

RECOVERING EVICTED MEMORIES

An exploration of heritage policies, intangible heritage, and storytelling in Vancouver, BC

by

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ABSTRACT

In 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* to officially recognize the value of non-physical heritage. Previously, established conservation standards focused on physical heritage, namely historic architecture, which generally reflected the values of western societies but did not necessarily accommodate other forms of cultural heritage. The adoption of the *Convention* signified a shift towards a more inclusive approach.

My thesis grounds this international discussion in a locality by examining conservation issues and practices in Vancouver, British Columbia. My thesis contains two key findings:

- (1) Echoing international criticism of established conservation standards, Vancouver's heritage conservation policies tend to systemically favour aesthetically significant and structurally robust architecture. As a result, certain histories without existing architecture become obsolete, leaving a selective history in Vancouver's everyday landscape.
- (2) At the same time, Vancouver has also hosted a number of community history projects. These recent projects have been able to recover fading memories of this landscape through storytelling, a form of intangible heritage, and to reconnect these histories to the locations where they originated (what Pierre Nora (1989) calls *milieux de mémoire*).

My recommendations include a formal integration of intangible heritage projects with the established heritage conservation program and suggest opportunities to achieve this integration. These recommendations hope to encourage a more inclusive approach that recognizes a place's history contains diverse, coexisting and overlapping narratives, and acknowledges the parts of this history that may be damaged by forces of gentrification, urban renewal and colonization. By approaching the city's landscape as a palimpsest, inclusive heritage conservation practice can make Vancouver more than a site of residence with aesthetic character, but a place that owns its past.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dad, who left us with so many memories and countless odd stories that continue to make me laugh.

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INTRODUCTION

Public heritage in public spaces represents more than aesthetic souvenirs of the past. Historic architecture and streets embed history into contemporary everyday spaces and, importantly, help define the essence and identity of a place. Yet, not all histories or collective memories survive with physical traces. Some communities could not keep property within current city boundaries because of gentrification, colonization, and exclusionary policies, and therefore left no physical remnant to mark their “*milieux de mémoire*” – the sites where their histories took place (Nora 1989). Some artifacts of these communities do exist in other forms such as stories, photographs, and cultural activities. However, these artifacts are often relegated to cultural institutions such as museums, archives, and cultural centres, and therefore, disconnected from their *milieux de mémoire* and the everyday consciousness of the public.¹

This study finds that the conventions of heritage conservation in Vancouver tend to systemically favour structurally robust built forms, and as a consequence, inadvertently exclude many histories without physical remnants. Gradually, with new generations and migration of people, these unacknowledged histories may be forgotten from collective consciousness. I interpret this privileging of built heritage as a limitation to the practice.

Briefly, I will describe the two categories of heritage under discussion. For decades, heritage organizations at the international level (e.g. UNESCO² and ICOMOS³) have received criticism

¹ Without discounting the power of personal and familial memories, I believe continuous public presence of histories from many communities can foster a more inclusive local identity and more inclusive plans and visions for that place.

² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

for established preservation approaches: built heritage is seen to serve the needs of western societies and does not necessarily accommodate other cultural heritage interests. In response, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) and reclassified heritage assets under the following criteria:

- **Tangible heritage** refers to physical forms of heritage, built heritage in particular. This includes historic landmarks and architecture like castles, bridges, and town plazas.
- **Intangible heritage** was defined broadly as non-physical heritage, which includes oral traditions, memories, languages, traditional crafts, performing arts or rituals, knowledge systems, values and know-how (UNESCO 2003, October 17: 2; HRSC⁴ 2004).⁵

The recent categorization of tangible and intangible heritage inspired a shift in heritage conservation to address systematic omissions; the next step would be to promote all forms of heritage in an integrative rather than a discrete manner.

This thesis will revisit the debates on, and tensions between, tangible and intangible heritage at a local level by focusing on a culturally diverse Canadian city, Vancouver, British Columbia.⁶ It will examine both official and alternative local heritage as a form of intangible heritage conservation to recall and reintegrate fading histories of a place, especially projects that employ

³ International Council on Monuments and Sites.

⁴ After the 2002 International Network of Cultural Policy met in Cape Town, South Africa and Senegal drafted a report on instruments to safeguard intangible heritage (see Human Sciences Research Council 2004). Three relevant findings include giving attention to “traditional and indigenous knowledge”, providing communities with economic incentives ideally other than selling cultural commodities, and seeing communities as “mode of creation and transmission of intangible heritage” (HSRC 2004: 6). The report suggests that communities need to be able to protect their intellectual property and improve or retain their socio-economic status.

⁵ Many interpretations of the intangible form have emerged. The South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) describes intangible heritage as “something one cannot touch, something ephemeral” (2004: 10).

⁶ While Vancouver, established as a city only 120 years ago, is not known for its public heritage in a traditional sense, the landscape upon which Vancouver is situated contains histories and memories of the first people and pre-Vancouver settlers of many cultures.

contemporary adaptations of storytelling through media technology. Many alternative projects have not been defined as heritage projects – and my examples did not involve the City of Vancouver’s Heritage Conservation Program – but they have engaged different communities such as Aboriginal, immigrant, and minority communities. These projects reveal how heritage and ancestral histories of various residents of this land relate and overlap within certain places, and how their identities are reflected in their environment.

Of these local heritage initiatives, my major case study is an intercultural history project I worked on in 2006 called *Storyscapes Chinatown*. This project is an oral history project that involved youth and elders of the Aboriginal and Chinese communities in Vancouver, and created community exhibits and a permanent public art piece installed on Pender Street in Chinatown. Projects like *Storyscapes* offer an alternative, decentralized approach to conventional heritage conservation practice.

Research Questions, Objectives, and Methods

This research will be guided by three research questions:

1. What are some major factors that have influenced heritage conservation and defined place identities on a grand scale?⁷
2. What are some alternative projects in Vancouver that bring under-represented local histories to public spaces?

⁷ For this research question, I am interested in the larger economic and political factors rather than complications that may arise from technical difficulties, such as engineering concerns (building safety codes, structural needs, *et cetera*).

3. How can city planning restructure its approach to heritage conservation to ensure inclusivity of all social histories, including minority groups?

Reflecting these research questions, my research objectives are as follows:

1. To identify systemic exclusions of certain local histories in urban heritage policies, and apply them to Vancouver,
2. To critically examine how conventional city heritage planning may include under-represented histories and intangible heritage through participatory approaches, and
3. To develop a set of recommendations for a more inclusive heritage preservation approach.

This study is informed by qualitative methods of inquiry. A review of relevant literature on heritage conservation, identity, and storytelling issues informed a response to Research Question 1 and the conceptual aspects of this study.

To address Research Question 2, I examined alternative heritage projects in Vancouver by attending exhibitions and sites, visiting project websites, and conducting interviews with project members. I used the “conversational” interview method to reflect the oral nature of storytelling as well as, according to Palys (2003), to facilitate more efficient data collection. For *Storyscapes Chinatown*, the story-gatherers, including myself, engaged in a reflection session guided by a few prepared questions. To address potential concerns of my own personal biases as a member of the *Storyscapes Chinatown* project, this study drew on multiple experts – story-gatherers (set 1), project managers (set 2), and support staff (set 3) – to triangulate responses in order to increase research reliability and validity; I have limited interviews on this project only to its staff

members because of the limited size of this study and the interest in *Storyscapes Chinatown* for illustrative purposes. The potential of misinterpreting interview data was addressed by encouraging each interview participant to respond to the representation of their ideas in this thesis and I have made appropriate changes based upon their responses. Transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews and a draft of the chapters where their contributions appeared were provided to research participants for comment.

In addressing Research Question 3, I interviewed members of recent local history projects, city planners who work largely in social, heritage, and neighbourhood development, and a curator at a local history museum in an iterative process to develop policy recommendations for this study. This iterative process consists of incorporating feedback and suggestions on my draft recommendations from one interview, and then bringing refined recommendations to each subsequent interview for additional feedback and suggestions. The final chapter contains a collection of recommendations including any incongruence and complexity that emerged from this process.

All interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format for 15 – 90 minutes. A sample of interview questions can be found in the Appendix A. All interview participants were informed of the option to leave this study at any time, along with any information they provided, or to remain anonymous; none of the participants chose to leave. After their interviews, they received an audio copy of their interview. Each interview participant signed a consent form outlining this information in accordance to the guidelines of the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) (see Appendix B).

Four Premises Guiding the Research

This research is guided by and based upon these premises:

1. **The examination of places of memory as history texts.** The emphasis on place-based memories intends to examine space as “one of society’s fundamental material dimensions” (Castells 2003: 59). Recognizing that extensive city heritage conservation occurs on the street and inside cultural institutions (e.g. libraries, museums, archives, etc.), I have elected to focus on heritage resources that lie visibly and more permanently in public spaces.⁸ This thesis research draws on Dolores Hayden’s approach (1995) of extending public history into urban landscape.
2. **The place-memory nexus lends itself to deep explorations of the past of a locality.** A number of scholars find certain memory discourses counterproductive. Most of the critiques are concerned with overtly sentimental, depoliticized, nationalistic approaches that convey “a romantic sense of loss and melancholy” (Huyssen 2003: 96; see Carrier 2000, Massey 1994, and Radstone 2000). Yet, memory and heritage studies need not be nostalgic or self-indulgent. The past of a place can reveal the temporal and spatial contexts that have lead to current tensions, whether detectable, undetectable, or concealed. Argentinean anthropologist Gastón Gordillo views spatialized memory as a means to understand places “...produced in tension with other geographies” (2004: 3).⁹ He goes on to say that,

⁸ Cultural festivals and performances represent another way to bring diverse heritage experience into urban spaces, and their visceral quality and cultural communication would be enhanced with heritage markers that exist as a constant acknowledgment of these *milieux de mémoire*.

⁹ For example, Gordillo’s *Landscapes of Devils* (2004) employs the spatialized memories of the indigenous Toba people (in Argentina’s Gran Chaco region) to examine current tensions inflected by a past of labour exploitation, state hegemony, Anglican missions, and others. Although my thesis research does not intend to conduct an

Remembering and its sedimentation in space are constitutive of experiences of labor and locality; they guide practices, struggles, and hope, and connect the places in which memories are produced with vanished and contemporary landscapes. (Gordillo 2004: 253).

3. Acknowledging and addressing that places contain multiple, overlapping histories.

As most places are containers of *milieux de mémoire* for more than one community, commemorative strategies that draw from a variety of approaches can enable a place to capture the diverse and intersecting narratives of its social history. Accordingly, this thesis does not advocate the replacement of tangible assets with intangible ones, even though the critique of the dominance of material heritage is a major part of this thesis. Instead, this thesis explores opportunities to better articulate tangible and intangible heritages together in tandem, in everyday urban spaces; specifically, by examining how stories and memories can help animate history in public spaces.

4. Place and identity are social constructs (Harvey 1996; Massey 1994). When a significant historic site is lost, it is not only the memories it contains that are lost but also the meanings that reinforce the existence of that place and identity. Harvey (1996) suggests that place only occupies space so long as it holds meaning. Thus, once a place loses meaning, it loses purpose, and it ceases to be a place; it “dies”. It dies again when a place is demolished, and again when its history is forgotten.¹⁰ As such, place is constantly battling against the erosion of time. For Harvey, a place will continue to exist if it

ethnographic study of Vancouver’s past, I hope to propose recommendations that can formalize opportunities within Vancouver’s cityscape to acknowledge the tensions of between its past, inhabitants, and land, and so the inevitable flow of new settlers into this global city and new generations can appreciate the complexities of residence.

¹⁰ I borrowed this notion of repeated deaths in the life of cultural artefacts from Celeste Olalquiaga’s work on kitsch commodities in her book titled *The Artificial Kingdom* (1998).

continues to be relevant to its community, and when a place can continue to hold meaning, a place will maintain its identity.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis begins by exploring some theoretical concerns of place heritage (Chapter Two).

These theoretical concerns inform a contextual inquiry into official and unofficial heritage conservation practices in Vancouver (Chapters Three, Four, and Five). Based on findings from the theoretical and contextual research, the final chapter proposes a set of recommendations for a more formalized, inclusive heritage conservation strategy.

Specifically, Chapter Two's conceptual exploration concentrates on two underlying factors influencing the management of place heritage: economics and politics. This chapter highlights the challenges heritage advocates face in maintaining local identity (through local history) against urban development and, simultaneously, the social and political construction of a place's identity that is utilized as a divisive device to define and defend a territory. A central idea of this chapter is the notion of the *genius loci* – the identity, essence, and spirit of place – and the struggles to affirm an identity that lends the most power to one's interest group (Massey 1994; Norbert-Schulz 2003). Social scientists observe that place identities are often used to unite insiders against outsiders in contested places and examples are not limited to neighbourhoods, colonized territories, and contested nation-states (see Harvey 1996; Massey 1994; Said 2000; Tunbridge 1997).

Chapter Three extends the concerns of the previous chapter and applies them to a local context: Vancouver. In reviewing official heritage policies in Vancouver (provincial and municipal), I found that official guidelines seem to focus only on preserving physical forms of heritage, or

architectural heritage, while designated heritage sites tend to represent national or local British history. Chapter Three raises three issues as a consequence of policies that prioritize architectural heritage: difficulty in preserving heritage of groups that did not have robust and architecturally significant property; difficulty in preserving heritage of groups who left or were forced to leave Vancouver; and, within heritage interpretation and education, official heritage site plaques do not contain sufficient reflection of historical context and social meaning of their sites but, again, focus on architectural significance. This chapter argues that this emphasis on architecture unintentionally facilitates erasure and affirmation of certain historical narratives of place.

Chapters Four and Five are dedicated to exploring the potential of incorporating the conventions and alternatives of place heritage conservation; this means combining traditional narratives and counter-narratives, tangible and intangible, within and through a collaboration between experts and communities. Specifically, Chapter Four highlights a number of recent story-based local heritage projects in Vancouver; Chapter Five offers an in-depth analysis of one project, *Storyscapes Chinatown*.

Public representations of counter-histories are critical to fostering an environment that acknowledges the stories of the land, appreciates the stewardships of Aboriginal peoples, respects all settlers and descendants of settlers¹¹, and accepts Vancouver as a shared residence. Effective interventions in public history need to take place in physical public spaces, where counter-histories can have an everyday presence and, as cultural critic Andreas Huyssen (2003) puts it, be codified into collective consciousness. The concepts discussed in these chapters will draw on the expertise of museum curators, artists, heritage planners, social planners, and

¹¹ Nick Blomley (2004) and Joe Wai (2006) are among many others who consider non-Aboriginals living in Canada as settlers, immigrants, or descendants of them.

community activists to develop recommendations proposed in Chapter Six that helps heritage policy and practice move towards a more formally integrated and inclusive approach to conservation.

Examining Public Heritage with the Field of Urban Planning

Intangible cultural heritage is not just the memory of past cultures, but is also a laboratory for inventing the future.
-- UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura (2002)

At the heart of my thesis, I am concerned with the articulation of identity representation and public history, and this is situated between collective memories (past), urban planning (future), and physical landscape (space). Place heritage plays a powerful role in reconnecting a place with its past and shaping how its community sees and plans for its future. For Aboriginal artist and activist Tania Willard from the Secwepemc Nation, the heritage of a place should guide the development of a place.

A culture that lives in a landscape is affected and develops culture based on that land, and based on their resources and experiences. So I just think that has been so intertwined that when you get into city planning and stuff, people aren't always looking through that lens of those deep layers of histories of the land itself. They are looking at transportation corridors, or building things to maximize space for people to live, which is truly not the way human beings negotiate how they live in a landscape. (Willard, personal communication, 2006).

In this way, heritage conservation is intimately relevant to planning. In planning for a pluralistic cultural environment, planners should consider a place's pluralistic heritage as a part of understanding the local context.

More than ten years ago, Dolores Hayden (1995) and preservation planning scholar Gail Lee Dubrow (1998) demanded that planners reexamine the relationship between planning and

heritage preservation. At a time when the disciplines of history, and planning were bringing social relations, including sexuality, gender, race and class to the centre of their analysis, this analytic advancement had yet to permeate the field of applied history, particularly heritage preservation. Hayden's work (1995) advocated social history as a crucial part of analyzing urban landscapes, in particular, redressing the absence of "ethnic history" and women's history. In 1983, only 2.3 percent of Los Angeles' official landmarks were associated with non-Anglo culture (Dubrow 1998); this means three-quarters of the American population "...must find its public, collective past in someone else's choices about the city's history" (Hayden 1995: 86).

Each community has its own histories, and each place holds many stories. The role of heritage conservation in forming place identity not only exists through official urban planning and design practice¹², but also through citizen organizations and in individual experiences that enable us to locate ourselves in place and time, to find meaning, belonging, and rootedness (Riaño-Alcalá 2006). Local heritage can be very personal when it deals so intimately with identity, and heritage-planning processes often bring out strong emotions and little agreement among the parties that requires planners to mediate (Neill 2004). The wealth of knowledge developed in planning practice can address these inequalities in heritage practices. Already, many great alternative heritage projects have taken place in Vancouver. This thesis hopes that more formalized support could ensure the continuity and proper execution of such projects, and ultimately, integrate many more narratives invisible in Vancouver's official history into future heritage plans. Cities promoting cultural diversity should recognize the diversity of local

¹² Urban planning and design concepts such as place-making, place identity, and landmarking rely on local history and identity to develop a sense of place (see the work of Giulio Garlo Argan, Kevin Lynch 1972, and Aldo Rossi 1983 [1973]). As sociologist Manuel Castells (1997) writes, "The concept of 'place-making' is a useful one in capturing a sense of the local importance of place to people and the constrained but still potentially significant local pro-activity that can be mobilized in the face of the impersonal flows of global economic network" (1997, cited in Neill 2004: 112).

memories so that the under-represented layers of histories of diverse individuals and communities can continue to have a place in collective memory with each generation and new group of residents to Vancouver.

PLACES OF MEMORY: IDENTITY, EVICTIONS AND INVENTIONS

“Historic buildings and sites bring Vancouver history into our daily lives.”
-- City of Vancouver (2003a)

“Life without memory is no life at all...”
-- Luis Buñuel (in *Le Doux* 2002: 97; in Huyssen 1995: 1)

The city speaks to us through places of memory. These spaces allow sensory ways of remembering the past (perhaps even more authentic and intimate than the common use of dates¹³) and act as a repository of local histories (Bachelard 1994 [1958]; Casey 1987; Hayden 1995; Kong & Yeoh 1995; Nora 1989; Sandercock 1998: chapter 8). Memory informs individual identities and allows individuals to locate themselves within a larger community, nation, or group (Sandercock 1998). This relationship between place, memory, and identity collectively defines a place’s essence and its orientation for the future. What happens to this relationship between place, memory, and identity when place experiences change with urban transformation, rapid globalization, or influx of new residents? What about places where changes have resulted in contested territories? How do we then define a place’s essence?

This chapter intends to provide a background to some of the issues in heritage conservation that have implications on current conventions and values in the field. I will discuss two underlying factors that have influenced heritage conservation: capital-driven urban development and political interests. These two factors relate to the powers of place and identity; place as a location embedded with meaning and a container for memories, and identity as it defines the past, the

¹³ Phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard critiques the conventional use of time and dates to access the past, which represents “...merely a matter for a biographer” and is only relevant to “external history...to be communicated” (1994 [1958]: 9).

present, and the influences on future of a place. To relate place and identity in a more succinct manner, I will use the concept of the *genius loci* to bring cohesion to this chapter.

The *Genius Loci*

Norwegian architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz describes the *genius loci* as the spirit or essence that gives life to people and animates place (1980, cited in Harvey 1989: 306 – 307). It determines the person's or place's essence (identity) and orientates them to “what it ‘wants to be’” (ibid. 306). The *genius loci* is defined, connected, and perpetuated by the memories and cultural meanings embedded in place.

The concept of the *genius loci* exists in many heritage discussions even without invoking the precise term. French historian Pierre Nora's work on sites of memory, including his seven-volume collection, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992), is dedicated to documenting cultural artifacts that are deemed essential to French identity. Most notably, part of his work differentiates memory sites that are organic (sometimes translated as “real environments of memory”) from those that are deliberately created to sustain the French *genius loci*. Nora (1989) claims that a modern society “propelled by change” threatens (or evicts) organic places of memory (*les milieux de mémoire*), and when organic places of memory (*milieux*) are destroyed, symbolic sites of memory (*les lieux de mémoire*) are created as intentional attempts to restore lost collective memories and identity (1989: 8). The dissolution of place results in the loss of identity or *genius loci* (Norberg-Schulz 1980, cited in Harvey 1989).

Yet, geographers Doreen Massey and David Harvey, among other theorists, challenge that notion of the *genius loci*, warning us against the dangers of solidifying an essence of a place as singular,

static, and official. While heritage has been described as a means to unite the individual to a history, identity, or group of people greater than themselves, heritage is also fundamentally a political and dividing social construct (Harvey 1996: 320). Geographer John Tunbridge writes,

Power conflicts among different social groups translate all too readily into contests over geographical identity and over the legitimacy of the heritage whereby it is perpetuated or varied. Social construction of identity and heritage implies social contest. (1997: xvi).

This chapter will revisit the politics of heritage and identity construction. But first, I begin with one of the greatest threats to heritage that greatly shapes the present-day driving forces of identity construction: capital-driven urban development.

Economic Factors

& certainly no nostalgia in the future of the past.
now, the corner cigarette-seller is gone, is perhaps dead.
no, definitely dead, he would not otherwise have gone.
he is replaced by a stamp-machine,
the old cook by a pressure-cooker,
the old trishaw-rider's stand by a fire hydrant,
the washer-woman by a spin-dryer

& it goes on
in various variations & permutations.
there is no future in nostalgia.

-- Arthur Yap, Singapore, *There is no future in nostalgia* (1977)

In her book, *Towards Cosmopolis*, planning theorist Leonie Sandercock proclaimed modernist planners as “thieves of memory” (1998: 208). For many communities, decades of urban renewal and less evasive developments today have continually replaced the old with the new in a process

economist Joseph Schumpeter (1942 [1987]) calls “creative destruction”.¹⁴ Urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s threatened some of Vancouver’s oldest neighbourhoods. Residents and allies took to the streets and protected some of their beloved neighbourhoods. Eventually, districts like Chinatown became designated and protected heritage sites.¹⁵ Then, some time between Expo ’86 and the 2010 Winter Olympics and Para-Olympics, Vancouver again became a landscape of construction cranes. Aging buildings and structures were torn down to construct new ones that generally had better market value and addressed all building safety codes. As the construction (and demolition) boom denotes development, it also threatens local heritage, places that hold memories, and local identity. Briefly, here is one example in Vancouver.

EXAMPLE ONE
Hogan’s Alley (circa 1920s – late 1960s)

A Vancouver history without historic remnant is Park Lane – better known as Hogan’s Alley, the black neighbourhood of Vancouver (Compton 2007, August 27, 2007, February 24, 2006, 2004a, 2004b; Fatona & Wyngaarden 2005; Hendrix 1979; Walker 1999). The newspaper *Vancouver Daily Province*, on April 21, 1939 wrote, “to the average citizen Hogan’s Alley stands for squalor, immorality and crime” (cited in Walker 1999: 57). Sometime between the late 1960s and early 1970s, Hogan’s Alley was demolished to construct the Georgia Viaduct, the entrance

¹⁴ The term “creative destructive” was used recently in reference to a city in Max Page’s *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1990-1940* (1999).

¹⁵ However, the interest of developing Chinatown into a historic site for tourism has created a somewhat sanitized and essentialized heritage place. It has heightened its “Chineseness” with the installation of red lampposts, red street furniture, mini gold dragons above red lantern streetlights (Anderson 1991: 230). And in sections like the Shanghai and Canton Alleys, its history as the city’s red-light district is replaced by tiled garden walking paths.

to a planned but never completed freeway that intended to connect the inner-city to the downtown business district (Anderson 1991; Compton 2002; Vancouver Museum 2006; Ward 2002). At this site today, passersby can see a viaduct with few references to Hogan's Alley: none of the clubhouses, chicken eateries, or homes that were central to this community exist today.¹⁶

The Hogan's Alley Memorial Project has been diligently trying to find ways to gain public acknowledgement of this history that was lost to an urban development project. The loss of Hogan's Alley represents a manifestation of Pierre Nora's work on sites of memory and urban development cited at the opening of this chapter. Although Nora has been criticized for his work's romanticism and nationalism (see Carrier 2000; Radstone 2000), his writing captures themes and sentiments integral to understanding why heritage matters to citizens. Nora's work situates modern society as a great threat to place identity, original places of memory (*milieux de mémoire*) in particular. It seems appropriate to expand on this perspective through the notions of "non-places" (Marc Augé), "flow cities" (Manuel Castells), and Marx's famous claim "all that is solid melts into air" (Marx cited in Berman 1988: 21). I acknowledge the limitations of drawing from theorists of one tradition and recognize that the tradition of radical political economy can underestimate cultural, identity politics, and other non-economic and political factors. However, this approach serves the purpose of examining the relationship between place identity and urban development.

In the opening paragraph of *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (1988), Berman writes,

¹⁶ Artist and writer Wayne Compton and the Hogan's Alley Memorial Project have been continuously holding commemorative events, such as *Remembering Hogan's Alley and the Black Urban landscape* held February 27, 2007 at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, and actively lobbying the City of Vancouver for acknowledgement and a physical marker of this piece of history. Heritage interpretation projects like *[murmur]* or *Our Community Story* can revitalize these histories into our collective memory and revive the significance of this space presently occupied by the viaduct. Chapter four and five will explore heritage interpretation in greater depth.

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. (p. 15).

From this perspective, the modern experience and environments allow individuals to trade their traditions, culture, and heritage for personal freedom, personal fulfillment, and the possibility of uniting humanity beyond the confines of the past and what is familiar. This experience of “unity of disunity” leaves individuals (and places) in continuous disintegration and renewal such that nothing remains solid (1988: 15).¹⁷ To elaborate, Berman expands on the creative destruction of bourgeois society:

...[A]s Marx sees, ...everything that bourgeois society builds is built to be torn down. “All that is solid” – from the clothes on our backs to the looms and mills that weave them, to the men and women who work the machines, to the houses and neighborhoods the workers live in, to the firms and corporations that exploit the workers, to the towns and cities and whole regions and even nations that embrace them all – all these are made to be broken tomorrow, smashed or shredded or pulverized or dissolved, so they can be recycled or replaced next week, and the whole process can go on again and again, hopefully forever, in ever more profitable forms. (Berman 1988: 99).

