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SITELINES GROUP

EDITOR	Brett Hitchins	604.682.5610
ADVERTISING	Tara Culham	604.682.5610
EDITOR	fax	604.681.3394
GRAPHIC DESIGN	Gravity Inc.	604.738.2768
PRINTING	Initial Printing Inc.	604.669.2383

The purpose of *Sitelines* is to provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the profession of landscape architecture. Individual opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily of those of the BCCLA.

Learning

By Brett Hitchins

Among the three key pieces in this issue of *Sitelines*, a common theme of continual exploration and learning within our profession becomes apparent.

It begins with a summary of the 2010 UBC Graduate Design Projects (pg. 4). Our feature of last year's student design projects received a welcoming response and we hope that you once again enjoy a glimpse into the talents of those about to enter the profession. As Ron Kellett and Cynthia Girling note in their introduction to the piece, these projects represent the culmination of each student's academic career. They have devoted tireless hours into these final assignments and the result is a collection of projects that display strong analytical, graphic, and creative skills.

With the school year coming to a close and the warm weather approaching, many landscape architects across the province are planning their summer holidays, and a trip to Vancouver Island may be on many people's itinerary. The Island offers a wide variety of attractions to active, and nature oriented individuals, most notably in the unique diversity of public gardens that can be found there. In, *Exploring the Gardens of Vancouver Island* (pg. 12), Gerald Fleming, provides a quick snapshot of 11 different gardens and parks of interest to any outdoors enthusiast, landscape architect or otherwise.

Our final article is a detailed and factual account on the history of one of Vancouver's defining feature elements – trees. Crafted by Clive Justice, *Vancouver's Trees – A History Lesson* (pg. 14), illuminates the efforts undertaken by the Rotary Club to create a diverse urban forest throughout the streets and boulevards of Vancouver.

From the moment we enter university to the days that we retire, our profession is an inquisitive one. I hope that you enjoy this cross-section of teachings from the past, places to explore now, and new ideas posed for the future. [SL](#)

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Cover Image: Viewing Tower on a Promontory. By Micole (Yiming) Wu.

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2010 UBC GRADUATE DESIGN PROJECTS


Introduction

By Ronald Kellett, Professor of Landscape Architecture, UBC, and
Cynthia Girling, Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture, UBC

The graduation design project is independent work that exemplifies the highest standards of graduate professional education. The typical project is a landscape design, which may range in scale from the garden to the region, and uses design and the design process as the primary mode of inquiry. The project represents the culmination of MLA education, providing students with the opportunity to draw upon and develop their total knowledge and interests. Many students in this year's class undertook projects located in the Marpole neighborhood of Vancouver. This group studied the public realm of Marpole, the future of the industrial lands and the Fraser River waterfront, and the coming impacts of the Canada Line on the neighborhood. They took varied points of view: biodiversity; urban water; urban waste; children; equity, resilient landscapes. Three students undertook independent projects sited elsewhere, including designing for holistic health for the health precinct and waterfront of the Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay; an alternative view of landscape preservation with a site in Brooks, Alberta; and animating Vancouver's public realm with creative athletics. Each project expresses the unique values and interests of the students, yet most were concerned with elevating the function and quality of public space for human use and ecosystem functions. We hope you enjoy this glimpse into the work of our creative and talented students. Ronald Kellett, Cynthia Girling, on behalf of the faculty and students.

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PROJECTS SITUATED IN THE MARPOLE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF VANCOUVER

Reappropriation Of Space Below Bridges: Revisioning Residual Space In Marpole

By Chaopeng Cai
Project supervisors: Daniel Roehr, Ronald Kellett

Urban infrastructure, such as bridges, takes up a significant amount of land area in the city. Much vacant space around and under infrastructure in the city can be problematic, typically, when it is underutilized. However, the potential held within these neglected parts of the city presents opportunities. This thesis aims to explore the opportunities and program possibilities of such residual sites in the Marpole neighbourhood of Vancouver. The lands below bridges in Marpole now stand as single use parking lots, industrial storage areas and unused lands. This thesis compares these residual spaces and then provides design solutions to accommodate activities that respond to specific needs of the neighbourhood. One residual site is refined to demonstrate that spaces under bridges are capable of facilitating multiple functions through various appropriate programs and thereby can reconnect the neighborhood to the riverfront.



Site plan and program diagram.

