

# Preserve

*Your voice for heritage in the Capital Region and the Islands since 1973*

**A Quarterly Newsletter**

**Volume 47, Number 2, Summer 2019**

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## Reborn Janion Hotel wins the Michael Williams Award

The idea behind the project was to restore a valuable heritage landmark in the historic Downtown District of Victoria, bring the prominent corner of Pandora and Store Street to life and to support heritage restoration in the City of Victoria. Another objective of the development was to create affordable, amenity-rich homes in an urban setting that serves as an alternative and unique housing product.

Built in 1891, the Janion Hotel was empty for more than three decades before Reliance bought it and brought the building's storied history back to life. After being vacant for more than thirty years, the Janion Hotel was purchased by Reliance in 2013 with the goal of revitalizing the building to honor the built heritage of Victoria and bring excitement and new opportunities to the neighborhood. The building is an integral part of Victoria's economic development history and with the revitalization of the Janion that history is preserved without sacrificing contemporary design and livability conveniences.

The interior was in rough shape but many features were still intact.



Creativity and inventive strategy were used to allow for a project design that included heritage restoration, exemplary design, and economic feasibility. With the submission of a Heritage Alteration Permit/Development

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## Mandate

The Hallmark Heritage Society was registered on April 18, 1973. We encourage the preservation of structural, natural, cultural, and horticultural heritage within the Capital Regional District. We accomplish these goals through education, public speaking, advocacy, tours, exhibitions, and the annual Awards Night. We are a non-profit society, financed principally by membership dues and members' contributions. 🏠

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**Deadline for articles and advertising for the Autumn 2019 newsletter is August 25, 2019.**

**P**reserve welcomes submissions, both written and photographic, on topics related to the preservation, conservation, and restoration of heritage from a local, provincial, national, or international perspective. The Editor reserves the right to edit material for consistency and length, and to reject articles.

Please submit manuscripts to the Editor, *Preserve*, 15-1594 Fairfield Road, PO Box 50013 Fairfield Plaza PO, Victoria, BC, V8S 5L8 or send to [office@hallmarkheritagesociety.ca](mailto:office@hallmarkheritagesociety.ca). 🏠

# President's Report

by Ken Johnson

The recent fire at that has taken from us the Westholme (Plaza) Hotel has resulted in a tragic loss to the historic fabric of Victoria's Government Street and has left the City of Victoria and the future of this part of Old town gem at risk.

The Hotel Westholme was constructed in 1910 to a design by Henry Sandham Griffith (also Architect for Spencer Castle) for the owners, the Westholme Lumber Company. It was considered a "good example of the influence of the Chicago School of architecture, popular during the Edwardian era occurring across the country in the early twentieth century "The Government Street façade was particularly interesting in the use of a white glazed brick, providing a clean, light-coloured surface that had endured without significant maintenance for over 100 years.

Re-named the Plaza Hotel in the 1990s, the historic building was in the design process seeking City Council approval that would have resulted, in return for the retention and restoration of the historic façade, in a new seven-storey building along the Pandora Street elevation. Council had previously allowed an increase in density and height for this Old Town location in return for the applicant's promise to restore the Government Street side.

Now the historic façade is gone. To even reconstruct it would be providing a false sense of history.

But what is to come of this site? The zoning remains. A brand new seven-storey building can still be erected on the site even though the owners do not have the previous obligation to restore the Westholme. The only constraints upon the design of the new building are those expressed in the recently adopted "Old Town Design Guidelines for New Buildings and Additions to Existing Buildings (2019)." This document, which can be seen at on the City of Victoria's website, was created after careful committee and public review and hopes to result in new buildings, which we expect to be erected on the site of the Plaza Hotel.

The Old Town Design Guidelines suggest that new, infill buildings proposed for Old Town follow the design principles expressed below:

*Good Fit: to foster infill building designs that respect, complement and contribute positively to the historic context of Old Town while encouraging innovative, creative and timeless design solutions.*

*Reinforce Existing Character: to ensure that new buildings contribute and do not detract from the established character of the area.*

*Human Scale: to create visual interest and a comfortable urban environment for pedestrians by providing appropriately scaled building mass, articulating facades and incorporating a range of detailed building elements at street level.*

*Cohesiveness: to ensure that new buildings have a unified architectural composition that relates well to the fronting street and reflects the internal function and use.*

*Authenticity: to ensure that new buildings are distinguishable from the genuinely historic buildings of Old Town (See Standard 11, Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada), while being sympathetic and compatible to their proportions, mass, scale and rhythm.*

All too often we see new buildings and additions to existing buildings within Old Town that only respect the last design principle in that they apply a little bit of clay brick masonry upon what is essentially a concreted block with "punched windows."

We expect more for what is proposed on the site of the old Westholme hotel, critically located across from Centennial Square and the McPherson Theatre. We expect a building that shows some architectural imagination, that reinforces the existing ambiance of Old Town and the Downtown area.