To expand on the idea of efficiency in the context of global capital accumulation, sociologist Manuel Castells’ concept of *flow cities* asserts that dissolving traditional spatial boundaries facilitates the flow of global exchange (e.g. capital, labour, commodities, information). *Space* is dissolved into flows such that the world becomes a grand production line, which Castells describes as a “spatial project of the new dominant class” (2003: 61). Similar to Castells’ *flow city*, anthropologist Marc Augé’s notion of *non-places* refers to spaces “to be passed through” (1995: 104). Non-places are created for transit, transport, commerce, and leisure, where they strip away meaningful human interactions and relations, local identity, and history to accelerate their systems. In non-places, individual identity is only recognized by mechanical means, for

¹⁷ Berman (1998) also describe this experience as something that has occurred for the last 500 years, with each generation perceiving modernity as a new threat to their heritage.

example, when you check in at the airport or check out at the supermarket (Augé 1995).¹⁸ This sense of alienation and sterility captured by *non-places* also extends to the state-level, as architect Rem Koolhaas (2000) describes Singapore as a tablet that can be written, erased, and rewritten again with no trace of the former. Leonie Sandercock interprets this lack of consideration for heritage as a condition where “nobody knows how to put a dollar value on memory, or on a sense of connection and belonging, [and so,] it always gets left out of the model” (1998: 208). From these perspectives, it seems that modern (and postmodern) society justifies the removal (eviction) of local identity and history when it obstructs capitalist progress.

But not all hope is lost. Although those concepts such as *non-spaces* capture the threat of capital-driven development, they appear inadequate at recognizing the possibility of finding a new (global) sense of place within spaces tied to capital, movement, and accelerated globalization (Massey 1994), and acknowledging agency and political will to create meaning in the city. Residents and preservationists reacting to the loss of meaningful places have organized demonstrations and defined local identities through conservation advocacy. Although Hogan’s Alley was lost in the late 1960s, demonstrators were able to stop the highway construction and save Chinatown. The Government of British Columbia soon designated Chinatown as a provincial historic district in 1971 (City of Vancouver 2003a). Then, in the 1990s, another transportation route required expansion. Vancouver’s Lions Gate Bridge marks the historic expansion to the north shore, but this *milieu de mémoire* was threatened by proposals to either retrofit it into a double-decker bridge or demolish and rebuild (Bula 1998, January 12: B2).

¹⁸ One may argue that airports are places of heightened emotions rather than places of alienation. For example, airports are where passengers may feel excitement, sadness, relief, or surprise as they reunite or depart from their loved ones.

Again, residents and preservationists successfully retain the sanctity of their heritage places and *milieux de mémoire*.

By uniting and taking action against urban redevelopment, community members exercise their voices to protect and defend a certain *genius loci* of place, to “save” Chinatown or the Lions Gate Bridge. This exercise of citizenship builds a sense of unity and ownership through the catalyst of social organizing but it can also develop into an overt sense of entitlement that is exclusionary and antagonistic. As feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994) observes, the fear of losing local identity to global and capitalist forces has provoked a number of disconcerting responses. She writes,

How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity? ...[T]he occasional longing for such coherence [in community and place] is none the less a sign of the geographical fragmentation, the spatial disruption, of our times. And occasionally, too, it has been part of what has given rise to defensive and reactionary responses – certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalized recovering of sanitized ‘heritages’, and outright antagonism to newcomers and ‘outsiders’. (p. 147).

These issues Massey raises, notably the defensive and reactionary responses, call for a deeper examination into the functions and intentions of heritage conservation. The next section of this chapter will deconstruct the notion of the *genius loci* and one of its devices, heritage conservation, as a social construct and political act.

Political Factor

“History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.”
-- Napoleon (cited in Neill 2004: 73).

“More subtle and complex is the unending struggle over territory, which necessarily involves overlapping memories, narratives and physical structures.”
-- Edward Said (2000: 182)

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”

-- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1978 [1994]).

Without a doubt, citizen resistance and activism have made a remarkable impact on protecting the *genius loci* in light of urban change. Simultaneously, this form of heritage protection resembles a certain desire to freeze or fossilize a moment in time and space, especially one that empowers a certain identity with meaning and history. This empowerment is both *vital* to developing a sense of place (by establishing continuity with the past) and *problematic* when we acknowledge that place and place identity are not static. Places evolve over time, and at any certain moment, people sharing a space may still have very different experiences. As such, logic dictates that diverse and evolving places cannot be equitably represented by one homogenously defined *genius loci*. In this vein, this second section explores how heritage and identity are asserted in places and some of the motivations behind these social constructions, first at a local scale, then at a state level.¹⁹

In Chapter 11 of *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996) entitled, “From space to place and back again”, geographer David Harvey opens with a familiar story about an affluent neighbourhood with an identity of prestige and security. Guildford was developed in the early 20th century as a secluded and exclusive residential neighbourhood for the affluent white Anglo-Saxon and largely Protestant power of Baltimore (Harvey 1996). According to Harvey (1996), even after a failed attempt to establish an exclusionary covenant restricting ownership to non-Jews and Caucasians, and after a period of citywide economic instability, Guildford still managed to maintain its identity. Then, in the mid-1990s, this neighbourhood experienced a

¹⁹ Geographers David Harvey (1996) and Doreen Massey (1994) state that places and their identities are social constructs.

number of violent crimes that created moral panic in the news: the murder of an elderly couple following a series of other crimes in recent months. Although the murder rate was close to one per day in the rest of Baltimore at that time (p. 292), Guildford believed that it was different from the rest of the city and that drastic measures needed to be taken to ensure its survival. Harvey then asks: what kind of place is Guildford? Beyond the obvious – a place with a name, a boundary, and distinctive social and physical qualities – Harvey discerns that Guildford had achieved and protected “a certain kind of ‘permanence’” over its identity that endures urban fluctuations and gains institutional support from the government, the media, and finance (1996: 293).

Harvey’s narrative illustrates how “permanence” – in this case, stability, exclusivity, and security – is constructed through the assertion and protection of a select *genius loci*. Guildford claims that crime is unusual in their community in the past, as per their defined identity over most of the 20th century, and that the occurrence of crime would threaten its survival. Before discovering the murderer was in fact a family member of the victims, the Guildford Community Association proposed heightened security measures, turning Guildford into a gated community, to separate the “civilized” Baltimore residents from those defined as outsiders: the “underclass” and African-Americans. This proposal to explicitly divide race and class was endorsed by security expert Oscar Newman as well as the press, who expressed regret for this strategy but believed it was necessary to ensure the wellbeing of Guildford. “*Place* had to be secured against the uncontrolled vectors of spatiality” (Harvey 1996: 292; italics in original).

This narrative invokes Doreen Massey’s critical work on place and identity formation in spaces of change. Massey (1994) explains that fixed identity – or permanence, in Harvey’s words – reinforces a group’s authority and enabled them to impose ownership, define its boundaries, and

empower their people with authority to defend it from those deemed as “outsiders”. As Harvey’s story demonstrates, the Guildford Community Association convinced the press and a security expert that Guildford was entitled to safety and security, which defined its identity. They effectively argued that this community, “if it was to survive”, must defend itself from the rest of Baltimore’s criminal tendencies by literally walling its boundaries (1996: 292). The fixing of this identity not only creates legitimacy for unjust solutions, it also helps maintain such an identity. In fixing its identity as affluent and white, Guildford has also identified the poor and black Baltimore residents as non-members of their community.

The fixed identity of a place is derived from a particular moment in time that lends the most authority and entitlement to a certain group (1994: 169). In other words, the past is no more static than the present, but a particular representation of the past is a political decision made to empower a certain history that supports or gives authority to a particular group, as we find in Harvey’s narrative and will explore later in this section.

Furthermore, when the *genius loci* is fixed to a particular moment in time and place, it fails to recognize that multiple forms of history, identity, and heritage coexist in one place.²⁰ To reiterate Massey’s caution from the previous section, the fear of losing local identity to global and capitalist forces has incited writing and action toward finding coherence and unity in place identities. Massey (1994) warned that idealizing “oneness” could lead to undesirable forms of nationalism, sanitized heritage, or an exclusion of outsiders or newcomers. Harvey resonates with this critique as he writes,

²⁰ Although, it would be difficult to exhaustively commemorate all histories of one place, heritage programs should acknowledge that there is no one definitive history of a place. Each narrative represents a partial history. Heritage programs should try to collect and represent as many partial histories as possible.

Places constructed in the imagery of homogeneity of beliefs, values, ideals, and persuasions coupled with a strong sense of collective memory and spatially exclusionary rights can be extraordinarily powerful players upon the world stage.

The established *genius loci* can perpetuate unified and static identities as official while rejecting other identities (often the indigenous) as subaltern and resisting change. Particularly in contested places, the powerful relationship between place, collective memory, and identity poses a danger to weaker groups.

Nationalism/colonialism/erasure

Yet, the use of certain place identities to mark territory and establish an official culture is not unique to the neighbourhood scale. Edward Said (2000) wrote that memory and memory's intentional form (history) affect not only questions of identity, power, and authority, but also nationalism. Applied history in public spaces through memorials idealizes select memories and, especially in the late 19th century, creates nationalistic myths of noble sacrifice and pride to legitimize occupation, oppression, and other forms of conflict in addition to defence (Miles 1997). In France during the Third Republic, the “national definition of the present imperiously demanded justification through the illumination of the past” and it depended upon its historians to unify nation and memory (Nora 1989: 10-11). Present urban design plans for Berlin repress and remove physical heritage sites that reference its “troubling” decades of communism and fascism (Neill 2004). After the arrival of Christopher Columbus, the land of the Americas was often seen and celebrated as extensions of European society, and this identity often bares a stronger prominence than the indigenous history and connections to this territory. Of course, there are also many examples from self-described “non-capitalist” countries such as China, North Korea, and Cuba. For Said, these examples of “manipulating certain bits of the national

past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way” are part of the invention of collective memory, a strategy for managing mass societies and a tactic to foster a new identity for the ruler and the ruled (2000: 179).

Dolores Hayden observes that American preservation groups have focused on saving historic buildings as a “unifying focus for national pride and patriotism in a nation of immigrants, or as examples of stylistic excellence in architecture” since the mid-nineteenth century (1995: 53). Similarly in Canada, until recently, national identity was in part reinforced through applied history such as heritage conservation. Major monuments, plaques, and place names often commemorate post-contact history of military men or early officials of British or European descent.²¹ Heritage conservation determines heritage value by a site’s significance to national history (see *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, 2003), and this poses critical questions as to how we determine what is essential Canadian heritage and evaluate the relationship between Aboriginal heritage and Canadian national heritage.

A very abbreviated history of Aboriginals and Canada

Many interpretations exist of the history between Aboriginals and the founding and development of Canada as a country. With the consideration of the difficulty to “finding” the most truthful interpretation, and being non-Aboriginal myself, I hope it is sufficient to quote directly from the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – People to people, nation to nation: Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996). This version seems to counter the seemingly more official, nationalistic version that often sanitizes injustices from the narrative.

²¹ For example, Denman Street in Vancouver’s downtown is named after British-born Admiral Denman.

The following excerpts are taken from a section entitled “The Ghosts of History” in Volume 1: “Looking Forward, Looking Back”.

The ghosts take the form of dishonoured treaties, theft of Aboriginal lands, suppression of Aboriginal cultures, abduction of Aboriginal children, impoverishment and disempowerment of Aboriginal peoples. Yet at the beginning, no one could have predicted these results, for the theme of early relations was, for the most part, co-operation.

The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people evolved through four stages:

- There was a time when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people lived on separate continents and knew nothing of one another.
- Following the years of first contact, fragile relations of peace, friendship and rough equality were given the force of law in treaties.
- Then power tilted toward non-Aboriginal people and governments. They moved Aboriginal people off much of their land and took steps to 'civilize' and teach them European ways.
- Finally, we reached the present stage - a time of recovery for Aboriginal people and cultures, a time for critical review of our relationship, and a time for its renegotiation and renewal.

This Volume (1996) also emphasizes the importance of studying the past or the ghosts that “haunt us still” to understand the barriers breeding confrontation between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. As Violet Soosay from the Montana First Nation community (Alberta) once said, “History has not been written yet from the Indian point of view” (cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – Canada 1996b), and I suggest, nor has Aboriginal history been equitably incorporated into urban landscapes. Vancouver is a postcolonial city where historic injustices continue to resonate today (Blomley 2004). Geographer Nick Blomley points out that the creation of a colonial settlement requires dispossession and displacement, and displacement can take the form of spatial narrations – that is, settler stories (“self-justifying accounts, told by a colonial people”) that can be asserted onto occupied territory to replace indigenous narratives (2004: 115). Among other forms, erasure of indigenous histories occurs in heritage landscapes and the next two example cases will illustrate the establishing of settler stories.

EXAMPLE TWO
Hatley Park National Historic Site

As an example of the national conservation approach, Hatley Park reveals some of the issues of evaluating heritage value in terms of “national significance”. This site is located in Victoria, British Columbia, and it describes itself as a site that has a “...rich history that has welcomed people from all walks of life for centuries” (URL: <http://www.hatleypark.ca/>). The earliest known human use was by the Straits Salish language people, who have left culturally modified trees and middens in their traditional territory. Since contact with European settlers, this landscape evolved through several distinct identities: Roland Stewart’s Hatley Farms, Hatley Estate of the Dunsmuir family (1908 – 1938), HMCS Royal Roads and Royal Roads Military College military training institutions (1938 – 1995), and presently, Royal Roads University and a National Historic Site. Yet, when the heritage preservation committee wrote the Commemorative Integrity Statement in 2000, they defined the historical period of national interest as 1908 to 1995, which precludes the landscape’s memory of Hatley Farms and First Nation stewardship. Some part of Hatley Farms’ legacy exists in the continued use of its name but the archeological findings of Aboriginal remains are left without recognition or protection. The exclusion of histories and memories that predates Canada as a nation brings critical concerns to the established values of heritage conservation practice in Canada.

EXAMPLE THREE
Commemorative Hamilton panel and street naming

In 1953, the City of Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners held a banquet for “all pioneers resident in Vancouver prior to the arrival of the first passenger train on 23 May 1886” to celebrate Vancouver’s 67th anniversary (Walker 1999: 77). Part of the evening involved the unveiling of the commemorative panel attributed to Lauchlan A. Hamilton, a CPR civil engineer, land commissioner, and later city councillor. This panel is installed on the southeast street wall of the former Canadian Bank of Commerce building, at the intersection of Hastings and Hamilton, and it contains the following inscription.

HERE STOOD HAMILTON
FIRST LAND COMMISSIONER
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
1885
IN THE SILENT SOLITUDE
OF THE PRIMEVAL FOREST
HE DROVE A WOODEN STAKE
IN THE EARTH AND COMMENCED
TO MEASURE AN EMPTY LAND
INTO THE STREETS OF
VANCOUVER
-- Inscription on plaque, Hastings Street, Vancouver

The plaque commemorates the first officially acknowledged intersection in present-day Vancouver (Davis 1997; Smedman 2006, March 3; Walker 1999). At the same time, the inscription subtly assumes a contested position: The use of the term “empty land” suggests that there were no human beings, not even the indigenous Coast Salish people, on this land prior to European settlement. It reaffirms the Royal Proclamation of 1763’s notion of *terra nullius* describing “...a wilderness to be settled and turned to more productive pursuits by the superior civilization of the new arrivals”, discounting the existence of indigenous nations and their stewardship of this land (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a).

Cultural theorist Malcolm Miles asserts that for a long time national heritage assets were defined within a dominant framework of values, as a part of nationalistic efforts to construct history and cultural identity by “concealing the internal contradictions of society” (1997: 58). This is a process urban planning and design theorist William Neill calls, “normalization by way of amnesia” (2004: 74). One example might be in places like Vancouver, where although many cultures have occupied this traditionally indigenous land, visitors may find mostly trivial acknowledgement of this place’s Coast Salish roots. As such, official histories and identities of places often result from dominant groups or groups with power. As Edward Said states, “Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful” (2000: 179).

Beside the problems raised in defining heritage value by national significance²², *Examples Two* and *Three* show how fixing national heritage also exacerbates possibilities for other histories that co-exist in these places. As previously mentioned, fossilizing the essence of a place with one official identity can be a catalyst for forgetting other histories. Therefore, in examining the heritage assets threatened by neo-liberal interests (in the previous section), we also need to be aware of the possibility of perpetuating a unifying but exclusive *genius loci*. As Massey puts it, “Those who today worry about a sense of disorientation and a loss of control must once have felt

²² *Examples two* and *three* present two cases of official heritage that are deemed and defined as “nationally significant”. In Dolores Hayden’s influential book, *The Power of Place* (1995), she criticizes the patriotism of many preservationist initiatives and proposes that heritage preservationists rethink American identity to include marginalized ethnic communities: “A new American sense of identity is emerging as we begin to recognize a diverse society where cultural differences are respected” (Hayden, 1995: 237). I would like to intervene by proposing that, perhaps, place-based heritage needs to be viewed as heritage of a landscape without any relation to the nation. Vancouver histories, for example, can be perceived to exclude peoples who do not identify with current governance structures. Should Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh First Nations identify their historical narratives as Vancouver memories even though their histories preclude the establishment of Vancouver? While settler histories of oppressed people such as early Chinese immigrants relate well to the construction of Vancouver, this approach to place history is clearly exclusive to certain identities. Therefore, it is important to recognize histories of present day Vancouver as simply histories of our landscape. That is not to say that the City of Vancouver does not have a role in preservation of such histories. In fact, the City of Vancouver has a responsibility to acknowledge the histories of the landscape they have inhabited. This acknowledgement fosters a historical context for city planning in the present for an inclusive vision of the future.

they knew exactly where they were, and that they *had* control” (1994: 165; italics in original). In this way, the writing of history represents a strategic mechanism to construct, exclude, and invent “useful” collective memories.

Conclusion

This chapter began with two general questions:

1. What happens to this relationship [between place, memory, and identity] when a place experiences change with urban transformation, rapid globalization, or an influx of new residents?
2. How do we then define a place’s essence [in contested territories]?

The idea of the *genius loci* enabled this chapter to deconstruct some of the underlying factors of heritage conservation. As this chapter illustrated, the *genius loci* are especially strong when under threat. This chapter explored urban growth as one major threat to local heritage; UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura was not alone when he expressed a sense of “...the urgent need for international protection given the threat posed by contemporary lifestyles and the process of globalization” (UNESCO Culture Sector 2006). Yet, this chapter also presented scholarly work that questions this critical and continuing concern over the maelstrom of global capitalist forces, urban development, and progress driven society. Through the works of Massey, Harvey, Said, and others, and examples of heritage-defining movements from local and state scales, this chapter deconstructed the *genius loci* and found that the *genius loci* (and heritage) are often used as strategic tools to construct a sense of coherence, permanence, and “oneness” (community) (Massey 1994). It also revealed how preserving the *genius loci* may justify a certain entitlement to land. As places are often developed in a way that reflects the political and

economic interests (see Castells 2003; Harvey 1996; Lefebvre 1991)²³, place heritage and identity also help reinforce those interests.

In closing, every piece of heritage in the city pays respect to a narrative of its past and, at the same time, designates importance to a history relevant to a person, group, or nation. For this reason, inclusive societies must be inclusive in their heritage conservation plans. Although the current City of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program may have no intention of privileging built heritage that represents a certain history of this place, legacies from outdated heritage strategies with such intentions will remain in Vancouver's landscape unless we find formal interventions to challenge them. In light of this continuing concern of heritage conservation, this chapter intended to give some background to some of the critical discourses and conceptual concerns over heritage conservation; the next chapter will take a closer examination into some of the contemporary gaps in conservation policy that affect Vancouver and reinforces some of the issues discussed here.

²³ Lefebvre has a different definition of place and space than Castells and Harvey. On this idea, the translator of Lefebvre uses the term space rather than place.

VANCOUVER AND HERITAGE POLICIES

“The city is constantly changing,” writes Dolores Hayden in *The Power of Place*, “and yet it retains potent memories in its streets and sidewalks, fences and alleys, buildings and vacant lots. (1995: 247). These everyday spaces represent places of memory for neighbours, for people who work there, go to school there, spend their time there, and above all, for those who do not possess property. But in changing cities, vacant lots are rarely vacant for long. So, while these spaces may contain potent memories, few are protected as heritage assets (especially not vacant lots). That is not to say that we need to safeguard all aspects of city spaces, but perhaps heritage conservation policies deserve review, so that parts of the past that do not appear, at first, to be heritage assets may receive a second look. Because, ultimately, local history visible in the landscape tells stories about its place, honours certain legacies, and helps define local identity.

The previous chapter provided a background on heritage conservation’s role in identity formation and definition through intellectual notions that deconstruct heritage conservation and its uses. It looked at how heritage conservation could be used as a tool to re-establish *genius loci*, to reaffirm place identity in spaces of alienating urban growth with an increasing sense of “placelessness”, and how, at the same time, this identity affirming tool also represents a hegemonic and political tool in the past and present. In this chapter, I will follow this trajectory of critical interpretation of heritage conservation and examine heritage policies and guidelines that impact conservation practice in Vancouver, British Columbia. In grounding this analysis within a specific locality (Vancouver), I am interested in how current conservation conventions might inadvertently affirm certain power relations that originated in the past and create gaps in representing history. Beginning with an overview of government policies, this chapter will

critically assess how its priority over architecture systemically excludes the relevance of certain groups' histories and, ultimately, contributes to a superficial representation of this place's heritage and identity. This chapter finds that the criteria for determining heritage value may affirm or deny parts of a past.

Case City: Vancouver, British Columbia

This city is situated on land that was and is part of the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people. Part of this landscape was transformed in the 1870s for a sawmill settlement (the Granville Townsite) and in 1886 became the City of Vancouver, named after a British naval captain who arrived nearly a century earlier. Now, Vancouver is a port city of almost 600 000 people – a metropolis of over two million – of many cultural backgrounds (Statistics Canada 2007; see Table 3.1). Yet, the relationship of this land with different cultures extends beyond Vancouver's recent history. From the stewardship of the Coast Salish people since this land became conscious of human existence, to the development of various industries by new settlers, to railroad construction by a new government, people of many cultures have contributed to the city we experience today. At the same time, heritage preservation in this city does not necessarily reflect many of those roots.

	<i>1996</i>			<i>2001</i>		
	<i>Population</i>	<i>% in City</i>	<i>Index of Seg.</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>% in City</i>	<i>Index of Seg.</i>
Total – all groups	1,813,935	28.1		1,967,520	27.5	
Total visible minority pop.	564,595	40.3	39.5	725,700	36.5	41.1
Chinese	279,040	50.2	49.3	342,620	47.0	50.0
South Asian	120,140	21.7	48.9	164,320	18.7	52.8
Black	16,400	30.2	31.0	18,460	25.9	32.8
Filipino	40,715	40.7	33.2	57,045	38.7	37.8
Latin American	13,830	40.5	36.6	18,765	34.6	36.4
South-east Asian	20,370	61.2	52.0	28,550	51.5	48.4
Arab/West Asian	18,155	20.6	41.6	27,270	17.0	47.0
Korean	17,080	24.0	42.2	28,880	21.3	44.5
Japanese	21,880	36.9	30.4	24,025	34.4	32.7
Visible minority, n.i.e.	6,775	31.6	48.6	3,290	35.1	56.3
Multiple visible minority	10,215	35.7	35.9	12,450	36.5	36.3
All others	1,249,340	22.5	39.5	1,241,815	22.2	41.1
Average, weighted			41.5			43.5

Table 3.1: Population group by geographical distribution and degree of concentration, 1996 and 2001, Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area. Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census and 2001 Census; Hutton 2008.

Here, I will provide a brief overview of government heritage policies that apply to Vancouver.

The focus will be on policies by the Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver as federal departments relevant to place heritage are concerned mostly with heritage of national significance.

Heritage policies

British Columbia's historic places – buildings, other structures, landscapes, historic districts, and other places of heritage value – are crucial to our understanding and appreciation of the identity and character of our communities. By conserving and celebrating these places, we contribute to the future of our communities.

-- Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (Province of British Columbia 2007a)

Historic buildings and sites bring Vancouver's history into our daily lives. Past economic, social, architectural, and cultural development is embodied in these structures and sites which serve as important measure of our progress. The style and construction of a building provides an excellent mirror which reflects the values and circumstances that shaped it. Designation of heritage buildings as protected heritage property is a legislative tool which ensures they remain a legacy for future generations.

Provincial: Government of British Columbia

At the provincial level, the Heritage Branch is the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. Until 1973, the Province governed heritage resources within Vancouver through the Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act. Since then, the Province has recognized the importance of putting “conservation into a more urban context” and has been amending the Vancouver Charter to give more authority and tools for conservation to the City of Vancouver to designate and regulate building structures and lands (City of Vancouver 2003a). Presently, most of the heritage-designated sites – with the exception of the CPR Roundhouse in Yaletown – have been transferred to the responsibility of the City of Vancouver (City of Vancouver 2003a). The Province continues to be involved with heritage conservation in Vancouver but at a limited capacity through its programs.²⁴

Municipal: City of Vancouver

In 1983, the City of Vancouver (2003b) developed an official body to address heritage conservation in a coordinated manner. This body eventually developed a sturdy heritage conservation program consisting of three components: a heritage register, management plan, and public education and information program. The Vancouver Heritage Register²⁵ (formerly the Heritage Inventory) laid the foundation by officially identifying buildings and places of heritage

²⁴ One program is the Heritage Legacy Fund of British Columbia. The BC government seeded the Heritage Legacy Fund of BC with a \$5 million endowment. The Fund is a joint initiative of The Land Conservancy of BC and the Heritage Society of BC. (Heritage Legacy Fund of British Columbia).

²⁵ Presently, the heritage register is undergoing an upgrade and the results will come out in several years (personal communication; City of Vancouver 2003c). My analysis will be based on the current program and available information, and I hope this research will help inform the upgrade process.

significance; legal protection comes from official heritage designation. This register conducted an inventory of all buildings in the city in 1986 and is periodically updated by public nomination with the approval of the City of Vancouver. The list includes mostly buildings of architectural and historical significance, although it also includes parks, trees, and monuments.

The Heritage Management Plan provides the tools to protect heritage property through incentives, such as density “bonusing” and transfer, and protective measures such as heritage designation and revitalization agreements (City of Vancouver 2003b). The last component is the Public Education and Information Program. Its role is intended to provide information to the public on heritage issues and conservation techniques, raise public awareness of local built heritage and history, and run the Heritage Awards and Heritage Plaque Program (City of Vancouver 2003b).

The power and tools of the City of Vancouver to manage heritage conservation are defined by the Vancouver Charter (SBC 1953), a piece of legislation that enables the City of Vancouver to act on behalf of British Columbia for matters that are under provincial jurisdiction. The Charter extensively covers the legalities of heritage designation and conservation in the realm of property ownership (see Vancouver Charter (SBC 1953), Chapter 55 Part XXVIII). The Charter is concerned only with propertied heritage and mentions nothing beyond that.

These policies leave gaps in the representation of Vancouver’s past. First, these policies indicate an emphasis on built heritage and especially architectural heritage, which excludes certain heritage sites from the heritage registry (Issue One), and secondly, they exclude histories without physical property (Issue Two). Furthermore, there are no specifications for heritage interpretation, which could result to inadequate explanations of the heritage value or local

historical context, and how that history relates to the present context (Issue Three). We begin with Issue One.

