



Heritage Discovery Day 2026

Saturday, June 6th
10am - 5pm

This guidebook is your ticket



VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION



TOUR MAP

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY



Legend

- 1 Kumita Residence
- 6 Robertson House
- 2 O'Neil House
- 7 Cambrian Hall & VHF Info Booth
- 3 Western Front
- 8 Grey Church
- 4 McLean Residence
- 9 Ramslie House
- 5 McGee House



TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME

Tour Map	2
Land Acknowledgement	4
About the Tour	5
Tour Guidelines	6
Transportation	8
Sites of Interest	26

TOUR SITES

Site #1 - Kumita Residence	10
Site #2 - O'Neil House	11
Site #3 - Western Front	12
Site #4 - McLean Residence	14
Site #5 - McGee House	15
Site #6 - Robertson House	16
Site #7 - Cambrian Hall	19
Site #8 - Grey Church	21
Site #9 - Ramslie House	23

ESSAYS

The Cellar	13
My Mount Pleasant	17
Vancouver Specials	24
15 Years of PTM	25

THANK YOU

Sponsors	29
About VHF	31



Mural on Tsimilano Building, the Native Education College's administrative building located on E 5th Avenue and Scotia St (Native Education College, grunt gallery, Corey Bulpitt, Sharifah Marsden and Jerry Whitehead)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

June is Indigenous Heritage Month in Canada, with National Indigenous Peoples Day designated as June 21st each year since 1996. As we spend today touring two Vancouver neighborhoods, let us reflect on the long history of this land.

Vancouver Heritage Foundation recognizes that the area where our tour takes place, now known as Mount Pleasant and Riley Park, is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

There are two Indigenous languages in use when referring to places in Vancouver: hə́h̓qəmi̓hə́h̓ (also written as Hul'q'umi'num), the Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh language, and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh sníchim, the Squamish language.

Today the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples are alive and well, surviving the long history of mistreatment and indignities by all levels of government. Through monumental efforts of these nations' communities, their languages and cultures have been maintained, revitalized and are being passed down from the elders to the youth.

Please take a moment to visit the websites of the Indigenous peoples of this land and learn about their priorities.



x^wməθk^wəyəm
(Musqueam)
Website



Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh
(Squamish)
Website



səliłwətaʔt
(Tsleil-Waututh)
Website

WELCOME TO VHF'S HERITAGE DISCOVERY DAY!

Vancouver Heritage Foundation has hosted our annual Heritage Discovery Day event in June since 2003, showcasing the incredible heritage that makes up the fabric of our city's historic neighborhoods.

This year's event features 9 sites, ranging from private heritage homes to some of Vancouver's Places That Matter - a collection of community-nominated sites, featuring the people, places and events that tell the stories of Vancouver's history and heritage.

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 site as well as additional neighbourhood insights.

We encourage you to enjoy a meal, drink, or shop at the local neighbourhood amenities between site visits.



ABOUT THE TOUR



TOUR GUIDELINES



Sites are open from 10 am to 5 pm only, unless otherwise noted. No latecomers or early birds.

Please be patient as line-ups are possible.



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

Please bring socks/slippers/indoor shoes and a bag for your shoes and avoid bare feet. Sites that are public buildings are exceptions.



All attendees must have a ticket.

No children under the age of 6 are permitted. Infants in front carriers are allowed.



Photography on tour sites and within participating buildings is strictly prohibited.

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

ABOUT THE TOUR



TOUR GUIDELINES



Washroom facilities are NOT available at tour sites.

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, bicycles, dogs, and visible cameras are not permitted in any tour site. You will be asked to remove or carry large bags or backpacks before entering.



Unfortunately, the tour is not mobility device accessible. If you would like more information about what parts of the tour are accessible, please reach out to us.

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

TRANSPORTATION & GETTING AROUND



Parking

Limited parking is available – we encourage you to consider carpooling or ridesharing. Please be respectful of neighbourhood residents, do not block driveways, laneways, drive onto private property and do not park in permit only zones. Ticket holders are responsible for finding and covering costs associated with vehicle parking.



Transit

In addition to the Canada Line (Broadway-City Hall) and Millennium Line (Main St-Science World), there are a number of bus routes that will take you within 2-3 blocks walking distance of each stop.

- 99 - Commercial-Broadway/UBC (B-Line)
- 9 - Commercial-Broadway Station/Alma/UBC
- 3 - Main-Marine Drive Station
- 25 - Brentwood Station/UBC along King Edward



Cycling

While tour sites are located across two neighbourhoods, this area of Vancouver is still very bicycle friendly. A friendly reminder that bikes cannot be stored on properties while touring homes, so please lock and secure your bike before visiting.

Find the nearest bike rack using this digital Cycling in Vancouver map.



ABOUT MOUNT PLEASANT

In its natural form, the neighbourhood we now call Mount Pleasant was full of ravines and creeks once teeming with salmon, sturgeon, trout and more flowing into False Creek. The largest in the area, later named Brewery Creek, was a source of fresh water and useful plants and resources (like licorice fern, skunk cabbage, huckleberries and stinging nettle) for local First Nations, which follows the same route as the Main Street we know today. While most of the area was covered in a dense rainforest of huge fir, cedar and hemlock, it was divided diagonally by an ancient trail used by wildlife and First Nations, the future Kingsway. Along 16th Avenue between Main and Fraser Street sat a swampy lake where the rich organic soil of the swamp grew a variety of berry bushes, and many other useful and unusual plants such as Labrador Tea (me'xwuchp), which was used for flavouring meat as well as treating wounds and ailments.