The architect and the owners have had what they considered a burden, the restoration of the historic façade, removed from their future design. They still have the benefit of increased height and density that was approved in 2013.

We expect a new building design that will meet all of the principles of the Old Town Design Guidelines and that will, in 100 years, still be considered a valuable addition to historic Victoria.

On another matter, yet another proposal is being 'floated about; for the Northern Junk buildings. While detailed plans are not yet



**Northern Junk Proposal, May 2019. Don Luxton & Associates Inc., Conservation Plan, Plaza Hotel, 2013.**

available on the City's Development Tracker, the illustrations seen in the Times Colonist of May 16, 2019 show a proposal incorporating the worst principles of facadism. The existing buildings, among the oldest in the City, are to be swallowed up by new five storey structures leaving little of the waterfront flavour of the 1860s to remind us of their significance.

The Northern Junk proposals, and there have been a number of them, have been ongoing since

2012. Each one attempting to create a development that fails to respect the historic fabric. The existing street façade presents a derelict, abandoned appearance. Graffiti is an ongoing problem along the waterfront side, and the buildings are tightly boarded up. We have no idea of the interior conditions which have little or no ventilation.

For the funds the owners, Reliance Properties, have expended on architect's drawings and public meetings, they could have restored the existing buildings and could have been enjoying the revenues from restaurants and retail outlets along the now 'much traversed' Wharf Street connecting the new Johnson Street Bridge.

The owners of the Northern Junk buildings seem to consider them a burden. Perhaps they are just an opportunity.

The opportunity should not be one that would only preserve a few walls by devouring the essence of historic waterfront buildings. There will be proposals for Northern Junk coming to City Hall. They must be better than that outlined in May. 🏠

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## Digital newsletter available - help us save money

For those of you receiving a printed copy of this newsletter, are you aware that we publish *Preserve* in digital form? There are several benefits to receiving your newsletter in this manner. First, you get your newsletter as soon as it is processed with no delay for printing and mailing. In addition, it is in full colour with working links to websites and other locations.

Perhaps the best reason to receive a digital copy is cost. As postage rates increase and printing costs rise, it now costs us just under \$4.00 per issue to send out a printed copy. Over the course of a year, that amounts to about \$15.00, leaving little of the membership fee for other expenses.

If you feel the need for a printed copy of the newsletter, rest assured that we send it out with a resolution suitable for printing at home. We will, of course, continue to print copies for members who do not have computers.

Quite frankly, we would rather use our money to promote heritage preservation and conservation.

We do not want to increase membership fees—they have not been raised in many years—but have to be responsible with our limited funds. Please help us keep our costs under control by requesting a digital newsletter. Let us know via email at [office@hallmarkheritagesociety.ca](mailto:office@hallmarkheritagesociety.ca). 🏠

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## Advance notice of Annual General Meeting

Join us on Monday, September 9, 2019 at 7:30 pm at Craigflower Schoolhouse for our Annual General Meeting. We will keep the business part of the meeting as short as possible so we can leave plenty of time for our speaker. Board member Eric Tomlinson will be talking about Historic Courthouses of British Columbia.

This would be the ideal time to renew your membership. This will save us the money we would have to spend to send out reminders. 🏠

Permit (HAP/DP) for the Janion after working closely with the City, a unique development form was able to become a reality. The primary intent was to conserve the existing historic structure, while undertaking a rehabilitation that would increase the buildings functionality for new commercial and residential uses.. The heritage plans allowed for maintaining and restoring the original grand stairwell and skylight, brick walls, fireplaces, and hallway baseboards of the original building as historic features.

The design of the addition employs a

contemporary architectural expression, in harmony with, but purposely setting itself apart from the Janion's heritage character. The redevelopment of the Janion was intended to provide value to not only its residents but to all of Victoria. From the historic brick façade facing Store Street to the curved glass walls overlooking Victoria's Inner Harbour waterfront, the architecture of The Janion embraces the past and looks to the future. A fully restored brick heritage building connected to a new concrete addition that stretches to the waterfront, The Janion is a striking example of Victorian design merged with a modern aesthetic. 🏡

## Award of Merit - 623 Avalon Road

**A**lthough designated in 1977, 623 Avalon Road was the last house in the Avalon Road/Huntington Place cluster to undergo restoration and rehabilitation. This heritage precinct was an early example of the option of preservation as a response to the development pressures on the James Bay neighbourhood. Combined with the blocking of Avalon at Government Street, the neighbourhood was stabilized.

The house, a Queen Anne Cottage built in 1899 for Thomas and Agnes Booz, had retained its single-family use under the 50-year ownership of neighbourhood character Charlie Carr. The next owners planned a restoration in 2000 which did not materialize. At the time of purchase by the McBride family in October 2015, the house was in fair to poor condition, having had minimal upkeep for many years. At some point duroid shingle siding had been applied to the exterior, with the usual removal of trim and decorative elements. However, to some extent the shingles did preserve the original siding underneath and the ghosting profiles of character-defining elements.