Issue One: Architectural emphasis

One example of the emphasis on architectural heritage is the evaluation method used by the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register to assess a site's heritage significance within one of three tiers:

Evaluation Category A	Primary Significance "Represents the best examples of a style or type of building; may be associated with a person or event of significance."
Evaluation Category B	Significant "Represents good examples of a particular style or type, either individually or collectively; may have some documented historical or cultural significance in a neighbourhood."
Evaluation Category C	Contextual and Character "Represents those buildings that contribute to the historic character of an area or streetscape, usually found in groupings of more than one building but may also be of individual importance."

Table 3.2: The Vancouver Heritage Register (City of Vancouver 2003c).

The evaluation criteria scores are in four categories (score cap in brackets): architectural history (40), cultural history (35), context (25), and integrity (0)²⁶ of a building. At first glance, architectural history and cultural history appear to have comparable weights in this assessment approach. However, upon closer examination, even though the architectural and cultural history categories have a similar score cap, the architectural category offers more opportunities (95 points) to gain a higher score as its subcategories (style/type, design, construction, designer/builder); the cultural history category, in comparison, has a 65-point possibility and is capped at 35 points.

²⁶ The integrity category scores between 0 to -15, therefore, this category gives a negative score.

	Point opportunities	Maximum allowable score
Architectural history	0 to 95	40
Cultural history	0 to 65	35
Context	0 to 60	25
Integrity	-15 to 0	0 ²⁶

Table 3.3: Based on the City of Vancouver’s Heritage Register “Evaluation Methodology” (City of Vancouver 2003d). For the full scoring system table, see Appendix D.

In short, this evaluation methodology is biased towards architectural heritage since this category has almost 50% more opportunity to reach its maximum score. Furthermore, nominations only need to provide legal descriptions, construction information, ownership history, and current conditions of the building, with no request for an explanation or research of the social significance or historical context in a nomination (see City of Vancouver 2003e).

Aesthetic value

Architect and historian Dolores Hayden opens her book *The Power of Place*²⁷ (1995) with a debate that took place in the opinion pages of the *New York Times* in 1975. Urban sociologist Herbert J. Gans initiated the debate with this open letter:

Since [the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission] tends to designate the stately mansions of the rich and buildings designed by famous architects, the commission mainly preserves the elite portion of the architectural past. It allows popular architecture to disappear. ...This landmark policy distorts the real past, exaggerates affluence and grandeur, and denigrates the present. (Gans 1975, January 28: op-ed section, in Hayden 1995: 3).

Architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable responds and defends the Commission’s work, writing that it preserves buildings that are “vernacular” and “...a primary and irreplaceable part of civilization” (1975, February 4: op-ed, cited in Hayden 1995: 3-4). Both Gans (1975) and

²⁷ Hayden’s *Power of Place* book (1995) and social history project attempted to bridge this disconnect between interests of architecture and social history, between socio-political histories and urban design. Hayden’s work aims to bring unrepresented histories into the public sphere.

Huxtable were passionate about urban heritage but differed in their visions of heritage. Huxtable defines vernacular buildings as those designed by unknown architects; Gans interprets vernacular as everyday buildings used by the general public.

Contrary to this American debate thirty years ago, Vancouver has protected a number of “popular public” buildings today.²⁸ In fact, much of Strathcona, a former working class residential neighbourhood, has many homes under heritage protection.²⁹ However this thirty-year-old debate still resonates on some level in the current Vancouver context. An architecturally-biased evaluation means that places with social meaning continue to struggle for heritage recognition and designation, and this systemically encourages gaps in inclusively representing the past in everyday landscapes. The Joy Kogawa House is a historic site that exemplifies the difficulties in obtaining heritage protection based upon social significance – although, eventually, it did obtain a status on the Vancouver Heritage Registry.

²⁸ However, I did find that in its Heritage Streetscapes program, the street blocks were overrepresented on the Westside, with only one block from Downtown and the Eastside. See Appendix G for details of this analysis.

²⁹ See City of Vancouver’s *Vancouver Heritage Register* (City of Vancouver 1986, last amendment on 2006, April 18).

EXAMPLE FOUR
The Historic Joy Kogawa House

In a recent and rare example, the childhood home of celebrated Canadian author Joy Kogawa in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Marpole was placed on the heritage registry list and saved from demolition despite the fact that it did not make the heritage registry list initially (McCrank 2004, January 18; Gill 2003, December 9). Its initial assessment deemed that this site had little heritage value except for the architectural heritage merit of its windows. A non-profit, charitable land trust, The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (2006), argued that the Joy Kogawa House has national significance as a “symbol of the racial discrimination experienced by Japanese-Canadians as a consequence of World War II”. During this war, the Canadian government confiscated the homes of Japanese-Canadians as a part of a national security measure. When this site failed to make the heritage registry under usual heritage qualifications, the City of Vancouver realized that they had a dilemma. The manner in which heritage value was assessed appeared to hold increasingly less relevance to its citizens (Hlavach, personal communication 2007, August 31; McGeough 2007). In 2006, city planners, The Land Conservancy, and community supporters worked together to purchase the property and were ultimately successful in protecting this property by adding it to the heritage registry.

This story of saving the historic Joy Kogawa House personifies a quote by Lowenthal in 1979: “Things worth saving need not necessarily be beautiful or historic as long as they are familiar or well loved” (1979: 555, in Jones & Shaw 1997: 3). Evidently, the saving of the Joy Kogawa House is not only a successful example in conserving a major piece of social history, but this case also engaged the public and heritage practitioners to revisit official heritage values and the

controversies embedded in them. The preservation of the Joy Kogawa House reveals that conservation of places with social meaning is possible if there is sufficient public lobbying and, as I discovered in my interviews, many heritage planners desire to protect places with social meaning as much as the citizens do. The Joy Kogawa House became a point of realization for heritage planners that the current conservation approach fails to conserve places that are necessarily meaningful to its citizens.

Economic currency

Beyond the aesthetic values and the parameters of the legal tools defined by the Vancouver Charter, the emphasis on architectural heritage is also relevant to economic development – but perhaps to a lesser extent. To briefly digress from the critique of heritage policies, one may argue that there was no economic incentive to preserve the Historic Joy Kogawa House. Although a thorough analysis of the economics of heritage policy-making is outside the scope of this study, a brief discussion of the role of economic influences on heritage conservation is warranted. In fact, heritage architecture continues to be used in economic strategies that include tourism and urban regeneration (Graham 2002).

In old urban districts, skid rows were transformed into historic tourist attractions, such as in New Orleans and San Francisco (Ford 1994). In Larry R. Ford's book, *Buildings and Cities* (1994), he notes that in the 1950s New Orleans' historic French Quarter brought economic profits second only to its port (Ford 1994). It appears that the British Columbian government envisions a similar role for heritage conservation. Not only is the heritage conservation branch situated within the

ministry responsible for tourism, the Province also explicitly describes the economic benefits of conserving heritage (see Appendix E).

Issue Two: Missing communities, missing histories

Although the City of Vancouver claims that its architectural landscapes bring Vancouver's histories "into our daily lives" (City of Vancouver 2003a), it seems that architecture alone does not have the capacity to inclusively capture the narratives of Vancouver. As described earlier, the social meanings and historic importance contained in the Joy Kogawa House were not enough to obtain heritage protection easily in an evaluation system weighted in favour of architectural heritage. To expand on these issues, the priority on built heritage creates a second dilemma for certain groups of people: people who may no longer possess their *milieux de mémoire* or original places of memory. More specifically, certain communities were evicted from their homes or neighbourhood as a consequence of exclusionary policies in the early days of Vancouver, including indigenous resettlements following European contact, or urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s, among other examples. In some instances, government agencies arranged new settlements for the evicted communities in housing projects, special districts, or neighbouring provinces. Some evicted communities dispersed after dislocation. In many cases, the sites where these people were evicted were demolished and redeveloped, or colonized, leaving no trace of the original built heritage to preserve and mark those fleeting local histories under current heritage policies. As an indirect repercussion of current conservation policies that emphasize architectural heritage, the histories of certain groups are often left untold, forgotten, or relegated to cultural, institutional spaces such as city archives or museums.

Examples of evicted communities from the landscape of present-day Vancouver include the black community in the Strathcona neighbourhood (or *Example One: Hogan's Alley* in see Chapter 2, pp. 16-17) now located between the current Union and Georgia viaducts. It is a site that feels like a transient place with no community ever having been there. The only existing historic building in the landscape from Hogan's Alley is the Chinese Lutheran Church, which was, at one point, the African Methodist Episcopal Fountain Chapel (Hendrix 1979). Other examples of evicted communities include the Coast Salish people who were confined to reservations, and Japanese-Canadians interned during the Second World War. A Coast Salish community was again displaced when the people of the former Indian Reserve 6, known as the Kitsilano reserve located across the water from Vancouver's Downtown, were relocated to North Vancouver; built in its place was a brewery, the Vancouver Museum, the City Archive, and the planetarium, Macmillan Space Centre. There are also families of mixed ancestry that embody some of the intersections between cultures. Recently, there have been a few local history projects about mixed children with Native ancestry, who may have spent part of their childhood living between one parent's home on their reservation and their other parent's home in the city, but who for many reasons eventually settled on the reservation and left few traces of this history in the city (see Jacob & Cha's *A Tribe of One* [film] 2003; see descriptions of *Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006, Chapter 5).

These forms of exile leave fewer traces of certain communities' existence in the city, leaving them out of the history of this land. The remnants of the past influence how we remember history in the present. The eviction of certain groups from their places in the past could also mean a removal of their present in public heritage, memories, and identity of a place. Some communities hold public cultural activities to commemorate their communities' former relationships with its

milieux de mémoire; others may have official street plaques or memorials. Still, descendants of certain histories have less capacity to revive these memories and acknowledge parts of the past that represent their contributions to the city.

Issue Three: Lost references

Another consequence that transpires from an architecture-focused heritage conservation program is its impact on interpretation and education. The official plaques and descriptions will often reflect the emphasis on architecture and render a significant part of heritage, cultural social history memories, absent. The City of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program evidently emphasizes architectural heritage. The descriptive information on their heritage case studies accessible from their website includes architect, building, architectural style, and in some cases, its uses³⁰, but rarely any descriptions relevant to the case's socio or cultural historical contexts (City of Vancouver 2003f). Likewise, a plaque typically contains the name of the building, the architect or builder's name, and the architectural significance; occasionally, there would be mention of some of the building's uses, physical context of the site, or the background of a prominent property owner (see example in Appendix F). Aside from some social history found on the website's online walking tour, most of the Heritage Conservation Program appears to emphasize architectural merits.³¹ This architectural emphasis, I argue, does not adequately capture the depth and complexity of locally significant meanings associated with a place and, as such, a place's context and associated histories then become "lost references".

³⁰ The best example is the case study on "The Barn: Artist Co-op Studios" which describes how neighbours recall their parents' stories of this building serving as a home for fire hall horses (City of Vancouver 2001).

³¹ The City of Vancouver's Community Pages webpages contain some social history and its Chinatown Revitalization Program website links to a detailed social and cultural history of Chinatown's society buildings prepared by the Chinese Canadian Historical Society titled *Historical Study of the Society Buildings in Chinatown* (2005).

Lost references occur in part because heritage sites may not bear a description containing sufficient history and context. Then, this “lost” is compounded by new people arriving in Vancouver, such as new immigrants, migrants, temporary residents, and new generations, who do not share the organically formed understanding of this place’s past, and would not have the capacity to acknowledge the significance of a structure beyond its superficial qualities. The late cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer describes lost references to the past in his writing on old photographs. In an essay titled, “Photography”, Siegfried Kracauer (1995) explores a scenario where grandchildren are looking at a sixty-year old photograph taken of their grandmother. The photograph depicted a grandmother at twenty-four years old, when she was a “film diva” dressed in then-fashionable crinoline.

Once the grandmother’s costume has lost its relationship to the present, it will no longer be funny; it will be peculiar, like an ocean-dwelling octopus. One day the diva will lose her demonic quality and her bangs will go the same way as the chignons. This is how the elements crumble, since they are not held together. (Kracauer 1995: 62).

He refers to how the static medium of photography cannot hold meaning to its image or façade without the image holding some form of currency with the present. Entering a place etched with history that does not evoke intimate memories is similar to shuffling through old photographs of people from a different time. The frame of time captured may be so disconnected to one’s own life experience that the meanings and stories the photograph, or architecture, is trying to convey become lost.

For example, historical landmarks such as the Dominion building across from Victory Square, the Woodward’s building and its searing neon ‘W’ sign, and the Wing Sang building in Chinatown attempts to bring historical context to Vancouver’s present streetscape. But while these physical heritage assets may act as a repository of personal, shared, and living memories,

their architectural heritage and aesthetics alone do not adequately convey the social meanings and historical context(s) that have changed over time, particularly if associated memories are rarely preserved and presented in an easy-to-access manner such as on building plaques. Some parts of these histories may be retrieved from archives, books, and community elders, and are sometimes referenced in festivals and walking tours, but these stories are not always present during visits to these locally significant sites.

At the root of this conservation gap is incongruence between the character of place and the commemoration of place. Heritage conservation often attempts to identify a heritage site and then make that site's history and identity static. But real places, as Doreen Massey would argue, do not bear those qualities. Massey proposes three premises for a progressive concept of place:

1. Places are absolutely not static (Massey 1994: 155);
2. Boundaries may be necessary for certain circumstances but are not necessary for the conceptualization of place (Massey 1994: 155); and
3. Places do not have single, unique identities. (Massey 1994: 155-6).

Massey's concept of place is useful for interpreting place and place history, and relates to a way of thinking about place that needs to be considered in heritage conservation practice.

Vancouver's historic Chinatown, for example, should not be essentialized as simply a Chinese place. It was originally where the Chinese labourers set up their camps, and was later named and designated by government health officials as "Chinatown" during the early days of Vancouver (Anderson 1991). Yet, even in such a distinct place, evidence gathered from oral stories indicates that this site was also a place for many cultural communities to find work and services that they may not have been able to access elsewhere (see *Opening Doors*, 1979, edited by Daphne

Marlatt and Carol Itter, and see *Storyscapes Chinatown* in Chapter 5). As another example that speaks to Massey's concept of place is the Woodward's Building property. This site was formerly a well-known department store selling affordable products and later a site of community activism for social housing. Presently, this place has been rebranded as "an intellectual property," foreshadowing its mixed-use development that plans to retain some of the façade of the original building (Rennie Marketing Systems 2006). As this site evolves over time, the neon "W" for Woodward's will be associated with a different identity than that experienced or remembered by the previous generations. While these redeveloped heritage sites are a part of natural urban growth and transformation, these sites also reference associated memories that illustrate the areas' history, character, and evolution, and are valuable to understanding the context and identity of a place.

EXAMPLE FIVE
Wing Sang Building (1889 – present)

As a similar example, on an adjacent parallel street, the Wing Sang Building is being redeveloped, coincidentally, also involving Rennie Marketing Systems. Located on the original street of Chinatown, the Wing Sang Building (1889, extension built in 1901) is Chinatown's oldest building and is currently undergoing an adaptive re-use process (see Figure 3.1). This building was home to the prominent Yip family, as well as the site of community services including a Chinese school and an unofficial bank for early Chinese settlers since prejudice prevented them from accessing services elsewhere (Anderson 1991; Wong 2003; Bobinski 1986 [unpublished]; Government of Canada 2000). When descendants of the Yip family moved elsewhere, this building became a rooming house with ground level retail space occupied by a number of unsuccessful Chinese businesses (see Figure 3.2). Most recently, the Jameson

Development Company purchased this property (Mackie 2004, April 17; Urban Land Institute [tour] 2007, July 11). They gutted the property and added a new foundation, pipes, wiring, an elevator and parking to satisfy the current codes and needs. The Wing Sang building will accommodate the corporate offices and private gallery of major Vancouver developer Rennie Marketing Systems (Mackie 2004) (see Figure 3.3 for model of development). As such, this building will be reserved for exclusive use without public access.

Figure 3.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed depicts Yip Sang and his family in front of the Wing Sang Building. This image was dated 1905 and is available at the Vancouver City Archives.

Figure 3.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed depicts the Wing Sang Building. This image was taken by Troy Whitbread in 1998.

Figure 3.3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed depicts a model of the redevelopment plans for the Wing Sang Building and the new condominiums. This image was taken by Glenn Baglo and printed in the *Vancouver Sun* on January 14, 2006.

The practice of heritage conservation is often approached in an essentialist and static manner (such as the historical narrative represented on the commemoration panel for Hamilton in *Example Three*). In conveying place history in an uncomplicated, seemingly apolitical, manner, certain historical narratives are lost except those contained in private memory (e.g. personal, familial, and community). The question for the future becomes how will people relate to these historic structures, beyond their aesthetics, if future generations and immigrants do not share a sustained connection with these historic places? More importantly, place identity, and the heritage that helps define it, should never be made static if it intends to be inclusive and reflective of dynamic social interrelations (Massey 1994: 169). This is part of a socializing process to help connect people within a society, and to foster a shared experience though shared space. This rethinking of place will provide principles upon which to observe and envision a more inclusive heritage conservation strategy.

Discussion: Relating to the *Genius Loci*

Here, I will return to the concept of the *genius loci* – the spirit, essence, or identity of place – discussed in the previous chapter and I will interpret it through the provincial and municipal heritage policies affecting the city of Vancouver described in this chapter. The established commemoration approach that relies on built heritage and architectural significance translates into a city heritage landscape of a certain standard of architecture – mostly ones that are well built (structural “integrity”) with unique aesthetic features (City of Vancouver 2003c). Therefore, most likely these structures were built with some affluence. In fact, the defined heritage streetscapes listed by the Heritage Conservation Program are located almost entirely on the

wealthier, west side of the city (see Appendix G).³² People without the capacity to own or retain property will be excluded from these heritage initiatives. Consequently, as the people who know these particular histories leave (through migration or death), fewer and fewer people will understand the complexity of each place's history, and its *genius loci*, beyond the aesthetic of architectural heritage. The unacknowledged histories missing from a place's *genius loci* are, in part, a result of the inclusions and exclusions of heritage policies and programs.

The systemic gaps reaffirm certain narratives such that, in an indirect and likely unintentional way, the current system carries some of heritage's former role as a colonial instrument to redefine territory. Sharing the perspective of many postcolonial writers, theorists, and activists, British-born geographer Nick Blomley asserts that "[t]he creation of the city requires active place making that relies upon certain forgettings of the past, as well as some creative reconstructions" (2004: 114). He describes the process of what he calls "urban displacement" in two parts: removal and emplacement. In brief, Blomley's concept of "urban displacement" refers to the removal of an indigenous presence to the city outskirts, or to associate Aboriginals with nature and the past, while redefining this place as a settler society, making this place "into a white place through physical settlement and occupation"³³ (Blomley 2004: 114).

The distortion of Vancouver's place history is not only a consequence of gaps produced by an architecturally focused conservation approach; the distortion also developed from residual colonialist heritage markers.³⁴ Street names, for instance, rarely reflect the indigenous and other

³² It is also possible that the property owners in the west side of Vancouver are also more interested in nominating their property for the Heritage Registry.

³³ Or, perhaps, a whitewashed form of multiculturalism.

³⁴ Mapping is another tool to reconstruct a landscape that has lasting effects on a place's identity. Blomley (2004) describes how the British mapping of this landscape represents more than instrumental ends. The act of mapping transforms the landscape, an "organized form of forgetting", such that "native presence is literally erased from the map, replaced by a cadastral grid" (Blomley 2004: 122). A similar interpretation sees this form of mapping as an

cultural heritage of Vancouver. Instead, as retired librarian and Vancouver Historical Society past president Elizabeth Walker (1999) observes, street names in Vancouver are mostly of British origin, replicating names from Britain and people and events significant to British history. As communication theorist Harold Innis would explain, colonial projects advance by devising and reinforcing classifications, to normalized new classification as “common sense” and overpower local native knowledge (Innis, in Cruikshank 2005: 62). To quote Blomley, he explains that original native place names were replaced by British ones to “celebrat[e] the British imperial project and corporate capital” (2004: 122). Many street names in Vancouver, like Denman and Trutch³⁵, honour British-born men as local heroes. European names for places have also replaced oral indigenous ones (Walker 1999).³⁶ The predominant use of settler names was a nomenclature tool to establish place identity in new states, in colonized territory, or in a change of regime around the world. Naming places help affirm a selective identity.³⁷

A historic building is a historical representation; a heritage marker is a mediation of history. Both may reinforce former ideological representations and interpretations of the past. For cultural policy scholar Robert Hewison (1997), heritage culture creates a certain illusion of the past to

instrument that fills the imagined emptiness, like Melbourne, Australia, with European entitlement (Louise Johnson 1994, in Blomley 2004). Symbolically, the importance of mapping in the starting of a new authority and new identity of a place is recognized in the commemorative panel for Lauchlan A. Hamilton, who surveyed and drew the streets of Vancouver (see Chapter 2; Blomley 2004; Walker 1999)³⁴; furthermore, the commemorative panel describes this land, before it was established as the City of Vancouver, as “empty”.

³⁵ This name is a controversial one as Joseph William Trutch was a land surveyor and politician who helped construct the Canadian Pacific Railway as well as, in the development of Aboriginal land policies, dismissing Aboriginal title and ensured that reserves were of minimal size (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2000).

³⁶ Only a handful of places in Vancouver have names referencing Aboriginal heritage and most names are not necessarily relevant to this area (e.g. Cree Street, Haida Drive, Tualat Drive, and Kamloops Street) except for places like streets on Musqueam Reserve, the neighbourhood and street diversion named Kitsilano (after Squamish Chief Khahtsahlano), and the recently named Chief Dan George Centre. Even for Chinatown, there are two alley names that reference Chinese heritage, Shanghai and Canton. According to Walker (1999), the name of Sotao Avenue, a private thoroughfare in south Vancouver, is also of Chinese origin.

³⁷ Furthermore, a planner with the City of Vancouver disclosed that suggestions for street names in a new community in South False Creek were requested internally over email without any public process or consultation. (personal communication, 2007).

detract attention from present conflicts. The *genius loci* and its manifestations in the *lieux de mémoire*, or deliberately created places of memory, are as much social constructions (whether for national-building, community-unity, or place-making purposes) as heritage policies and guidelines. Current Vancouver heritage policies call for a more inclusive and holistic approach. The systemic exclusions created by seemingly benign interest in preserving physical heritage landscape raises issues around the kind of identity and the kind of place represented by Vancouver. To be an inclusive place means that the place and its identity reflect its people. In *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden believes that before a city can create true public places, it must engage in local histories inclusively, even with difficult memories, “to mourn and to celebrate who we really are” (1995: 238).

The examples and ideas presented in this chapter do not imply that heritage conservation should be arrested by controversy; on the contrary, more work needs to be done on these issues. This chapter has identified the exclusionary nature of current heritage policies in Vancouver. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, international heritage advocates have criticized the emphasis on built heritage (as tangible heritage) as failing to serve all cultures. In 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* and began addressing the need to conserve intangible heritage as well. Intangible heritage offers people without heritage property to share and publicly acknowledge their histories based upon the “potent memories in its streets and sidewalks, fences and alleys, buildings and vacant lots” (Hayden 1995: 247).

The next two chapters explore alternative local history projects in Vancouver that draw upon one form of intangible heritage: storytelling. Storytelling, as the next chapter explains, enables multiple, overlapping histories of a place to be shared in a responsive manner that reflects current

contexts. The final chapter will propose ways to better integrate intangible heritage into tangible (built) heritage projects, and formalize this to ensure that the staff of community art projects spend more time on their work than they have to do seeking funding.

NEO-STORYTELLING AS INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: SHARING MEMORIES IN THE STREETS OF VANCOUVER

He was 99 and a half years old and was born in 1898 in a Musqueam village at the mouth of the Fraser River. Together we spent many hours driving along the shoreline of what is now called the city of Vancouver, my grandfather beside me, and one or more of my children in the back seat, listening closely to him telling us the history of our great lands. The same histories his grandparents, who raised him, told him as they drove along in horse and buggy. The stories their grandparents told them, walking along the same shores or in their canoes. About 300 years of stories are still being passed on. Because of these oral traditions my grandfather can rest in peace, knowing I have, as he did, retained in "my computer -- my brain" what we shared as the peoples of this land.

Because I was blessed to have this time with him, I will take with me into the future the success and integrity of our people through these reflections.

I know who I am.
I know my history.
I know where I come from.

My roots are planted firmly in the very soil that my ancestors are buried in. I am connected, my children are connected, and my grandchildren will be connected. We will be here another millennium as we have been here for nine millenniums past.

Some people say that there are no signs on the mountaintops, that it is not written anywhere that this is First Nations land. Anywhere you open the earth there is evidence. It is written in the earth.
-- Debra Sparrow, "Know who you are" (*Portrait V2K* 1999)

In *The Texture of Memory* (1993), James E. Young suggests that the creation of public memorials and days of commemoration intends to foster a shared sense of values, ideals, past and future, memory, and ultimately, forge a unified national identity. Constructing local identity, particularly in contested or colonized places, through commemoration of certain events, objects, and people is one way to assert entitlement to a place. However, long after the need to assert cultural dominance, remaining public heritage markers will continue to perpetuate those established narratives in defining the past while marginalizing other histories – at least, until counter-narratives challenge the established ones. When British settlers began developing

Vancouver as a city, these settlers asserted entitlement over this landscape to the exclusion of the Coast Salish people and other settlers by remapped this place and asserted a new social hierarchy. They also redefined the history of the settlers as the official history of this land: as artist and activist Tania Willard from the Secwepemc Nation observes, “history has often been erased – been erased by settlers, erased by the development of the city of Vancouver, justification for the city, and all that kind of stuff”; she calls this “the first injustice of this land” (personal communication, 2006). Presently, much of Vancouver’s official heritage landscape continues to prominently honour its European heritage above other cultures; this is evident in Vancouver’s street names. A contemporary heritage conservation plan should call for a more inclusive and integrated approach to remember its multilayered, multicultural identity.

Aside from City of Vancouver’s Heritage Conservation Program, a number of local history projects have been actively recovering and adding new layers to the established public heritage with Vancouver residents’ personal memories of this place. These storytelling projects engage the public on a different level than traditional heritage programs that emphasize architectural values. Storytelling represents a form of heritage UNESCO identifies as intangible and UNESCO has begun actively promoting the safeguarding of intangible heritage. Intangible heritage refers generally to non-physical heritage and it has come a long way to attain official status with UNESCO. At the international level, UNESCO was motivated to acknowledge intangible heritage as a counterpart to tangible heritage because, previously, the established priority of built heritage did not have the capacity to include the heritage of all cultures. At an informal and possibly subconscious level, Vancouver is host to a number of intangible heritage projects.

This chapter, as well as the following one, focuses on storytelling as a form of intangible heritage, and more precisely, neo-storytelling as a contemporary interpretation of storytelling that involves mediation between the storyteller and its mass audience. I have selected three recent story projects as illustrative examples: *Storyscapes Chinatown*, *Our Community Story*, and *Portrait V2K*. Unlike conventional public heritage projects, these unofficial ones incorporate more participatory and community engagement processes. I selected these three projects because each one uses a different process toward collection and presentation of local living histories.

