of the roads and the sidewalks. Some blocks will have the sidewalk right up against the road, whereas others will have a strip of land between them. There are different terms for this strip of land, like utility strip, planting strip, or hellstrip. Here, it is most often called a boulevard. The typical boulevard is just grass. When a citizen replaces the grass on a boulevard with any sort of garden-like intervention, they create a boulevard garden.



LEARN MORE

Follow Saba on Instagram @eastvan_blvd_gardens to explore more of Vancouver's boulevard gardens, as well as stories about the people behind them.

Boulevard gardens have many positive effects on our urban environments. This streetscape element adds to a neighborhood's character, encourages neighbourly interaction, helps to beautify our streets, and increases environmental performance. All these things help build community and make our communities and cities more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

As you walk through Strathcona today, look closely to appreciate how the boulevard gardens - like the one in front of the Principal's House (602 Keefer) that stretches an entire half block along Princess Ave or the more subtle ones in front of Koo's Corner and Montreal Bakery - contribute to this neighbourhood and its streetscapes, just as much as the homes you visit.



Want to continue your exploration of landscapes in Strathcona? Visit both the Cottonwood Community Garden and Strathcona Community Garden today from 11am to 3pm. Stop by for a tour, running every hour!

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Since 1985, the **Strathcona Community Garden** has provided a model of inclusivity through organic community gardening and environmental stewardship. Of its 3.34 acres, 1/3 is allotted to ~300 plots for individual and family gardeners, 1/3 consisting of an orchard and espalier, and 1/3 open space. The garden also features a buddha pond for contemplation, an herb garden, an apiary, an eco-pavilion with a greywater system and composting toilet, and a greenhouse.

In 1991, **Cottonwood Community Garden** was created when a group of Strathcona garden activists brought back to life an industrial waste site. Today it includes three acres, 1/3 is home to 118 garden plots and 2/3 is communal garden area. Some highlights of the garden include the Asian plant garden, native plant garden, more than 30 fruit and nut trees, and a Memorial Garden to MMIWG.

URBAN RENEWAL IN STRATHCONA

In 1957, the City of Vancouver began a twenty-year urban renewal plan. One major component was the complete redevelopment of Strathcona, including the clearance of all existing homes and replacement with public housing, high rises, and row housing. The first phase began with the construction of public housing at MacLean Park and the clearing of land to build the Raymur Place Housing Project. Further expropriation of homes and their pending demolition was met with strong opposition from Strathcona residents and Chinatown leaders, who feared urban renewal not only threatened the livelihood of Chinatown but would destroy the community.

With more public housing and a freeway planned and the rest of the neighbourhood's existing buildings scheduled for demolition, it became clear that a strong and unified voice from within the community was needed to maintain what was left of Strathcona. The Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) was created in December 1968. The combined political will of the federal, provincial, and civic governments resulted in the halting of the City's existing redevelopment plan, followed by the creation of a \$5 million pilot project that engaged SPOTA in a planning process that involved each level of government and saw existing buildings, streets, and sidewalks in Strathcona rehabilitated and new parks and a community centre built.

Following on the heels of the success of this initial rehabilitation project, in 1973 SPOTA created the Strathcona Area Housing Society (S.A.H.S.) to address the issue of infill housing for the neighbourhood's residents on the lots that had been left vacant after the City's redevelopment plans had been stopped. Known as 'Strathcona Infill Housing,' the project that S.A.H.S. administered was comprised of a mix of cooperative and affordable housing completed in four phases from 1974-1982. Later, from 1980-1982, Joe Wai Architects with Spaceworks Architects designed the 120-unit Mau Dan Cooperative Housing Project.

Area between Gore and Jackson c. 1967 that was cleared for construction of housing project in the 1950s. Source: Mau Dan Gardens Cooperative



GROWING UP IN STRATHCONA

BY ELWIN XIE

There are several cat skeletons beneath Nora Hendrix Housing in the SW corner of Union Street and Gore Avenue.