The restoration program for the house was based on: adaptive reuse as a duplex to suit the owners' multi-generational family, exterior restoration, with the addition of sympathetic additions which are clearly defined as separate from the original building, partial interior restoration, incorporation of seismic upgrading and other protective measures, and energy upgrading, including ventilation to current codes

The design program, conceived and supervised by Keay Architecture Ltd., was complex. It involved



the removal of the duroid shingles, the utilization of the attic and a rear addition.

A dormer sympathetic to the original building was added, while at the rear a contemporary use of glass was incorporated into the design. A full basement was constructed, with the building returned to its original relationship to grade. The exterior of the new foundation has been faced with stone, using the original foundation materials. Replacement siding, shingles and trim were milled and installed where required, based on patterns taken from the siding, while every effort was made to retain the original exterior fabric. Windows were generally rebuilt, although some were too badly deteriorated to repair, and these were replaced with new wooden double-hung windows. The porch and entry stairs were rebuilt, using original materials or accurate reproductions as necessary.

Chimneys were recorded, dismantled, and then rebuilt from the roof level to seismic requirements. The entire house was rewired, replumbed and fitted with an energy-efficient

heating system. The exterior was painted in a heritage colour scheme, with the assistance of a House Program Grant from the Victoria Heritage Foundation.

Although the intended two-family use precluded significant interior restoration, the entry hall, parlour and living room were restored, including art glass windows, panelling, and trim. Period light fixtures were installed. The original fir

floors were carefully sanded and refinished.

The extent of this work was completed using current seismic, thermal, and ventilation codes. The result, the preservation and adaptive reuse of this significant heritage residence, is successful. 623 Avalon Road is now a significant contributor to this heritage precinct and to the fabric of the James Bay community. 🏡

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## Award of Merit - 506 Government Street



The building at 506 Government Street in James Bay was long overdue for maintenance and restoration as it showed signs of failing paint and wood trim detailing. Much of the original details had long disappeared, with patchwork efforts provided to address the deterioration. In addition, the loose, single-glazed, double-hung sash windows and uninsulated walls contributed to inadequate and costly interior heating. Previous efforts to address this problem included the installation of heat pumps and the addition of insulation in the attic space.

The residence, originally known as 55 Birdcage Walk, was built in 1885 for John and Susan Robson at a cost of \$5,000, at the same time as its mirror-image next door at 514 Government for their daughter Frances and her husband, Joseph Hunter. Both houses, we now know, were designed by

architects Samuel Cyrus Burris and William de la Penotiere, and built by the contracting firm of Smith and Clark. In 1945, the BC government purchased the houses and has utilized them for various purposes over the ensuing years. The Hunter house at 514 Government was, for some years, the location of Crown Books, and the government won a Hallmark Heritage Award for its restoration in 2003.

The Robson House was the subject of a “letter to the Times Colonist editor” from the Hallmark Society on March 18, 2016, which urged the restoration of this heritage building.

This project focused on two aspects of conservation work – restoring the failing building envelope and reconstructing the architectural elements that had gone missing over time. Upgraded heating systems were also undertaken to address the comfort of future occupants.

As the old paint was determined to be hazardous, removal was required in a contained environment. All deteriorated wood elements were replaced, recreated from existing pieces and photographs. The existing windows were repaired where necessary and protected with the addition of storm windows, a number of them operable for temperature. Restored architectural elements include the south porch, the front portico doors, the balustrade over the front portico and the roof balustrade. All restoration work was based on historic photographs, with guidance from a number of conservation consultants. The building was repainted with colours selected by an expert in the field. The rear fire escape was renewed to provide improved egress, with the landings adjusted to better blend in with the building design. The exterior lighting was also replaced and the BC Hydro power supply moved from above-grade wires to a below-grade system which is more sympathetic to the historic character of the house.

A substantial investment of both money and time was committed by Chris Myles and the provincial government towards getting this long overdue conservation project completed. It was initiated and driven by Nicola Moyles from the property management company BGIS. Chris chose to go above and beyond a fundamental maintenance effort and enabled the substantial restoration of the historic character of the home by renewing existing architectural details and restoring missing ones. He also commissioned a maintenance plan that will

ensure the long term performance of this building and its historic character.

Contractor Cameron Barnes of Kingsview Construction and John Dam of John Dam and Associates were instrumental in ensuring the work was done to the highest standards.