- *Our Community Story* is a neighbourhood project developed and coordinated by two of its recent residents. It produced local history artwork driven by youth and their artist mentors.
- *Portrait V2K* is a City of Vancouver official Millennium project. It received about 1800 submissions of personal stories and old photographs, with almost 250 of the stories presented on plaques or engraved into boulders around the city.
- Lastly, *Storyscapes Chinatown* focused on stories between two particular cultural communities and their relationship. As such, the project members and participants also reflected the bicultural nature of its subject.

These three projects all involve some form of mediation in order to present these stories to the public. Another part of this chapter will highlight some concerns around recording and presenting oral stories raised by Walter Benjamin and anthropologist Julie Cruikshank, namely around ethics and the cultural experience.

This chapter briefly retraces the evolution of UNESCO's heritage policies, presents literature on stories and storytelling, and explores two projects, *Our Community Story* and *Portrait V2K*. *Storyscapes Chinatown* will be discussed in Chapter Five in greater depth.

Intangible heritage: A background of UNESCO's development

In a special issue on intangible heritage in *Museum International*, Director-General of UNESCO Koïchiro Matsuura recalls UNESCO's oversight of intangible heritage and, consequently, the under-representation of certain heritages around the world.

I was deeply concerned about the geographic imbalance among sites included in the World Heritage List. As I delved deeper into this issue, I came to recognize that, through its exclusive focus on tangible cultural heritage and natural sites – most of which are located in the 'North' – the 1972 World Heritage Convention was unable to deal adequately with the living cultural expressions of the 'South'.
(Matsuura 2004: 4)

In the same issue of *Museum International*, Dawson Munjeri, the former Executive Director of National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, shares Matsuura's sentiments. He elaborates on UNESCO's former emphasis on "authenticity" to assess heritage value and how authenticity was defined to relate almost exclusively to physical attributes of heritage – "authenticity in materials"; "authenticity in workmanship"; "authenticity in design"; and, "authenticity in setting or context" (Munjeri 2004: 13). Munjeri attributes the discrepancy between tangible and intangible heritage to the established values and valorization of physical attributes of heritage. These established values and valorization officially shifted in 2003 when UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. But until then, intangible heritage was a largely neglected area of protection by UNESCO.

In the editorial note of this same issue of *Museum International*, Mounir Bouchenaki³⁸ (2004) recounts the broadening definition of cultural heritage over the past three decades. According to Bouchenaki (2004), *The Venice Charter* of 1964 dealt with architectural heritage and "monuments and sites", and soon, this definition expanded to include a greater variety of cultural landscapes such as historical gardens, and architecture such as vernacular, industrial, and 20th

³⁸ Assistant Director General for Culture, UNESCO.

century styles. It was not until 1973 that Bolivia raised the issue of copyright and intellectual property protection of folklore. Although UNESCO did not immediately form an expert governmental meeting on folklore, UNESCO did so a decade later and the recommendations were adopted in 1989 (Aikawa 2004; Bouchenaki 2004). Bolivia's request for copyright and intellectual property protection, although not ratified, did set an important precedent for recognizing these types of heritage.

In 1992, UNESCO introduced a new program called *Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Aikawa 2004). Then, in October 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The adopted convention sets standards and binding legal instruments. This *Convention* defined intangible heritage as follows:

[T]he practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and it provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (2003 July).

Examples of intangible heritage includes, but is not limited to, languages, oral literature, performing arts and body technique, knowledge and know-how, and “narrative forms in all its diversity” (*ICOM News* 2003: 5).

As these policies develop on international and state levels, a number of progressive municipalities with greater access to funds are taking up the challenge to integrate intangible heritage into their localities. The Ville de Montréal's heritage policy (2005) includes a section on intangible cultural heritage. An administrative report by the City of Vancouver proposed a heritage conservation plan for the redevelopment of the Woodward's Building property that

includes both physical conservation and intangible conservation (McGeough 2006, March 8). However, it remains unclear how cities will implement intangible heritage conservation. The projects and initiatives described by UNESCO for intangible heritage provide examples, but many of the described initiatives seem to focus on heritage objects that will likely be preserved in institutional spaces like museums, archives, and cultural centres.

Generally, intangible heritage, because of its non-physical quality, tends to be less suitable for presentation in everyday public spaces like plazas or sidewalks. Food, dance, performance, as examples, require designated time and space for preparation, sampling, exhibition, and/or experience. Language and knowledge systems require special conservation systems. Although these forms of intangible heritage are vital for interactive engagement and precise documentation, it is also important to give intangible heritage a permanent presence in the everyday public sphere. This is especially important when involving certain people's histories that have been disconnected with the landscape due to the lack of heritage architecture. Storytelling (or mediated-storytelling), for one, has been demonstrated as one form of intangible heritage that works in everyday public spaces, thus reconnecting place-based intangible heritage to its *milieu de mémoire* (the original place of memory). Before I explore some of the storytelling projects in Vancouver, I will first explore the notion of story and storytelling.

On Story and Storytelling

The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story.
-- Walter Benjamin (2000 [1936]: 93).

A richer vein now examines storytelling as a practice that is part of everyday life...
-- Julie Cruikshank, on humanities and social sciences (2005: 60)

The telling of stories is one of the oldest forms of history making (Cruikshank 2005).

Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank views stories as a “framework for understanding historical and contemporary issues” and a venue to “take in and interpret the world” (2005: 60). Specific to local history, Dolores Hayden explains how “storytelling with the shapes of times use[s] the forms of the city...to connect residents with urban landscape history and foster a strong sense of belonging” (1995: 229). Storytelling, as a form of transmission, has evolved over time and across cultures. In the context of heritage conservation, stories are often transcribed and translated into text, thereby transforming its oral quality to a textual format. This section presents some of the literature on stories to provide a better understanding of its qualities as a form of intangible heritage. This understanding will help inform strategies and approaches to handling and integrating stories into heritage landscapes.

One concern in preserving oral stories is how the recorder interprets or presents the story. In the social sciences, Franz Boas popularized textual recording of oral stories. However, scholars have criticized Boas’ approach for his selective representation of information and, as such, misrepresentation of indigenous stories. Cruikshank observes, “Boas erased his own role and that of individual Native narrators, as well as the context from which each speaker spoke” (2005: 60). Although story gathering continues to play an important role in academic work, story research has progressed beyond the former “scientific” interest by historians and anthropologists for “accuracy, objectivity, reliability, and verifiability” (Cruikshank 2005: 60).

Another concern came with the advent of mass media technologies. Walter Benjamin, in his well-cited essay titled “The Storyteller” (2000 [1936]), claims that the role of the storyteller has diminished over the last century, and attributes this phenomenon to the consumption of text-

based, mass-printed stories made available by the invention of the printing press. For Benjamin, storytelling involves oral communication, based on the experience of the storyteller, whereas stories translated into text form, in mass-produced books, contain isolated experiences of their authors. The latter form offers no immediate opportunity for discussion, interaction, or contextual interpretation that relates to the reader. As Vancouver-based international artist Jeff Wall writes, in reference to Benjamin's work and his photographic interpretation of *The Storyteller* (1986), story-telling has "lost its function as a result of the technological transformation of literacy" (1992: 7).

Benjamin suggests that the decline of storytelling coincides with a decline of the intimate experience³⁹ of sharing between the teacher and learner (as opposed to the "studier"). The archaic storyteller as someone who is a sage, teacher, and counsel engages listeners interactively by interpreting their world through the performance of storytelling (Benjamin 2000 [1936]). The storyteller allows legends, myths, and memories to evolve, such that stories remain relevant and reflective of current contexts and collective experiences. As the late Harold Innis once described, oral tradition allows perpetual revision of history by actively reinterpreting the past. This

³⁹ This use of "intimate" refers to Jürgen Habermas' concept of the intimate sphere ("intimsphäre"). In his 1996 book titled *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas revisits the domains of society, namely the public and private sphere but also the intimate sphere. Habermas (1996) explains that the intimate sphere was inspired by western societies' transition into modernity and the rise of the bourgeois class. In his examination of the etymology of the public and private spheres, he finds a vague separation between the two terms in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance (for example, the church and state) until the arrival of the current capitalist system and the bourgeois class. Modernity's secularization of society offered new opportunities for self-determination, privacy, cultural activities, and comfort commodities to the new class but, at the same time, it reduced space for subjectivity, the sacred, and the personal (see Tomás Maldonado 1995; Olalquiaga 1998). Habermas (1996) claims that bourgeois social structures were more distinctly divided into the private realm and the sphere of public authority, where the public was the state and the private consists of society. The private realm (society) contains all aspects of civil society including commodity exchange (the market) and political dialogue, and within its depths lays the "interior domain" of the bourgeois family, the intimate sphere. The experience of the intimate sphere guides understanding within the civil domain, and this deep understanding occurs where modernist ideologies cannot penetrate. By the 20th century, the private sphere became increasingly "deprivatized" through the institutionalizing and alienation of labour and commodity exchange and the intimate sphere began to diminish within the private (Habermas 1996: 152).

flexibility enables a gifted storyteller to adapt a given narrative to “make sense of a confusing situation” (Innis, in Cruikshank 2005). Through storytelling, the storyteller can engage listeners, their memories, and ensure that their stories never expire or lose their references. For Benjamin, the diminishing role of the storyteller also diminishes the hearers’ “capacity to listen” and for effective dialogue (cited in Cruikshank 2005: 64).

These works on storytelling offer points of consideration for story-based heritage projects. Cruikshank’s work (2005) on oral history asserts the need for proper transmission and reproduction of stories, in a manner that respects the storyteller and their stories. Benjamin (2000 [1936]) shares this respect, describing storytellers as a sage, teacher, and counsel. He argues that the mass-mediated stories cannot adequately replace the storyteller. The qualities of the oral form allow stories to transform and reflect listeners’ context, while the mediated form produces a permanent, fix record, a fossil. Thus, in local history projects, story gatherers need to be keenly aware that stories are the interpretation by storytellers and special care is needed when removing these stories from the intimate experience of storytelling to the public heritage landscape.

Bringing storytelling to the streets

While the category “intangible heritage” may seem foreign, employing stories as a part of a place-based public heritage project is familiar to many places. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Dolores Hayden launched and led The Power of Place, a non-profit corporation “to situate women’s history and ethnic history in downtown [Los Angeles], in public places” (1997: xiii). The Power of Place completed a number of history projects on Los Angeles from the perspectives of workers, and African-, Latina-, and Asian-American women (see Hayden 1997).

More recently, Vancouver has also created a number of place-based heritage story projects. Keeping in mind that stories located in public streets do take on a different quality than the “storyteller” described by Benjamin, Cruikshank, and others – thus, the name “neo-storytelling” rather than “storytelling” – here are two local history projects that brought Vancouver residents’ personal stories and memories to the streets of their city.

Our Community Story

In the sixties, when I started barbering, it was the style of the Beatles so everybody had the long hair. So a lot of customers coming in and shout, don’t touch my hair!

The father would bring the child there – the kid’s got to school the next day, to beat his friends, you know, so he doesn’t want to be teased, you know, with short hair. But his father, especially the Italian people, they want to see their son with nice short hair, tapered up, and buzzed, like, you know?

Most of the time, you know, the father would phone before so he don’t want to talk in front of the child here, how he want the hair cut. So they phone before, I’m going to come down and you make sure you going to cut short for him, very short. So the son sits in this chair. And the father sit down here and say, Don’t make it too short. The father just wants to make you understand that he’s not the guy who said that. And we had no choice. So, we had to cut it like he said on the phone. And the little kid, he’s crying. ...The father and mother come here and they say, Why you cut it so short?

-- story from Sorrento Barbers, “Four on Hastings” [film]⁴⁰ (*Our Community Story* 2005).

I had no idea that there was a war going on. It was scary because nobody would talk to us. All of a sudden we were, in their eyes, we were enemies, I guess. And we didn’t realize that. We’re too young, just way too young to understand anything.

And then we were evacuated.

Uh huh.

And where did we go from there, did you say?

Hastings Park.

Hastings Park.

⁴⁰ Artists Lea Moss, Pietro Sammarco, Emma Banks, Wendy Chen, Julie Jones, and Lucy MacKenzie.

Yes. No we didn't know what was going to happen, we were just told that we were going to be sent to Hastings Park.

'Cause you were only allowed to take so many suitcases.

One suitcase.

Oh, we had to leave everything.

Were we allowed to take one or two?

I don't know if it was by pound or what?

I thought it was by suitcase.

-- conversation from "Stories of Internment"[audio installation]⁴¹ on Hastings Park (*Our Community Story* 2005)

And my father died December 1st – it was just a few months there. He wanted his body cremated. And what can we do? So, when he died, we had no choice but to do it ourselves.

So, the old men and young people, and women, got up into the hill, chopped down some trees, and he was cremated. And when his remains went up, I watched him. I left after that, and my first funeral, and my dear dad. You know, and that is something that will never, never, never leave me. And next day, we didn't have anything to put his remains in. And he loves cigarette, so we had a cigarette kennel left, and chopsticks. And we went up the hill, and now here's his brain, here's his heart, picking up his remains.

And, you know, this was the most difficult experience, but it wasn't the only one. After that, all the people that died, in that location, because it was too far from any crematory, had to cremate their remains that way. And the community helped.

-- story from "Stories of Internment"[audio installation] on Cremation (*Our Community Story* 2005)

In 2005, Media Un-Defined Collective launched *Our Community Story*, a community history and public art project in the Hastings Sunrise Neighbourhood. Situated in Vancouver's Eastside, *Our Community Story* engaged local youths and seniors in recovering this community's living history through artistic processes. The team was made up of a diverse group of fourteen youths (under twenty years old) and six artist mentors. Collectively, they interviewed over thirty seniors in the neighbourhood and, in three smaller groups, they focused on three aspects of this neighbourhood's history:

⁴¹ Artists Jaimie Robson, Igor Santizo, Karl Fousek, Camilo Porter, Bruce MacDonald, Mimi Li, and Mitchell Vong.

- “Stories of the Waterfront”,
- “Four on Hastings” included stories on small owner-run businesses, and
- “Sights and Sounds of Hastings Park”, which included stories of Playland, PNE, Hastings Racecourse, the Japanese Internment, and the general neighbourhood.

These stories were presented as photos, short films, sound installations, and an animation in featured shops along East Hastings Street, a main corridor of this community, in addition to venues such as the Hastings Community Centre and a nearby artist-run centre, Video In Studios. Since the exhibition, these stories have inspired eleven story tiles to be installed in the sidewalks of this neighbourhood.

The Hastings-Sunrise neighbourhood is one of the first established neighbourhoods in Vancouver, and was the subject of *Our Community Story* (City of Vancouver 2006a; *Our Community Story* 2006). Prior to the 1900s, indigenous people created a trail along the waterfront area and named this area, *Khanahoot*, meaning “to appear or be born” (noted in MacDonald 1992: 11). More recently, in the late 1800s, this area of native cranberry marshes, trees, swamps, and wildlife became the first of a number of developments in what was to become known as Vancouver. This neighbourhood, then called “New Brighton”, had the first ferry service between Burrard Inlet to Victoria, the first hotel, the first road, and the first telephone service (City of Vancouver 2006a; MacDonald 1992; *Our Community Story* 2006). Its resort reputation led to the development of the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) and Hastings Park, which held the popular horse racecourse. During these developments, its residential population continued to grow. The history of Hastings-Sunrise includes people of many cultural backgrounds including First Nations people, a large Chinese-speaking population, and a significant Italian-speaking community (Statistics Canada 2002).

More than a century since the opening of Vancouver's first hotel in this neighbourhood, art school graduates Maya Ersan and Jaimie Robson, who form the Media Un-Defined Collective, created *Our Community Story*. When asked how the idea of this project came about, Jaimie replied,

It really came from our own curiosity about our own neighbourhood. I had been living there for, I guess, four years, at the time. We started hanging out at some of the local establishments, some of the local cafes and there's quite a few local people that frequent those cafes as well. So we ended just hearing stories from people that we would chat with in the shop and being really inspired by that. ...And we got curious to know more. (Jaimie Robson, personal communication, 2007).

After securing funding, assembling an advisory board, and putting together a team of youth and artist mentors, the project began. The project took place over six months.

While the City of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program was not involved with *Our Community Story*, other city departments supported this project in a number of ways. The Engineering Department approved the sidewalk tiles. The community centres offered their facilities. *Our Community Story* also received funding from various departments. The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks Board provided more than half the funding for this project. *Our Community Story* received funding through a number of grants and programs such as the Neighbourhood Matching Fund, the Artists in Residence Program, the Community Public Art Program, and the Get-Out! Program. Jaimie and Maya spent a significant amount of time applying to each department individually and are thankful that the City of Vancouver has great staff who gave them support and positive feedback.⁴²

⁴² Jaimie Robson said, "The people who work for the city are great, from my experience. Any funder that I've been in touch with had been very supportive. So they offered a lot of positive feedback, especially Bryan Newson, at Community Public Art grants" (personal communication, 2007).

Strengths and Accomplishments

In my interview with Jaimie Robson, she shared some of the strengths and accomplishment of *Our Community Story*. In particular, she stressed *Our Community Story*'s ability to engage youth and the wider community, and the foresight to develop an advisory committee that helped give direction to the project during its development and at times of conflict.

Advisory Committee

Overall, the advisory board filled valuable and necessary roles in the project. For *Our Community Story*, “it broadened our base of knowledge that we were coming from, and felt that it reflected the community more” (Robson, personal communication, 2007). The advisory group also took responsibility for mitigating and addressing conflict among members of the project. The five members of the advisory committee were invited to be part of this project because they were people who have experience in different parts of this neighbourhood. The committee met semi-regularly.

Youth engagement

Our Community Story engaged interested youth who wanted to be engaged. One of the youth said in an interview, “Basically, we just want to know more about this area and its history 'cause, I mean, it's been around so long and we haven't”. This project allowed youth to be essentially self-selected participants (Robson, personal communication, 2007). The youth participants submitted a letter expressing their interest in community art, local history, and participation in this project. As long as they fit the criteria of age and place of residence (East Vancouver), they were invited to an initial meeting about the project where they decided for themselves whether or

not they wanted to participate in this project. All youth participants completed this project, which is indicative of the ability of this project to engage youth.

Community engagement, community driven

Even though some members of *Our Community Story* described this project as a “community history project” and others describe it as a “community public art project”, the common term “community” symbolizes the collective belief in the value of community in this project (*GET OUT!* 2006a; Robson, personal communication, 2007). From the very beginning, this project received a lot of community support. Even informally, the coordinators would hear people talk about the project in the neighbourhood. As the project progressed, the community began to take ownership of it. For Jaimie, this was an indicator of success.

It really became its own creature...that we really couldn't control anymore. So, at one point we said, this really isn't our project anymore, this is fantastic. This project belongs to the group, the community. (Robson, personal communication, 2007).

Yet, this project has accomplished more than just youth engagement and community engagement. According to Karen Pittman (2001), a sociologist who has directed foundations and research on children and youth development, healthy development of youth and their communities require a healthy balance between the two groups. This means that youth contribute to their community, while the community gives support to their youth members. *Our Community Story* developed into an opportunity for community members and youth to engage in a shared interest and take ownership of the memories of their neighbourhood.

Challenges

Despite the strengths and accomplishments mentioned above, *Our Community Story* also faced a few challenges.

Funding

After Jaimie secured the first grant towards this project, a \$5000 Neighbourhood Matching Grant, Jaimie and Maya began reshaping the project. As with many projects, securing funding posed a major obstacle. “It took a lot of ground work – we totally pounded the pavement. We were out there, walking up and down Hastings Street. Again” (Robson, personal communication). They did receive support from community members, and each grant encouraged more grants.

Overworked and underpaid

Jaimie and Maya fundraised \$70,000. Although this may be a significant sum, it was also a small budget for the scale of what was produced. Artist mentors were paid an honorarium of several hundred dollars per month for meeting times and the use of their equipment. They only used basic media equipment to keep costs down; they purchased insurance for the artists’ equipment and ensured that broken equipment was repaired or replaced. The budget also paid the coordinators, however, Jaimie disclosed that they worked too much at times – “more than overtime” – on the project and, at the same time, they also needed to keep other jobs to supplement their income (personal communication, 2007). Jaimie was explicit that *Our Community Story* was their first project of this nature and so, some tasks took longer to address

than they would on their next project. Jaimie stated, “It did consume our lives completely but it was quite fantastic as well for our lives to be consumed by that.”

Social Inclusion

As previous chapters of this thesis has established, the history of a place has many overlapping layers. Ideally all layers of history would be included in a local history project, however, this may be difficult to accomplish in practice. For *Our Community Story*, Maya and Jaimie were nervous that people would feel excluded because this project could not include everyone or every cultural group in the project’s stories. Although this did not prove to be a major concern, Maya and Jaimie were also diligent in trying to be as inclusive as possible in their initial outreach activities, for example, the initial outreach materials were translated into the seven languages spoken in the neighbourhood.

Internal conflict

Sometimes conflicts are inevitable and the most important part is to determine the most appropriate strategy to address it. *Our Community Story* experienced one challenge with a mentoring artist. The project coordinators sought advice from the advisory committee. The advisory group took responsibility over this issue. Ultimately, the artist mentor left the project, deciding that this partnership was not a good fit. Jaimie admitted that while it caused a lot of distress between the coordinators and the artist, the relationship between the artist and the rest of the team (other artist mentors and the youth) remained positive.

Portrait V2K

Spring was heralded by the clickaty-clack of the lawn mowers; a really pleasant sound if heard from a distance. Think of the raucous sounds of power-mowers today. There was also the early morning "cock-a-doodle-do" of a neighbour's rooster, as many city people kept chickens. My father kept teams of horses at the south end of Cambie Bridge for his excavating business, and my great-uncle George, kept dairy cows near the south end of Oak Street until the early thirties.

Then there was the clip-clop of the delivery horses' hooves on the macadamized roads. This was especially memorable when heard in the stillness of the early morning darkness, as the milkman and his horse made their lonely way from door to door.

The "ah-oo-gah" of the old car horns briefly scattered the neighbourhood kids playing "scrub" in the roadway; no hard feelings, nor harsh words on either side.

The resounding "whack" of a wood-framed screen door, slamming behind a restless kid, who, always in and out of the house, is gone forever along with the high-pitched calls of children playing those old street games such as "Run Sheep Run" or "Kick the Can".

The streetcars on rails are gone along with the motorman's foot-operated, clanging bell – warning a dog off the tracks or a child chasing an errant ball.

Since television was non-existent and radio's were few, the call of "Extra! Extra! Read all about it! " was often heard as a boy jogged down the street with an armful of papers to sell. Seldom was the news of any importance. Nevertheless, kids were sent running out of the houses to buy a copy for five cents, or at least to try to find out what the news was.

-- Ina Trudgeon, "Sounds we no longer hear" (*Portrait V2K* 2000)

Portrait V2K is another local history project. This project asked Vancouver residents to submit their old photographs, personal stories and memories of this place. The response was overwhelming: an estimated 1800 submissions. *Portrait V2K* also inscribed 250 stories and photographs on street post plaques and ten boulders across the city. Joan Seidl, the Vancouver Museum Curator of History who helped in selecting the stories, described this project as "a kind of a collective memory bank" (personal communication, 2006).

Portrait V2K is similar to *Our Community Story* in a number of ways. It did not involve the City of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program but it was a special initiative of another City of Vancouver department, the Office of Cultural Affairs (City of Vancouver 2007). Like *Our*

Community Story, this project also involved many departments at the City of Vancouver, but this time as partners rather than funders. These partners were the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and Vancouver School Board.

This project was led by Lorenz von Fersen as a part of his cultural planning work with the Office of Cultural Affairs. This project was inspired by a story-sharing event that took place in three city parks during the 1997 Arrivals and Encounters project hosted by the City and delivered by the staff of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival. Participants shared their personal stories about coming to Vancouver and their experiences here (Bonnemaïson 1997; von Fersen, 2007, personal communication). In a conversation with Lorenz, he recalled how the storytellers with different cultural experiences would relate to one another's stories.⁴³ The idea of story gathering came from this event.

Prior to the year 2000, *Portrait V2K* was launched with a call for stories and photographs. During that time, *Portrait V2K* assembled a small informal team, consisting of a librarian, development planner, Vancouver resident, museum curator, among others. The team developed a set of criteria to select stories for the project. The team looked for representation from a variety of Vancouver neighbourhoods and perspectives (in regards to age and culture), and required stories to be first-person recollections. Since these stories are based on memory, historical accuracy was less important. The selected stories were exhibited at the Vancouver Museum, and continue to be presented on story plaques and boulders around the city. In addition, these stories were distributed to Vancouver elementary and secondary schools, and archived at the Vancouver

⁴³ Lorenz recounted the story by Joy Kogawa's father on internment camps and a woman's story on curfews in Chile.

Museum, on the City of Vancouver website (<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/portraitv2k/>), and in a book and CD set (see City of Vancouver 1999).

Strengths and Accomplishments

Some of the strengths and accomplishments of *Portrait V2K* are described below:

Support from Council

Portrait V2K also had strong support from the City of Vancouver Council. Then City of Vancouver Mayor Philip Owen wanted to support the celebration of the new Millennium (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). The Council “knew story projects have power” and approved \$150,000 toward the \$450,000 budget for this story and photo project. Mayor Owen also helped fundraising efforts by organizing a luncheon on behalf of the City of Vancouver.

Funding

In addition to the approved funds from the Vancouver City Council, this project also received government funding from the Federal and Provincial levels; Lorenz noted that the City of Vancouver often partners with the other levels of government on such projects (personal communication, 2007). Furthermore, retailer London Drugs provided media equipment for the project and provided their stores as a sales location for the project’s 100-page commemorative book “A Hurricane in the Basement. Approximately 3,500 books were sold, with all proceeds going to the project (City of Vancouver 1999; von Fersen, personal communication, 2007).

Staff capacity

As a municipal initiative, this project had greater access to full time and dedicated staff.

Challenges

Some of the challenges faced by *Portrait V2K* are discussed below:

Vandalism

Approximately 50 plaques have been damaged, and 42 are missing. Much of this is due to vandalism (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). Joan Seidl felt that the vandalized plaques have "...this kind of a sad, shabby aspect that doesn't honour the stories" (personal communication, 2006). According to Lorenz, the City of Vancouver is beginning to repair and replace damaged plaques (personal communication, 2007).

Complaints against story content

Lorenz recalled receiving several complaints from residents and business associations regarding particular stories (personal communication, 2007). The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association objected to a story that said that, "the street was now run-down and riddled with drugs and beggars" (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). Lorenz agreed on the point that part of the objective of this project was "to improve the perceived condition of the street", and asked the storyteller to consider revising the story, to which the storyteller agreed (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). In another complaint, the South Granville Business Improvement Association pointed out that some of the stories in their neighbourhood relate more closely to locations around False Creek; Lorenz recommended moving these plaques in his 2006

Condition Report to the City of Vancouver (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). In addition, three complaints came from residents. Lorenz explains,

[A] resident of Champlain Heights telephoned objecting to what she perceived as criticism of Canada by an immigrant taxi driver. We resisted, since this seemed to be an extreme interpretation of the text, and no change was made. (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007)

The other two complaints involved story stones and did not result in further action. Residents were invited to provide a written complaint but none were actually received (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007). One resident disliked a storyteller's politics, and the other resident did not want a story regarding a death during the Second World War posted near his home (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007).