During the 1960s, in my adolescence, I performed many feline funeral rituals throughout this property while my family and I lived and worked on this property known as Union Laundry. My family ran this labour-intensive business at 274 Union Street between 1948 until the late 80s.



Photos courtesy of Elwin Xie

My parents decided to venture into the laundry business upon my mother's arrival in Canada in 1948 after the lifting of the Exclusion Act; thereby enabling re-unification of separated couples and families. However, choosing to be self-employed, meant my father had to forego a career as an aviation technician despite being trained as diesel mechanic in California and possessing experience working for Boeing during WWII. Oh, the things we do for love!

No matter the age, my siblings and I had our chores. Pre-school age? No problem, we'd start off folding fluffy towels while standing on apple boxes. Adolescent? Great! You've graduated into folding bedsheets and pillowcases. Mature teenager? Excellent. You'll do fine as master assembler, no interview required. Good with numbers? You'll be perfect on invoices and accounts payable.

Tagging along for pick-ups and deliveries outside of Chinatown was always an adventure. What an eye-opener to witness behind-the-scenes operations and lifestyles within hotels, motels, saloons, adult bars, cafes, restaurants, and rehabilitation centres etc.



However, my favourite pastime as a kid was being sent down into washing machines to retrieve silver coins that had fallen out of customers pants pockets during the wash. (Yes, I was exploited for my small and agile body, but I got to keep the loot!)

Either out of compassion or capitalist exploitation, my parents hired several Chinese bachelors - one slept on the ironing table at night and smoked Vogue tobacco out of his water pipe while the other lived in a rooming house on Powell Street.



Elwin, age 10, in 1970.

When City Hall unleashed its plan to expropriate our entire block of 200 Union Street, which included a portion of Hogan’s Alley, all my neighbours and playmates on our block vanished overnight.

My father’s insistence for a better deal from the city resulted in us being the last property standing between 1970 & 1973. Perhaps you recall our red brick building as you drove onto the Prior Street on-ramp?

My father’s refusal to accept the city’s latest offer landed him in The Province Newspaper vowed to “Fight off the bulldozers with guns”.

At the time of this writing in 2023, there are now plans to demolish the Georgia-Dunsmuir viaduct.

I am told East Georgia Street and Union Street are considered very desirable neighbourhoods for eateries. Who knew? Certainly not my father.

If my father was still gracing this planet with his quirkiness and I was to report the news of the pending viaduct demolition and the escalation of property value of this previously undesirable block, he would be in disbelief– “don’t waste my bloody time with your nonsense! that’s the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard of”. But then again, he might be spinning in his grave.

STRATHCONA MARKETS & ADAPTIVE RE-USE DISCOVERY ROUTE



Almost from the beginning, Strathcona has been home to both business and residences. Some, like Freybe's (820 E Georgia St), which started in the back of local Strathcona houses, later became large, well-known Vancouver firms; others such as Benny's Italian Foods, are well known but are considered local neighbourhood secrets.

LEGEND

1 **Royal Grocery** (701-725 Hawks St)

Built in 1908, the end unit of these row houses at 701 Hawks was the Royal Grocery from 1920 to 1941, which was run by a series of Japanese Canadian families. During WWII, they were forcibly removed from their homes and interned in inhumane conditions. Their property was confiscated and sold off without their consent.

3 **Wilder Snail** (799 Keefer St)

Dating to 1906, this building has been home to a grocery store since 1915. Named Keefer Grocery by Chinese owner Seto Mee in 1947, it was run by different Asian families over the years and maintained this name until 2007.

5 **BC Grocery** (679 E Georgia St)

This building has served as a grocery store from the time it was built in 1901 for Edwin Cassidy until 1975. In 2000, through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement with the City of Vancouver, the building was rehabilitated and converted into 3 residential units and 3 infill units were built on the lot to the north.