Waiting for the streetcar in Mount Pleasant, 1908 (City of Vancouver Archives #Dist P144)

Named for the birthplace of Henry V. Edmonds' Irish wife, Mount Pleasant is thought of as Vancouver's first suburb. Establishment of farms, commercial establishments, corner stores, churches and public transportation routes began in the mid-to-late 1800s, creating in a highly livable, vibrant neighbourhood that retains its historic character to this day. The subsequent boom of industry in Vancouver caused the area to grow rapidly and by 1912, it was home to an elementary school (now the Kingsgate Mall site), a firehall, a first run theatre, and Vancouver's first skyscraper (the Lee Building - a PTM site).

In the 1930s and 1940s, industrial expansion north of Broadway resulted in the demolition of much of the original housing stock. The remaining houses in the industrial area disappeared in the 50s and 60s when low-rise offices and warehouses moved in. The 70's, 80's and 90's saw the creation of several enduring neighbourhood institutions, including the Western Front in 1973 and R&B Brewing, who returned the area to its beer-making origins in 1997. During this time, the Davis family lovingly restored seven heritage homes in the 100 block of West 10th Ave that still shine as jewels of the neighborhood.

KUMITA RESIDENCE

Built in 1909, the Kumita Residence is an example of vernacular Edwardian design with its box-like form, hipped roof and porch, classical columns and elegant art-glass windows. Once part of a set of four end-of-block houses constructed by builder Jas Lougheed on the corner lot of Columbia and W 5th Avenue, it is one



This entire project (house and studio) is a Zero Carbon Building, certified by the Canadian Green Building Council.

of the few remaining houses in the once residential neighbourhood which rapidly transformed into an industrial area in the 1940s and 1950s.

With its proximity to the nearby mills and factories on False Creek, this area was once home to a thriving Japanese Canadian community. In addition to rooming houses for workers, there was also a Japanese Canadian run laundry and two Japanese schools, including one attached to a Japanese Methodist church. From 1938 to 1943, 2040 Columbia Street was home to Genzaburo and Hatsuye Kumita and their 3 sons. Genzaburo was a salesman at a mens' clothing and furnishing store on Powell Street called Matsumiya and Nose.

Beginning in early 1942, the Canadian government detained and dispossessed more than 90 per cent of Japanese Canadians, including 21,000 people living in British Columbia. Genzaburo was forcibly removed to an internment camp in Ontario, while the rest of his family was sent to a camp in New Denver. By 1943, the seized property had been sold to James and Beatrice Moore. Few Japanese Canadian-owned houses confiscated in 1942 remain, including two others that can be seen nearby at 498 E 5th Ave (Masuda) and 473 E 6th Ave (Edamura).

After serving as a residence for many years, it was bought in 2008 by the current owners. In addition to the modern infill, which serves as production tower for their jewelry company, Pyrrha, the heritage house has undergone extensive rehabilitation by Birmingham and Moore Architects with a focus on sustainability. Details including the original wood flooring, exposed wood ceiling, working fireplace and stained glass celebrate the legacy of the house. Modern elements that have been added include a powder-coated steel staircase that winds its way through the center of the home and a sunken garden, designed by renowned landscape architect Cornelia Oberlander.

O'NEIL HOUSE

Completed in 1908, O'Neil House is a historic Edwardian residence constructed by William H. Marcus, an architect and builder known for his work in Vancouver from the early 1900s through the 1920s. It was named after its first occupant, dentist Frank O'Neil, who lived there from 1908 to 1911.

The house was part of development spurred by the extension of streetcar service along Broadway. It was one of two houses built as "show homes" for a neighborhood characterized by modest houses and corner stores, and it exemplifies the original dwellings in the area, facing the side street to enhance development potential.



O'Neil House is valued as one of the few historic residences that have endured in what is now primarily a light industrial zone. It is part of a small collection of adjacent historic sites, including 2314 Ontario St next door and Lane House at 14 E 7th Ave.

Notable original elements of the house include clapboard siding, wooden windows, decorative trims, and various wood features. Interior aspects that have survived include baseboards, staircases and doors.

The current owner acquired the property in 1997 and has diligently worked to preserve the home. Over the years, 2322 Ontario has received several Conservation Grants from the Vancouver Heritage Foundation, which have supported projects such as new front stairs and restored wood windows.



WESTERN FRONT

This three-storey wooden building was constructed in 1922 as a lodge hall for the Knights of Pythias, a fraternal organization founded on the principles of friendship, charity, and benevolence. Designed by member Ira B. Jones, it served as both a social hub and place of mutual support for members. Inside were two large assembly halls, a dining room and kitchen, temporary lodging rooms, and an attic apartment for the caretaker.



The building still retains many of its original features, including wood wainscoting, gurney folding cottonwood chairs and doors with peepholes.

In 1972, the Knights sold the building to a collective of artists who in 1973 transformed it into a live-work and presentation space for experimental art called Western Front. The group adapted the halls into performance and dance studios, the dining room into a gallery and offices, and the lodging rooms into studios and accommodation. The organization's name reflected the building's pioneer-style façade (like fellow PTM site, Arbutus Grocery in Kitsilano), its West Coast location, and the founders' adventurous avant-garde spirit.

Over the past five decades, Western Front has become a cornerstone of Vancouver's cultural community and a significant contributor to Canada's artist-run centre movement. Today, Western Front supports interdisciplinary artistic practice and innovation while owning and stewarding the historic building that houses its activities. The building also continues to host longstanding tenants such as EDAM – Experimental Dance and Music. **Please note this space will only be open from 1:30-5pm.**

Western Front also maintains extensive archives containing video, audio, and textual records documenting its history of programming. If you are interested in learning more about their archives and ongoing digitization efforts, join us for a virtual lunch and learn this November!