For the stories that contain negative content, sometimes acknowledging those stories that recall a difficult part of the past is necessary to build inclusive and healing communities. In *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden observes that the memories of women and marginalized ethnic groups in places like South Bronx and South Central Los Angeles would "inevitably... involve issues of isolation and exploitation, as well as connectedness" (1995: 246). As such, she concludes, "Choosing to engage in difficult memories, and the anger they generate, we can use the past to connect to a more livable urban future" (1995: 246).

Citizen engagement

Receiving approximately 1800 submissions is an indicator of a significant level of citizen interest and engagement. Lorenz noted that in doing the outreach, they "go where the fish are"; they held gathering events, including organized lunches, at community centres, English-as-a-second-language classes, schools, seniors' residences, among other places (personal communication, 2007).

Continuing impact in public spaces

Even though stories were collected before the millennium, these stories continue to have a presence in Vancouver's streetscape, especially since the plaques and story stone boulders will receive maintenance. This project's other media outlets – book and CD set, website, and Vancouver Museum archive – will also assist with its legacy.

Neo-storytelling: Negotiating ideals of storytelling

If we stay true to Benjamin's definition of storytelling, the use of any media technology to convey stories would disqualify the story projects in this study as artificial storytelling projects. Yet, projects like *Our Community Story* and *Portrait V2K* should not be discounted as invaluable or ineffective by the fact that they mediate their stories. The neo-storytelling projects bear redeeming qualities and exist as alternative representations of city heritage. Furthermore, they deserve the same level of scrutiny as "authentic" ones, and therefore, the points raised by Benjamin and Cruikshank still apply.

We can return to the example of the Hamilton commemoration panel introduced in Chapter Two. The inscription on the Hamilton commemoration panel tells a story of an empty land "in the silent solitude of the primeval forest" being developed by a CPR Commissioner. Kamala Todd (presentation, 2005) and Nick Blomley (2004), among others, have criticized this interpretation of the past for discounting First Nations settlement and stewardship of this land, at this heritage site. The Hamilton commemorative panel represents a story that present an unfair representation

of the past, and arguably, an inadequate reference and relevance to present issues over land claims and entitlement.

Benjamin would take issue with the inability of the Hamilton panel to relate to current contexts. Quite literally and figuratively, this narrative is etched in bronze, and fixed an interpretation of local history as the authority. As such, the heritage marker itself became a fossil and a piece of heritage that is unable to adapt its narrative to relate to present circumstances.⁴⁴ This concern over the fixed nature of the story-gathering project will always be present because, for the most part, local history projects relay stories without the presence of a storyteller. But rather than dwell on the fact that the use of stories in public street heritage projects cannot compare with the authentic and intimate experience of listening to a storyteller, perhaps a more productive direction would consider Benjamin and Cruikshank's more achievable points, namely, fair representation of stories and relevance to local systems of meaning⁴⁵ (in other words, context).

Benjamin wrote that the decay of stories also "mak[es] it possible to see a new beauty in what is vanishing (2000 [1936]: 79). In many ways, places like Vancouver are experiencing constant change, and this instability makes it more difficult for intimate experiences like traditional story sharing to have a natural place in society. Similarly with collective memory, Pierre Nora (1989) observes that only when societies sense lost or fading of authentic shared experience (or memory) do they deliberately create replicas or sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*). Hence, although stories in public spaces are told in a less than ideal form, such as stories presented in *Portrait*

⁴⁴ To take this idea further, perhaps the Hamilton plaque requires a "counter-heritage marker" that can interpret the marker as a product of its time, so that the Hamilton plaque marks a dominant or accepted perspective of the 1950s.

⁴⁵ The notion of "local systems of meaning" was used by van Deusen (2001) and cited in Kazubowski-Houston (2001: 212).

V2K and *Our Community Story*, the inherent qualities and merits of stories also deserve consideration.

1. Stories as a form of intangible heritage can bring interpretation and coherence to fragments of built heritage found in the city (see Arizpe 2004, Bouchenaki 2004, and Munjeri 2004).
2. Stories in public help raise local consciousness, in personal and local memories.
3. Stories in public can help provoke curiosity that may lead to more authentic connections, even if the mediated form of storytelling appears artificial.
4. Stories can convey the storytellers' values and perspectives, if the stories are properly represented.
5. Perhaps, stories can foster, recover, or re-interpret a neo-intimate experience as the intimate sphere is seen to be fading by Benjamin, Habermas, and others.

Neo-storytelling for integrated heritage

Intangible heritage is relevant to all forms of heritage, whether movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, creative or developmental. Intangible heritage demands interdisciplinary collaboration.

-- Amar Galla, Chair of ICOM-ASPAC (2003: 4)

Even if tangible and intangible heritage are very different, they are the two sides of the same coin: both carry meaning and the embedded memory of humanity.

-- Mounir Bouchenaki (2004: 10).

Stories have always been a part of heritage landscapes. Beyond stories shared among friends and family, stories have long existed as text on heritage markers in everyday public spaces (e.g. plaques, monuments, guided walking tours) and more recently, innovative local history projects such as *Our Community Story* and *Portrait V2K*. In many ways stories have demonstrated their capacity to interpret place heritage, to give meaning to historic buildings, sites, and places without built remnants.

Stories, in a broader classification as a form of intangible heritage, have been theorized as an inseparable part of physical (tangible) heritage. Contributors to *Museum International* elaborated on this idea of the inseparable nature of tangible and intangible heritage. Anthropologist Lourdes Arizpe (2004) views intangible heritage as the history or historical process that gives coherence within each culture; it adds “value and meaning beyond the sum of separate cultural fragments” (2004: 131). Dawson Munjeri draws a metaphor: “In a real world, *ceteris paribus* the cart does not pull the horse” (2004: 13; *italics in original*). In other words, for Munjeri cultural heritage such as objects, collections, and buildings should be recognized by the values people give it such that “the tangible can only be understood and interpreted through the intangible” (2004: 13). Munjeri (2004) quotes socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai,

[I]ntangible heritage because of its very nature as a map through which humanity interprets, selects, reproduces and disseminates cultural heritage was an important partner of tangible heritage. More important it is a tool through which the tangible heritage could be defined and expressed [thus] transforming inert landscapes of objects and monuments turning them into living archives of cultural values. (Appadurai, cited in Munjeri 2004: 18).

As such, conservation policies and practice need to take a more holistic and integrative approach, as Bouchenaki (2004) and Munjeri (2004) both suggest, envisioning intangible heritage as a framework within which tangible heritage takes on its shape and significance.

Stories bring coherence and context to a place. For Joan Seidl, who took part in *Portrait V2K*, place-based stories exist as significant historical markers, especially for people moving to Vancouver.

[F]or me, stories kind of shimmer and hovered over the landscape. And so they're always with me in the back of my mind when I go to different places... And I think for a lot of us which are newcomers...I borrow the family and personal histories of all the people who have lived here before me and enrich my own understanding of the city because I don't have relatives to turn to to tell me what it was like shopping at Woodward's. (Seidl, personal communication, 2006).

Jaimie Robson of *Our Community Story* feels that “it brings a level of personal connection to the place that you live in” (personal communication, 2005). One can imagine how stories of the past could activate vacant spaces where there appears to never have been a trace of life.

The integration of tangible and intangible heritage also means that stories stored and archived in cultural institutions can be united with their original places of memory (*les milieux de mémoire*). For a proposed community art project in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, Jaimie points out that “There are some people that you can get them into spaces in the community...But in that neighbourhood, especially, when people are around outdoors, on the street, they’ll gather to see that kind of work.” Stories displayed on the street are able to address a more general public who may not be deliberately looking to learn about their local history.

Integrating stories into everyday spaces creates opportunities to acknowledge the histories of missing and evicted communities in a public way. It is an opportunity to engage marginalized memories and to mainstream, normalize, and acknowledge them as a part of how a place came to be – its local identity, its *genius loci* – and to bring coherence to places of multiple, multi-intersecting stories and memories. With the projects I present in this chapter and the next, stories and storytelling are often seen to represent a means to convey local history and, through these projects, the presentation of the stories slowly become a part of the heritage of its locality.

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY: *STORYSCAPES CHINATOWN*

Nilh ta ens Xalex kwashamen, Sekyu Siyum kwis snas.
My name is Chief Ian Campbell; my ancestral names are Xalek and Sekyu Siyum. My lineage descends from the Squamish and the Musqueam First Nations here in Vancouver.

Basically where Chinatown is situated was our supermarket. It's where we went for a lot of resources and food gathering. The land was a land of bounty full primarily of kayi7ch, which is the elk—the first things to go extinct in our territory with establishment of the city of Vancouver. Also lhaasem, which is the wild rice. It was abundant down there as well as bog cranberries. These weren't found in very many places in our territory, so False Creek, and Chinatown, was in particular an important locale for trade and economy for the local people from the local villages...And skwichys, which is throughout the whole Chinatown, was all pretty marshy back in the day; they say at the highest tide our people were able to portage their canoes across to Burrard Inlet from the channels that went through what is now known as Chinatown. Also the sturgeon that were in False Creek were an important food source, and of course the salmon that ran through the creeks. Seals also were bountiful and hunted down there. So we have a lot to offer here as a local First Nations with a history that dates back to time immemorial. It's very important to recognize that the land that was established is built upon our backs. It's important to bring that information out, and share it in a good way. Huy chexw wa.
-- Chief Ian Campbell, "This Land has Memory" (*Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006)

I'm Larry Grant from Musqueam. And my Chinese name is Hong Lai Hing. I come from an old stock at Musqueam. I'm born here, raised on the territory, raised between Musqueam reserve and Strathcona.

And all that time we were living together, my mother's community and my father's community, and because of legislation, the Indian Act, they couldn't live together on the reserve. A non-Aboriginal person is not allowed to reside in the domicile of a status Indian person.

Dad was a vegetable farmer on the Musqueam Indian Reserve. There were approximately 15 farms there. So we spent a lot of time coming back and forth from Musqueam to Chinatown as young boys, cause our dad...drove the truck and did all the deliveries. So a lot of times we would ride on that truck, come to Chinatown, delivering all the way, and have breakfast in Chinatown where the bank is, at the corner in the alley just east of Main Street. We would have breakfast there and from there go to school.

Yeah, I don't have a real connection to my Father's people. And that's probably because our dad was an absentee father, more than anything else. All the time I worked, up until 1980s, I went by my father's name. People thought I was Chinese. Well, I had the Chinese name, I was half Chinese but I had no real connection to my dad other than I knew he was my dad and I loved him.
-- Larry Grant, "Weaving Communities Together" (*Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006)

STORYSCAPES CHINATOWN

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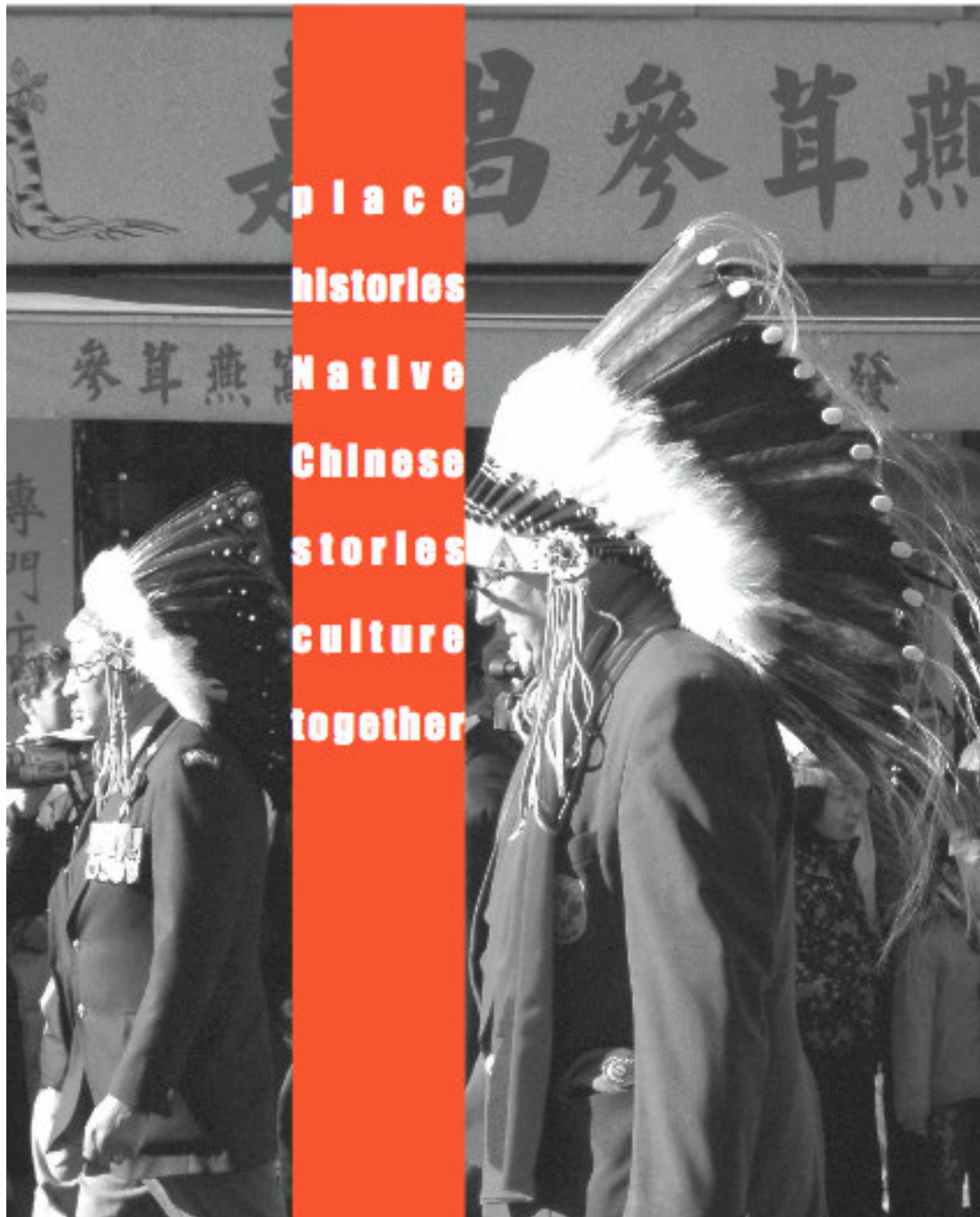


Figure 5.1: Promotional postcard designed by Red Willow Designs for *Storyscapes Chinatown* (2006).

Kamala Todd hopes a new project that can be heard on any Vancouverite's phone will help heal rifts between Vancouver's Chinese and Aboriginal communities by revealing their shared history.

-- Vancouver Courier staff reporter Mark Hasiuk (2006, November 3).

Storyscapes Chinatown is another community history project in Vancouver. This project brings greater visibility to the shared histories, legends, and memories of the connections between the Aboriginal and Chinese communities in this place. Beyond its stories between communities and generations, this intercultural theme was present throughout the project and its supporting organizations. The storytellers shared stories on legends, military service, partnerships in business and life as a result of joint oppression⁴⁶, mixed heritage children, and identity. This chapter examines *Storyscapes Chinatown* as a project I participated in as a story gatherer, and as a project that brings intangible heritage and another layer of history to everyday public spaces. This chapter is dedicated to the experiences of those involved with this project.

In this project, twenty-three local storytellers shared their stories with story gatherers Michelle Mah, Amanda Nahanee, Terry Point, and myself, as well as project coordinator Tania Willard and project director Kamala Todd. This project was supported by the City of Vancouver area planning and social planning staff Helen Ma and George Hui. At the end of the project, these

⁴⁶ In addition to general racism by other citizens (see Howe Lee's "Second Class Citizens" in Appendix H), the Aboriginals, Chinese, and likely many other non-British settlers struggled against oppressive policies and economic sanctions in the 1800s and early 1900s that impacted where they lived, how they survived economically and socially. One, the Aboriginal and Chinese communities were strongly encouraged to stay within their designated spaces: Aboriginal communities were assigned to "Indian Reservations", while government health officials designated three blocks of Dupont Street (present day Pender Street) for Chinese settlers so that they would be close to their work yet contained, apparently for sanitary reasons according to Anderson (1991). Other oppressive policies directed towards each community led these communities to joint partnerships. Economic partnerships developed out of the unique economic sanctions of each community. While the Indian Act restricted Aboriginals from selling agricultural products, the Chinese were restricted from owning land outside of the defined Chinatown boundaries. Under their respective restrictions, Chinese and Aboriginals worked together for survival: the Musqueam First Nation, located on the north shore of the Fraser River mouth, leased out some land to Chinese market farmers. In terms of social restrictions, the Immigration Act prevented the Chinese worker's wives and family from entering Canada. A number of Chinese workers, then, started families with local Aboriginals, especially Chinese market garden farmers who lived and worked on the reserve. Some of the mixed heritage children remember as adults how they would travel between Musqueam and Chinatown/Strathcona to see their families (see Larry Grant's story at the beginning of this chapter).

stories were designed onto panels and into an audio montage, which allows these stories to be publicly shared at community centres, cultural events, and the streets of Chinatown, among other places. These stories are also intended to inform and inspire public artwork through the City of Vancouver's Public Art Program.

I became involved with *Storyscapes Chinatown* in February 2006 and it was one of my most memorable projects. I believe that writing about a project that I was integrally a part of allows me to draw on my everyday experiences with the project and to look at the project more critically. This chapter offers an overview and context of the project, along with a synopsis of the perspectives and thoughts that I collected from in-depth and group interviews with the project team.⁴⁷ I regret not reaching the storytellers and some of the audience, even though this project is really about the storytellers and their stories of this land. I hope this chapter would be a resource for organizers of future story projects and hope that those organizers could exceed *Storyscapes'* standard of care, respect, and heart for local stories and their storytellers.

Storyscapes

I guess I've grown up with story all around me. My mom's a filmmaker and she really taught me about the importance of story, and telling your own story especially when you look and you don't see your story in the media or in the land around you, or in books.

-- Kamala Todd, project director of *Storyscapes* (personal communication, 2007).

[*Storyscapes* is] uncovering and rewriting and creating that strong Aboriginal culture in the city.

-- Tania Willard, project coordinator of *Storyscapes* (personal communication, 2006).

⁴⁷ I tried to keep as many direct quotes as possible.

Storyscapes Chinatown is one of *Storyscapes*' story gathering projects. *Storyscapes* is "a multi-dimensional storytelling project that seeks to strengthen the voice and place of Aboriginal people in Vancouver – from digital art to documentary, from public art to poetry, from oral histories to community mapping" (2006: 3). The story-gathering component of *Storyscapes* aims to enrich the stories of Vancouver, to be "more inclusive and representative of the many layers of Aboriginal stories of this land" (2006: 9).

Kamala Todd, a writer, filmmaker, artist, and creator of *Storyscapes*, hopes that this project can help address the invisibility of indigenous stories and the invisibility felt by indigenous people. She became increasingly concerned over the visibility of indigenous stories and stories of other cultures during her urban geography studies at the University of British Columbia (personal communication, 2007). Her concerns were confirmed in her work at the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department.⁴⁸

I've heard local Coast Salish people say, if we could put up a welcome figure, that would be a huge statement, or if we could say this was our village here then that would be huge statement, 'cause then suddenly, this idea that this place was an empty land is shattered because actually people were here thousands of years ago, and we're still here. So then it shifts everything. (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

Kamala shares the belief that many people have a shallow understanding of this place's history, often believing that this place's history begins only as far as the development of Vancouver. "If people knew more about the history of these places and what it's like for Aboriginal people to live here, and what the histories are here, then maybe people would have a better understanding of this land that they are on" (Todd, personal communication). *Storyscapes* intends to bring those stories back to the public. *Storyscapes* aims to reconnect the Vancouver area with this place's

⁴⁸ "I was hearing from [Aboriginal residents] especially in the Downtown Eastside that they felt invisible or they felt like they weren't being heard, in general. So the most important thing is to create ways for people to have a voice" (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

indigenous culture: “I think the local Coast Salish culture should be visible everywhere, anywhere you go” (Todd, personal communication).

For Kamala, an essential part of reestablishing Coast Salish presence is by creating opportunities to hear the voices of local First Nations. Aboriginals make up nine percent of all residents in the Downtown Eastside area in 2005, which is four times higher than the city average (City of Vancouver 2005b). Yet, grassroots Aboriginal organizations told Kamala, in her position as a social planner that they felt they were not heard and were excluded from decisions by the City of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside revitalization initiative.⁴⁹ When Kamala suggested bringing a planner from that initiative to meet with them, they stated that they wanted to tell their story and make their voices heard through video. This was how these organizations wanted Aboriginal voices to be heard. As a result, *Storyscapes* worked with the community-run Aboriginal Front Door Society and completed two video shorts. The videos were shown to the city planning departments. From this experience, Kamala affirms, “I am now convinced that one of the most important resources for planners is story” (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

Initially, *Storyscapes* developed as an independent project but it was difficult to find funding. When Kamala became a social planner for the City of Vancouver, she saw how stories could be a way to address issues of invisibility and voice in the city. Although her manager did not think that story gathering was part of the work of the Social Planning Department, he was later convinced after he heard the sense of invisibility felt by the local Aboriginal community. Kamala expressed how fortunate she felt to have a supportive manager who believed in his staff. Eventually, *Storyscapes* hopes to become an independent project.

⁴⁹ “People were telling me that there’s all this money, and all this attention on the Downtown Eastside, and the revitalization, and we’re not involved at all” (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

*Storyscapes Chinatown*⁵⁰

Storyscapes develops small projects as small steps to the overall goal of increasing visibility of indigenous heritage in the city, and *Storyscapes Chinatown* represents one of *Storyscapes*' projects.

The idea of Chinese-Aboriginal stories developed as this intercultural relationship became increasingly visible. Kamala first heard about this connection from Doreen Jensen, “[who] said, you know, I’ve been hearing that there have been very special relations between the Chinese and Aboriginal people, historically and even now” (personal communication, 2007). Some of these shared experiences include racism, poverty, and partnerships in marriage and business. A growing number of films tell the stories of mixed families of Aboriginal and Chinese people, such as the National Film Board documentary *A Tribe of One* on Rhonda Larrabee’s family, as well as Dorothy Christian’s current film on her own family. A reconciliation dinner was largely hosted by the Chinese community a few years ago to “acknowledge wrongs” done to Aboriginal people (Todd, personal communication, 2007). And Larry Grant, a Musqueam First Nation Elder who has been continually involved with *Storyscapes*, is himself of mixed Chinese-Aboriginal ancestry.

Before I elaborate on the project process and reflections by the team and support staff, I will provide some context of Chinatown, its Downtown Eastside community, and relevant planning initiatives by the City of Vancouver.

⁵⁰ *Storyscapes Chinatown* was produced in partnership with Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association (KAYA) and the City of Vancouver, working with the Musqueam Indian Band, Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC), Aboriginal Front Door Society, and other community groups (Todd 2006). The Vancouver Agreement and Western Economic Diversification provided project funding (Todd 2006).

The Chinatown Context

A story Squamish Chief Ian Campbell shared with *Storyscapes Chinatown* recounts the history of this traditional Coast Salish land now known as Chinatown. This land, he describes, was their “supermarket” (Campbell 2006). It was a place of food and resources that are hard to find in other places, such as elk, wild rice, and cranberries, as well as salmon, sturgeon, and seals nearby. Then, settlers arrived and their settlements drastically altered the landscape. As Greek-born Vancouver artist Christos Dikeakos asserts in *Between Keefer, Shanghai Alley & Carrall Street* (1993; see Figure 5.1), non-indigenous development of this land disrupted the traditional uses of this place.

Figure 5.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed depicts Christos Dikeakos’ work titled, *Between Keefer, Shanghai Alley & Carrall Street* (1993), a part of “Hole in Bottom” series. This series diagram what existed in the past on to a photograph of the present. This image is available from the Centre for Canadian Contemporary Art and was published in 2007.

Around the 1800s, settlers came to this general area for its resources and soon colonized this territory to create permanent settlement, which grew to become the city of Vancouver. Each cultural group had a separate camp area, and the Chinese camp became officially known as

Chinatown in 1885, a year before Vancouver was incorporated as a city.⁵¹ Chinatown is one of the first officially recognized communities for its ethnic makeup in Vancouver, and to this day, it continues to be identified as an essentially Chinese place despite the interconnected social geographies of the neighbouring communities and the inseparable economic geographies of Vancouver.⁵²

A condensed story of Chinatown

To give more context to Chinatown, this section revisits Chinatown's development, particularly in relation to external powers impressed upon Chinatown. In the last decade, scholars have written on Chinatown's history in a number of ways. David Chuenyah Lai defines four states of evolution – “Old”, “New”, “Replaced”, and “Reconstructed” – in his book, *Chinatowns: Towns within cities in Canada* (1988). Australian-born Kay J. Anderson, author of *Vancouver's Chinatown* (1995), examines Chinatown's history in six phases: Creating outsiders (1875-1903), constructing race through place and practice (1886-1920), marginalization (1920-1935), new allies and perceptions (1935-1949), slum clearance (1950-69), and re-orientation (1970s-1980s). There has also been writing on neighbourhood organizations in Chinatown and their resistance and actions against institutional discrimination (Ley, Anderson & Konrad 1994; Lee & Bruce 2004). Indeed, most scholarly literature on Chinatown critically examines the dominant and institutional perception and exclusion of Chinatown as an exotic place of “essential Chineseness” over the past 120 years or so – although scholarly literature has also almost always concentrated exclusively on the Chinese community to the exclusion of interactions with other groups unlike

⁵¹ Vancouver was formerly called Granville town site.

⁵² Daphne Marlatt and Carole Itter's anthology *Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End* (1979) contains many personal stories by the residents that refer to the connections between neighbourhoods within the Downtown Eastside (then known as the East End), as do local history projects such as *Storyscapes Chinatown*.

oral history collections such as Marlatt and Itter's *Opening Doors* and *Storyscapes Chinatown*. This following brief historical context will portray some of the essentialist impressions of Chinatown.⁵³

Before Chinatown was even officially established in Vancouver, Chinatowns in North America had already acquired a stigma of being unsanitary and “morally aberrant” (Anderson 1995: 82). As such, Vancouver's Chinatown was no exception. According to Anderson (1995), “Chinatown” first appeared as an official entity in medical health committee reports on sanitation concerns to council.⁵⁴ This stigma invited numerous attacks on Vancouver's Chinatown including attributing it with a list of perceived absences: “non-European”, “non-Christian”, unsanitary, uncivilized, amoral, and a “threat to Canadian's social order” (Anderson 1995: 39; Yee 2005: 13). While accusations of gambling, poor sanitation, prostitution, and drug use may not be unfounded, these activities and behaviours do not exist in isolation from the social and economic circumstances suffered by Chinese labourers. Back then, most of the Chinatown community consisted of transient single men who also lived where they found work. These men were separated from their families because of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, the Chinese Exclusion Law of 1923, and the head tax since 1885 (Anderson 1995; City of Vancouver 2003g; Chinese Canadian Historical Society 2005; Lai 1988). Most workers did not have adequate housing – Anderson (1995) noted fourteen occupants per room. They did not have access to proper sanitation since they were located on tidal flats and their sewers were not connected to the public system (Lai 1988; Ley *et al.* 1994). As a result of the lack of government financial and social support to new Chinese settlers, the elite members of Chinatown formed the *Chinese*

⁵³ I have not elaborated on the social history of this neighbourhood in this research because I have not obtained expressed permission from the storytellers I interviewed for *Storyscapes Chinatown*.