This team effort has ensured that this historically significant house will continue as a neighbourhood landmark for many years to come. 🏠

## Award of Merit - 247 Denison Road

This residence forms part of an important cluster of Art Deco style residences located on Sylvan Lane and Denison Road on Gonzales Hill. It was designed, built and occupied in 1946 by Frederick Richardson. The property was listed for sale in 2015. At that time, it had only had two owners. Without any protection from the Municipality of Oak Bay there was concern that the property would be purchased for the value and desirability of the lot. It had been seriously neglected, the stucco had yellowed and cracked, the paint was peeling and the garden had returned to the wild.



Fortunately, the Walkers fell in love with the house from the minute they saw it. Bruce Walker has extensive experience in renovation, restoration and rehabilitation and they purchased the home with a full understanding of the magnitude of work that would be required in rehabilitating the property.

restoration of original windows were completed.

The scope of the project included retaining and restoring architectural elements, replicating elements that were beyond repair and meticulously and thoughtfully introducing new interior elements where required.

A rounded window on the second floor had been replaced by three flat windows by another owner. These were removed and replaced with curved glass as it was originally.

Custom-milled wood flooring was used throughout and the kitchen was renovated.

The original rock dash stucco finish, which was beyond repair, was removed and replaced using the original application process which involved the rocks to be hand thrown using a small scoop.

The owner used nothing but solid Douglas fir for replacement studs, all interior and exterior doors, and all interior baseboards and casings.

The lath and plaster in the interior was removed and replaced with gyproc with special attention to recreating the coved and rounded corners. The coved ceilings in the living room are original.

Upgraded landscaping recognized the original builder's outcroppings and the natural layout of the land.

New plumbing, new wiring, a new roof,

The Walkers' meticulous restoration, rehabilitation and upgrading of mechanical systems of the F. Richardson property have not only given this house a significantly extended lifespan but has contributed to maintaining the unique architectural character of this landmark collection of Art Deco residences on Gonzales Hill. 🏠

## Award of Merit - Fairfield Block



The Fairfield Block Building is a three-storey structure located in Downtown Victoria in the heart of the urban core of the City across from Victoria City Hall. The completed renovation was successful in making the building more efficient, modern, and sustainable while simultaneously restoring and enhancing the condition of its numerous heritage features. This renovation allowed the Fairfield Block to improve its heritage integrity while still continuing to function economically for years to come.

The Fairfield Block holds heritage value as a large-scale commercial building constructed in Victoria during the prosperous years prior to World War One. The building was constructed in 1912 for well-known local businessmen and is one of the few still-existing designs of recognized architect, H.S. Griffith. One of Fairfield Blocks most important heritage features is its Edwardian detailing, which includes terra cotta ornamentation and tan-coloured brickwork. The overall design features of the building including its large floorplate, prominent cornices, and grid-

## Award of Merit - 2519 Currie Road

The Tudor Revival house, named Kirkland, is a one-and-a-half storey with full basement with a prominent front gable and a partially-recessed balcony above a pair of cantilevered bay windows. The exterior includes a combination of stucco cladding with half-timbering and shingles.

like fenestration pattern are characteristic of the commercial wealth that existed in Victoria during an thriving economic period between 1908 and 1913. Other historic buildings in Victoria developed in the same timeframe such as the Hudson's Bay Company Department Store (1914) and Hotel Douglas (1911) share these similar features.

The work completed in the recent renovation included a complete restoration of the brick, terra cotta, and architectural woodwork on the second and third floors of the Fairfield Block. It also included the replacement of the roof and skylights. A balance was struck by preserving the building envelope with the conservation and restoration of all the original window frames while incorporating enhanced double-glazed window panes and improving the livability of the small residential suites within the building. The facade materials restoration of the second and third floors component not only benefits the building aesthetically to preserve and maintain the heritage features but also helps the Fairfield Block to be a more sustainable and energy efficient building.

Within the interior of the building, there was restoration work done to the CRU washrooms and common corridor, as well as the residential entry, common corridors, and residential suites. The ground level was renovated to resemble and replicate the original conditions of the Fairfield Block building with repetitive alcoves, continuous wood clerestory, and storefront windows. This allowed for several previous interventions that deteriorated the heritage value of the commercial component of the building to be removed.

Overall, this renovation was able to not only improve the condition of this valued asset for the important preservation of Victoria's built heritage but also improve the livability and use of the building for the benefit of the economic feasibility of the building. 🏡

Kirkland's high roofline, symmetrical front facade, and situation on a corner lot make it a prominent heritage landmark. "Kirkland" makes a significant contribution to the ambience of the Windsor Park neighbourhood and is an important component of the Windsor Park heritage cluster.

Built for Pattinson Hayton, a civil engineer, this residence is valued as an example of the style



and size of homes favoured by the emerging professional class that moved to Oak Bay in the years preceding the First World War and reflects their wealth, leisure pursuits and lifestyle. The house is large with a separate rear entrance and living accommodation in the basement for a cook-general. The front gable provided the ideal spot for viewing activities in Windsor Park, as the house is situated across from the cricket pitch.