THE CELLAR

BY CHRIS WONG

The original Cellar jazz club at 2514 Watson Street was one of the most important venues in Vancouver's jazz and cultural history.

In April 1956, a group of jazz musicians and aficionados opened the club. It was in the basement of a non-descript building on the alley-like Watson Street at Broadway, in the heart of Mount Pleasant, near Main and Kingsway.



Dave Quarin, who managed the Cellar for a number of years, in the club circa 1958 (Photographer Unknown)

The musician-run club, led by Ken Hole, Dave Quarin, Jim Kilburn and other local jazz players, started as a place where they could play music and socialize. Patrons walked down the stairs into an alternative milieu, where striking art hung on the walls and vibrant jazz resonated from the bandstand.

From DIY beginnings, the Cellar became a significant jazz destination at the level of other prominent clubs on North America's west coast. Iconic American jazz artists, including Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, Art Pepper, and Wes Montgomery, played at the Cellar. Experimental plays were also staged in the subterranean space.

In the early sixties, as other jazz venues emerged in the city, the Cellar went into decline. The last notes were heard there in 1964. Four years later, another jazz club opened where the Cellar was. When that died in 1970, yet



Side of the building that housed the Cellar, 2013 (Chris Wong)

another short-lived jazz joint replaced it. (Thirty years later, another Cellar jazz club started a long run on Broadway near Alma.)

It took until 2014 for the building that housed the first Cellar to be demolished. While no trace of the jazz club remains, the warm memory of its remarkable spirit lives on.

MCLEAN RESIDENCE

Designed by architects Campbell and Bennet in 1910 for Murdoch C. McLean, a customs inspector, this Edwardian influenced stone home features a unique blend of stylistic elements - from the Queen Anne turret and wraparound verandah, Tudor Revival masonry and Arts and Crafts influence in its half-timbered gables. At the time it was built, the McLean Residence was just two doors east of Rogers Park, now the site of City Hall. It has many of the features normally seen in more prominent homes found in Shaughnessy and Point Grey, including a stunning wooden staircase, paneled rooms, coffered ceilings, stained glass and beautiful fireplaces.



The McLean family lived in the home until Murdock's son Frederick died in 1944, when it was sold to William Bodnar, a co-owner of the Hotel Europe in the early 1950s. The home stayed in the Bodnar family until 2009, when it was bought by Janet Campbell. One of the founding pillars of VHF, she was passionate about heritage restoration and this home was one of several that she helped return to its former glory.

A modern addition was added to the back of the home in 2010, designed carefully by Robert Lemon to blend with the existing layout and fabric of the house. The most unique feature of that project is the original stone wall of the house, which was left intact and now serves as a feature wall for the dining room.

The current owners have taken the beautifully restored home and added their own personality to the spaces, blending precious family heirlooms, like the exquisitely long dining table intended for hosting big gatherings and the Welsh cheese cabinet, with rich coloured furnishings, patterned wallpaper and whimsical fixtures. They are also passionate about sustainability and recent projects have included participating in the Heritage Energy Retrofit Grant (HERG) program as well as making changes to the front yard to introduce local and drought resistant plants, as well as clover to replace the lawn.

**Proudly
sponsored by:**



ODLUM BROWN

Ross Turnbull
Vice President, Portfolio Manager

MCGEE HOUSE

Built in 1910, 52 W 13th Ave was designed and built by H.O. Hatt and Co., a company of 3 brothers – Harold, Melbourne and David Floyd, with an office at 659 Broadway. A 2.5 storey Edwardian home, it has an arched sleeping porch on the third half story and typical Edwardian features, including a steep front gabled roof and bay windows. A full width porch is complemented by an unusual full width second storey balcony, which is original to the design. It has a mirrored twin to the west, currently painted a vibrant yellow and pink.



Albert Bacon, a conductor for the BC Electric Railway Company, was the first owner and lived in the home from 1912 to 1920. Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, the McGee family came to Canada in 1912. They bought the property in 1920 and the house would remain in the family into the 1980s. Alexander Robertson McGee was a salesman who worked for many different companies over the years, including Ajello Piano Co on W Hastings St and Palm Dairy. He and his wife Christina had 6 children – John, William, Alexander (Alec), George, Margaret, and Isabella. George, a clerk and driver at UBC, moved into the property after the deaths of his parents in 1947 and lived there until he died in 1981.

In the mid-1980s, a renovation was done to enclose the back porch, replace the fireplace and mantle in the dining room, adding bathrooms in the attic and on the main floor and converting the unfinished basement to suites, which according to a neighbour still had dirt floors!

The current owners bought the house in 2007 and undertook an extensive restoration with the guidance and support of architect Patricia Bourque, engineer Wilkins Chan and builder David Barkovic. From refinishing and re-laying the fir floors to sanding down doors and replicating missing wooden molding and trim to match, their dedication and tenacity has brought back the home's warm, cozy original character. Some of the standout original features are the original clawfoot tub on the second floor and the beautiful stained-glass windows by the front door and above the piano in the living room.

ROBERTSON HOUSE

Designed by architect T. Payton, this Edwardian house was built in 1912 by S. J. Dougan. The surrounding block is made up of many heritage homes from the early 1900s, including a pair of 1911 gabled vernacular houses at 3048 and 3050 Ontario across the street, which contribute to a wonderful heritage streetscape.