The Marpole Wasteworks

By Caitlin Harrigan
Project supervisors: Cynthia Girling, Ronald Kellett

There is an old expression, “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” In a future of increasingly scarce resources, this proverb becomes more than simply a nice saying — it becomes an imperative. If Vancouver is to maintain its reputation as a global leader in addressing issues surrounding sustainability, it must design its infrastructure to reflect this commitment. This proposal redesigns the Vancouver South Waste Transfer Station and Manitoba Works Yard as the hub of a materials recovery precinct in Marpole, Vancouver. The redesign acts as a publicly visible and accessible model of sustainable infrastructure for the City of Vancouver. It also employs eco-revelatory design principles to reveal currently hidden processes as a means of reconnecting community members to the City of Vancouver’s waste and operational systems. The Marpole Wasteworks addresses the need to embrace a paradigm shift — one that champions sustainability principles and reconnects peoples’ behaviours and actions with their physical consequences.

Caitlin Harrigan is the recipient of the 2010 Durante Kreuk Prize in Landscape Architecture for achieving the highest degree of design excellence in the graduation project.



Site plan for Marpole Wasteworks.



◀ Site sections north-south through the Reworkshop and mid-site through the elevated walk and transfer station.

Generating Pedal Power In Marpole: Retrofitting Marpole For Cycling

By Zhiwei Lu

Project supervisors: Patrick Condon, Ronald Kellett, Frank Ducote

Automobile dependency is one of the major contributors to climate change, peak oil, physical inactivity, and traffic congestion that threaten our future. Recent studies have shown that all these crises are worse than our worst expectations. Responding to this situation, this project provides a unique solution that explores a cycling-focused development for Marpole. A research based process found that urban form, street networks, and streetscape design all have a significant impact on alternative transportation mode shares, which includes cycling. Consequently, this project provides a comprehensive design system to retrofit Marpole for cycling, through three interconnected lenses of design interventions. These three lenses are Cycling Supported Urban Form, Cycling Infrastructure Network, and Cycling Friendly Streetscape. The outcome of this project is to increase cycling mode share in Marpole, by improving environmental cycling conditions.



Proposed commercial node.

Children Unleashed: Embracing Risk And Playing With Challenge At Tumble Park

By Travis Martin

Project supervisors: Susan Herrington, Ronald Kellett

Outdoor opportunities for children are not keeping pace with the opportunities of indoor technologies. This is a contributing factor to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Middle childhood, ages 6-12, is an important time in a child's life when they should be extending their range and improving general physical fitness. There is a need for exciting spaces that will attract children outdoors and inspire them to move and challenge themselves.

This project explores neighbourhood park design with special attention to providing opportunities for risk and challenge that help children develop strength, determination and independence. This project culminated with the design of a renamed 'Tumble Park' located along the Arbutus "greenway" in western Marpole. The topography has been moulded in an attempt to create visual interest, inspire movement and define the park spaces. Furthermore, structures and play elements are integrated with the topography to create a flowing, accessible and durable play environment.



Section perspective looking from the main north/south axis across the rolling hills towards the play mountain.



Play mountain evaluative perspective: The children are highlighted with various colours based on their activities to represent the presence of key design principles.

Don't Throw The Baby Out With The Bathwater! Ecological Benefits From Urban Wastewater

By Ben Mulhall

Project supervisors: Patrick Mooney, Ronald Kellett

This project focuses on the hydrologic cycle to exemplify the potential for positive interface between urban and ecological systems. The primary goal of this project is to determine ways to rethink and redesign the urban water system to be more compatible with the natural hydrologic cycle of an area. The secondary goal is to alter the urban water system to improve ecological functions such as increasing habitat, facilitating species migration, accommodating biodiversity, and purifying water. The resulting products from this project include a design process that can be transposed to different neighbourhoods: A neighbourhood design for a Marpole pipeshed that characterizes streets into typologies and attributes design guidelines to every street, and site designs for locations along Cambie Street that illustrate how the interface of the urban and ecological systems can fit within the character of the site.



Langara slope transportation hierarchy.

A Framework For Re-Envisioning The Urban Industrial Landscape: Towards Greater Eco-Efficiency

By Inna Olchovski
Project supervisors: Ronald Kellett, Stephen Sheppard

A Framework for Re-Envisioning the Urban Industrial Landscape: Towards Greater Eco-Efficiency develops a framework to visualize a more efficient, compact and resilient working industrial landscape. It is based on analysis of the South Vancouver Industrial Area, literature review of eco-efficiency and eco-industry principles, and projections for the future role and character of industry in the urban system.