The Oak Bay building permit number 150 was issued on July 18, 1911, listing the owner as Pattinson Haydon and the builder as Murray & McKinney. The 1912 city directory shows Pattinson Hayton as the occupant, and the 1913 and 1914 directories show Edgar O. Mansfield. The assessment card dated 1911 has a faint penciled note reading 'Maclure Design' and the design details are consistent with Maclure.

The house was in original but poor condition and required considerable repair and restoration. The owners have completely renovated and upgraded the house and preserved the original appearance and character. They faced numerous challenges and spent a number of years completing a meticulous and historically-accurate refurbishment and restoration.

Maintaining the original exterior appearance, the owners: restored the entire exterior including chimneys, handrails, porches, roof, exterior shakes, etc., replaced the existing windows with wood, thermal pane windows to replicate original, built a new detached garage with shingle siding, stucco, boards to match house, replaced the interior slabs and footings, installed new perimeter drains, waterproofed the foundation, and installed new storm, sewer, and water services

Maintaining the original interior appearance, the owners restored the existing plaster in the living room and dining room, installed coffered ceilings in the living and dining rooms to match



the entry, restored the existing plaster, wainscoting, and coffered ceilings in the main entry and stairwell, restored the original features including wainscoting, window and door trims, front door unit including stained glass, stained and leaded glass windows (13 in total), fireplace mantles, light fixtures in dining room and living room, cast iron radiators, pocket doors in living room and dining room, cast iron bathtub

They installed new solid oak flooring, tiles, and updated bathrooms and kitchen, made flush all ceiling beams to level ceilings, shaved studs as necessary to straighten walls, doubled all floor joists, and sheathed floor over shiplap, installed new baseboard detail throughout, upgraded all electrical and plumbing to current BC Building Code, finished basement to include laundry room, family room, bathroom, and bedroom, installed four 1911-era replica gas fireplaces in existing fireplaces, and installed a new gas boiler.

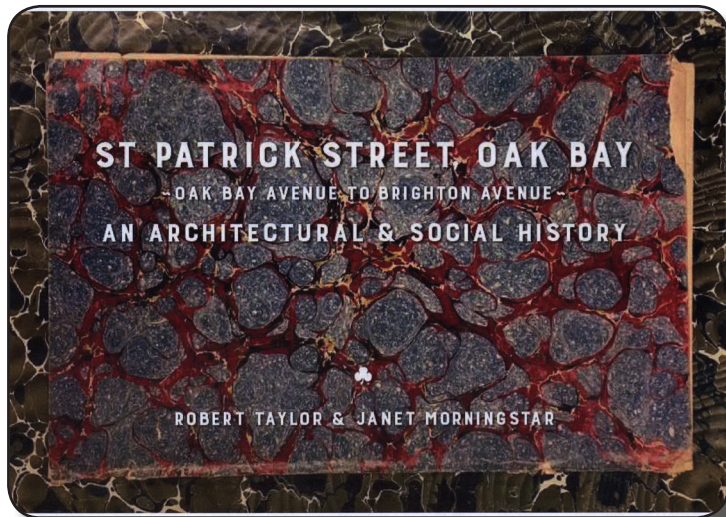
Kirkland is an important component of the Windsor Park heritage cluster. The renovations have enhanced the heritage character and effectively preserved the landmark house as part of the traditional Oak Bay streetscape for future generations. 🏡

## Communication Award - St. Patrick Street, Oak Bay

Robert Taylor and Janet Morningstar began by researching the history of their own heritage home at 1405 St Patrick Street and soon discovered numerous connections between the original owner, developer, and architect as well as the social and architectural environment

of the neighbourhood. They realized there was a fascinating story with links to all twenty-two houses on the block and with the support and interest from neighbours and former residents they began an in-depth research project.

For a year, they combed through the records at Oak Bay Archives to compile a history of their neighbourhood from the earliest years of the municipality to 1970, tying together the building



history and architecture of the street with the personal stories of the families and the influences of the First World War, Great Depression and other events. Their enthusiasm for the project brought residents of the street together and cultivated a new awareness and appreciation for the heritage of the neighbourhood. To share the results of their research, the authors undertook to publish their work and hired graphic designer Arafin Graham of Alaris Design to produce a beautifully illustrated book.

St Patrick Street is one of Oak Bay's early residential developments. The authors were originally drawn to their home, designed by William D'Oyly Hamilton Rochfort and built in 1922, because of the streetscape and community

ambience.

The book is structured with the houses described in order of construction, determined by the dates of the building permits and other evidence. The architectural style of each house is described together with the events in its history. The marbled design of the front and back cover of the book are taken from the 1907 Oak Bay Assessment Roll, one of the many sources used in the research. The inside covers illustrate the 1925 fire insurance plan of the street, from Oak Bay Avenue to Brighton Avenue. The book is referenced with footnotes and endnotes.