⁵⁴ Other literature on the various parts of the Downtown Eastside which Chinatown is a part of seem to have obtained official status of their names through health reports as well – e.g. Hogan's Alley (see Walker 1999).

Benevolent Association (CBA) in 1906, in addition to individual family or clan societies, to help new Chinese settlers with work, food, and other settlement needs, as well as mediation between its members and the levels of government (Anderson 1995; Chinese Canadian Historical Society 2005; Ley *et al* 1994; Yun Ho Chang, in Marlatt & Itter 1979). The CBA and other societies remain important institutions in present day Chinatown.

The stigma became a justification for government action (and inaction). In the late 1800s, the provincial government formed a committee that later created the Anti-Chinese League (Anderson 1995). In 1887, the Anti-Chinese League painted crosses over Chinese establishments to mark “wholesale vice” and led the race riot that destroyed the homes of 250 Chinese men while the police watched (Anderson 1995; Lai 1988). The race riot left many Chinese settlers without a home and many moved to the Chinese settlement in New Westminster (Anderson 1995).

This stigma continued although in a different form following the Second World War. By that time, Chinese Canadians earned the right to vote, Chinese families were reunited, and the Chinatown community expanded to Strathcona, the neighbourhood immediately east of Chinatown. The stigma that was formerly attached to Chinatown residents was reattached to the area’s neighbourhoods: Chinatown and Strathcona. In the mid-1900s, Vancouver was booming and the City of Vancouver became interested in urban renewal or “slum clearance” (Ann Chan, cited in Marlatt & Itter 1979; see Anderson 1995). This approach believed that demolishing “blighted” areas, like removing decay, and replacing them with new housing can turn “slums” into healthy communities. Without consultation with residents, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (now Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) and the City of Vancouver identified Chinatown west of Main Street as tourist-worthy and the east side,

including Strathcona, as blighted, significant only to its residents, and ready for immediate comprehensive redevelopment (City of Vancouver 1957, 1964; Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation).⁵⁵ The Planning Department reassured residents that they “will be very surprised when they find they can have modern Western accommodation at prices they can afford” (George Fountain, in Anderson 1995: 192). Citizens later realized they were being misled and with their churches, resident associations, and other groups, they protested these plans (Anderson 1995; Lee & Bruce 2004; see Marlatt and Itter 1979).⁵⁶

But it was Vancouver’s freeway project in 1967 that incited intense citizen opposition leading to the end of all urban renewal projects across Canada. The City proposed a freeway system, part of which would run through Chinatown-Strathcona (Anderson 1995; Ley *et al.* 1994; see Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Quade & Douglas Incorporated 1968). The proposed freeway project would occupy the land of then black neighbourhood, Hogan’s Alley, and either cut the Chinatown community into two halves or occupy the western side of Chinatown (Ley *et al.* 1994). Vancouver residents, politicians, and UBC students protested with the Chinese community; this citywide citizen engagement to defend Chinatown marks a change in the perception of this neighbourhood (Anderson 1995; Lai 1988). As a result, urban renewal projects were halted in Vancouver and across Canada, but not before destroying Hogan’s Alley and displacing over 3300 Strathcona residents (Anderson 1995; Davis 2004; Ley *et al.*).

Ironically, since the history of successful resistance to the freeway project, the Chinatown that was once stigmatized and essentialized for its perceived “Chineseness”, was now capitalizing on

⁵⁵ A leading Chinatown activist Shirley Chan recalled that, since 1958, the city continually rejected applications for improvement to their homes because the City had secretly kept plans for slum clearance, even though “we never thought we were part of a slum” (*Vancouver Sun* 1967, December 2); once this area was labeled as a slum, property prices dropped, and owners could not sell except to the city.

⁵⁶ Notably, women had powerful roles in the leadership of SPOTA (see Lee and Bruce 2004).

this “Chineseness” as a cultural commodity; Chinatown is now an ethnic enclave with cultural assets and economic development possibilities.⁵⁷ Planners developed a focus of restoring this neighbourhood as a heritage tourist destination, a strategy used when redeveloping economically depressed communities.⁵⁸ In 1971, Chinatown was designated as a Provincial Historical Site, but this was not necessarily good news to Chinatown members.⁵⁹ The designation that protected Chinatown’s built form meant that Chinatown property owners surrendered their rights to alter their own buildings. According to Anderson (1995), the City of Vancouver also insisted that the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee be made up of a non-Chinese majority; however citizens successfully challenged this requirement. Furthermore, much of the beautification strategies by planners focused on accentuating and distilling Chinatown down to its Chinese heritage; Anderson identifies this as a perception of “an essential Chineseness” (1995: 226; Ley *et al.* 1994).

The City Hall powers... are trying to force new or rebuilding type construction to conform to copies of tourist photos of temples in Asia. In other words construction cannot proceed unless it would be a museumized version with artificial red posts and vertic[al] window stripes. Most of the commercial buildings in downtown Hong Kong, Kowloon, Taipei, and Singapore are not built in the old temple style... [N]ew sign guideline brochures... contained two photos of old Chinatown scenes showing garbage cans and horse drawn wagons. Are we to presume that [planners] are trying to force us in Chinatown to revert to grubby buildings and horse wagons? (Goldberg 1974).

⁵⁷ The City of Vancouver describes this transition as “from foreign, sinister and dangerous” to “foreign, exotic and appealing” (2003g: 2).

⁵⁸ See Larry R. Ford’s *Buildings and Cities* (1994) on a perspective on how “skid rows” in old urban districts were transformed into profitable historic tourist attractions, for example in New Orleans and San Francisco. Ford (1994) notes that in the 1950s New Orleans’ historic French Quarter brought economic profits second only to New Orleans’ port.

⁵⁹ For City of Vancouver documents defining the Chinatown historic area, see *Chinatown HA-1 Guideline for Designated Sites* (1994a [2003]), its companion document on un-designated sites, *Chinatown HA-1A Guideline for Un-designated Sites* (1994b [2003]), and *HA-1 and HA-1A Districts Schedule (Chinatown Historic Area)* (2007),

As Ley, Anderson, and Konrad observe the evolution of government policies and practices in the twentieth century, “the assigned role of the Chinese community is to be different, and to flaunt its ethnic difference in a landscape carefully managed by the state” (1994: 113).

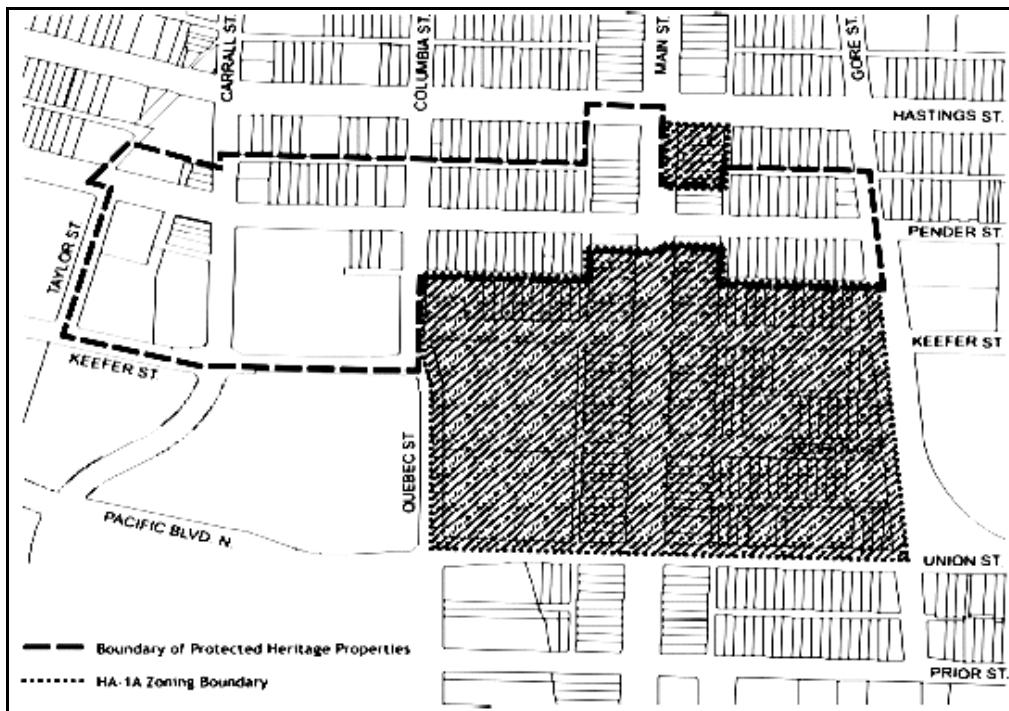


Figure 5.3: Chinatown heritage sites. Broken line indicates area of designated heritage sites. The shaded area identifies non-designated heritage sites. (Source: City of Vancouver 1994b [2003]).

Then, in the 1980s, Chinatown became less of a centre for people of Chinese ancestry. The immigration boom from Hong Kong and China caused Vancouver’s Chinese population to double in a decade but many new Chinese immigrants were coming from higher socio-economic classes and do not often share the same perspectives as the established Vancouver Chinese community who are mostly from blue-collar and merchant-class backgrounds. Newer generations did not want to remain in Chinatown. Businesses, too, relocated to other parts of Vancouver (Yan 2001). Under such circumstances, Chinatown is eager to attract economic development especially through tourism and property development.

As a consequence, developers are moving in as the Chinese population filters out. “Vancouver’s Chinatown is inviting the world to its doorstep,” writes a popular Vancouver periodical *Business in Vancouver* (Petrozzi 2006, March 21 – 27). Developers are considering the Downtown Eastside (which includes Chinatown) as the future expansion of Vancouver’s Downtown core. Business developers are also not shy to capitalize on the “essential Chineseness” either.⁶⁰ Albert Fok from the Chinese Tourism Project was quoted in *Business in Vancouver* saying, “I would like to see Vancouver Chinatown turn into something like Granville Island⁶¹ with an Oriental touch” (Petrozzi 2006, March 21-27). Rennie Marketing Systems’ current condominium project adjacent to Chinatown’s oldest building is advertised as “East: A cultural property” (see *Rennie Marketing Systems* 2006). Chinatown is described as being on the “cusp of renewal” again (Rennie quoted in Mackie, 2004, April 17).

As Doreen Massey (1994) suggests, places should not be approached as static entities, with absolute boundaries except in certain cases, or with single, unique identities. Residents do not live within absolute boundaries in the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown holds different memories and meanings to different people and communities. Yet, the early heritage conservation efforts in Chinatown, as described in Anderson (1995), to only bring forth Chinatown’s Chinese character through its built heritage have created lasting effects on a landscape that seems to merely recognize memories of the Chinese community until recently.

⁶⁰ Some property transactions in Chinatown are motivated by personal memories. Rennie admitted that his purchase of Chinatown’s oldest building “was an absolutely emotional purchase” (Mackie 2004: B4). Similarly, University Chancellor Milton Wong purchased the building of his father’s tailor business and Carol Lee moved into her grandfather’s old real estate office headquarters, both in Chinatown (Mackie 2004).

⁶¹ Granville Island is a major tourist destination in Vancouver.

Chinatown within the Downtown Eastside



Figure 5.4: Context map (Source: City of Vancouver 2005b).

The Vancouver Downtown Eastside includes many sub-areas including Chinatown and Downtown Eastside-Oppenheimer; the latter is more commonly referred to as simply “the Downtown Eastside”. The Downtown Eastside was the original town site of what has become Vancouver; it was also, at different points of its past, Vancouver’s downtown core and the center of many cultural communities. Some stories have recognized the connections between the various Downtown Eastside communities but they are not well known. Stories in Marlatt and Carol Itters’ *Opening Doors* (1979) refer to the inter-neighbourhood memories, particularly in relation to childhood friendships, Strathcona School, and activism against urban renewal projects. Several stories mentioned Chinatown as a place for fresh produce, live animals, and meals when other restaurants at the time discriminated against customers for their cultural backgrounds. As well, non-Chinese people also worked in Chinatown particularly as servers at Chinese diners. However, these stories are rarely highlighted in Chinatown’s heritage landscape.

A recent City of Vancouver report describes the Downtown Eastside as “increasingly dysfunctional economically and socially” (2005b). The Downtown Eastside is often mentioned as “the poorest postal code in Canada”. It has accommodated many disadvantaged people (City of Vancouver 2005b). It struggles with substance abuse⁶², economic poverty, homelessness and poor housing conditions, as well as mental illness. At the same time, this neighbourhood is also endowed with many mental health and addiction services, social service agencies, and strong community support.

The increasing concerns around the Downtown Eastside have led to growing tensions among certain Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods such as Chinatown and Gastown.⁶³ To address these issues, the City of Vancouver introduced the Downtown Eastside Revitalization plan⁶⁴ and, as a part of this plan, the Chinatown Revitalization Program⁶⁵ in 1999 (City of Vancouver 2007b). Funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, this project intends to work collaboratively with community members to address key issues in this area.

⁶² The Vancouver Drug Use Epidemiology (2003) estimates 4700 injection drug users residing in this area (cited in City of Vancouver 2005b), and according to the City of Vancouver (2005b), in 2001, death by alcohol was seven times the provincial average and thirteen times with drug use.

⁶³ And city planners have reported that when the planners approached Chinatown community leaders to develop a community steering group to address safety and economic issues, “the climate was one of significant tension and mistrust” (Chen-Adams & Edelson 2005: 5). Chinatown, along with Strathcona and Gastown, opposes the City of Vancouver’s current approach to the drug trade in the Downtown Eastside.

⁶⁴ The approved guidance principles of this plan include “encouraging legitimate commercial activity, improving conditions at the street level, improving low income housing, reducing crime, and helping community people to find allies and seek a common future” (Hemmingson 2005: 2).

⁶⁵ The three-year Chinatown Revitalization plan, approved in 2005, focuses on five areas: cultural development, economic revitalization, residential intensification, public realm and urban design, and community development (City of Vancouver 2007b). As part of the area revitalization initiatives, the City of Vancouver’s five-year Heritage Building Revitalization offered incentives through a variety of tools including federal programs. Based upon community consultations, the City of Vancouver drafted a Revitalization Plan that acknowledged the importance of heritage rehabilitation.

Storyscapes Chinatown: Recovering other stories

My name is Rhonda Larrabee. I'm Chief of the Qayqayt Nation. I grew up in the Chinatown area. My parents were Arthur Lee, of Chinese descent, and my Mother, Marie, who was Native. Mom did her hair and her makeup and gave the appearance that she was Oriental. When I found out at the age of twenty-four that she was a full-blooded Aboriginal woman, I was quite shocked and sad to know that she had to hide her origins because of discrimination. She was a result of the Residential School system and passed away never accepting who she really was.

I think the history of each person's family should be known to each person in the family because I believe that you should know where you came from so that you can know where you're going. We started taking my Granddaughter Jade out to New Westminster when she was about 9 to show her where our land was; where her Great Grandmother – my Mom – was born. What happened to the land, what's there now, what I am trying to do. The whole family is very involved in the history of our ancestors. I'm sure this journey will continue I'm very happy that this legacy is all in my Mom's name.

I think if all the families who helped in the making of the City of Vancouver told their stories, it would be amazing. Everyone should ask their Parents and Grandparents about their history and stories, and they'd be surprised at what they can find out.

-- Chief Rhonda Larrabee, "Know Where You Come From" (*Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006)

My name is May Liang and I was born here on the Musqueam Indian reserve, March 24, 1936. My life as a child, each year I was pushed from foster home to foster home. I was only happy was when my dad would come and visit me on the weekends. My dad always put me in a Chinese foster home because I found out later he wanted me to have a Chinese upbringing.

I grew up not having good thoughts about Indians and once I started school there was no good thoughts about being half either because we were picked on by the White people. They thought of me as Chinese and in those days a lot of prejudice against the Chinese, and then that prejudice against the Chinese and the Indians. I was not welcome in the Chinese community and in the White community I was a Chinese and in the Chinese community I was considered a little squaw...so it was kinda hard having both, never feeling belonging. I always felt like, hey, maybe I was born out in the ocean somewhere, you know, where do I go?

I can honestly say the very first time I came to the [Musqueam] elder's lunch, I was very touched by the way they treated me. For the first time I felt, hey, I've never been here and yet they have accepted me like I had never been gone...They call me Little Gloria and they said, "Gloria welcome home."

-- May Liang, "Never Belonging" (*Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006)

The Chinese are one of the few communities that have an officially recognized and designated historic area to mark their presence in Vancouver's history. Yet, the history of the Chinese in Vancouver did not occur in isolation from other people. The impact of European settlers has

often been mentioned, but until recently there has not been little recognition of other groups.

Conservation projects need to recognize that places contain histories of many peoples.

Sometimes they intersect, and sometimes they run parallel, but a place almost never bears one isolated, static, and uniform history.

Storyscapes Chinatown and other recent projects play a vital role in preserving some of the stories of Chinese and Aboriginal communities and bringing them to public consciousness.

Though the stories from *Storyscapes Chinatown* tend to be autobiographical, this does not diminish their power to convey important pieces of this place's history. This project has lifted the sense of invisibility experienced by some of the storytellers and their listeners and goes beyond the recovery of a lost past; it represents a "political strategy for cultural (and national) survival and personal identity" (Wong 1998: 171).

More precisely, the mechanism that allows this extension of personal stories to a larger history might be what Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) calls polyvocality (Wong 1998). In this style of dialogue, autobiographical stories are told not as individual and autonomous stories of the storyteller alone but describe the storyteller in relation and interaction with his or her community.⁶⁶ The latter form is embodied in the contributions by storytellers Larry Grant, Chief Rhonda Larrabee, and May Liang. These autobiographical stories carry meaning beyond individual confines as they interweave social and political tensions between communities and between the communities and with the state. As theorist Hertha D. Sweet Wong asks in reference to Native American women's autobiography, "When a Native woman writes or speaks in the first-person singular, who else is crowded into that 'I'?" (1998: 168).

⁶⁶ Wong (1998) suggests that first-person constructions are often associated with Native American and women's literature, as opposed to Western/European and men's writing (although Wong critiques this notion in her work).

Through *Storyscapes Chinatown*, these autobiographical stories reference multiple communities and contribute to a network of historical narratives above and beyond the storyteller's immediate story.

Developing Storyscapes Chinatown

In 2005, Kamala Todd approached planners at the City of Vancouver Planning Department to put a piece of public art acknowledging Aboriginal heritage in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and to enhance the reflection of Aboriginal culture in this area. The planners were immediately supportive of this idea as a part of existing initiatives and objectives (Ma, personal communication, 2006; Todd, personal communication, 2007).⁶⁷ The planning team responsible for the Downtown Eastside incorporated *Storyscapes Chinatown* with their current Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program initiative, Carrall Street Greenway (Ma, personal communication, 2006).⁶⁸ The Planning Department also saw *Storyscapes Chinatown* aligning with their current objectives, namely, developing Chinatown as an intercultural, multigenerational city (Ma, personal communication, 2006). Helen Ma of the Downtown Eastside planning team explains,

I think another objective of Storyscapes is to get people to really think more about Chinatown as part of the multicultural city in Vancouver because it's always been the ethnic neighbourhood. It's the Chinese neighbourhood. And I think it's a limitation for Chinatown's future. And we've been saying that we want to plan Chinatown for the entire Vancouver. It's a cultural neighbourhood for the entire Vancouver. While maintaining Chinatown's uniqueness, we want to open it up to multicultural culture and to all different people so I think this project really fits into that. There's always been exchanges of culture and then,

⁶⁷ As a City of Vancouver staff explains, planners cannot dedicate resources to a new project and must find a way to include new projects in existing programs (Ma, personal communication, 2006).

⁶⁸ Carrall Street marks the centre of the eastside-westside divide and travels almost from the waterfront of False Creek to the Burrard Inlet; the current initiative intends to turn this street into a more pedestrian-friendly corridor that connects the seawall bike paths while "revitalizing" three historic areas: Chinatown, the Hastings Corridor in the Downtown Eastside, and Gastown.

Chinatown's not so closed as this, you know, little walled-in community.
(Personal communication, 2006).

Storyscapes Chinatown officially launched in December 2005 with a dinner gathering held at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (*Vancouver Storyscapes* 2006). Together, members of the Aboriginal and Chinese communities and the City of Vancouver staff began exploring ideas and aspirations for the project. Social planner George Hui remembers community members at the feast agreeing that this project “is something quite promising” (personal communication, 2006).

The project team and staff

The project team was made up of community-engaged people of Chinese or Aboriginal heritage. Aboriginal story gatherers Amanda Nahanee and Terry Point are from Squamish Nation and Musqueam Nation, respectively.⁶⁹ Michelle Mah and myself were hired as the Chinese story gatherers, each speaking a different Chinese dialect. Michelle said, “I’m always really interested in stories and people’s cultural backgrounds and people’s own history” (personal communication, 2006). The project manager Kamala Todd and project coordinator Tania Willard also collected stories for this project; they used to be involved with a grassroots media and arts organization, *Redwire Native Youth Society*.

In addition, two City of Vancouver staff members who work in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside gave support to this project. George Hui of the Social Planning department provides support for

⁶⁹ Terry grew up on Musqueam Reserve, across the street from a Chinese family who leased land from Musqueam for their market gardens and has always been aware of this relationship between Aboriginal and Chinese people that became one of the themes of *Storyscapes Chinatown* (personal communication, 2006). He recalled that the son of that family used to be in the same grade as Terry but “disappeared” sometime during Terry’s childhood; “I didn’t realize why he did but now I do. It was the last garden from Hong Kong” (personal communication, 2006).

communities to help them define and address issues as a community, while Helen Ma of Central Area Planning deals with the planning aspect. They are interested in building better cooperation and partnerships between communities.

Story Gathering

The story gathering involved several components:

1. Background research of each community and their histories,
2. Community outreach and engagement,
3. Connecting with storytellers, recording their stories, and taking their photo,
4. Editing stories to a presentable length, and
5. Ensuring storytellers consent to each step of the process.

Our story gathering team convened in late January 2006. The first two months focused on preparation work necessary for collecting stories, this included background research and a workshop on interviewing storytellers.⁷⁰ In addition, we also began connecting with communities by introducing our project to various community events and centres.⁷¹

In March, we launched the story collection phase of the project with a storytelling circle held in Chinatown, a public event that included story sharing, a chance to reconnect with community members from the initial community feast, as well as an opportunity to engage the public with

Storyscapes Chinatown. Seven storytellers were invited to share their stories; other storytellers

⁷⁰ The team divided the background research work and reported what they learned at their regular weekly meetings. The team visited Chinatown with Helen from the planning department and the Museum of Anthropology led by Terry Point. The project also ran an interview workshop with Chinese-Aboriginal filmmaker Dorothy Christian to prepare for story collection.

⁷¹ Family Night at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Musqueam 101 at the Musqueam Administration Building, and we also visited seniors in a senior's residence in Chinatown.

included Joe Wai, Larry Grant, May Leung, Todd Wong, Rhonda Larrabee, Hayne Wai, Howe Lee, Bing Wong, Fred Mah, Louie Schmidt, and leaders in Chinatown, local Aboriginal bands, and war veterans. The storytellers shared their stories, and then some of the audience shared theirs.

From March to May, the story gathering team sought out storytellers, interviewed them, and prepared their stories for presentation. The story gatherers kept in touch with storytellers, ensuring that they were comfortable with each stage with signed consent. Tania Willard designed the story panels while Rob Warren of the story archival project [*murmur*] and I worked on an audio montage of some of the stories, which weaved in three-decades of archival sounds of Vancouver provided by Barry Truax and the World *Soundscape Archive collection* at Simon Fraser University.

Storyscapes Chinatown celebrated the close of the project with a final community-gathering event at a community centre in the Downtown Eastside to thank all the storytellers for their contributions and the community members for their support. This event officially premiered the stories to the communities. Then, that summer, *Storyscapes Chinatown*'s work was exhibited at community events such as the Chinese Cultural Centre's Arts and Cultural Festival in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival (City of Vancouver 2006c). The audio story project [*murmur*] has made it possible for people to listen to the audio montage by dialing the phone number and code posted on a *Storyscapes Chinatown* and [*murmur*] street plaque at the corner of Carrall Street and Pender Street. This project has also been presented at a number of academic classes and events.

Reflections

After the project, I interviewed the *Storyscapes Chinatown* team including supporting staff from the City of Vancouver. I heard a number of different hopes, intentions, and interests in this project and also a strong desire for this project to be successful. Here is a synopsis.

Reconnecting communities, healing relationships

Chinatown has a history of working independently from the other communities in the Downtown Eastside. In his extensive experience working with the Chinatown community, George Hui of the Social Planning department recalls that this community was “very isolated” but it has recently begun working with other community groups (personal communication, 2006). *Storyscapes Chinatown* represents another opportunity for the Chinese community to work with another community, the Aboriginal residents (Hui, personal communication, 2006).

Several members of the project voiced that *Storyscapes Chinatown* is the beginning of something.⁷² Recognizing that the Aboriginal and Chinese communities have grown apart, *Storyscapes Chinatown* represents a step towards reconnecting these communities by recovering their shared stories. As George Hui puts it, “*Storyscapes* is just a vehicle to bring communities together” to start a dialogue and draw on their commonalities (personal communication, 2006).⁷³ And by sharing these stories publicly, Tania feels that

[w]e would learn from those stories, about not just our history but how it was reflected in other people’s experiences in Canada...[and] find some common

⁷² Hui and Willard, personal communication, 2006.

⁷³ “It’s really empowering and encouraging to see the people who are maybe not as comfortable talking about being mixed before, and now, they are really starting to talk about what it’s like to be of two very diverse cultures and the gifts that come with that” (Todd, on *On the Coast* 2006, July 14).

ground that we can look at past injustice, to look at communities today, and how we can strive towards a future that doesn't have that kind of inequality. (Willard, personal communication, 2006).

Even at the project level, the *Storyscapes Chinatown* team brought together professionals and young people with Aboriginal and Chinese cultural backgrounds to work together and to collect stories from their communities. Tania felt that the process of bringing together, rebuilding, and healing between the two cultures was “just something really beautiful” (personal communication, 2006).

Impact on planning

These community stories will hopefully help planners better understand the depth and dynamics of a community and influence planning decisions. As someone outside of the city planning profession, Tania sees understanding locality, and the power of stories to illuminate and foster this understanding, as foundational to planning a settlement.