The Robertson family lived in the house from 1923 until the early 1960s. Originally from Scotland, Colin Sr. and his wife Jacobina had 3 sons – William, George and Colin. Colin Sr. held many jobs during his life, including clerk for the Vancouver Harbours Board and driver for Augustine Coal in New Westminster.



He was also the caretaker of the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church at 10th and Quebec, which was converted into condos in the 1990s, and later worked for the Vancouver School Board. He died in the home in 1958 at the age of 72. The Sidow family – Elli and two of her four children, Wolfgang and Ginter – lived in the house from the 1960s until the 1980s.

The current owners bought the property in 2009 and undertook renovations in 2017 that transformed the functionality of the home to better suit the needs of the family. The basement was reconfigured, a powder room was added on the top floor and the kitchen was updated to maximize the space provided by an extension built in the 1960's. If you look above the kitchen island you can see a drop in the ceiling that indicates the original end of the house. The pocket doors in the living room are another original feature.

During the renovations, their contractor uncovered a time capsule in the attic rafters, likely hidden by the Robertson's son, William, while he and Colin were attending UBC in 1936. The capsule included an interesting mixture of magazines and newspapers, family cards and more mundane items from the late 1930s, including day-to-day products like baby powder, hair tonic and borax, along with beer bottles and cigarettes.

MY MOUNT PLEASANT

BY CHRISTINE HAGEMOEN



Nana's House in Mount Pleasant (Christine Hagemoen)

Ten years ago I discovered that my Nana once lived in the house across the street from the heritage building where I live now. How exciting to learn we were neighbours in Mount Pleasant 75 years apart! This got me thinking about my family roots in Mount Pleasant and how they fit into the story of the neighbourhood.

Mount Pleasant is one of Vancouver's oldest neighbourhoods and its first suburb. It started to develop in the late 1880s, when families started settling there—establishing schools, stores, and services—giving birth to the city's first neighbourhood south of False Creek.

However, unlike other historical areas of the city—Strathcona, the West End, Gastown, and Chinatown—very few histories of Mount Pleasant have been published. As a resident and someone with family ties to the neighbourhood I felt this was a serious oversight as Mount Pleasant has as rich and interesting a history as any of the other historic areas of Vancouver. So it became my mission to learn more about and then share the stories of Mount Pleasant.

Since walking and seeing is my favourite pastime, I started my “mission” by leading history walks around Mount Pleasant—a perfect way to discover a place’s history and share some of its stories. Those history walks evolved into a guidebook, *Mount Pleasant Stories: Historical Walking Tours – Walk 1: Mount Pleasant’s Heritage Heart*, published in 2021, and the winner of a City of Vancouver Heritage Award for Education & Awareness in 2023.

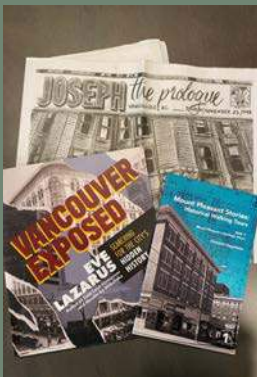


A walk in history's footsteps - the Belvedere Building at 2545 Main Street (Christine Hagemoen)

I partnered with the Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Association (MPBIA) in 2024 for the Mount Pleasant History Boards project. These local history vignettes appear on lamp standards at various locations along and just off Mount Pleasant’s Main Street. These permanent neighbourhood features give visitors random facts of history any time of the day.

This year marks the completion of the second guidebook of my *Mount Pleasant Stories: Historical Walking Tours* series, *Walk 2: NW Mount Pleasant*. Though it is hard to tell today, northwest Mount Pleasant was once primarily residential and home for a multi-cultural community of families and individuals drawn to the industries (and jobs) along False Creek. This area is near and dear to my heart because it is the part of Mount Pleasant where my own Italian immigrant family lived from 1926 to 1946. With this new book I hope readers will learn about some of the families, workers, legacy businesses, and social groups that once called this unique part of Mount Pleasant home.

YOSEF WOSK PUBLICATION GRANT

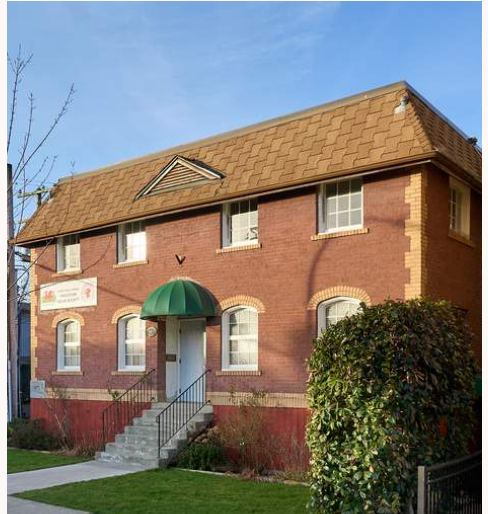


Both of the above-mentioned publications by Christine Hagemoen are supported by a Yosef Wosk Publication Grant. Managed by Vancouver Heritage Foundation, this grant provides financial support for projects that highlight Vancouver’s heritage places and their stories. It encourages innovative presentations of the city’s past through diverse publications such as books, films, digital content and exhibits. Applicants must demonstrate a strong connection to Vancouver’s history and a commitment to producing high-quality, accessible work. Applications are accepted each spring, with a deadline to apply of May 15th annually.

CAMBRIAN HALL

The only Welsh hall in North America, this brick building was designed by architect H.J. Pritchard. Constructed in 1929, it was built on land purchased by the Cambrian Society for a nominal sum of one dollar from Mr. Joseph Jones, the owner of a Vancouver dairy on the north-east corner of Kingsway (formerly Westminster) and Windsor Streets.