The project came about as a response to municipal policy advocating the intensification or densification of industrial lands. For the purpose of the project, intensification is defined as the efficient utilization of land, infrastructure and operational resources to improve industrial productivity and its benefits to the human and natural environments. The outcome is an urban design exercise applying a framework of industrial clusters based on synergies in form, layout, and distribution of industry types, open space, and networks.



Industrial Green plan. This open space is an example of a more robust move toward linking the River edge to the Marpole and industrial communities.

Social Landscape: Community Infrastructure For Marpole

By Caroline Schutrumpf
Project supervisors: Ronald Kellett, Cynthia Girling

Marpole is the physical and social gateway to Vancouver, serving as a landing point for a range of newcomers. Using social inclusion as a framework to assess needs, how can this significant role be enhanced?

Social inclusion is defined as equal access to social, cultural, and economic life. Analytical mapping at increasing scales revealed that Marpole lacked equitable social services and public amenity. Design interventions at neighborhood and block scales addressed missing facilities and services while implementing design principles that facilitate social interaction among a diverse and transient population. The resulting proposal repurposes an underperforming building as a community centre and upgrades the adjoining plaza to serve as much needed public space.



Design for diversity + social interaction principles.

Greenways In Marpole – Enhance Biodiversity + Recreation, Transportation, & Stormwater Management

By Ying Shi
Project supervisors: Patrick F. Mooney, Will Marsh, Ronald Kellett

The expansion of human population and urbanization has caused a decline in global biological diversity. To address this problem, most of the efforts in protecting biodiversity have tended to be concentrated on remote or unproductive land. This project will focus on the enhancement of biodiversity in the urban context.

The project goal is to enhance urban habitat while supporting regional biodiversity and also enhancing for human use, i.e. recreation, transportation, and stormwater management. This project focuses on designing multifunctional greenways in the Marpole neighborhood (in Vancouver, BC, Canada) a densely populated area. Using birds as indicators to assess the status of biodiversity on site, as well as using basic concepts of landscape ecology, the end product demonstrates that urban landscapes can support significant biodiversity values. Multipurpose greenways (integrating biodiversity and human activities) are a promising solution.



Linear park designed to enhance habitat, stormwater management, recreation.

Re-Imagining The Paths To Schools – Marpole’s Active Transport Network

By Quyen Tran

Project supervisors: Susan Herrington, Ronald Kellet, Cynthia Girling

Many of our communities are designed for cars and not for people, especially when it comes to children. Consequently, there are fewer and fewer children walking to school regardless of distance. There are a wide range of predictors contributing to children’s commuting behaviors. However, it is the individual, external and physical environmental factors that are most likely to influence decision-making regarding mode of travel. In other words, the landscape surrounding schools plays a role in children’s mode of travel to school. More specifically, improvements in sidewalk infrastructure, traffic calming measures and street aesthetics may result in increasing active transport (walking and biking) to school.

Using the area around David Lloyd George Elementary School in Marpole as a study site, this project argues that the physical design of the urban landscape can play a contributing role in increasing active commuting to school in elementary school children and enhance childhood development by creating safe and memorable childhood experiences during their trips to and from school.



Patterned pavement guides bikes and pedestrians.

Placing Amenity: Developing A More Complete Community In Marpole Through Design Of An Integrative Public Realm

By Megan Vogt

Project supervisors: Ronald Kellett, Cynthia Girling

This project explores how rapid transit oriented development can best be integrated into Vancouver’s existing urban fabric in ways that benefit and enhance the city’s neighbourhoods. It is inspired by the recognition that cities and neighbourhoods are designed around transit systems and that introducing a new type, particularly of a very different speed, brings with it new urban forms and challenges. Precedent studies of existing transit-oriented developments in Greater Vancouver establish the effectiveness of such attempts to date. The project seeks to find ways to reconcile and integrate the best of both development patterns while maintaining a sense of cohesion and positive evolution. The project takes the approach that the idea of ‘neighbourhood’ is an important neutralizing spatial concept that when structurally understood, can be invoked as a design tool. Public realm is understood as the medium through which integrative neighbourhood-scale experiences can happen because it is how ‘neighbourhood’ is psychologically and physically experienced. The neighbourhood public realm is broken down into networks of connective streets and nodes of activity, which are invoked and manipulated to create an enhanced quality of neighbourhood. This thesis is tested on a 10 hectare site in Marpole, adjacent to the future 57th Avenue Canada Line Station, via redevelopment of the site as a mixed-use pedestrian-priority neighbourhood.