I always think that it is strange to plan or think about a city, building a place for people to live, without understanding the true nature of the land, and the history of the land. And that's how indigenous cultures live. That's how agricultural people live. And that's what creates a sense of belonging, when people understand the land, understand the history. So when I think you're planning a neighbourhood or a section of city, ...you look at the tree around there, you look at the earth and the animals and you look to the history of the peoples of that place and from that you build, you know, you build and you plan from there. Because that is the organic way of how it happened. (Personal communication, 2006).

Kamala shares this perspective as someone who has worked in planning, and adds, instead of “just to go down there and do the technical stuff or have an open house meeting”, planners need to listen to first-person narratives and the residents’ voices (personal communication, 2007).⁷⁴

As some evidence to the impact of this story sharing approach, Kamala references a previous *Storyscapes*’ project, *Storyscapes Gastown*.

So, for example, in the planning of Gastown and the Downtown Eastside, the history and so many residents there are Aboriginal. And so far, they don’t have a lot of access or input into the development process down there. I’d like to think that part of the shift in the planning and consultation down there has happened because we helped some of the downtown eastside residents have a way to tell their history. And I saw it in one of the planners down there, as he learned these stories that it was the Squamish people who rescued people from the great fire, that Gassy Jack was married to a Squamish woman, that there were fishing sites in that area. I saw that shift happen. And that planner became an advocate for reaching more to the Aboriginal community, for letting people know about this history. (Personal communication, 2007).

Kamala believes that particularly since the City of Vancouver invested in *Storyscapes Chinatown*, in funding and resources, the planners would probably take more ownership and these stories would probably “carry weight” (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

Connecting to the Present

Storyscapes is unique because it does not take an “anthropological lens” to indigenous stories (Willard, personal communication, 2006). Tania Willard, who was the project coordinator and graphic designer for two *Storyscapes* projects, asserts that this approach does not ask, “What was it like, pre-contact, for indigenous peoples?” (personal communication, 2006). Instead stories draw on pre-contact stories to inform present experiences. Tania explains,

⁷⁴ Helen of the Planning Department also believes that stories inform planning because it is people-oriented (personal communication, 2006).

we look to [pre-contact experiences], and we recognized it, and we learn from it, and we're still active indigenous peoples, with our cultures, living in this place, having new experiences. And it honours those stories as well and all those people. (Personal communication, 2006).

Asserting underrepresented histories in the city

A major idea behind *Storyscapes Chinatown* is to help demystify the belief that Vancouver was developed on “empty land” through the public sharing of indigenous stories. As such, a crucial element of *Storyscapes Chinatown* remains the output of gathered stories to the public and this was completed through many channels⁷⁵ to reach the public, including plans for a future public art piece on Carrall Street in the Downtown Eastside.⁷⁶ Tania describes this as the “action part of this project” (personal communication, 2006).

While public presentation exists as “a reminder about that bridge and the work that we have done together and to show that within the landscape”, more importantly, this project restores some of the under-represented voices and stories back into Vancouver’s landscape (Willard, personal communication, 2006). Tania elaborates on the value of bringing these stories into public spaces.

I think it’s very similar for both the Aboriginals, Chinese, and new Canadians. People have different histories here that’s not reflected in the landscape.⁷⁷ You know, you walk downtown and it’s western kind of stores, and consumerism, and all that kind of stuff. And it’s really important for their experiences, their symbols, their lives reflected around them so that they are a part of things here. Especially Aboriginal people whose lands...are not even really settled in term of land and title. (Personal communication, 2006).

⁷⁵ This specific *Storyscapes* project presented the stories on story panels, an audio installation in Chinatown, in the *Storyscapes*’ booklet, and on the *Storyscapes* website.

⁷⁶ *Storyscapes Chinatown* initially began as a public art project and the story gathering aspect intended to be a research and community engagement process to inform and inspire a piece of public art for the Carrall Street Greenway. The City of Vancouver is still considering creating a public art piece as a part of the Carrall Street Greenway and Downtown Eastside Revitalization plan.

⁷⁷ Tania offered her reasons why indigenous heritage remains under-represented: “There’s still real hesitancy to start to invest that kind of energy and that kind of truth in those projects (stories by indigenous people), because it threatens Canada’s resources, which often come from lands that...they are called crown land and 95 percent of BC is claimed by Aboriginal people so you know there’s some really political reasons why these histories hasn’t been recognized and why it’s still not today” (personal communication, 2006).

Another approach to history

Storyscapes offers another historical perspective to broaden established ones and this perspective draws on a different approach to recalling the past. Like how Aboriginals have passed their stories and allowed stories to evolve, *Storyscapes* is “...much more based in a creativeness or ‘organicness’ of the story...[and] they should be just as a part of the history of this place as the official history” (Willard, personal communication, 2006).

You understand those stories [as they] relate to factual things or historical things that have happened. But you understand them in a human way, you understand them, you know, in your heart, or whatever, when you hear a story. And I think that is what’s gained. (Personal communication, 2006).

Beyond its capacity to offer an alternative approach to local heritage, this approach to local history represents a significant means to allow community members and intercultural groups to engage in the history of their place by conveying their personal experiences. Storytelling allows local history to be told by the community rather than by experts who commonly hold authority to this field (Willard, personal communication, 2006).

As with all approaches to recalling the past, historical narratives will contain some biases and represent only a part of a history. The approach taken by *Storyscapes* offers pieces of histories to be integrated with established partial histories (such as the established partial history of Lachlan A. Hamilton on a commemorative panel; see *Example Three: Commemorative Hamilton panel and street naming*, p. 28). These pieces of history contribute to a larger network of historical narratives.

Healing

The story sharing also offered a therapeutic experience for some storytellers and listeners.

Kamala explains that storytellers were “talking about things that aren’t always easy to talk about.

Because it’s healing for the individual and it can be healing for others to hear and understand and maybe have more compassion with.” (*On the Coast* 2006, July 14).

I guess, for many Aboriginal people, there were so many years, or decades and generations, of...people not talking about the pain that they went through, you know, people not talking about difficult experiences or any of those things, that you find that once they realize that, ‘oh I’m feeling this’ or ‘I’m experiencing this because I was traumatized’, or ‘because my parents were traumatized’ or, you know, ‘this is my history’, ‘hey I am worthy and this isn’t cool that this happened.’ ‘I am a citizen here.’ When people have that sense, they really want to talk about the stuff that happened and, you know, how it affected them, and how they want people to learn from it. So you’ll find that a lot of times that Aboriginal people really want to talk. They really want to tell those stories. It’s sort of like breaking that silence. (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

As Terry recalls his experience with his aunt, the exchange of stories allowed some storytellers to realize that they were not alone in their circumstances.

[T]o hear her story, which ended up being really amazing, I can’t imagine having her life. And then how free she was at sharing her story, and how free she is, you know, letting us do pretty much whatever we want. Every time I phone her, she’s so happy about doing this, and then she was at the story circle too and she was like, ‘oh my god, I’m not the only one.’ You know, one of her quotes is like, she didn’t know where she was born, she might have been born in the middle of the ocean...This whole thing I think helped her with her own personal struggles. (Point, personal communication, 2006).

Sharing their stories might help develop more public understanding of the trauma experienced by Aboriginal people that have led to current circumstances. As Kamala observes, “there’s a lot of healing that can come from that” (personal communication, 2007).

Approach to sensitive stories

In my working relationship with a few members of the Aboriginal community, I found that there is often a tension or concern that non-Aboriginals would take indigenous stories and either misinterpret their stories or appropriate them as our own. In fact, Aboriginal storytellers have had their stories misrepresented, appropriated, and exploited (for research, for example) and more recent researchers like Julie Cruikshank have been outspoken about this. In academic research, the federal research Tri-Councils – the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Natural Science Research Council and the Council for Interdisciplinary Health Research – have developed an Aboriginal Research Protocol to address this issue.

Dealing with personal and difficult stories, *Storyscapes Chinatown* carried out the project in a manner that was sensitive and respectful to the stories and their storytellers. *Storyscapes Chinatown* ensured sensitivity and respect as much as possible through its framework.

1. Obtaining signed consent from the storytellers at every stage of their story, from the interview to publication, to confirm that storytellers are comfortable with how their stories are handled⁷⁸;
2. Making sure that storytellers retain full ownership of stories, images, interviews, and transcripts of their interview, and the City of Vancouver and *Storyscapes* are given only permission to use the final edit of their stories and selected images for presentation purposes;

⁷⁸ As a note, storytellers were not always conveniently reachable to sign the package of consent forms. The story gatherers found the consent forms somewhat tedious and named it, along with transcribing interviews, the most disliked portion of the project.

3. With Aboriginal storytellers, we also obtained consent from their respective band offices;
4. Making as few edits as possible in preparing the stories for presentation; and
5. Creating a story gathering team consisting of people that share commonality with their storytellers, in this case, their cultural heritage.

In addition, story gatherers needed to engage their listening skills beyond oral communication and approach each story with heightened sensitivity and respect.

Opportunities for Improvement

Engaging the Chinatown community

While this project was particularly innovative at dealing with story ownership, cultural sensitivities, and difficult memories, it was not as robust in developing a culturally appropriate approach to engage the general Chinatown community. The Chinese storytellers were almost exclusively from Chinatown's circle of community leaders.

In an attempt to engage more Chinatown seniors, we visited a seniors' residence to introduce our project. The seniors did not seem to really understand or take interest in *Storyscapes Chinatown*; on the contrary, they took the presence of City of Vancouver planners as an opportunity to talk about neighbourhood issues that concerned them, namely sanitation and crime. Even when one senior shared his story at this gathering, he still did not want to participate in the project.

At the end of the project, at the first exhibition of the story panels and audio montage at the Chinese Arts and Cultural Festival, it seemed that much of the Chinatown community was still unaware of what *Storyscapes Chinatown* was really about (Hui and Mah, personal

communication, 2006). Visitors and the organizers of the Festival did not discern *Storyscapes Chinatown* from the other history projects on Chinatown nor that these stories focuses on shared experiences and histories between Chinese and Aboriginal residents.⁷⁹ Chinatown residents, perhaps, find story sharing in this way somewhat foreign, especially for residents who are not engaged with other communities through civic activities.

Pressure from funders

Storyscapes Chinatown is the first *Storyscapes* project that involved the City of Vancouver as a lead partner. The planning department of the City of Vancouver secured funding and made specific arrangements with their funders, which included clear deliverables, deadlines, and a certain way to “connect back to the community” (Todd, personal communication, 2007). Deliverables, deadlines, and requests are a common part of a funding agreement; however, sometimes these parameters could limit the creative output and inclusion of inventive community projects. While the City of Vancouver’s involvement in this project has limited this project in some ways, *Storyscapes Chinatown* could not have reached this capacity or level of achievement without the support of the City of Vancouver.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ A host of the festival formally introduced *Storyscapes Chinatown* as a local history project on Chinatown without mentioning the unique perspective taken by this project. George remembers the host’s introduction that went something like “if you want to know the history of Chinatown, we have some on the story panels. Just go there and look at the heritage of Chinatown” (Hui, personal communication 2006).

⁸⁰ Based on responses from Kamala Todd and Tania Willard (personal communications, 2006, 2007).

Project timeline and deadlines

In the last weeks of story gathering, *Storyscapes Chinatown* continued to receive more offers by storytellers than we could accommodate because of deadlines and staff resources.⁸¹ Several members of the team felt that the project was only beginning to build a strong community relationship when the funding and time ran out.⁸² The team had already extended their four-month contract and several story gatherers had to move on to other commitments.

Project management and decision making approach

This project for the most part was exemplary in its collective decision-making approach to running a community project. Most of the time, project members were encouraged to make suggestions and project leaders accommodated suggestions until the last few weeks of the project as time pressures mounted. Recognizing that everyone has different comfort levels and approaches to running a project, a story gatherer expressed discomfort in the shift in power dynamics during the last weeks of the project: a shift from a guided collective decision-making structure to one that was more “top-down”.⁸³ A staff member, who had not been as involved with the story gatherers⁸⁴, arrived at a meeting and began assigning tasks. This had some impact on the sense of ownership of *Storyscapes Chinatown*. The other story gatherers were not immediately

⁸¹ We received interest from community centres Raycam, Carnegie, and the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre near the end of the project.

⁸² Based on responses from Kamala Todd and Tania Willard (personal communications, 2006, 2007).

⁸³ One story gatherer said, “I almost blew up last week. I was like, what are you talking about? We’ve done all of this stuff and now you get your last two minutes and the higher ups are telling you what to do now? I was really frustrated.” Another story gatherer responded by saying, “That’s just the way the City works though. That’s the bad part about it.”

⁸⁴ This staff member met with the team occasionally to ensure that the project was meeting its needs and agreed targets. This staff member seemed to be more involved with the administration and funding of the project than the day-to-day running of it.

aware of the intrusiveness of that incident until that story gatherer raised this issue during my group interview. The story gatherer regretted not speaking up at the meeting but said, “The only reason why I didn’t say anything was because I was so frustrated.” Many factors could have led to this incident but, most concretely, this incident escalated because of the pressures of deadlines and because we invested ownership to this project (which is invaluable).

Reclaiming Place Identity

As an extension to the sense of invisibility voiced by urban Aboriginals, writer and historian Marcia Crosby (1991), of Tsimshian and Haida ancestry, also recognizes that Western civilization has had a particular interest in indigenous people, limiting indigenous representation to prescribed forms, namely, “collecting and displaying ‘Indian’ objects and collecting and displaying ‘Indians’ as objects or human specimens, constructing pseudo-Indians in literature and the visual arts” (1991: 267). Crosby poses the concept of the “Imaginary Indian” who she describes as having “functioned as a peripheral but necessary component of Europe’s history in North America” (1991: 269). She argues, “the portrayal of indigenous people as victims, contaminated by European culture and dying rather than changing,” as well as the conception of British settlement on Coast Salish territory as settlement on “empty land”, has benefited those who have participated in its construction (1991: 270, 275).⁸⁵

In recent decades, indigenous voices are increasingly subverting the Imaginary Indian construct in the public sphere by asserting their own identities into the landscape. Aboriginal artist Jeffrey

⁸⁵ Crosby quotes Paul Tennant, who describes the established view amongst “white settlers” is that “Indians had been and remained primitive savages who were incapable of concepts of land title and who most certainly should not be perceived as land owners...fed the emerging white myth that British Columbia had been in essence an empty land devoid of society, government, or laws” (Tennant 1990: 40, in Crosby 1991: 275).

Thomas challenges colonial images, as in ethnographic “Indian head shot” photographs, by juxtaposing that form of photography with his perspective as a “postcolonial aboriginal participant in that North American society” (Walsh, 2002; see Figure 5.5); Thomas’ work establishes an interruption to the colonial story (Walsh 2002: 42). In another example, geographer Nick Blomley (2004) cites and describes a sign in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside by an unidentified artist: On a regular City of Vancouver sign, the artist had cleverly replaced “DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION” with “DEVELOPMENT SUPPLICATION”, and details of the development application with a series of numbers and descriptions which Blomley (2004) interprets as an indigenous narrative history of the land. Still another example is Edgar Heap of Birds’ work that aims to reclaim New York and other North American places as indigenous territory (see *Edgar Heap of Birds* 2003, Blomley 2004, and Hayden 1995). His 1988 installation in New York City parks was an aluminium sign that stated “New York” in mirrored text, followed by “Today your host is Shinnecock”. Edgar Heap of Birds’ work is replicated at the Vancouver Art Gallery and continues to mark the University of British Columbia campus as indigenous territory (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed is Jeffery Thomas’ *Indian Treaty No.1* (1989). It depicts a head shot of his son, Bear, at Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba. This image was reprinted in Walsh 2002 (page 45).



Figure 5.6: Edgar Heap of Birds, *British Columbia Today Your Host is Lil'wat*. (Photo taken by author).

Naturally, storytelling, or mediated storytelling, represents another approach to asserting and reclaiming representation. The personal stories told in *Storyscapes Chinatown*, for example, challenges the historical narrative dominated by the visible built heritage landscape and “the expert” in interpreting a community’s past, as Tania Willard (personal communication, 2006) said and Dolores Hayden (1995) would write. It gave community members an opportunity to contribute to their interpretations, to integrate missing voices into the city’s landscape, and to enable a more inclusive approach to acknowledging a place’s history. Furthermore, *Storyscapes Chinatown*’s partnership with the City of Vancouver means that the stories will not only assert indigenous voice to the public but also to decision makers.

French historian Pierre Nora once stated, “History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer” (1989: 8). While this statement may be true, projects like *Storyscapes* have also presented more opportunities to counter or add to

established histories. The recent stories may not be anymore accurate than the established ones but they add more interpretation and perspectives of the past that will provides a fuller understanding of a place's heritage and identity. As Tania Willard states,

I just hope for a shift in awareness of where people are, and the land we are on, and the history that's there; the fact that the exclusion of Aboriginal voices has meant that the city is not as rich as it could be, and that by including those voices and those histories, the city could be much richer. (Personal communication, 2006).

RECOVERING EVICTED MEMORIES: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

...intangible cultural heritage is not just the memory of past cultures, but is also a laboratory for inventing the future.

-- UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura (UNESCO 2002).

Because I believe that you should know where you came from so you can know where you're going.

-- Chief Rhonda Larrabee (*Storyscapes Chinatown* 2006)

Place does not exist without meaning. By telling the stories of these places, stories and memories give meaning to places. A places with redefined boundaries, demolitions, and redevelopment may carry little resemblance to its past, but it can continue to survive in stories and memories – at least momentarily until there is a deliberate attempt to remember, recover, and commemorate. Reconnecting memories through contemporary adaptations of storytelling can bring coherence to the fragments of histories in a streetscape. This form of intangible heritage is one approach to recognizing a place's history holistically; as such, I argue that community memories and its intangible quality are an integral part of conserving the heritage of a place.

This thesis identified gaps in current heritage conservation policies in Vancouver that can lead to omissions of heritage sites associated with weak built heritage or no physical remnant at all. These omissions can have an impact on the level of inclusive heritage representation in everyday public spaces as well as the identity of a place. To develop a more inclusive history and identity of place in Vancouver, this study suggests integrating intangible heritage with current heritage practice, shifting the concentration from a history of urban architecture to local meanings and memories.

Two chapters were dedicated to story sharing, a form of intangible heritage that exists in Vancouver. By illustrating three recent local history projects in Vancouver, these cases demonstrate the capacity to acknowledge under-represented local heritage that connect the people to the landscapes. Each community history project drew on residents' memories and stories of Vancouver's landscape, each took a different form, from different inspirations, and a different approach. Yet, their contribution to local heritage did not earn them a part in the City of Vancouver Heritage Conservation Program, nor would the one-time support from the City of Vancouver ensure continuing funding for these projects.

Fortunately, the City of Vancouver employs innovative heritage planners and consultants who work to advance the system and there continues to be citizen activism that brings consciousness to lost histories. As I write this thesis, at least two hopeful stories developed: an approval to revamp the City of Vancouver Heritage Conservation Program, and the installation of an unofficial public heritage marker to commemorate Hogan's Alley.

Heritage Upgrade Program

Twenty years after the creation of the Heritage Register of the City of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program, the Vancouver City Council approved a multi-year process to update the Heritage Register. This Heritage Register Upgrade Program proposes to "better represent heritage values important to the city and its communities" (McGeough 2007). In an Administrative Report to Vancouver City Council, Senior Heritage Planner Gerry McGeough named several factors that led to the "Upgrade Program". One factor is the "materials-based

bias” of the current Heritage Register, which meant that places like the Joy Kogawa childhood home could not be placed on the Heritage Register based on the quality of its architecture. As the Upgrade Program begins, my research comes to a close and I hope that my research can contribute to the Upgrade in some form.

Hogan’s Alley

The present site of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts was the former site of Vancouver’s black neighbourhood. Hogan’s Alley now survives in literature, on film, in the memories of a few remaining evicted residents and neighbours, and in a relic hung in a nearby pub, a neon “Hogan’s Alley” sign. Arguably, Hogan’s Alley is drifting towards the periphery of public awareness, and French historian Pierre Nora (1989) would assert that it is precisely these moments of fading memories that inspire deliberate attempts to maintain some public presence. In 2002, a grassroots cultural organization, Hogan’s Alley Memorial Project, formed and began actively working towards recovering this part of Vancouver’s history.

In July 2007, Hogan’s Alley Memorial Project took an active presence to this evicted and forgotten history. Hogan’s Alley Memorial Project along with artist Lauren Marsden and the Vancouver Flower Brigade symbolically reclaimed the history of this neighbourhood: mimicking municipal welcome signs that mark city boundaries, they marked the site of this neighbourhood by planting over 2000 red impatiens inscribing the phrase “Hogan’s Alley Welcomes You” into the interstitial green space between the viaduct and 200-block of Union Street. Fortunately for the “floral graffiti”, the City of Vancouver’s labour disruption at the time saved the garden from the regular yard work that would have destroyed this project prematurely (*Lauren Marsden 2007*;

see Figure 6.1). The Hogan's Alley Memorial Project continues to seek an official heritage marker from the City of Vancouver to acknowledge this part of Vancouver's history.




Figure 6.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed is a bird's eye view of the art garden installation on Union Street, between Main Street and Gore Street. This photograph was taken by Lauren Marsden in 2007.

Hogan's Alley, the Chinese-Aboriginal histories, stories of the internment of Japanese Canadians, and other narratives of this landscape are some good reasons why heritage conservation needs to revisit its systems. Heritage markers need to reflect the layers of histories, counter-narrative, *milieux de mémoire* (original places of memory), and *genius loci* (essence or spirit) of place and, at the same time, include the opportunity for the stories to evolve with its storytellers and listeners, such that they continue to be relevant. As cultural theorist Andreas Huyssen asserts,

It cannot be stored forever, nor can it be secured by monuments. ...If the sense of lived time is being renegotiated in our contemporary cultures of memory, we should not forget that time is not only the past, it's preservation and transmission. (Huyssen 2003: 28-29).

Keeping memories of this landscape alive through collective community story sharing is one alternative from turning local history into fossils that can only be understood and appreciated by an exclusive audience.

Policy recommendations: Bring stories to the streets

In this study, I examined storytelling as one intangible heritage form that support associated heritage landscapes. Storytelling represents only one of the more common forms of intangible heritage we find in heritage streetscapes. The following recommendations are based on producing community history projects. They are developed from my research and conversations with heritage planners Helen Cain, Jeannette Hlavach, and Alastair Kerr, cultural planner Lorenz von Fersen, public policy theorist Monica Gattinger, social planner George Hui, planner Helen Ma, community artists Jaimie Robson, Kamala Todd, and Tania Willard, heritage landscape architect Wendy Shearer, museum curator Joan Seidl, (personal communications and public lectures, 2006-2007).

Integrating intangible heritage into existing systems

Intangible heritage may be integrated into the existing systems of City, Provincial and Federal heritage conservation plans and programs, particularly through the following recommended measures:

Expand the Public Education and Information Program

As the primary component of the Heritage Conservation Program goes through an upgrade, here are some recommendations for the other two components. The existing Public Education and Information Program component provides information on heritage issues and aims to raise public awareness of local history and built heritage (City of Vancouver 2003b). Although it currently concentrates on architectural heritage, this component of the program can draw on local

narratives as another form of heritage interpretation. Local narratives can emphasize local social significance and bring coherence to the fragments of historic structures in a landscape. Local narratives conveyed through oral stories can be a great educational tool to engage the public inter-generationally and cross-culturally through the process of collecting, retelling, and listening. Local narratives could also be a more prominent part of the inscriptions on Heritage Plaques affixed on heritage buildings.

Expand the Heritage Management Plan

The current Heritage Management Plan is another component of the Heritage Conservation Program and it provides tools to protect heritage properties listed on the Heritage Register. Current tools include density bonusing and transfer, and protective measures such as heritage revitalization agreements (City of Vancouver 2003b). These tools can also apply to conserving and presenting intangible heritage: the Heritage Management Plan could require developers to contribute funding and support to an on-site community history project as a part of the developers' contribution to area amenities. Curator Joan Seidl suggests that perhaps new policies can require building owners to make a display on the site's history in the lobby, or fund artists and community groups to create a film on the history of that site (personal communication, 2006).

Consider conserving associative cultural landscapes

Landscape architecture identifies three categories of cultural landscapes: designed, evolving, and associative. Associative landscapes approach heritage places that lack physical evidence of parts of its history. According to the World Heritage List, associative landscapes may include cultural

routes, landscape bearing evidence of agriculture or husbandry, sites that evoke legend or myth, and commemorative sites (Luxen 2000, cited in HSRC 2004: 15-16).

At the federal level, Parks Canada has proposed cultural landscapes as an approach to commemorate Aboriginal history, an approach that recognizes indigenous history “in ways that are meaningful to Aboriginal people while at the same time upholding the rigor of [the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada]’s evaluative process” (Parks Canada 2007).

South of the border, the Flight 93 National Memorial Park is an associative landscape designed to commemorate the September 11, 2001 crash in Pennsylvania (National Park Service 2007; see Figure 6.2). The plane had exploded into unidentifiable pieces and left few physical remnants to recognize this incident. A year-long design competition was held and the winning design created a designed landscape that honours and commemorates this tragedy (Cramer 2005).

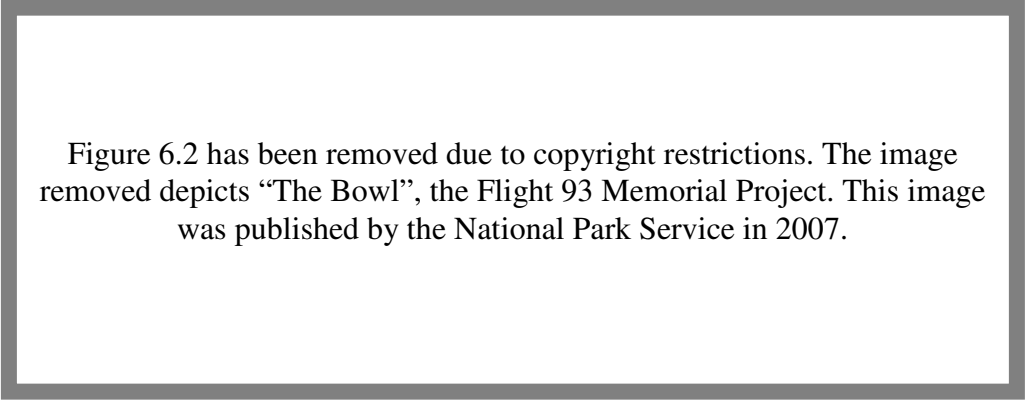


Figure 6.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The image removed depicts “The Bowl”, the Flight 93 Memorial Project. This image was published by the National Park Service in 2007.

The approach of cultural landscapes seems most prevalent on national-scale projects but it can be tailored for a municipal or local context. This approach acknowledges histories with small-scale monuments and memories, public art, and landscape design.

Partner with local institutions

Conventional heritage planners should consult and partner with other cultural institutions that have expertise in the field. As UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Culture Mounir Bouchenaki notes, intangible heritage possesses different needs: it may require translation into a tangible form; it may require support for intangible heritage practitioners to transfer their knowledge and skills; and it tends to offer a wider heritage context than conventional built heritage (HSRC 2004). Municipal governments, which may have experience with public spaces and protecting built heritage, could partner with institutions that have experience working with intangible heritage such as civic cultural institutions Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver Art Gallery, UBC Museum of Anthropology, and City Archives.