The cornerstone at the front of the building at 215 E 17th Avenue pays tribute to the members of the Cambrian Society who had assisted in erecting the building.



Among the donors were prominent Vancouver citizens, such as Chris T. A. Spencer, a member of the Spencer's Department Store family, Thomas Edwards, funeral director at T. Edwards Company, which began at 612 Main Street in 1899, and Jonathan Rogers, a builder and philanthropist.

Cambrian Hall was officially opened on September 1st, 1929, by Marion Malkin, wife of Vancouver Mayor, William Harold Malkin, followed by an afternoon and evening concert where a packed house enjoyed traditional music of the Welsh homeland. Throughout the years, the hall has been home to typical Welsh cultural events and a meeting place for the community.

The 70s and 80s were a time of renewal, addressing deteriorating conditions in the hall. The Lower Hall was completely renovated in the 1970s and the Red Dragon lounge was born, providing a new members-only space for social events and gatherings. In the 1980s, a new staircase to the Lower Hall was added in addition to a new stage, storage space, a partial kitchen and washrooms in the Upper Hall.



CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG

Between 1900 and 1930, over 29,000 Welsh emigrated from Wales. Joining the Welsh miners and entrepreneurs who had journeyed west in the 1860s during the Cariboo Gold Rush, some of these newcomers became part of a growing Welsh community on the West Coast.



St. David's Day Dinner at the Hotel Georgia on March 1, 1945 (Welsh Society)

The roots of the Welsh Society (Cymdeithas Gymreig) in Vancouver can be traced back to the early 1890 when the Welsh started organizing events, social gatherings and sporting teams in the city. The first St. David's Day Banquet was held in the old Denman Auditorium in 1907. Vancouver's first-ever Eisteddfod was held at the Vancouver Opera House in 1912. This annual competitive festival of music and voice would become one of the Welsh's lasting musical and cultural contributions to the city.

During the Depression and World War II, the hall remained a welcome home to the Vancouver Welsh community, with the society remaining active in promoting Welsh cultural events such as the Gymanfa Ganu, a festival of sacred hymns. The Cambrian Society officially changed its name to the Welsh Society of Vancouver in 1974.



Winners of the 1914 Miller Cup at Brockton Oval - the Vancouver Welsh (City of Vancouver Archives 99-68)

Without a steady stream of Welsh immigrants, people of Welsh ancestry are now playing an important role in the revitalization of the Society's membership. Language lessons, a Welsh-speakers' group and folk dancing at the Cambrian Hall all help keep the Welsh culture alive in Vancouver. In addition to supporting youth rugby and hosting travelling Welsh artists, poets and athletes, other groups currently affiliated with the Welsh Society are Vancouver Welsh's Men's Choir, the Vancouver Orpheus Male Voice Choir and the Dylan Thomas Circle.

GREY CHURCH

Built in 1921 by F. Franklin at the corner of Scott Street and 15th Avenue, this site was the home of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland for over eighty years. In 1950, Scott Street was renamed Fraser Street, which previously ended at Kingsway, to ease traffic flow – today Fraser Street runs from East 5th Avenue all the way south to the Fraser River.

When the current owners bought the property in 2007, they saw the potential to retain the historic character of the space, with its high ceilings and original windows, while adapting it to be used as an office and studio space. Adding a full kitchen, bathroom and loft created a functional live-work space, while



the skylights let in much needed light. Adjoining the kitchen is the breakfast nook, an addition that is an extension of where the priest would have prepared for services. The area under the stairs, now a dining space, is where the pulpit and altar once stood. The terrazzo floors bring warmth into the space and one side of the main room features several sets of towering wood-and-steel bookcases that house an expansive library of art catalogues.

During the renovation, the owners realized that the space could also be used to serve the local arts community as event space for dinners, performances and talks as well as a residence for visiting artists.

The site is filled with contemporary art, including several unique large-scale pieces. In the living room is a life-size bronze sculpture by Myfanwy MacLeod of a hobo on a log, based on a 1906 postcard image. In the backyard, artist Cameron Kerr transformed road dividers and barriers used during the Olympics along the Sea to Sky into a sculpted marble piece. The owners are also sponsors of the Capture Photography Festival and the billboard that can be seen across the street from the front windows is the only one that runs year-round, thanks to their generous support.

ABOUT RILEY PARK

Before Riley Park had a name, it was a rich forest where salmon spawned and wildlife thrived. The area's origins stretch back to 1893, when Little Mountain - an extinct volcano - was logged and early trails took shape. By the early 1900s, a small community grew along upper Main Street, home to quarry workers who mined volcanic rock for the Canadian Pacific Railway. This rock formed some of the area's earliest roads. In the 1920s, one of the quarries became the city's water reservoir.



The Reeve and Councillors inspecting Little Mountain Quarry c. 1908-1910 (City of Vancouver Archives Dist P109)

By 1911, the area had its first post office and shops lined Main Street. When Vancouver and South Vancouver became one city in 1929, Riley Park was officially created - named after Clark Riley, the former clerk of South Vancouver. In 1940, Little Mountain became Queen Elizabeth Park and the water reservoir was covered to make room for parking. One of the old rock quarries was also reshaped into a striking sunken garden. Through the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, the neighbourhood welcomed many immigrants and grew as a working-class community. It later became home to the Little Mountain Housing site, the city's first large modern social housing project, built in 1954.