Megan Vogt is the recipient of the 2010 Dr. John Wesley Neill Medal and Prize as top graduating student.



Land use and building massing.



Plan of the civic and hospital precinct.

Resilient Landscapes: Designing Resilience Into The South Vancouver Industrial Lands

By Michael Vorhies

Project supervisors: Will Marsh, Ronald Kellett, Cynthia Girling

The co-evolution of societies, technologies and the biosphere has created a socio-ecological system that is producing rapidly changing landscapes. The complex and interconnected components of these systems are susceptible to shocks produced through these changes with widespread and crippling results. Resiliency needs to be designed into the systems to reduce our vulnerability to system shocks. This design project explores a resilient alternative to developing industrial land in a tidally influenced floodplain. The former industrial site of the Silver Tree Sawmill and Terminal Forest Products mill within the South Vancouver Industrial Lands is the site selected to implement design strategies and develop solutions towards building resilient capacity. An in-depth analysis into the ecological and industrial systems allows for a synergistic industrial cluster to develop on the site. The infrastructure of this cluster is cognizant of the economic and climatic uncertainties that exist and remains flexible enough to accept these potential changes through resilient building strategies and appropriate industry siting. The site also understands the ecological requirements of the inter-tidal zone and provides room for habitats to migrate with changing ecological gradients both up-river and up-bank. The combination of industrial infrastructure and ecological function provide a tremendous opportunity for public amenity the Site provides public access, and movement through it, revealing and celebrating the dynamic industrial and ecologically integrated systems acting on this site.

Michael Vorhies is the recipient of the 2010 Will Marsh - Doug Paterson Scholarship.

Revealing Industry: Promoting Sustainability, Re-Integrating Industry And The City

By Cameron Woodruff

Project supervisors: Kris Fox, Ronald Kellett, Cynthia Girling

Industrial land in the City of Vancouver is a valuable, yet dwindling resource. It is a vital component to the economic and social sustainability of the city, and yet there has been a 30% reduction in the amount of available industrially zoned land in the last 40 years. The City of Vancouver has recognized the need to protect these lands with numerous policies over the years, however little has been done to suggest *how* industrial lands can be protected. The result has been an increased segregation of industry and the city, between place of work and place of residence, and a lack of accountability of industry to the environment.

This project proposes that protection of these lands can be achieved by increasing the public's interactions with and visibility of industry, thereby creating a sense of ownership and understanding of its value within a larger context. Using the Ocean Concrete facility in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Marpole, a design vocabulary is created that allows for an incremental unfolding of small scale design interventions that zip together industry and the city, thickening edges and strengthening industrial centres and providing a structure which enables an unfamiliar public to read, understand and enjoy the industrial landscape.

Cameron Woodruff is the recipient of the 2010 CSLA Award of Merit for academic excellence.



Detail plan: Public access, kayak rental, tidal weir outlook under the Canada Line.



Composite site plan: The industrial landscape becomes a collection of barriers, filters, switches, cues and pulls that re-integrate the industrial landscape into the city.

Weaving An Urban Industrial Riverfront

By Micole (Yiming) Wu

Project supervisors: Patrick Condon, Ronald Kellett

What is the future of the Fraser River waterfront in Vancouver— an industrial waterfront, or a residential waterfront? This project explores another answer for this question, that is, a middle ground between a pure industrial waterfront and a pure residential waterfront. Here, in Marpole, the riverfront along Fraser River is designed into a unique place where people can experience both industrial big boxes and intimate residential space. Meanwhile, the landscape of the river edge is designed to reflect the different land uses, and provide interesting moments for people to enjoy and touch the water. This project proposes a design that can keep a waterfront with industrial functions while bringing more public activities into the site. After all, a mixed-used waterfront is much more sustainable than the one with only single purpose.



Viewing tower on a promontory.

PROJECTS THAT EXPLORED OTHER LANDSCAPES

'Yalis Garden: Designing For Community Wellbeing

By Christine Bachinsky

Project supervisors: Cynthia Girling, Dr. Nancy Mackin

This project develops a landscape plan for the health facilities neighbourhood of Alert Bay that reflects the traditional holistic health knowledge and plant uses of the 'Namgis First Nation while creating garden space for sharing and learning about this information. 'Namgis Elder, Gloria Cranmer Webster explains the concept of "strength" that is fundamental to the Kwakwaka'wakw people's holistic understanding of well-being, health and culture:

"In our discussions with our older people, one of the points they made is that for them, health meant 'strength,' 'axwe'...The 'strength' our old people refer to was the health of the whole person..." (Culhane Speck 1987)

A person's whole health is strongly influenced by the health of the places they live in. Design can facilitate healthy living by creating spaces that nurture the unique wellness needs of a community. Therefore, this project hypothesizes that landscape design can contribute to the health and well-being of the people of Alert Bay by building upon existing ecological, social and cultural environments within the community.