Provide continuing support and core funding

Without support and core funding, the future of current community heritage projects would depend on the dedication, personal financial ability, and capacity of the project coordinators.⁸⁶ Currently, the Office of Cultural Affairs at the City of Vancouver offers Operating Grants to Vancouver-based arts organizations with proven quality programming or services and ongoing operations for at least two consecutive years. This supports projects with a year round part-time staff member to maintain an organization. Although this grant is only available to arts-based organization and projects, this grant offers an importance source of funding for those that qualify.

⁸⁶ As *Our Community Story* coordinator explains, "The way they seem to work is like, what I'm realizing, is that we're going to have to work our asses off for at least two of three more years before we are going to get to the stage where we are going to get any kind of continuity in our organization. And it's just a matter of whether I personally manage to maintain that momentum in myself. And it's a struggle" (personal communication, 2007).

“Single Window” service delivery

“Single Window” refers to a service delivery concept that uses gateways or portals to streamline or centralize access to relevant services and information together on a particular subject matter for the public (Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS) 2004; see Service Canada Implementation Team 2000 and Public Sector Service Delivery Council 2001). This concept takes a variety of forms, across sectors in Canada and internationally, and could be tailored to support municipal governments, such as a program targeting intangible heritage projects.

A report by the South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC 2004) finds intangible heritage spans many fields and departments. Intangible heritage certainly involves heritage planning and cultural development. When a project involved public presentation in public spaces, the project will involve engineers. A Single Window can help community groups efficiently access federal, provincial, and even international resources.

Resources through a Single Window

Single Window service delivery can take the form of a handbook and a webpage part of the Heritage Conservation Program site. The City of Vancouver could highlight best practices and case studies helpful for community groups to develop their project. Research for resources should also include national examples, especially since the Department of Canadian Heritage and Parks Canada have been commended for their progressive initiatives towards integrating

intangible heritage into place-based heritage conservation.⁸⁷ Research can also include creating a nationwide network of municipalities to share resources on conserving intangible local histories.

Funding through a Single Window

Projects like *Our Community Story* secured funding from a number of grants and programs at or through the City of Vancouver such as the Neighbourhood Matching Fund, the Artists in Residence Program, the Community Public Art Program, and the Get-Out! Program. Evidently, municipal funding exists. However, the City of Vancouver could consider streamlining the application process into a single grant application. A designated department such as the Department of Cultural Affairs can process this “Single Window” application or the Heritage Conservation Program, and then assess the need and liaise with grants and programs of various departments. This department may also act as a resource for external funding and support opportunities from other levels of government and non-governmental groups such as foundations and corporations. A Single Window service delivery would allow project coordinators to focus their attention on planning and operating their projects as funding applications can be a timely and frustrating process.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ A South African Human Sciences Research Council report states, “The federal Department of Canadian Heritage is unusual compared to other national governments in that it deals with both tangible and intangible heritage. There is a growing interest in that Department in ‘bringing issues of ecological integrity and diversity [together] with those of cultural integrity and diversity, and exploring the relationships between natural and human ecology. The Department has taken strong steps towards a more integrated view of heritage, which builds on the views of cultural landscape articulated by First Nations communities. These views are seen as a way towards embracing a complex cultural diversity within a complex physical environment’ (Smith in Campean 2001: Canada page 47)” (HSRC 2004: 62).

⁸⁸ From *Our Community Story* coordinator Jaimie Robson’s experience, each grant and program requires individual applications and processes, and the coordinators spent a lot of time finding funding for their project rather than working on the project (personal communication, 2007). *Storyscapes* also had difficulty securing funding until director Kamala Todd proposed *Storyscapes Chinatown* as a part of her work as a social planner (personal communication, 2007).

Managing a Single Window

Ideally, the Single Window service would have a dedicated staff member responsible for community heritage projects. This position will not only manage community concerns and applications, it will maintain formal links between relevant departments and programs.⁸⁹

Alternatively, the program coordinator could also be an external organization such as advocacy groups like *Heritage Vancouver Society* or cultural institutions like the Vancouver Museum (von Fersen, personal communication, 2007).

Let the communities lead

Governments need to encourage communities to take lead roles in shaping their projects. As city staff George Hui observes, communities need to lead “because they own the story, they own the history, culture and heritage” (personal communication, 2006). Communities are in the best position to determine heritage value based on its significance to their communities, which may not match universal heritage values (Grenada *et al.* 2003, in HSRC 2004).

Secondly, giving support to community groups in leadership roles can foster greater community ownership (Hui, personal communication, 2006). Community ownership ensures the continuity and resilience of a project. Even amidst a change in city council, the project will likely persevere “...if the community comes together with a strong voice, then the government cannot ignore the voice of the community” (Hui, personal communication, 2006). And communities cannot be

⁸⁹ Lorenz von Fersen suggests a budget of \$500,000: \$150,000 for 1.5 staff members and \$350,000 for core projects, programs, and supporting institutions (personal communication, 2007).

pushed into taking ownership; sometimes community “fermentation time” is necessary to develop community interest in taking a project into the next phase (Ma, personal communication, 2006).

Nonetheless, with the communities taking the lead, projects still require city staff for resources and support. City staff could help develop partnerships with museums and local historians, who have expertise in heritage preservation and protection, while a partnership with city planning could facilitate better public presence of the project outcomes. Dedicated support from city staff can benefit community groups to secure funding and resources to ensure a strong and continuing presence of their project.

Considerations for operating local history projects

Bringing personal and community memories into everyday streets can help acknowledge histories missing from protected built heritage sites. *Our Community Story* embedded story tiles into the sidewalk of East Hastings Street. *Portrait V2K* put residents’ photographs and memories on street-post plaques and boulders around the city. *Storyscapes Chinatown*, in partnership with *[murmur]*, created an audio montage of some of the stories gathered and is accessible by dialing a phone number and access code posted on Carrall Street and Pender Street in Chinatown. I spoke with members of these three projects and asked them to reflect on lessons they may have for future projects. Here is a synopsis of our reflections.

Build relationships first

To start a project like *Storyscapes*, Kamala Todd suggests that groundwork has to happen first (personal communication, 2007). By groundwork she means to establish the ownership of the project by communities first, and then connections with funders and decision-makers.

Storyscapes Chinatown launched its project by holding a community meeting to gather ideas and direction from members of involved communities. Ideally, project teams would share the responsibility of maintaining and building contracts through local Aboriginal bands and urban communities and develop a steering committee of community members that would shape the project from beginning to end (Todd, personal communication, 2007).

Develop meaningful community partnerships

No one knows the past of a place better than the people who spent their time there. Dolores Hayden's project *The Power of Place* conveyed the importance of "...giving respect to members of a community, listening to them and talking to them as equals, and earning their trust" (1995: 229). To attain meaningful community engagement, communities need to be the leaders and champions of these projects and local government or organizations should be there as supporters. Here are some ways to develop meaningful community partnerships:

Establish a steering committee, board, or advisory group

One way to develop and maintain that relationship with communities is to create a steering committee. George Hui recommends that a committee should consist of no more than ten

members (personal communication, 2006). A steering committee would help monitor the development of a project and, at the same time, formalize ownership by members of the community.

Engage with the community (communities)

Ensure that there are leaders from the community or communities to formalize connections with the project. Ideally, this would take the form of a steering committee, however, if that is not a possibility, continuous contact with members of the community is important. The project should fulfill community needs or interests (Byrne 2004; Ma, personal communication, 2006).⁹⁰

Plan for effective public presentation

Presenting stories in public spaces would have greater impact on public engagement than storing stories in an archive (Willard, personal communication, 2006). Yet, mere public representation does not ensure effective public engagement. According to Vancouver Museum curator Joan Seidl, a strong design will meet intellectual and affective objectives and communicate to visitors (personal communication, 2006). In addition to good presentation, projects should also explore different outlets for their project. For example, projects should also explore and incorporate other ways of sharing collected stories such as through school curricula, weblinks from community websites, and presentations at events and community gatherings.

⁹⁰ Denis Byrne (2004) describes the benefits of a partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous people in mapping indigenous place history in Australia. The maps became a source of public acknowledgement of the shared landscape and 180 years of colonization.

Ensure communication is culturally inclusive

To reach a wider audience, local history projects need to communicate their stories in ways that capture public interest. In places with large non-English speaking communities, projects would reach a greater audience by translating those stories and ensuring that the presentation of projects would effectively communicate the theme of their project. For example, does the name of the project convey the objective of the project?

Be aware of saturation

Particularly in heritage districts, one should consider how a new project could be integrated with existing heritage projects and how a new project can be differentiated from others. *Storyscapes Chinatown* and *[murmur]*'s phone-accessible audio montage does not take up more space than two street-post signs as Chinatown is a provincially-designated historic district with numerous, concurrent local history and Chinese heritage projects.⁹¹

On funding opportunities and partnerships

Many community-run projects have difficulty securing funding. In the case of *Our Community Story*, once they found their first funder, it became significantly easier to secure more. They received most of their funding from various city government programs. They also received some funds from a corporate donor, Hastings Racecourse. *Our Community Story* specified that they

⁹¹ Historian and curator Joan Seidl praises the presentation of audio stories by *[murmur]*, “*[murmur]* has that same ability to be in that landscape and not be as clunky as sign or kiosk or something like that” (personal communication, 2006).

were comfortable with Hastings Racecourse because it was a donation rather than a sponsorship, and the Hastings Racecourse has been an integral part of their community's historical fabric.

Developing strategic partnerships

For projects like *Storyscapes*, partnerships enable its project to have a greater impact beyond public presence; *Storyscapes Chinatown*'s partnership with the City of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program increased the potential of their stories to have more influence on planning decisions in the Downtown Eastside. *Storyscapes Chinatown* story gatherer Terry Point suggests that a partnership with the Vancouver School Board would ensure a presence of these stories in the Vancouver public school system (personal communication, 2006). Projects should also consider incentives for ideal community partners who do not have the resources necessary for them to participate otherwise (e.g. funding for staff time).

Consider the impacts of working with a city government

Affiliation with the City of Vancouver has a number of advantages. It ensures more support for the presentation of the project, such as public art, art installations, community exhibits, and video screenings, and it also tends to lead to greater access to support and resources. The stories may also have a stronger impact on city planning initiatives and processes (Todd, personal communication, 2007; Willard, personal communication, 2006). Even after a project has officially ended with a municipal government like the City of Vancouver, "Projects never get shelved" (Ma, personal communication, 2006). As the City of Vancouver staff Helen Ma states,

when there is sufficient community interest, the City will take up the project again (personal communication, 2006).

Community history projects should also consider working independently if they secure sufficient funding. One advantage to this approach is greater flexibility, as community-based work and creativity sometimes require. Kamala Todd believes that projects can still have impact on community planning without an explicit partnership with their city government, as long as they connect with their city departments (personal communication, 2007). Independence from government and certain organizations or corporations could also mean access to more stories as some storytellers may be skeptical of certain affiliations.

Manage expectations

Dolores Hayden (1995) suggests that good urban public history projects build on good relationships with community member and planners. Everyone involved in the project should be informed of the scope of the project, the expectations of all parties, how the project plans to be implemented and, if relevant, what relationship this project has and will have with the city planning department. Funders, sponsors, partners, and community members who invest their resources will develop expectations of the project. Being conscious of those expectations and defining attainable goals when possible would help alleviate unnecessary pressure and restrictions.

Other Considerations

There are other considerations in running community history projects, such as:

Ensure cultural appropriateness

Storytelling exists in many communities but not necessarily in such a public and formal way.

The *Storyscapes Chinatown* project learned that Chinese elders were less open to sharing their personal stories with this project, with the exception of its community leaders. In such cases, *Storyscapes Chinatown* may consider partnering with a recognized organization in their community to build trust, aim to develop individual relationships with community members, or perhaps if time permits, seek advice and insight from community leaders. Although gender is not often considered “cultural”, gender dynamics in a community should also be considered. With *Storyscapes Chinatown*, for example, Chinese storytellers from Chinatown tended to be male and known community leaders. Although our visits to seniors and community centres, which consisted mostly of women, were unsuccessful, the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre showed interest in participating in future *Storyscapes* projects.

Cultural appropriateness will increase the chances of engaging targeted communities and community members even if many of them still decide against sharing their stories. In some cases, they may not be comfortable with sharing personal stories with the public, and not everyone is interested in participating in public history projects. Despite that, it is important for local history projects to actively seek out participants from a diversity of backgrounds and to engage them as best they can with an opportunity to share their perspectives.

Allocate sufficient time for outreach and develop community relationships

Community outreach takes times and building relationships take even longer. Allocate sufficient time prior to the start of a project to develop those relationships (Hui, personal communication, 2006).

Use a project management style appropriate to its members

Communities and projects have unique working styles that may be sensitive to change, particularly in projects with short timeframes. Unless problems arise, leadership and management systems should remain the same as much as possible. For instance, if a project is accustomed to a certain system of communication (e.g. funders and city staff communicating to project leaders, and project leadership to participants), then this structure should remain consistent throughout the project in order to avoid conflict or misunderstanding.

Inclusive decision-making

The opinions of community members are not homogenous, especially when working across communities. Therefore, it is crucial for projects to be as inclusive as possible.

Develop a long-term vision

Storyscapes Chinatown exists as only one part of *Storyscapes'* initiatives. As *Storyscapes* continues to develop, the stories of *Storyscapes Chinatown* could be brought into school systems,

the stories could become a book of under-represented local histories, and the project would reconnect with its communities, “allowing them to have access to these materials, to share them, and build on them” (Todd, personal communication, 2007). *Storyscapes* could also make story sharing an ongoing program, possibly by creating places for storytelling and media-based technology that collects stories online (Todd, personal communication, 2007). A long-term vision is vital to the continuity and impact of a project, and core funding would materialize and sustain that vision.

A project that continues on an ongoing basis also allows community relationships to grow. Expanding *Storyscapes Chinatown* into a continuing project would help encourage a stronger relationship between the Chinese and Aboriginal people in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. As social planner George Hui states, “*Storyscapes* is only something to kick off the process” (personal communication, 2006).

Revisit: Placing memory, constructing identity

If people are able to walk down the street and have some sense of where things came from or what used to be here before, or how the landscapes evolved that they are walking through, and what kind of sensibilities and points of view people had who lived in those same places before, I think it creates a stronger sense of personal identity and also a stronger sense of commitment to the place.
-- Joan Seidl, Curator of History (personal communication, 2006).

But places are never merely backdrops for action or containers for the past.
-- Karen Till, *The New Berlin* (2005)

Heritage in city streets is more than ornaments from the past. Heritage contributes to the identity of a place and it connects the past to the present for a grounded vision of the future. In cities experiencing rapid growth like Vancouver, much of the shared memories depend on heritage that exists visibly in our public spheres – for example, everyday public spaces, the education system,

and the media. In public space, memory can “inscribe itself into history and be codified into collective consciousness” (Huyssen 2003: 101). With such potential impact of public heritage on collective consciousness, it seems fitting that heritage be developed in a collective manner.

A collective and inclusive approach to heritage benefits at least two publics: under-represented communities and new residents. For Aboriginal communities and other marginalized communities, the lack or insufficient reflection of themselves in the city landscape evokes a sense of invisibility, erasure or exile from social consciousness, and a feeling of unimportance. Kamala Todd believes in the importance of seeing oneself reflected in one’s environment, suggesting that it represents evidence of one’s existence and ancestral origins that helps locate one’s identities (*Storyscapes* 2006). Consequently, civic organizations need to foster opportunities for their communities to recover their histories in this land, and to recapture the identities of a place so that the existing residents can maintain that connection to the land. Even if these histories are difficult memories, as Erna Paris (2000) asserts in her work on national attempts to overcome violent histories, these difficult memories can only be managed with remembrance, accountability, and with justice, “however frail, however inadequate, however imperfect” (2000: 464). She writes,

...for the sake of social harmony, responsible citizens are often expected to put away the past and never speak publicly about what happened or who was responsible. But seen through a long lens, peacemaking founded on “forgetting” appears to have a limited lifespan. (Paris 2000: 464).

As “identity is intimately tied to memory” (Hayden 1995: 9), conversely, the erasure of local memories, the past, and histories is an erasure of identity and existence.

Inclusive representation of the past landscape serves visitors, immigrants, and younger generations as well. As residents from other places, Joan Seidl and Jaimie Robson observe the

power of local histories to connect new people to their new communities.⁹² Joan Seidl and Jaimie Robson speak from personal experience.

For a lot of us, [who] are newcomers...I'm borrowing the family of personal histories of all the people who have lived here before me and enrich my own understanding of the city because I don't have relatives to turn to tell me what it was like shopping at Woodward's. (Seidl, personal communication, 2006).

There are also people coming to Vancouver that aren't from here. They are from all different parts of the world. They may know about the city of Vancouver from books, or whatever but they haven't experienced it. ...just having a true personal experience connected to the place that you live is really meaningful and powerful, and it really makes you care about the place you live [in]. (Robson, personal communication, 2007).

Our Community Story, *Portrait V2K*, and *Storyscapes Chinatown* engaged with these issues concerning the invisibility of certain histories and the connecting of new people. These projects reveal the significance of community stories in fostering a deeper understanding of this place's local heritage and identity. They also reveal its capacity to connect old stories with new people, and to integrate intangible heritage with tangible heritage. Stories as an intangible form offer a more holistic approach to heritage conservation. Its fluid quality defies boundaries and restrictions on the significance of a certain history imposed by the physical quality of historic structures. With the recognition of intangible heritage, the histories of groups without built heritage, too, can assert their historical connections to shared geographies.

⁹² Joan Seidl left Minnesota and became the Curator of History for the Vancouver Museum, and *Our Community Story* coordinator Jaimie Robson was a recent resident of Hastings-Sunrise neighbourhood, which became the subject of her community history project (personal communication, 2006 & 2007).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: In-depth interview questions

These questions are presented as examples and listed in no particular order.

Sample interview questions for artists and curators

- Can you describe your project? What inspired this project?
- What kind of meaning does your project have?
- Do you consider your project a heritage project?
- How do you engage the public?
- How can we bring history to everyday streets?
- Can you describe the logistics of running such a project?
- What makes or would make local history important to you?
- Should we connect city museums with city heritage conservation?
- What support did you receive from the City of Vancouver?
- Did you find problems in representing history?
- What do you think of walking tours, plaques, art projects, etc.?

Sample interview questions for heritage planners

- What is your role and responsibility as a heritage planner?
- What is the heritage register upgrade? How will it be executed?
- What are some obstacles to “govern” non-physical heritage?
- Could you suggest some initiatives that incorporates intangible heritage?

Sample interview questions for members of Storyscapes Chinatown

- Why did you get involved with *Storyscapes*?
- What did you hope to accomplish with *Storyscapes* ?
- What are some community impacts, if any, you hoped to achieve through *Storyscapes*?
- Are there aspects that could be improved for the next *Storyscapes* project? Could urban planning have a role in preserving collective memories of marginalized communities? If so, can you describe that role? If not, then why not?
- How was this project funded?
- How would other groups, communities, or cities make a case for projects like *Storyscapes Chinatown* to happen in their location?

Sample interview questions for planning staff

- How did this project begin?
- How did you balance ownership of the project between community and the City of Vancouver?
- What were some strategies used to engage the public?

Appendix B: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - AMENDMENT & RENEWAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Leonora Angeles	DEPARTMENT: UBC/College for Interdisciplinary Studies/Community & Regional Planning	UBC BREB NUMBER: H06-80374
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
Institution		Site
N/A		N/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted: N/A		
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Diana Leung		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: N/A		
PROJECT TITLE: Recovering Evicted Memories: Redefining Heritage Planning		

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: July 25, 2008

AMENDMENT(S):	RENEWAL AND AMENDMENT APPROVAL DATE: July 25, 2007
Document Name	Version Date
<p>The application for continuing ethical review and the amendment(s) for the above-named project have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board</p>	

Appendix D: City of Vancouver Heritage Program Scoring System

The Scoring System
During development of the criteria, many buildings were evaluated to test their relative significance and to experiment with a range of numerical scores for excellent, very good, good and fair/poor values. The final numerical scores that were used during formal evaluation sessions are:

A. Architectural History					
[Maximum category score of 40]					
1. Style/Type	35	18	12	0	0
2. Design	30	15	10	0	0
3. Construction	15	8	5	0	0
4. Designer/Builder	15	8	5	0	0
B. Cultural History					
[Maximum category score of 35]					
1. Historical Association	35	18	12	0	0
2. Historical Pattern	30	15	10	0	0
C. Context					
[Maximum category score of 25]					
1. Landscape / Site	15	8	5	0	0
2. Neighbourhood	20	10	6	0	0
3. Visual/Symbolic Importance	25	13	8	0	0
D. Integrity					
	0	- 5	- 8	-15	
Total Possible Score:					
	100				

Source: <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commssvcs/PLANNING/heritage/Method.htm>

Appendix E: Benefits of conserving heritage defined by Province of BC

- Makes our province even more attractive - We like to live in well-kept, diverse and sustainable communities and travelers like to visit them. Plus heritage tourists stay longer and spend more.
- Helps us breathe easier - By reducing our need to build more, we protect green spaces and farmland. Keeping housing in towns facilitates healthy commuting. Also, by reusing buildings, we produce half the emissions produced by demolition and new construction.
- Keeps us happy - when we conserve our heritage it connects us to our past and strengthens our sense of self, our sense of community and our ability to shape our future.
- Revitalizes our communities - Turning old buildings into restaurants, shops, and offices generate income and keep them trendy and fun too!
- Keeps the economy booming - Heritage buildings generate jobs during rehabilitation, and draw tourists and commercial activity long afterwards. Creative organizations tend to be attracted to heritage buildings.
- Conserves energy and reduces waste - Reusing historic buildings saves the energy used to build it and maintain it, the building material that was less energy exhaustive than today's building materials, and space in our landfills.

Source: BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (Province of British Columbia 2007b)

Appendix F: Sample Heritage Plaque

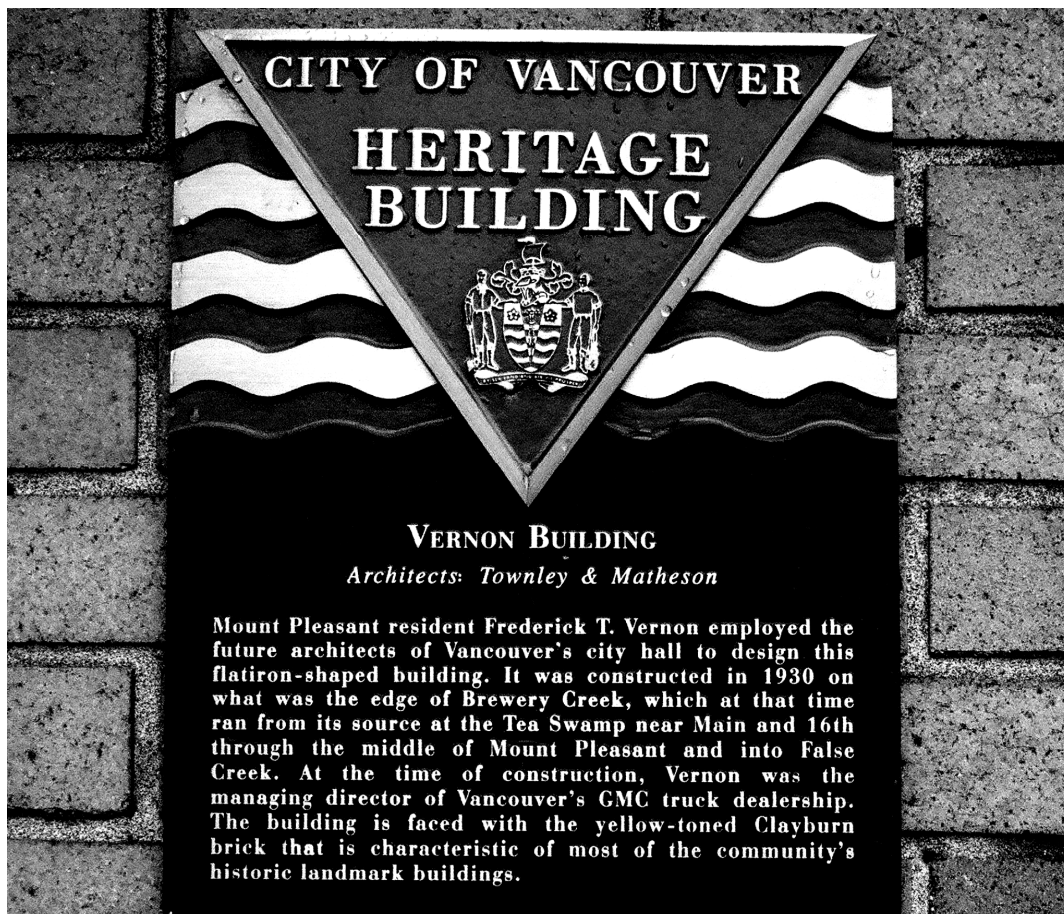


Photo: 200-block East Broadway, Vancouver; taken by author.

Appendix G: Heritage streetscapes

Location	Downtown/Eastside/Westside
300 Block W. 7 th	Westside
1100 Block W. 7 th	Westside
400 Block E. 10 th	Eastside
2600 Block W. 10 th	Westside
1500 Block W. 14 th	Westside
1500 Block W. 15 th	Westside
1500 Block W. 15 th	Westside
2000 Block W. 36 th	Westside
2100 Block Alberta	Westside
2200 Block Alberta	Westside
2300 Block Balaclava	Westside
2300 Block Dunbar	Westside
800 Block Granville	Downtown
6100 Block MacDonald	Westside
2600 Block Marine Crescent	Westside
2200 Block Yukon	Westside

Source: Location data from Heritage Streetscapes; URL:

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/PLANNING/heritage/Streetscapes.htm>

Appendix H: Howe Lee, “Second Class Citizens”

From *Storyscapes Chinatown* (2006)

The common link is discrimination for both the Aboriginals and the Chinese Canadians.

I’m a third generation Chinese and I was born and brought up in Armstrong at the Northern end of the Okanagan valley. I have an education background, I have a business background, and I have a military background.

The common link is discrimination for both the Aboriginals and the Chinese Canadians. During the war even if the Chinese Canadians wanted to volunteer for service, they were rejected. We weren’t even treated as second class citizens. We didn’t have citizenship, we didn’t have the right to vote. In Vancouver, it was almost like clockwork that there would be a group of hoodlums coming into Chinatown. There was a veteran who said every weekend, Saturday at 6:00 o’clock, there will be a group of hoodlums waiting to come into Chinatown to do damage, and pick fights. Some were so bad they were driven out of Chinatown. Often the White people would tear down the Chinatown, even burn them. They had to seek hiding place or refuge somewhere. It was the Aboriginals that took them into the reserves. Often the White people wouldn’t go into the reserves because they were outnumbered. So that’s how the Aboriginals protected the Chinese and took them in until they were able to get reestablished or rebuild. Often friendship developed with them and over time, relationships developed, romances, and common law marriages.

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