Corner of 25th Avenue and Main Street c. 1912 (City of Vancouver Archives SGN 1021)



Vancouver Capilanos Baseball Club composite photo, November 7, 1939 (City of Vancouver Archives 99-2959)

Baseball has shaped this area for more than a century. Vancouver joined the Northwestern League in 1907, and in 1952 the Vancouver Capilanos opened Capilano Stadium near Little Mountain. Many teams played here through the years, and in 1978 the arrival of the Vancouver Canadians helped save the field from demolition. Renamed for Nat Bailey that same year, this Places that Matter site remains a cherished place for games and community moments.

RAMSLIE HOUSE

This 1962 cozy retro and contemporary home is a fascinating combination of Mid-Century Modernist roots and what later became typical Vancouver Special layout and design. Perfectly intact when the owners bought it from the original owners, very little has been done to alter the main floor. The house has the classic bedrooms on one side, living spaces on the other, the low-pitched roof, and combined masonry and stucco siding of a Vancouver Special. The substantial façade glazing, entry stairs that begin outside into the foyer and continue up to the living room, and vaulted exposed ceilings are hallmarks of Modernist residential design.



According to the original building plans, the architect was By Homes Design, who were located at 2256 Kingsway. The plans also show the centrally located fireplace was originally intended to be on an exterior wall.

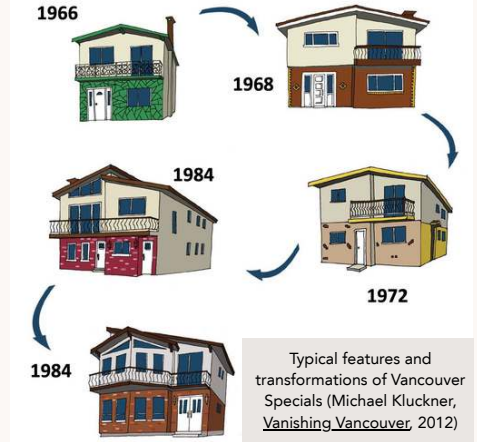
The current owners felt very lucky to secure the house. The listing only captured the main floor square footage, which is a modest 1000 square feet, so they were alone at the open house and were the only bidders. Two days after construction, the first owner installed shag carpet throughout the house, preserving the oak floors the new owners had refinished. The kitchen saw the most substantial alterations but they kept most of the original kitchen cabinets in place with new replica hardware, removing one set of upper cabinets to open the view to the back windows. An engineered quartz counter and colourfully patterned wallpaper finished the renovation for a mixture of original and modern features.

Recent work on the house includes masonry repair of brick at the front of the house (salvaged from the now demolished Burr Bros Building on Main Street), as well as a renovation of the unfinished basement. The stairs to the basement were originally enclosed – the owners have added vertical slats and a skylight to bring more light into the space. Walling in the carport during the renovation added to the living space and the Mid-Century Modern design aesthetic of the main floor continues downstairs with the cabinetry and polished concrete floors - one of the owners' favourite parts of the house.

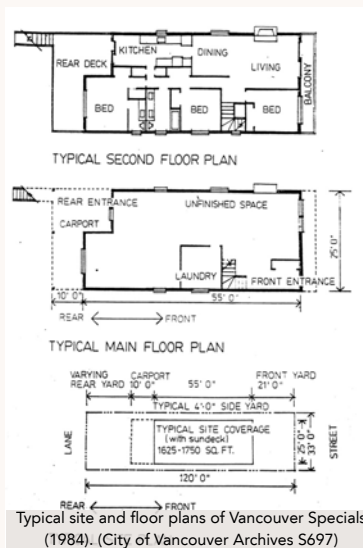
VANCOUVER SPECIALS

BY YITING PAN

In 1984, the Vancouver League for Studies in Architecture and the Environment launched a new “Vancouver Special” competition. The goal was to explore alternatives that matched the cost of this distinctive housing type while improving design variety, quality, and neighbourhood compatibility. This brought an era to a close for Vancouver Specials (1960s–1984) shaped by immigration, zoning, and permitting—but debate and fascination with them have never truly ceased and continues today.



Critics once dismissed them as “eyesores” that “spread like a virus,” while supporters praised them as “design masterpieces” and “originally sustainable homes.” Scholar Jennifer Chutter notes how they challenged the city’s “racial and class ideals of homeownership” and helped immigrant families settle. Artist Ken Lum used his installation ‘Vancouver Especially’ to reflect on soaring housing costs and broader social change.



In Riley Park, the broader urban story of the Vancouver Special takes visible form. Some homes stand side by side in groups of four, while others are quietly interspersed among older houses.

In the past twenty years, Vancouver Specials have gained attention in heritage and home-renovation discussions, even though they are not officially heritage buildings. Renovations take three main forms: upgrade, for practical improvements without altering the home’s overall character; reinvent, for bold exterior redesigns that may risk masking the home’s original identity; and modernist revival, enhancing mid-century modernist features while honouring the home’s original spirit.

Vancouver Specials today embody half a century of Vancouver’s urban story and the possibilities still unfolding in the city.

15 YEARS OF PLACES THAT MATTER

PLACESTHATMATTER.CA

After 15 years of the Places That Matter plaque project, VHF continues to tell the stories of Vancouver's hidden histories and heritage places! Each of the 99 presented plaques reflects the words of community and represents countless volunteer hours of research, engagement, in-kind sponsorship and a financial commitment to the longevity of Places That Matter.

New site nominations are ongoing and with financial support, site approval and community commitment (a knowledgeable contact who is championing the site), we are celebrating several new sites in 2026, as well as a renewed interest in the refurbishments and re-printing of many original plaques.

Sharing your connections or experiences, by nominating a new site or spreading the word, will ensure the project's future.

We hope you'll consider supporting Places That Matter for the next 15 years, and beyond – whether through in-kind donations, sponsoring a site, attending a plaque presentation or participating in our annual PTM Community Fair.