Gathering on the shoreline: The Awakwes.



A portion of the plant materials palette.

Landscape In Motion: Beyond Preservation

By Lara Davis

Project supervisors: Susan Herrington, Cynthia Girling

Landscape and history are in perpetual motion. Typical historic resource management and design strategies that view physical preservation as the only desirable conservatory approach fail to reflect this dynamic nature and are not applicable to all sites with historic value. There is therefore an opportunity to explore an expanded approach to preservation that expresses these inherently dynamic characteristics and in doing so, provides an alternative future for those historic places that cannot be physically preserved. This project proposes a virtual depository for the multiple visual, verbal and textual narratives associated with historic sites.



The Virtual Landscape: Expressing and constructing narratives of landscape change via virtual media.

Bodies In Motion: Animating The City Of Vancouver With Creative Athletics And Active Play

By Marta Klaptocz

Project supervisors: Cynthia Girling, Doug Paterson, Erick Villagomez

Planning theory indicates that public space must serve two primary functions: providing a means of getting from points A to B to C, and providing a dwelling place for gathering and interaction. The City of Vancouver exemplifies how the former can be achieved, offering extensive transit routes, bike and greenway systems, and safe streets. Unfortunately, creating spaces that foster cultural exchange and creative diversity remains a goal in the City's Cultural Plan. Combining William Whyte's triangulation theory with an acknowledgement that physical activity improves health and encourages interaction between different personalities and cultures, this project proposes that designers consider layering the public realm with stimuli in the form of imaginative and artistic apparatus or cues that instigate creative athletics and active play. The project offers a tool kit and process for designing for movement and tests these through the design of the public spaces surrounding the Vancouver Public Library.



Elegant globes that roll on the spot serve as the feature stimuli for active play in the redeveloped Budget car rental site off of Homer Street.

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Exploring The Gardens Of Vancouver Island

By Gerald Fleming, CSLA, BCSLA, Island Chapter Chair

The “100 Mile Diet” may be an idea that is worth applying to our summer vacations.

In other words, consider exploring some of the amazing places right in our back yard. There are many such places on Vancouver Island and they can easily be reached by making the relatively simple ferry trip from the Lower Mainland. There is also something unique about how easy it is to get to the water.

As landscape architects, we are often asked (particularly in the coming summer months), about where to go to see the special places and gardens on Vancouver Island. Here is a sampling of some of these special places that are very easy to get to and have amazing features and a wide range of landscapes. There is much more to see than the famed Butchart Gardens, which are nice but there are many, many more...

Glendale Gardens and Woodlands at 505 Quayle Road in Saanich.

Over 10,000 plant varieties in 28 themed gardens show the diversity of plants of the Pacific Northwest. This facility is operated by the non-profit Horticulture Centre of the Pacific as a demonstration and education garden. This peaceful site, a 15 minutes drive from downtown Victoria, also includes a conservation park with a wetland, walking trails, bike trails and a feeding area for over 35 varieties of birds. Plan a couple of hours to enjoy the excellent displays of heathers, rhododendrons, perennials, and especially the enchanting Takata Japanese Garden in a wooded hillside.

Government House at 1401 Rockland

Avenue in Victoria is the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor, the Queen's representative in British Columbia. Substantial gardens, in a lovely setting, were

established and are maintained in large part by volunteers. There's a large cutting garden, perennial beds, and a rose garden.

Finnerty Gardens at the University of Victoria.

There are over 4,000 different trees and shrubs including 1,500 rhododendron and azalea plants, and companion plants – ferns, vines, groundcovers, ornamentals – artistically displayed at the SW corner of UVic's campus. The site includes three tranquil ponds, an inviting network of winding paths and dozens of benches, each with its own distinctive view of the gardens' ever-changing splendor. April and May are the best times to see the rhododendrons in their glory, but it is a very pleasant place to go at any time.

Hatley Gardens at Royal Roads University.

