



*Gil Nicholls (left) and Martin Buck have saved two century-old homes.*

## 120-YEAR-OLD HOMES RENOVATED FOR OFFICES

Partners **Gil Nicholls** and **Martin Buck** have taken a pair of tired 19th century workingman's homes and renovated them for distinctive office and commercial space close to downtown Victoria.

The side-by-side houses are just off Pandora Street behind the **Blanshard Building** which houses the **Ministry of Health**.

The neighbourhood is Amelia and Cormorant streets, an enclave of some of the oldest houses in the city that have survived the decades more or less intact, in spite of a neglectful owner.

"They've got a peculiar kind of charm for me," says Nicholls, who is the principal in **Nicholls Engineering**.

A woman who owned them lived in one of the houses and let them gradually run down. Buck and Nicholls bought the trio of houses from her estate last year.

Nicholls said the wood frame house at 1519 Amelia was built in 1871, and the brick house next door at 1521 dates from almost the same time.

The pair of houses is for sale at \$289,900. One has been leased already at \$12.50 a square foot and the partners are looking for other tenants, as well as someone to purchase the property. A third house of similar vintage at 1517 Amelia directly behind **Christina's Furniture** has been sold by Buck and Nicholls to a couple who are renovating it for their psychology practice.

*Norman Gidney*

## GRAD DAY FOR 8 CIVIL SERVANTS

June 23 was graduation day for eight provincial civil servants who received financial management certificates from Finance Minister **Mel Couvelier**. They were the most recent grads in a unique provincial program started in 1982.

"We attach such a high priority to it internally we like to make a special day of it," said Couvelier at the ceremony, held in the Ned deBeck lounge of the legislative buildings.

The program consists of 13 recognized accounting courses, plus the government's own financial management and control course — about two-thirds of the way towards professional designation.

It's unique among the provinces, according to Comptroller-General **Brian Marson**, whose department administers the program, begun seven years ago with the major reform of B.C.'s financial administration.

Another goal was to improve the success rate of civil servants working towards an accounting degree while continuing to work in the government.

"It was a heavy course and a lot of people dropped out along the way," said Marson.

Many who start the six- or seven-year process of earning an accounting designa-

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