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VICTORIA STAR

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Pro-Heritage batterie assaults Battery assault

By Edna Slater

Mayor Gretchen Brewin has long been a supporter of heritage building preservation, and on Sunday she proved it, marching with the protest marchers at James Bay.

The placards told the tale. "No assault on Battery" read one. Battery Street, with its big turn-of-the-century houses is the core of the problem.

There, John Hanrahan, proprietor of Douglas House and himself the owner of a restored Battery Street heritage home, has bought two old houses, planning to demolish them and expand his Niagara Street rest home through to Battery.

The marchers, including Brewin, MLA Robin Blencoe and three aldermen, Geoff Young, Martin Levin and Eric Simmons, had various arguments for their land.

Preserve heritage houses. Preserve the old neighbourhood. Don't turn out families at the whim of a developer. Renovate, don't demolish. This oldest part of the city has historic and therefore tourist values. "We live here too," said one placard, carried by a small child.

In an interview this morning, Hanrahan was irate. He had just received a letter from the Heritage Foundation offering him a grant for the maintenance of his own heritage home.

"I'm not against heritage preservation in principle," he said. "But when the city is short of money for policemen, firemen, drainage and sewage, it's ridiculous to pour city funds into these



Scores of James Bay residents paraded at Battery St. Sunday to demonstrate their concern for development of heritage property. Owner John Hanrahan wants to extend his rest home, and picketers, including Mayor Gretchen Brewin, want to save two old houses which stand in Hanrahan's way.

old houses."

"There are close to 90 people at Jubilee waiting for beds," he went on, "and another 50 to 60 at Helmcken Road. The facilities are desperately needed, and the need gets greater all the time. The old folks are talking about holding their own public protest."

"But it looks as though I'll have to withdraw," Hanrahan said, resignedly. "With the mayor publicly against me, and she having the deciding vote, I don't stand a chance."

"This is a very partisan and unfair way for the mayor and the other city politicians to act," he said.