Developed over 100 years ago by the Dunsmuir family, this large estate is now Royal Roads University, a National Historic Site. The three major gardens – Japanese Garden, Formal Italian Garden and Rose Garden – are set in a classic Edwardian park design. During the Dunsmuir era, approximately 100 gardeners tended the estate. You can tour both the Castle and the gardens.

Abkhazi Gardens at 1964 Fairfield Road.

This is the result of a 50-year dedication by a Russian prince and princess who rebuilt their lives after years of separation and internment camps during the Second World War. It was saved from townhouse development in 2000 by an outpouring of donations and volunteer labour. These natural gardens with Garry Oaks, exposed rock with ponds and alpinists, and a rhododendron wood are full of charm. Light lunches and teas are served.



Mount Douglas Park
Credit: Gerald Fleming

Playfair Park in Saanich is located at Rock/Quadra Street.

This small hidden park is a secret garden treasure that not many Victorians are unaware of. May and June sparkle with the blooms of hundreds of mature rhododendrons in a maze. There is also an excellent perennial border that is splendid from June until October.

Saxe Point Park in Esquimalt at Fraser/Munro.

This dramatic waterfront setting is a great place to go on a sunny, warm afternoon, picnic in hand. Saxe Point was designated as park land in 1934. During World War II, many trees on this site were cleared and a searchlight was installed as part of the DND's shoreline defense. The park provides spectacular views of the Olympic Mountains and Strait of Juan de Fuca. Fine perennial and shrub borders and a large open lawn area overlook the water. Forested trails and beach accesses are set among mature Douglas fir and Grand fir. Walk the trails, explore the beaches, or enjoy the views from one of the many benches or picnic tables.

Mount Douglas Park in Saanich.

This is the largest and most magnificent park administered by Saanich. Walk the shores of Cordova Bay, hike trails lush with the abundance of ferns and wildflowers towered by Douglas fir and Cedar trees overhead. A trail, as well as a paved, but steep, park road leads you to the summit. From the parking lot at the top, a walking trail leads you to the



Mount Douglas Park
Credit: Gerald Fleming

summit elevation of 213m. This 360° look out is spectacular, with views of Saanich, the city lights of Victoria, and further, the Olympic and Cascade Mountains in Washington State. Mount Douglas Park Beach is a long sandy beach, ideal for strolling and exploring. In 1942, Emily Carr claimed to have had a vision while visiting a friend in Vancouver. The vision inspired her to

return immediately to Mount Douglas Park where she felt the “forest had something to tell her.” There, for a few weeks in August of that year, she painted her last works that were both mystical and enchanting.

Beacon Hill Park is one of Victoria’s grand treasures!

This historic civic park has tremendous variety and a natural space even in the heart of downtown. Its 200

acres were set aside in 1858 by James Douglas, governor of Vancouver Island when it was a British crown colony. The park’s name was inspired by a pair of masts on a hill used as a beacon and navigational aid to mariners approaching Victoria’s inner harbour. The park is beautifully landscaped with many native trees and plants. There are paths with benches amidst flower gardens, a band shell with summer concerts, sports

fields including a cricket pitch, a totem pole, a children’s petting zoo and ponds with lilies and waterfowl. Bald eagles and herons regularly nest in the huge fir trees.

For a day-long trip along the east coast of Vancouver Island one can visit two quite different gardens.

Milner Gardens and Woodland in Qualicum Beach.

These gardens are set around a 1931 home and acres of conservation forest maintained by the Vancouver Island University. Afternoon tea is served.

Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park in Comox

Is a landscaped heritage property where the annual arts, crafts and cultural Filberg Festival is held, and Kitty Coleman of art shows and where cedar bark trails lead you through a unique showcase of 3000 rhododendrons and companion plants in a serene and natural setting. [SL](#)


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Vancouver's Trees – A Short History

By Clive L. Justice, PhD., FCSLA, Lm BCSLA, Lm IDS., Ornamental Garden Tree and Plant Historian



Planted in 1938, this portion of the Cambie Heritage Boulevard, looking down to City Hall and the Northshore mountains, has the Big Trees (Yes! That's the common name), *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, alternating with Golden English Elms, *Ulmus glabra lutescens*, and large circles of golden flowering, *Forsythia suspense*. The Canada Line now goes underground to YVR Airport and Richmond alongside these magnificent trees and the ornamental flowering cherries that are still a feature of the Cambie Heritage Boulevard from King Edward to Marine Drive.