7 **Les Amis du Fromage** (843 E Hastings St)

Built in 1923, this commercial building was designed as a warehouse for the Bowman Storage Company by architect Maurice Helyer. Helyer and his father John worked on a number of buildings in Vancouver, including the Dominion Buildings on W Hastings.

2 **Finch's Market** (501 E Georgia St)

The original store in this space appears in the 1911 directories as the Costalas Costa Grocery. Although it has changed names and hands many times since then, it is one of the few apartment building stores to retain a grocery function today.

4 **Benny's Market** (598 Union St)

Benny's Italian Foods Ltd. has served the Strathcona neighbourhood for almost 100 years, selling everything from European dry goods to T-shirts. It is an important surviving and thriving example of a family enterprise once common in Vancouver.

6 **Union Market** (810 Union St)

Originally a Chinese laundry in 1913 owned by Gin Lee, in 1927, Henry Olenyk opened a grocery store on site. Armindo Gomes founded the Gomes Grocery at this location in 1962, which he ran for 32 years, thus starting the long tradition of Portuguese ownership that continues to this day.

8 **Chapel Arts** (304 Dunlevy St)

This Art Deco style building opened in 1911-12 as the Armstrong Funeral Chapel and was operated for three generations by the family until 2005.

 **What does the neon sign on the front of 843 E Hastings say?**

 **What creature's face is welded into the metal gate at the entrance to the building?**

LEVELLING THE HILLS

BY JOHN ATKIN

As you walk through the neighbourhood, you might wonder about houses that appear high above the street or sit way below sidewalk level, the result of a street levelling program begun by the City in the 1890s. It wasn't just Strathcona where streets were graded but here the results are a bit more dramatic than other neighbourhoods.

On steep streets such as Pender, filler material was pushed into the deep depression between Hawks and Heatley which was a marshy tidal flat connected to the eastern basin of False Creek. Interestingly, the streets were graded but the lanes were not so the original geography remains in place. At Heatley and Pender, take a look into the side yard of the house on the northeast corner - it's quite the drop.



Elsewhere, houses were left high above the street as the hill was cut down and this can be seen on the 700 block of Georgia and 600 and 700 blocks of Union where the height difference between sidewalk and front porch is quite dramatic. And again, the lanes retain their original form and walking up from Heatley to the lane between Georgia and Union you can see how significant the hills were.

At the crest of the hill in the lane between Georgia and Union you can look west and see how low Heatley is as it cut through the hill. Looking east there's the significant drop down to Hawks Avenue and the old tidal flat. On Hawks, the road was raised so all of the row houses at this end have a full floor below grade.

It is hard to imagine today but a streetcar used to run down Georgia Street and out to Victoria Drive. As you are walking, look for a few surviving BC Electric manhole covers.



HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISCOVERY ROUTE



To find additional sites on the Vancouver Heritage Register, visit the Heritage Site Finder <https://www.heritagesitefinder.ca/>

Learn more about VHF's granting programs that provide support for heritage homeowners: vancouverheritagefoundation.org/grants/

LEGEND

1 656-666 E Georgia St

Constructed between 1892-1893 by owner James Borland, these 3 houses were painted in an authentic True Colours paint scheme with the assistance of a VHF Heritage Conservation Grant in 2020 and one of the homes was featured in VHF's 2021 Heritage House Tour Online – watch the video here:




3 549 Union St

This 1891 Queen Anne style house features exuberant wooden detailing on its front façade - the sunburst motif in the gable end was a common decorative motive in the Victorian era. The restoration of the front door in 2020 was supported by a VHF Heritage Conservation Grant.

5 Principal's House (602 Keefer St)

The Principal's House, as it's known, is an impressive mix of late Victorian and Queen Anne, with a witches-hat turret, stained glass windows, ornate bargeboards, gable roofs, and a magical garden.


 **When was this house built?**

7 BC Mills Houses (507-525 Hawks Ave)

These 3 houses are the earliest known examples of BC Mills prefabricated houses. Built in 1903, Stanislaus Brereton, the yard foreman at Hastings Mill, they were likely demonstration houses.