The story of each home captures the trauma of WWI and the Great Depression to happier times of genteel tea parties and bridge games. The record reflects the social conditions of particular eras including rentals of the homes in the 1940s and early 1950s, conversions to duplexes, and even a rest home. The authors' work captures and preserves this fascinating period of life in Oak Bay through the architectural development and social life of the street.

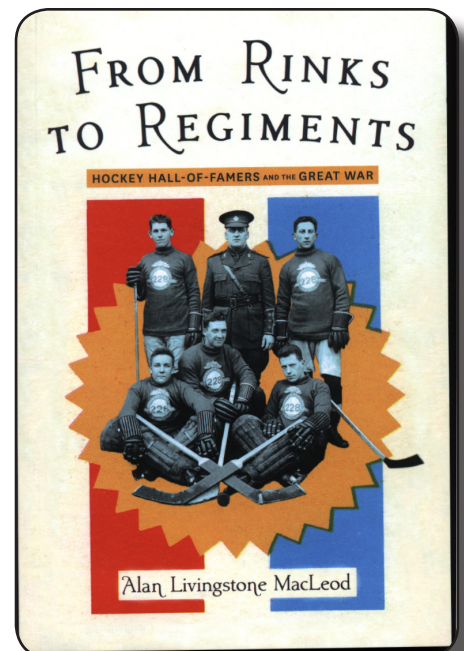
The book was launched in August 2018 at a garden party at the authors' home. Neighbours, Oak Bay's mayor, representatives from Council, and the local press turned out to celebrate this very welcome addition to Oak Bay's local history. With typical generosity, the authors provided copies to neighbours and attendees for a small donation. 📖

## Communication Award - From Rinks to Regiments

**A**lan Livingstone MacLeod has a lifelong passion for history, hockey, and writing. Since retiring from the field of labour relations, he has transformed his passion into two books (Remembered in Bronze and Stone: Canada's Great War Memorial Statuary and From Rinks to Regiments: Hockey Hall-of-Famers and the Great War) and a number of public lectures commemorating Canadian efforts in the First World War.

This book delves into the history of star hockey players who also served in World War I. The author has made their stories come alive with material never before seen in print.

Of interest to Victoria readers is the story of Frank Fredrickson, one of the most exciting players to skate for Lester Patrick's Victoria Cougars. He was an integral part of the 1925



Stanley Cup victory. Another player from the Stanley-Cup winning Cougars was Frank Foyston who had also won the Cup with the 1917 Seattle Metropolitans.

There are also biographies of other players in the Pacific Coast Hockey Association founded in 1910 by Joe Patrick and his sons, Lester and Frank.

Woven throughout the book is the social history of the pre-war, war, and post-war periods which makes for interesting reading.

This book is a joy to read and is lavishly illustrated with rare and previously-unseen images, many from the families of the players. 🏠

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## Special Award - Pamela Madoff

Pam Madoff has had a great deal of influence over the state of heritage preservation in Victoria for a very long time. Before she was elected to the City Council, during her long tenure as a heritage and architectural critic, and since last Fall, she has continued to speak out against the destruction of heritage buildings and to advocate for good design principles in the new buildings that dot our civic landscape.

Heritage preservation is important to Pam, but she has always recognized the importance of good, imaginative design in new buildings that will complement the existing fabric of the city.

Being such an advocate is not an easy path. There are reversals and impediments to be dealt with, often of unexpected types and from unexpected sources. Planners, politicians, and critics often disagree, and it takes care in plotting a safe course of action.

For this and many other reasons, we have decided to present Pam with a lovely bronze compass, manufactured in about 1948 and which is mounted, fully gimbaled, in a fine teak presentation box handcrafted by Hallmark member Darwin Robinson.

A compass is a tool to help shape your course forward and to arrive safely at a desired destination, A gimbaled compass will stay level and true no matter what the seas or winds of change may present – always directing one to the desired end.

Pam has stayed true to her beliefs no matter what the situation and all indications are that she will continue to do so into the future. 🏠



## Why Old Places Matter – Memory

By: Tom Mayes, Preservation Leadership Forum, 2013.  
Old Places Help Us Remember.

Like many people, my earliest memories are of places—a pasture on our old farm where I napped in the warm sun until a cow licked me, and the dining room of my grandfather’s house where we watched President Kennedy’s funeral cortège. Simply seeing a place again may bring back a flood of memories—whether it’s the Caffe Reggio in Greenwich Village, which I frequented in my 20s, or the Davidson College Library where I pored over architectural history books as a teenager. “Old buildings are like memories you can touch,” the architect Mary DeNadai tells her granddaughter. It’s a succinct explanation of how old places—our homes, libraries, schools, barns, and parks—seem to hold and embody our memories.