Bylaw for a new one, and a system of dual carriageway, wide treed medians, with tree lined sidewalks on each side as recreational drives for the city's residents. This grid of passive recreational drives is a signal urban landscape element, unique in its scope, which remains largely intact 75 years after these "street parks" were proposed. These landscapes present a great diversity of trees species, particularly flowering trees that

Sequoiadendron giganteum, with *Rhododendron occidentale*, California Native Azalea, in the foreground. Photographed in King's Canyon National Park.

In 1923 Harland Bartholomew appeared before the Point Grey Town Planning Commission chaired by Professor of Horticulture at the University of British Columbia (UBC) newly appointed Campus Landscape Architect Frank Ebenezer Buck and members of the Point Grey Municipal Council. He spoke of a city's need for passive recreation in the form of "... grass, trees, flowers and water (where possible) forming a restful background."

When he prepared the Town Plan for amalgamation of the municipalities of "staid" Point Grey and "unruly" South Vancouver with the city, Bartholomew proposed two additional passive recreational features for the new amalgamated Vancouver. These were: street and boulevard trees, by updating the antiquated 1912 amended in 1917

make for visitor and resident attraction and beauty found in no other temperate city in the world. All, or sections, in the opinion of the writer, have become heritage urban landscapes.

Only one, Cambie Street, has heritage status due to the efforts of the Cambie Boulevard Heritage Society. Because of the efforts of the Society to ensure that the Canada Line went underground rather than destroying the landscape, the wide Bartholomew centre park median and boulevard trees at the edges of both sides remain largely unchanged and are still a major part of Vancouver's tree and street heritage. East and West King Edward Avenue (25th), Dunbar to Main also qualifies, but so far, Vancouver's heritage community has seen fit to confine heritage status only to buildings. Some of which have dubious architectural heritage merit.

Post WWII development in Vancouver resulted in tree planting of the smaller and faster growing, single storey suburban scaled flowering trees along residential streets. The cherry varieties — Akebono, Shirotae, Rancho, Accolade and Ukon — were among the 26 varieties that were favoured. The devastating Dutch Elm Disease that ran rampant, destroying the avenues of majestic twenties, thirties and earlier planted American Elms on streets in Eastern Canadian and US Midwestern cities and towns, never got to Vancouver. It showed the danger of a monoculture approach to street planting; the French passion for order versus the English passion for diversity. Because of Vancouver's strong British settler and Scottish gardener heritage the city has always favoured and savoured tree diversity.

In 1967 the newly registered B. C. Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) proposed an inventory of Vancouver's Heritage trees in honour of Canada's Centennial of Confederation. It was a particular passion of the BCSLA's first and long serving Secretary and Registrar, Einar Broderon, but it took a decade and a half before the BCSLA secured



Rotary Club plantings near the Hastings Street exit in 1992.
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funding. Through funding from the BC Heritage Trust, BCSLA was able to employ two students, Clarence Sihoe and Elisabeth Whitelaw from the UBC Landscape Architectural program. During the summers of 1982 and 1983 they measured, photographed, and uncovered local stories for more than 150 heritage trees found throughout the 22 Vancouver residential districts, Stanley Park, and the UBC campus. This inventory is only a representative sample of

Vancouver's heritage trees; it doesn't include trees on streets or boulevards.

In 1988 the City employed the arboricultural consulting firm, ACRT, to inventory and assess Vancouver's street and boulevard trees and prepare a comprehensive management plan for care, maintenance, renewal and replacement of the over 500 species and varieties of planted trees in parks and on the streets and boulevards, in the city. This plan was adopted in 1990 by The Board of Parks

and Recreation, and it states, "the goal of Vancouver's street tree program is to proactively manage the municipal forest in a proper arboricultural and cost effective manner by providing to the taxpayers innovative leadership and services designed to preserve and improve the natural beauty of the urban forest." It continues, "The goal will be accomplished through the design, communication, and implementation of tree planting and maintenance policies and programs outlined in the Street Tree Management Plan"▶

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which are consistent with Vancouver's environmental concept and objectives. Vancouver's Street tree program will respond to the needs and expectations of the taxpayers and local government agencies and will improve the quality of life and increase the value of the trees and the real estate of the City of Vancouver." The amendment to the City Charter in the 1990s now permits some regulation of trees on private property. This was initiated in part as a result of the loss of mature landscape elements, especially trees



RHForests sites on Hwy 1c from the air. Credit Clive Justice

by residential redevelopment and "the erosion of Vancouver's landscape traditions [as] a result, in part of the fact that the City's population is no longer dominated by people with an European culture who are inculcated with landscape traditions similar to those of Vancouver's past."