First PTM plaque install in 2011 at the Stanley Park Rock Garden (Chris Hay)



Installation of PTM plaque #96 for Electric Avenue in 2026 (P. Woodward)

LEARN MORE ABOUT PTM



Hogan's Alley in February 2013

The Places That Matter project goes beyond a physical marker to raise awareness of a site's many layers of history and significance. The PTM Community History Resource website is a digital record and storytelling space, linked to each PTM plaque with a QR code or simply by visiting placesthatmatter.ca.

Whether researching online or wanting to visit a PTM site in person, the map page shows the distribution of installed and non-installed plaques in Vancouver, along with a full page of brief history, images, research, and community stories.



Scan to view the interactive map!



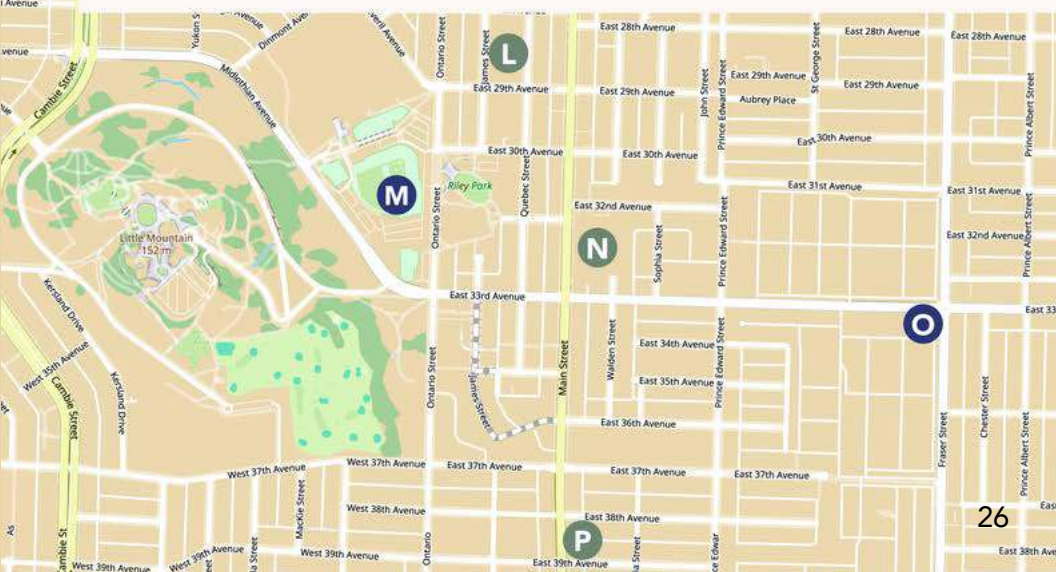
SITES OF INTEREST

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Legend

- A** Coulter House | 67 W 6th Ave
- B** City Centre Artist Lodge | 2111 Main St
- C** Doering & Marstrand Brewery | 280 E 6th Ave
- D** Quebec Manor | 101 E 7th Ave
- E** The ANZA Club | 3 W 8th Ave
- F** Gertrude Guerin Plaza | 2404 Main St
- G** Lee Building | 175 E Broadway
- H** The Cellar | 2514 Watson St
- I** Davis Block | 140-150 W 10th Ave
- J** Heritage Hall | 3102 Main Street
- K** Turner Dairy | 6 W 17th Ave
- L** Imrie House | 4446 James St
- M** Nat Bailey Stadium | 4601 Ontario St
- N** Brock School | 4860 Main St
- O** Mountain View Cemetery | 5455 Fraser St
- P** Lawson Logie House | 212 E 38th Ave

- Places That Matter
- Site of Interest
- Public Art



PLACES THAT MATTER

IN MOUNT PLEASANT

As you explore Mount Pleasant, see if you can spot the blue oval plaques on these Places That Matter sites.

At the northern tip, False Creek's industrial history, Canon Shipyards (PTM #73) at Hinge Park, in today's Olympic Village, references the longevity of the industry, transformed today.



West Coast Shipbuilders Ltd facility on False Creek, showing the Salt Building, 1943-44 (City of Vancouver Archives)

Heading south, as you cross 2nd Avenue, you'll notice a shift in the mix of residential and commercial buildings within this suburb of Mount Pleasant but many landmarks are still in use and thriving. On W 8th Avenue and Ontario Street, the former Mount Pleasant Gospel Hall, today the ANZA Club (PTM #95), has brought people together since 1914. Any given evening of the week, you will find a social space offering everything from blue grass to African dance.



PTM Plaque Presentation #95 at the ANZA Club (Rob Atkins)



ANZA Club Plaque (VHF)



Lee Building at 2425 Main Street (VHF)

At the corner of East Broadway and Main Street (formerly Westminster Ave) stands the Lee Building (PTM #18). Mr. H. Lee came to Vancouver in 1888 from London, Ontario. In 1903, he bought a store and grocery business at 2425 Main Street, and by 1911, the seven-storey business office and apartment block known as the Lee Building was opened. It stands tall amidst the Broadway Line construction.

PLACES THAT MATTER

IN RILEY PARK

As you travel south of Mount Pleasant along Main Street, you'll find yourself in the North Riley Park neighbourhood. Legacy businesses, independent shops, live music venues and new food spots can be found from 16th Avenue all the way to 33rd Avenue.

Riley Park and Hillcrest Community Centre is an active hub for all ages, and next door, Nat Bailey Stadium, home of the Vancouver Canadians, (PTM #69) celebrates 75 years in 2026. At the top of Little Mountain and Queen Elizabeth Park, you'll find Bloedel Conservatory (PTM #47), at the highest point in Vancouver.