Most people experience this connection between memory and place. The connection was acknowledged by John Ruskin, who wrote in *The Lamp of Memory* about architecture, “We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her.” But how important are places to memory? Does preserving old places—and the memories they represent—matter? Do the individual and collective memories embodied in old places help people have better lives?

“Memory is an essential part of consciousness,” says Randall Mason, chair of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania, talking to me about the large and ever-growing topic of memory studies. Philosophers, psychologists, writers, geographers, sociologists, and historians have written, studied, and theorized about memory, from Proust (yes, that famous madeleine that triggered memories of, what else? a place) to Freud to French historian Pierre Nora, who coined the term *Lieux de Memoire* – “Sites of Memory.” Among the thousands of books, studies, and essays on memory and place, many analyze or critique the way memories are shaped or manipulated, including how historic preservationists and others choose what places to preserve and why. Yet, even taking into account the criticism of what we preserve and why, most of these writers seem to support what the geographers Steven Hoelsher and Derek Alderman refer to as the “... inextricable link between memory and place.”<sup>1</sup> Places embody our memories, even when

those memories are contested or controversial. As Hoelsher and Alderman put it, “What ... groups share in their efforts to utilize the past is the near universal activity of anchoring their divergent memories in place.”

Places are key triggers for both individual memory, such as those very personal memories I recalled above, and collective memory, the memory shared by the larger society. Diane Barthel, in *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historic Identity*, captures the relationship between individual memory and collective memory in a discussion of religious buildings: “Religious structures play a specially significant part in the collective memory as places where moments in personal history become part of the flow of collective history. This collective history transcends individual experiences and lifetimes.”<sup>2</sup> One need only think about important national sites to see the blending of the two types of memory and how they are tied to place. How many of us remember something both about ourselves and about us when we see the Lincoln Memorial and its reflecting pool, or images of the World Trade Center?

People writing about memory have described the mechanisms that drive the connection between place and memory. Places serve as mnemonic aids—they remind us of our memories, both individual (coffee at the Caffe Reggio), and collective (marches at the Lincoln Memorial), but they also spur people to investigate broader societal memories they don’t yet fully know. Pierre Nora writes, “Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects....”<sup>3</sup> Environmental psychologist Maria Lewicka refers to studies that discuss “historical traces” and “urban reminders.” As she states, “Urban reminders, the leftovers from previous inhabitants of a place, may influence memory of places either directly, by conveying historical information, or indirectly—by arousing curiosity and increasing motivation to discover the place’s forgotten past.”<sup>4</sup> Old places seem both to trigger memories people already have, give specificity to memories, and arouse curiosity about memories people don’t yet know.

And why is this “place memory” important?

In an earlier post, I wrote about continuity—that old places contribute to a sense of continuity that is necessary for people. Memory contributes to the sense of continuity. Memory also gives people identity—both individual identity and a collective identity. As Hoelscher and Alderman put it, “Whether one refers to ‘collective memory,’ ‘social memory,’ ‘public memory,’ ‘historical memory,’ ‘popular memory,’ or ‘cultural memory,’ most would agree with Edward Said [who stated] that many ‘people now look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity, a national narrative, a place in the world.’”<sup>5</sup> This sense of identity provided by memory is largely what defines us as individuals and as a society. (Look for a future post on the topic of identity.)

Memories and identities are often contested. We see people argue over the meaning of old places—a restored southern plantation house, which may or may not acknowledge the painful memory of slavery, a battlefield that may or may not present the memory of both the victor and the vanquished. People have different approaches about how places should be remembered. They argue over memorials, from the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial to the World Trade Center. The history of an old place may be viewed differently over time—and interpreted and reinterpreted as our conception of who we are as a people changes.

But here’s the key point. The fact that these arguments occur highlights the importance of the place. Regardless of conflicting points of view, the place itself transcends a specific interpretation. The place is the vortex, the common ground, the center-point, and the focus where divergent views about memory can be felt and expressed. The continued existence of the place permits the revision, reevaluation, and re-interpretation of memories over time. As Paul Goldberger, the architecture writer and critic, said to me in an interview in July, the continued existence of the place “...allows new memories to be created.” Preservationists often think of historic sites from the viewpoint of significance for architecture or design. Yet architecture critic for *The New York Times*, Herbert Muschamp, wrote, “The essential feature of a landmark is not its design, but the place it holds in a city’s memory. Compared to the place it occupies in social history, a landmark’s artistic qualities are incidental.”<sup>6</sup>

People may ask (and they have), “but won’t the memories survive even if the place is gone?” Yes, memory sometimes outlasts the place. I remember still the smell of the kettle of hot tea on the stove of my grandmother’s house in North Carolina on Christmas Eve, though the house has been gone for many years. Memories can survive if places disappear. But memory—collective or individual—will not prove as durable—nor as flexible—when that vortex of memory, that mnemonic aid, that urban reminder, that historical trace—the old place—is gone.