While there is a mature tree removal per year loophole, this charter amendment through the Development Permit process has resulted in retention of many trees and protection fencing installation for existing trees at or near construction sites. Public pressure in some Vancouver communities to save large old trees during redevelopment has occurred, as in the saving of the large Chinese elm tree on the southwest corner of York and Arbutus Streets in Kitsilano, this was a much more responsible response than starting over with the bylaw rule of diameter for diameter tree replacement requirements during lot redevelopment. This is all incorporated into a booklet titled: Private Property Tree By-law and Guidelines available from the Planning Department (for ten dollars, plus GST). This has increased awareness of tree heritage and replacement values by developers and homeowners, due in part to legal acceptance of the International Society of Arboriculture valuations made by ISA-arborist appraisers.

In 1992, to celebrate the bicentennial of the arrival in these waters of Captain George

Vancouver, with his surgeon-botanist, Archibald Menzies and the Rotary Club of Vancouver South (Marpole) initiated a tree planting program as part of the landscaping plan of Catherine Berris and Associates around the highway 401 tunnels project under Hastings Street. Starting in October, continuing through November and the first part of December 1992, saw the arrival by bus of one class, each morning and afternoon from one of the 35 Vancouver and Burnaby Schools in the program at

one of the six forest sites. On each bus, the class had seen a specially prepared video on how to plant a tree. This enabled each student with the help of Rotary Volunteers from the eight Vancouver and Burnaby Rotary Clubs to plant a tree, install a protector tube around it, and learn the name of their tree from a label. The class planting took only 15 minutes, getting back to the bus with the shovels and safety jackets took 20 minutes with a 30 minutes bus ride back to their school. The 2700 trees seedlings they planted included five of the native conifers and three of the native deciduous trees that Menzies found growing here. Instead of the Pacific Dogwood, also a Menzies' discovery, the students planted Vancouver's Centennial tree, a locally created floriferous hybrid of the Pacific Dogwood named Eddie's White Wonder.

In the following years, a Vancouver South Rotary Club program called the Treekeepers Program began at six Vancouver and Burnaby schools prior to 1992 had grade five classes from these schools take on the stewardship of the Rotary Heritage Forest. Each class had an annual field trip in the week before Easter to the forest to identify, count the living and dead trees, remove the protector tubes in the third year (they had failed to biodegrade as they were supposed to) and mulch them with wood chips after the fourth year. This

stewardship extended over nine years from 1993 to 2001. At the last count, there was a 60% survival rate. Today we have a young urban forest of 4700 native trees beside the 401 as you approach the bridge over Burrard Inlet.

The Treekeeper Program, originally initiated in Maple Ridge to counter tree vandalism in newly landscaped suburban neighbourhood schools and parks, was redirected to some of the older Vancouver and Burnaby schools that have numbers of mature trees on the grounds and on the surrounding streets. The program was geared to awareness, understanding, and respect for natural things that make the urban environment, beautiful, healthy, and livable. In September, each grade five child was given a tree name with its scientific and common name, which was growing on the school grounds or along nearby streets. On a walkabout, the tree was found and given into his or her care for a year, to observe, research, measure the physical size, (height calculations involve some great math), aesthetic and cultural values with seasonal changes, all to be recorded in their personal Treekeepers' Journals. By the end of term, each had enough knowledge about his or her tree to understand the tree's place and value to their neighbourhood and the greater urban environment. The Treekeepers Program was most successful and went on the longest for the two grade five classes at Sexsmith Community School at 59th and Ontario Streets; more than that 500 individual children, there and at other Private and Public participating schools, received a Treekeepers Certificate.

The trees in Vancouver Parks, on streets and boulevards along with those trees on private grounds and gardens are the most precious living heritage that we have in our city. My family and I have lived in this city for sixty years, in the province more than a hundred. The trees in the city are features, unlike the rest of us, that have improved in greatness and beauty with age. We cannot afford to lose this element of our city's cultural heritage — this tree diversity passion. It is unique to our city and essential to maintain the high quality, diversity, and uniqueness of Vancouver's urban forest. [SL](#)

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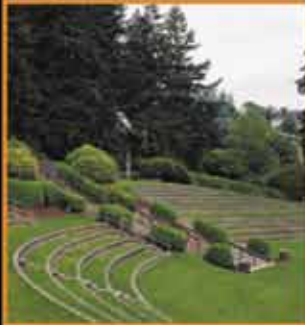
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