Plaque Presentation #69 at Nat Bailey Stadium



Bloedel Conservatory in the 1970s (City of Vancouver Archives 1435-420)

West of Fraser Street, from 31st to 43rd Avenues is Vancouver's only cemetery, Mountain View Cemetery (PTM #33). Owned and operated by the City since 1886, its 106 acres of land and over 100,000 grave sites are a fascinating walk through time. Remarkable early residents in Vancouver include the Filipino, Chinese, Japanese and Jewish communities, many of which have their own sections. Along with the Commonwealth War Graves, the Military Fields of Honour include over 7,000 graves for those who died in both World Wars. A renewal project led by Pechet Studio in 2000 won awards for its revisioning of the site for future generations.



PTM plaque at Mountain View Cemetery, located at SW corner of E 33rd Ave



Looking north from 41st Avenue c. 1910s (City of Vancouver Archives A-6-77)

Across the street from Mountain View Cemetery, Hamilton Harron Funeral Home (PTM #90) dates back to 1912 but moved to its current location (5390 Fraser Street) in 1954.

SAVE THE DATE

Join us on Thursday, September 24th for an evening of reflection and celebration as we partner with the Vancouver Historical Society to commemorate 15 years of Places that Matter featuring special guests.

2026 SPONSORS

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THIS YEAR'S
HERITAGE DISCOVERY DAY!

Presenting Sponsor

Equitable Real Estate Investment Corporation Ltd.

Providing office space in some of Vancouver's finest heritage buildings since 1950.

The Equitable Real Estate Investment Corporation manages an impressive portfolio of Vancouver's buildings. The stories of these landmark structures reflect the city's own historical development, as well as its boom and bust economy. They represent a century of progress, and continue as a proud reminder of the past and a continuing legacy for the future.

Many of their buildings are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register and are significant landmarks in the City. Equitable has twice been awarded City of Vancouver Heritage Awards, one "for their pride and commitment to heritage buildings in downtown Vancouver" and a second for the Vancouver Block.

505 - 325 Howe St, Vancouver, BC
604 683 7571 or info@ere.bc.ca
equitablerealestate.ca



Site Sponsor

Odlum Brown

For over 100 years, independent Canadian investment firm Odlum Brown has been helping clients achieve their financial goals. By gaining a deep understanding of what wealth means to each client, Odlum Brown advisors make a difference for clients through disciplined investment advice integrated with the firm's financial planning expertise. Odlum Brown also invests in the communities where its clients and team members live and work through its passionate support of over 150 organizations across Canada.

1100 - 250 Howe St, Vancouver, BC
604 669 1600
odlumbrown.com



ODLUM BROWN

Ross Turnbull
Vice President, Portfolio Manager

Friend Sponsors

Extraordinary League Contracting

Renovating and restoring buildings in the Vancouver area since 2009, we take immense pride in the retention of existing homes and older buildings. When retention improves and enhances the buildings, benefits the occupants, while respecting the surrounding environment and community, we call this a win.

604 728 3707
exle.ca



Collis Verdicchio, Oakwyn Realtor

Real Estate for Homes That Deserve More – Specializing in Vancouver Character Homes

I use my background in construction and passion for heritage properties to help homeowners navigate that process with confidence. Preserving Vancouver's character homes is what makes it all worthwhile. It's where construction, history, and community come together and it's what drives everything I do.

778 840 5315 or collis@collisv.com
www.collisv.com



In-Kind Sponsors

MARTIN KNOWLES
PHOTO/MEDIA



SACHIN RITVIKA
PHOTOGRAPHY

CITY OF
VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

ELYSIAN
COFFEE ROASTERS

GLORY
JUICE CO.

THANK YOU

Heritage Discovery Day 2026 has involved the efforts of over 150 volunteers, including all of our team leads, site attendants, info booth and photography volunteers. A big thank you to all of the owners and site stewards for welcoming us into your space.

Guidebook – Don Luxton, VHF Staff, Koch & Kahkonen Communications

Essays – Chris Wong, Christine Hagemoen, Yiting Pan, VHF Staff

Photography – Martin Knowles, Alireza Dashti

Research – Bronwyn Smyth of City of Vancouver Archives

ABOUT VHF

Vancouver Heritage Foundation advances the appreciation and conservation of our city's diverse heritage places and their stories. We raise awareness of the vital contribution that heritage makes to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community.



VHF Staff (Pictured above, left to right)

Jessica Quan, Community Engagement Manager

Sarah Carlson, Director of Education

Golmehr Kazari, Program Manager

Katherine Figueiredo, Program Manager

Monique Badun, VHF Board Chair

Laura Carey, Executive Director

Caroline McDonald, Administration and Volunteer Manager

Meghan Lenz, Grant Programs Manager



Scan the QR code to
visit our website

Tag us on social!

 @vancouverheritagefdn

 @Vancouver Heritage Foundation

#HeritageDiscoveryDay2026

THANK YOU

TO OUR 2026 SITE PARTICIPANTS



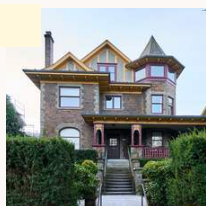
1. Kumita Residence



2. O'Neil House



3. Western Front



4. McLean Residence



5. McGee House



6. Robertson House



7. Cambrian Hall



8. Grey Church



9. Ramslie House

**This
guidebook is
your ticket!**



**VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION**

vancouverheritagefoundation.org
Registered Charity # 891765968