2 Thomas & Jessie Crawford House (826 E Georgia St)

Built in 1892, the Thomas and Jessie Crawford House is one of the earliest houses in the east end of Strathcona. The house was added to the Vancouver Heritage Register in 2014 and in 2017, it awarded a City of Vancouver Heritage Award of Recognition, recognizing the restoration and rehabilitation of the house.

 **What shape is the plaque on this house?**

4 Duclos Residence (752 E Pender St)

This gabled 2-storey Queen Anne house is a manifestation of the leveling of many street in Strathcona with yards set below street grade. It recently underwent extensive renovations by Maestro Development and Architrex Design Studio and was added to the Vancouver Heritage Register in 2019 as a B-listing.

6 Roscoe Residence (818 Keefer St)

Built in 1900, the Thomas and Zebby Roscoe Residence is a simple one and a half storey front gabled vernacular house. The house was painted in a historically authentic colour scheme with the assistance of a True Colours Grant in 2019. Its neighbour at 828 Keefer is undergoing restoration, with support from VHF to pour a new foundation.

8 Undertaker's House (450 Heatley Ave)

Built in 1906 for Thomas Edwards, Vancouver's first Undertaker, it has been a store, a rooming house, and was even rumored to be a brothel with gambling and mahjong on the main floor.

JOE WAI SPECIALS

BY JOHN ATKIN

When the plan to demolish the neighbourhood was finally stopped through the actions of the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) in the late 1960s, officials had to figure out what to do with a number of lots that had been expropriated in preparation for the redevelopment.

Instead of selling off the lots the three levels of government working with SPOTA came up with a scheme to build affordable housing and a young architect Joe Wai was given the task of designing the infill housing.



Joe's design was simple and straight forward. The houses were narrow because of setback requirements and featured a peaked roof to fit the neighbourhood form. Lap siding on the base and stucco above. They managed to look contemporary and yet fit seamlessly into the existing neighbourhood.



760 E Georgia St was featured on the 2014 Vancouver Special House Tour.

Joe's design worked as a single but can be seen in various configurations from duplexes, triplexes and even quads and by shifting the volumes forwards and backwards none of these feel like they dominate the street. The largest grouping is the housing coop in the 800 block of Union with seven buildings.

Unique as well was the fact that the land under the house was owned by the government and the houses were initially rented and it's only recently that the option to purchase both the land and dwelling was offered. They remain a unique and thoughtful solution to providing a housing solution in the neighbourhood.

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THANK YOU

The 2023 Heritage Discovery Day and House Tour has involved the efforts of over 100 volunteers, including all of our house leads, house attendants, info booth and photography volunteers. A big thank you to our homeowners for welcoming us into their homes.

Special thank you to:

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Strathcona: Vancouver's First Neighbourhood by John Atkin
Opening Doors in Vancouver's East End: Strathcona. Edited by Daphne Martlatt & Carole Itter

Strathcona Resident's Association: Strathcona History,
<https://strathcona-residents.org/archive/strathcona-history/>

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us this fall for our annual Fundraising Gala to celebrate 31 years of VHF! This year, the event will be hosted at **Cecil Green Park House** on **September 28th, 2023**. This is a great opportunity to listen to historian John Atkin speak about the history of Cecil Green House while enjoying refreshments and bidding in a silent auction.

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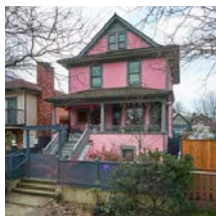
Stonehouse Team



1. Fountain Chapel



2. Chan House



3. Montreal Bakery



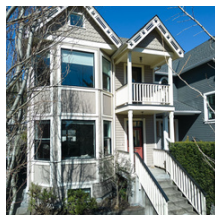
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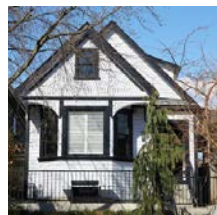
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