I would love to hear about the places that you think embody individual or collective memory, or those that are particularly prone to competing interpretations.

#### Notes:

1. Hoelscher, “Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship,” *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5, 348. (2004).

2. Barthel, Diane, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historic Identity*, Kindle Locations 1199-1200.

3. Nora, Pierre, *Between Memory and History, Les Lieux de Memoire*.

4. Lewicka, Maria, “Place Attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 28, 211, 214 (2008).

5. Hoelscher, 348-349.

6. *The New York Times*, January 8, 2006.

Tom Mayes is the deputy general counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 2013 Mayes was awarded the Rome Prize in Historic Preservation from the American Academy in Rome



# South Vancouver Island Regional Heritage Fair 2019 Results

## Lieutenant-Governor's Award

Keira Leibel                      Willows                      Working on the CPR

## Historic Places Award

Elizabeth Clark                St. Margaret's              Chinatown

## The Rich Culture / Other Voices Award

Salina Dhrolia                 Glenlyon Norfolk            Viola Desmond

## CCHSBC Award

Bryce Kong                     Home School                 Force 136 Behind Enemy Lines

## Royal BC Museum First Nations Award

Liam Pope-Lau                 Glenlyon Norfolk            Jimmy Chicken Island: From Partial Perspective to Paddling Together

## University of Victoria – best use of library resources

Lois Harnett-Shaw             St. Margaret's                BC Legislative Building  
Daniel Huang                    Glenlyon Norfolk              Glenlyon Norfolk School - Then and Now

## Victoria HarbourCats Sports Award

Trevor Bernoties                Willows                        Jacques Plante

## Parks Canada National History Award

Thomas Jungen                 Bayside                        Chronicles of the Coast

## Special Award for Music

Ava Blacker and Dylan Peters    Bayside                        Gord Downie  
Ava Webster                      Bayside                        Leonard Cohen

## Special Award for Children in Canadian History

Jacob Jull                        Glenlyon Norfolk            How British Children Were Evacuated to Canada During World War II

## Royal BC Museum Awards for Creativity in Presentation

Liam Pope-Lau                 Glenlyon Norfolk            Jimmy Chicken Island: From Partial Perspective to Paddling Together  
Luthien Teel                     Home School                 Through Their Eyes: A History of West Coast Artists  
Keira Leibel                     Willows                        Working on the CPR  
Cordell Dam                     Homeschool                  Code Name Habbakuk  
Soren Rossato & Lukas Le Gras    Bayside                        Le Traineau De Chiens

## Stellar Certificates

### The three students in bold type will attend the provincial fair.

Liam Pope-Lau                 Glenlyon Norfolk            Jimmy Chicken Island: From Partial Perspective to Paddling Together  
Thomas Jungen                Bayside                        Chronicles of the Coast  
Luthien Teel                    Homeschool                  Through Their Eyes: A History of West Coast Artists

Bryce Kong	Home School	Force 136 Behind Enemy Lines
Elizabeth Clark	St. Margaret's	Chinatown
Paige Banks	St. Margaret's	History of First Nations Medicinal Plant
Jacob Jull	Glenlyon Norfolk	How British Children Were Evacuated to Canada During World War II
Keira Leibel	Willows	Working on the CPR
Salina Dhrolia	Glenlyon Norfolk	Viola Desmond
Kyle Knapp	Willows	Maple Syrup
Fern Lemieux	Bayside	Tom Longboat
Claire Finnis	St. Margaret's	Emily Carr and her Pets

### Honourable Mention

Kemi Mahil	Homeschool	Gordon Racette
Jailyn Ringland	Willows	Cedar Trees
Lillian Jackman	Willows	D'Arcy Island
Annika Akeroyd	St. Margaret's	Leprosy and D'Arcy Island
Evie Beiderwieden	Glenlyon Norfolk	Roger's Chocolates
Ella Milford	Glenlyon Norfolk	Craigdarroch Castle
Claire Sangha	Glenlyon Norfolk	Butchart Gardens
Alyssa Tyson	Bayside	The Empress
Nathan Papp	Glenlyon Norfolk	First Nations History of Lacrosse in Canada
Riley Greenfield	St. Margaret's	Island Swimming Club Head Coaches
Wyatt Wilson and Sam Nyantahe	Glenlyon Norfolk	Edmonton Oilers
Kemi Mahil	Homeschool	Gordon Racette
Soren Rossato and Lukas Le Gras	Bayside	Le Traineau De Chiens
Cordell Dam	Homeschool	Code Name Habbakuk
Charlotte Bedford	St. Margaret's	Halifax Explosion

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### *Hallmark Heritage Society Annual General Meeting*

*September 9, 2019*

*Craigflower Schoolhouse 7:00 p.m.*

*Speaker: Eric Tomlinson: Historic Courthouses of British Columbia*