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inclusive

HALLMARK ANNUAL AWARDS

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

31 BASTION SQUARE

Title

① [64-14]

Situated in Bastion Square are certain buildings that were instrumental to the economic growth of early Victoria. The building that was home to the most dynamic catalysts was the ^②Board of Trade Building. Although the building was itself not actually opened until 1893, the concept of forming a Victoria Chamber of Commerce began in September of 1861.

The actual founding of the organization was February 9th, 1863, and with this came its first duty to organize an armed escort to accompany gold shipments from the Cariboo. The Board functioned as a discussion forum for any matter of concern to its 150 members, among whom were leading merchants, bankers, manufacturers and professional men. Their work led to the economic expansion of the port for Victoria. This Board helped improve the steamer service from Victoria, because in 1881 this City was Canada's third largest cargo port. This interaction with Ottawa produced the construction of the Ogden Point breakwater.

In 1891 they decided to construct a building in order to provide office space and facilities required by the Board

The structure would also incorporate office rental revenue and other facilities required by the Board.

Maxwell Muir, an architect with considerable experience in engineering large buildings was chosen to draw up the plans for the building. It was to occupy the corner of Helmcken Alley and Bastion Street, at that time a favourable site which overlooked both the City

and the Inner Harbour. Local excitement in anticipation of the large structure was evident in the local newspaper which described the prospective building as "Towering To The Sky."

③ The corner stone was laid in September of 1892 by President Hall with the assistance of the contractors Dinsdale and Burns. In February, 1893 the Board of Trade occupied its new premises.

The official opening was in May, 1893, and at that opening the Board of Trade burgee, a long blue bordered flag with Board of Trade in red on white was raised on its staff above the structure.

④ [64-427] The *Victoria Times* reported: The members of the Board of Trade can today look back with pride and pleasure upon the efforts which make the annual banquet last night such a pronounced success.

There were at least 20 speeches, but Mr. R.P. Rithet, who had been Mayor of Victoria in 1885, seems to have been the hit of the evening when he proposed a toast to the Senate and the House of Commons.

He is reported to have said "he did not know that he could say much about the Senate, which although a useful body, some people said, was more ornamental than useful. Also, if there were some Senators present he did not know that he would be bold enough to say this."

⑤ The facade's decorative elements illustrate Muir's familiarity with both the High Victorian eclectic style and the Richardsonian Romanesque. It is divided symmetrically into two tighter bays flanking a broad central bay. ⑥ The bays are defined by four composite pilasters whose verticality is somewhat impeded by a different stylist treatment at every story. Similarly the window treatment, like that of the pilasters, differs at each level.

⑦ The entrance at the left, is set in Saturna granite is a Richardsonian-

type archway and is flanked by two short Doric columns and a band of organic ornamentation. At the third level is another band of floral ornamentation running across the facade. The cornice done in galvanized iron and brick, is an elaborate repetition of the fourth story string patterned relief work. Originally a lookout adorned the roof.

An elevator was located on the west side and complemented the spacious stairwell on the east. There was a ten-foot furnace room, kitchen and pantries, a grill room, washrooms, and a wine room, while the front was divided into a suite of offices for the " Merchants Exchange." The third floor contained a 39'x48' board room and other executives offices.

In 1971 the architectural firm of Peterson and Lester was hired to draw up plans to renovate the building and modernize the interior for the reoccupation by commercial business.

It is a credit to the skill of this firm that it was accomplished without defacing the original facade.

Prior to this the building was vacant for several years, and in the mid 1960's, had been occupied by Heaney's Moving and Storage.

The present owners Andromeda Investments Ltd. decided in 1992 to bring back the appearance of this heritage building to that when it was built in 1892.

The budget was \$549,309.33 on the basis of some seventy-two photographs of the then existing conditions. Tenders closed April 9, 1993. Johathan Yardley, the architect, says the total cost was \$465,849.28. All work was to be carried out without disruption to the tenants, because the Ministry of Forests, Provincial Forest Fire Control Centre, was located with in the building.

As the building had heritage designation, it was important that all materials and finishes used be contemporary. ⁽¹⁰⁾ All painted surfaces to be brought back to the original colour scheme. This involved the taking of paint samples and matching to the appropriate historical colour. It was found in two instances, the original colours were identical to pre-mixed colours in Benjamin Moore's Historical colour range.

⁽¹¹⁾ The structure had to be seismically up-graded on the north face (front) elevation and the first bay to the west, both of which are Henelly Fenestration, and thus weak to seismic forces.

Jonathan Yardley, the architect, explains the ⁽¹²⁾ procedure that involved the removal of all ceiling finishes ten feet back from the perimeter wall to insert blocking and two-meter long steel straps to the masonry walls using epoxy anchors. ⁽¹³⁾ Horizontal tension tie rods were installed above the window openings within the ceiling space, with ⁽¹⁴⁾ three-inch diameter holes drilled through brick and stone work from the inside, terminating on the exterior in an exact ⁽¹⁵⁾ position to the position to allow for the positioning of the decorative end plates. The seismic upgrade to each floor took approximately three weeks from start to finish. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This also had to tie in with tenants vacation times and relocation of the disrupted personnel within the body of the adjacent floor. This seismic upgrade was designed by Dave Tansley of Grahame & Murray Consultants of Victoria. The contractor was Hunter Construction Ltd. with Greg Hunter as principal. The site superintendent during the seismic upgrading was Allan Wells, to ensure there was as little disruption as possible.

The second aspect of the project was window refurbishment ⁽¹⁷⁾ with the plan to restore and refurbish all the original wood windows so that all

the originally opening lights function and to install more effective draft excluders to reduce air infiltration and heat loss.

It was necessary to remove every window sash to repair frames in-situ as required, to refurbish the windows in Vintage Woodworks Ltd.'s shop and then replace the units. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Jim Stiven of Vintage Woodworks Ltd. fabricated a wood and lexan expandable unit fit into each window opening while the windows were being refurbished. This permitted the tenants to still use their office and to get daylight. The window sub-contract involved over seventy units and was accomplished on a budget and on time. There is a great diversity of window types from simple one over one vertical sashes to ⁽¹⁹⁾ ten feet wide by six feet high central vertical pivoted opening units.

⁽²⁰⁾ The exterior work involved the replacement of approximately five thousand bricks, the ⁽²¹⁾ washing with appropriate heritage cleaners, the brick ⁽²²⁾ and stonework, ⁽²³⁾ the re-forming of the decorative plaster mouldings to the north elevation, the ⁽²⁴⁾ repair of the sheet metal cornice and ⁽²⁵⁾ repointing the stonework. For this exterior restoration of the ⁽²⁶⁾ sheet metal, terra cotta, brickwork, stonework and plaster work, the ⁽²⁷⁾ Superintendent was Tommy Banducci, and the subcontractor was MacLeod of Comox at a contract price of \$150,000..

Cleaning of the exterior surfaces ⁽²⁸⁾ and repainting was carried out by Clark and Patterson and involved painting some of the original advertisements to the west elevation

⁽²⁹⁾ The building occupies its entire legal site which put severe limitations on the construction. At the west is a public alleyway which had to be kept open during construction. Further, there was no site for a garbage skip on site office.

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The Board of Trade building no longer "towers above" but is among other prominent historical building in Bastion Square. None the less, its importance in Victoria's history and its intriguing aesthetic impact will continue to make it a long standing significant landmark.

Title